Barunah Plains Homestead Outbuildings and Garden



National Estate Register, 2003.



National Estate Register, 2003.



National Estate Register, 2003.

Location

Hamilton Highway, Hesse, via Inverleigh WINGEEL, Golden Plains Shire

Municipality

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO20

Heritage Listing

Golden Plains Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

National Estate Register:
Barunah Plains is a late nineteenth century homestead development and is important for exhibiting a rich array of cultural features as follows: a collection of bluestone buildings including the homestead and outbuildings; and a homestead garden and parkland with a large attractively crafted timber gate, a timber pedestrian bridge, shrubberies, a sunken croquet lawn, a rose garden and mature trees (Criterion A.3).

Barunah Plains has a strong and long association with the grazing history of the western district, and thus with a major chapter of the history of Victoria (Criterion A.4).
The range of structures on the property, including bakery, laundry, cottages, implement shed, stables, coach house, woolshed and ram building, is important for the way it reflects a functioning western district sheep property founded in the nineteenth century. Additionally, the ram shed and the gate providing entry to the garden and park are unusual features. The garden is also important as an example of the Gardenesque design style, exhibiting the following style characteristics: a dominance of shrubberies with minimal lawn area; use of gravel paths; and use of trees with distinctive form as features (Criterion B.2).
Barunah Plains is important for technical and creative excellence exhibited in the evolved form of the bluestone house, the collection of substantial bluestone outbuildings, and in the 1890s garden design layout (Criterion F.1).
National Trust:
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE Barunah Plains (formerly Long Water Holes), commenced as a pastoral run in the late 1830s, acquired by the
Russell family in 1851, the homestead erected in 1866-67 and extended in 1886 with development of the garden presumed to relate to the 1860s-80s, and retained in Russell family ownership for almost 130 years, is of statewide cultural significance:
- historically, as a fine example of a nineteenth century homestead, exemplifying the transition from the earliest stone-built homesteads of the 1860s to the more grandiose homesteads of the 1870s-80s; major constituent elements include the homestead, conservatory, coach-house and stables, manager's residence, shearing shed, implement shed, bakehouse, ram shed and other outbuildings, entry drive, garden and dry stone walling;
- historically, for its integral links with the pioneering Russell family of the Western District; the family owned Barunah Plains for 127 years and the fabric of the property reflects all phases of their occupation; the family ownership also links the property with other Russell family properties such as Golfhill, Mawallock, Carngham and Wurrook and through early owner John Simson it is also linked with Trawalla - these links have a great ability to demonstrate traditional Scottish kinship loyalties and exemplify a major characteristic of the social and cultural history of the Western District;
- for its retention of design elements of a mid to late nineteenth century homestead garden; including elevated site overlooking a creek, drive and path layout, spatial arrangement of buildings and services, fencing and gates, a balance between productive, leisure and horticultural pursuits, and the contrast between homestead garden and open farmland;
- for its retention of planting from the mid nineteenth to early twentieth century, including specimen trees, shelter belt plantings and parkland, shrubberies, flower beds and lawn areas (both formal - as in the croquet lawn - and informal); and
- aesthetically, for the contrast between the open volcanic plains and the oasis of the garden around the homestead nestled into a bend in the Warrambine Creek, for the maturity of the garden landscaping, and as the setting for a fine mid-nineteenth century homestead.
[The architectural significance of Barunah Plains has not been re-assessed as part of this report.]
EXISTING DESIGNATIONS
National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
9 June 1960: Barunah Plains Homestead classified (level 'D') [FN1126]
1980: Peter Watts, 'Historic Gardens in Victoria', Barunah Plains ranked 'of state significance' and 'Category 1'
Barunah Plains - classified 2/12/96
Australian Heritage Commission
Not assessed for the Register of the National Estate
Heritage Victoria
Not assessed for the Victorian Heritage Register
Shire of Golden Plains
Not assessed for possible scheduling in the planning scheme
National Trust (Homestead):
Some places were classified by the National Trust in the early years without a citation being prepared. These are being gradually reviewed and citations are being prepared. Please contact the National Trust for more information regarding the significance of this place.
Class: Local

Heritage Study/Consultant	Golden Plains - Golden Plains Shire Heritage Study Phase 1, Lorraine Huddle P/L, 2003;

Hermes Number	23771
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

National Estate Register:

Barunah Plains on the Hamilton Highway at Wingeel was established in the 1840s. Philip Russell, with John Simson and Thomas Russell, took over the property in 1851 and from 1856 Thomas, with other Russell family members, had the property. Barunah Plains remained in Russell family hands until 1978. The oldest section of the homestead (which contains main rooms) dates from 1866 and was designed by architects, Davidson and Henderson, who designed a number of homesteads and other buildings in this part of Victoria. Additions were made later in the nineteenth century and major additions and alterations date from the 1900s to the 1910s. These early twentieth century works included the western wing with its polygonal window, filling in of the central courtyard to create an enormous lantern lit room with two fireplaces and refitting of parts of the older house, such as leadlights in the front door surround. The dates of the various outbuildings are unknown. In 1904 it was stated that the Barunah Plains Merino flock was 'the most noted in the western district', comprising 50,000 sheep on the 51,000 acres. The ram building is one unusual manifestation of this once very large sheep property, evidently the largest in Victoria when it was subdivided for soldier settlement in 1946.

Barunah Plains homestead is a large, single storey bluestone residence, comprising two main sections forming a U-shape around the rear courtyard, infilled in the 1900s to the 1910s. The eastern section of the building was built in 1866 to Davidson and Henderson's design. This eastern section is asymmetrically composed with a cast iron verandah at the north-east corner. The present front door faces east and is beside a projecting bay window and sheltered by a stone porch; this section may well be an addition. The north side elevation has a projecting bay windowed room with a higher roof crowned by cast iron cresting. Further west is the 1900s to the 1910s wing, comprising principal bedrooms and intact bathrooms. On the western side of the old courtyard is a bluestone section reputed to be the oldest part and a timber section. Immediately south of the rear of the house is the bluestone bakehouse and laundry. Further south again are the bluestone and timber station buildings, stables, coach house and implement shed, arranged to form a large courtyard. The garden encloses the homestead on the south, east, north and part of the west sides. Separating the garden and station outbuildings is a picket fence, which is the last surviving section of this fencing which was more extensive.

The garden has a layout dating from at least the 1890s and has much mature planting. The garden originally extended to the other side of the Warrambine Creek, but became badly overgrown in recent times. Warrambine Creek runs along the north side of the garden, and a sunken croquet lawn is just north-east of the house. The garden has 2ha of informal area and parkland, and 3ha of formal garden which includes a rose garden, orchard, kitchen garden, various shrubberies with small tress, a variety of shrubs and perennials, and mature pines, monkey puzzles trees, and cypresses. The garden has an approach through and attractive old style timber gate, and also across a timber pedestrian bridge, spanning the creek.

The T-shaped bluestone woolshed is on the other side of the creek, on a rise; its south wall is concealed by corrugated iron additions. There are two bluestone houses east of the woolshed, on the other side of the creek. The coursed bluestone ram shed has a slatted floor, with subfloor access doors below.

Integrity

Condition and Integrity:

Barunah Plains homestead, garden, outbuildings, woolshed, adjacent houses and ram shed are in generally good condition and intact. (May 1988)

Physical Description 2

National Trust:
Extra Location Info: Section A (Long Water Hole pre-emptive right) and Section 1 (the woolshed block), Parish of Hesse, County of Grenville
EXTENT OF CLASSIFICATION
Land bounded by the Warrambine Creek and taking in the 640 acres of the Long Water Holes pre-emptive right and the adjacent 80 acres containing the woolshed (Section 1).
DESCRIPTION
Barunah Plains is approached from the Hamilton Highway by a long tree-lined drive. This and other tree plantings around the homestead protect the garden from strong winds which sweep across the undulating plains surrounding the property. The homestead is sited east of Warrambine Creek at a point where it bends through the rocky volcanic ground. The focal point for this garden, with its meandering walks, tennis court, sunken croquet lawns, kitchen garden, shrubberies and orchard is the basalt residence erected in 1866 and apparently extended in 1886. Attached to the homestead is a small conservatory.
A gravel driveway sweeps up to the front of the house and continues on to the stables. A large lawn bordered with eucalypts and pines on its eastern boundary lies to the east of the drive and is the site of a tennis court surrounded by climbing plants and various trees including a palm, elms and the stump of a tamarisk tree. Between the southern end of this lawn and the stables is a second smaller lawn which was planted by the Russell family in the 1950s.
To the northern end of the homestead a group of steps leads down to the croquet lawn. This area is sheltered mainly by cypresses, although other species, namely Phillyrea angustifolia (Jasmine-box), Phillyrea latifolia and Corynocarpus laevigatus (Karaka) are also present. Remnants of a basalt wall said to be part of a shepherd's hut of the 1850s are located near an Araucaria bidwillii (Bunya Bunya Pine) and Cedrus atlantica f. glauca (Blue Atlas Cedar) on the south-west of this lawn which was once used for croquet. A path leads from the croquet lawn west through a gardenesque style area edged with basalt boulders and much overgrown with assorted wattles, roses, philadelphus and pomegranates, to a newly established rockery and on to a privetlined pathway leading to the orchard and vegetable garden.
Between the orchard and the house is a small area of lawn bordered with modern roses on the southern side and shrubs on the western end. This is also the site of a windmill covered with wisteria and a tank stand covered with Rosa fortuneana and Rosa laevigata. Rainfall in this area is very low and water is frequently drawn from the creek for both the house and the garden. A third tank covered with Rosa banksia stands adjacent to the house. Another path leads past the modern rose bed and toward the kitchen garden. This path is lined with privet on one side and trees on the other, including two rare specimens of Teucrium betonica and Danaea racemosa.
Outside this more formal area is approximately two hectares of parkland. The path leading northwards beyond the croquet lawn and over the bridge crossing the creek (in which platypus are sometimes sighted) is one such area. Parkland is also to be found on the spur beyond the gardenesque area and to the south-eastern end of the croquet lawn. The parkland area beyond the croquet lawn was once a zoo with kangaroos, peacocks and the like, apparently created by the Russell family in the 1920s-30s. This area is now mainly covered with eucalypts.
Recent work in the garden by Graham Mills (owner since 1978) has included:
- planting trees such as Golden Ash and Silver Birch along one side of the drive;
- rebuilding the entrance gates;
- restoration and painting of the picket fence surrounding the garden;
- planting flowers and shrubs including some camellias along the front of the homestead;
- clearing up part of the parkland adjacent to the footbridge.

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/