

Victorian Heritage Database Report  
**Edendale Farm & The Fences Act 1968 sculpture, 30-32  
 Gastons Road, Eltham**

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Map of site plan



**Location:**

30-32 Gastons Road ELTHAM, NILLUMBIK SHIRE

**Heritage Status / Level of Significance:**

Included in Heritage Overlay

**Heritage Overlay Number:** HO204

**Listing Authority:** Nillumbik Shire

**Statement of Significance:**

Revised statement of significance, EDENDALE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN -OCTOBER 2007

What is significant?

The site of today's Edendale Farm was once part of a larger 51 acre portion of land purchased from the Crown in 1852 by

one of Eltham's first farmers, pioneer Henry Stooke. Thomas Cool, the manager of Melbourne's reputable Victoria Coffee

Palace, acquired 7 acres of Stooke's property, and built the Edendale Homestead in 1896 as a country retreat rather than

as a productive farm, a rare occurrence in an area otherwise dominated by farmers of modest means. The Homestead itself,

while of a design that was standard for metropolitan houses, was an anomaly given its remoteness from the city, its

considerable size, and the care and detailing evident in its construction.

The Homestead, surrounded by a fenced garden area, once surveyed a larger property comprising paddocks and open

fields. While Cool made additional land purchases, his estate was sold in 1922 to farmer John William Cox, who introduced

animal husbandry and farming practices to the property. The Gastons, the subsequent owners from 1933, maintained the

property virtually unchanged, introducing only some exotic plantings, within and without the garden. The purchase of the

property by the Shire, which led to its use as a Pound and more recently as a community-based environmental education

centre, has introduced a number of new structures of no significance to the site.

How is it significant?

Edendale is of local historic, aesthetic, and social significance, and has heritage value for its rarity and

representativeness within the Nillumbik Shire.

Why is it significant?

Historically, Edendale Farm is significant as one of the few remaining properties of a small number of country retreats

established in the late nineteenth century by 'gentleman farmers'. The Homestead building itself is significant as a

rare, well-preserved and highly intact example of a large, late-nineteenth century timber weatherboard farm house in the

Nillumbik Shire.

Aesthetically, Edendale Farm is significant as a rare example of a fairly intact pastoral landscape within a suburban

context. The character of the study area is defined by its cleared rural landscape within a historic bushland setting

beyond the study area boundary. The clearly defined 'edge' between the study area and surrounding bushland, while

slightly diminished by gradual accretions of introduced native vegetation, forms an important part of this character,

and screens the property from neighbouring development, allowing its rural character to be retained.

The open paddocks to the south and southwest of the property, and the isolation of the Homestead and its fenced garden

within the farm setting is unique in the Shire. The few mature cultural plantings remaining in study area provide

important evidence of earlier plantings and are typically characteristic of a garden setting for a Victorian residence

and rural properties of this period.

The layout of study area has significance under many categories, as it is a key component of the design, function,

and aesthetics of the place. The prominent siting of the Homestead and its garden, and the setback of buildings from

them, has allowed the Homestead to retain its original aspect as an individual, discrete element. Its dominant location on

the crest of the hill, and its distinct architectural character relative to other buildings on the site, continues

to emphasise that the Homestead is the key element of the study area, and upon which the rationale for the entire study

area rests.

The Homestead building has aesthetic significance as a well designed and detailed timber weatherboard residence of the

late Victorian period. Notable external features include a characteristic hipped roof with corbelled brick chimneys;

wide verandah shelter (verandah removed); a domed brick wellcover at rear; prominent bay windows to the front; and a

slightly unusual projecting side entry bay to the east.

Internally, the Homestead features, in virtually all rooms, original ceilings and roses; original fittings and hardware;

original fireplaces; hand-painted and lead light windows; original joinery; and detailed plasterwork decorations and

cornices.

Edendale Farm has associative significance as the former residence of Thomas Cool, the manager of the Victorian Coffee

Palace, one of Melbourne's most prominent social venues in the late nineteenth century. It also has strong associations

with the Gaston family, one of the Eltham's longest resident families, who continue to live in the area.

#### (Former) 2005 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

What is significant?

Fabric (farm) & trees associated with:

- the Victorian-era
- Thomas Cool tenure

Fabric of sculpture & environs, including land within 5m of its perimeter, plus fabric associated with:

- 1990s.

How is it significant?

The Shire of Eltham Heritage Study 1992 Statement Of Significance:

Basis Of Significance:

Rarity

## History

## Architecture

## Illustration Of The Theme

'Edendale is a standard design late 19th century timber residence that is common in many parts of Melbourne, but very rare in the Shire of Eltham, where the local economy and remoteness of the district did not allow the construction of such buildings. Significantly the first owner worked in Melbourne as the Club Manager of the Victoria Coffee Palace, rather than farming the property. His Eltham house reflects the Shire of Nillumbik Planning Scheme Amendment C13 Heritage Assessments better-off living at a rural property on the outskirts of Melbourne, rather than those who earned their living in the local economy. '

Edendale farm house trees are significant to the Shire, historically and aesthetically.

The Trembath sculpture is significant to the Shire, socially and aesthetically:

Why is it significant?

Edendale farm house, trees

Edendale farm house, trees are significant:

- for the rarity of a farm house of this age and size in the Shire, although a standard late 19th century design for many parts of inner Melbourne (Criterion 82);
- for the relatively well preserved exterior and elements of the interior, including leadlight toplights in the windows, plaster cornices, and mantelpieces (Criterion 02);
- for the farm's association with Cool, who was the manager of the Victoria Coffee Palace, an establishment that then rivalled The Grand (now the Windsor) as a major Melbourne coffee palace (Criterion H1),
- for the farm's evocation of the small group of absentee gentleman farmers in the Shire, in contrast to the far more numerous and more modest farm houses of those who earned their living in the local rural economy (Criterion A4);
- for the contributory (pepper and fruit trees) and individual merit (fan palms) of the mature exotic trees surviving around the house, as an expression of the desire to present an ornamental planting style in the house yard in contrast to the more utilitarian pasture landscape (Criterion A4);

Fences Act 1968

The Trembath sculpture is significant:

- for the aesthetic excellence of the Trembath sculpture (Criterion E1),
- its use of found objects and natural tree forms as a means of expressing past farming practice in the bush environment, and its particular relevance to pioneering farming in the State, and Edendale farm (Criterion E1);
- the extensive community involvement in its creation (Criterion G1) as one of the few permanent installations in the State and by this artist (Criterion B2),
- for the recognition of its expression of aesthetic skill by an expert community group, being the Public Art classification committee of the National Trust of Australia (Vic) (Criterion G1)

## Description

### DESCRIPTION

Edendale Farm

The Shire of Eltham Heritage Study 1992:

Style late Victorian.

Design basically standard.

Plan rectangular.

Single storeyed.

Walls timber stud construction.

Roof hipped with shallow eaves, corrugated iron clad.

Features include the encircling verandah, front bay windows, large rooms, use of leadlight top lights in the windows, cornices, mantelpieces and an internal kitchen originally.

Revised description:

(see above)

This is a hipped roof, transitional Italianate style weatherboard farm house with a skillion form reconstructed return verandah, bay windows to the east side; 3rd. front (south) elevation, brick chimneys with corbelled tops (bricks painted), carved eaves bracket pairs, moulded entablature panels with intermediate bulls-eye mouldings, and a fretted gablet set in the main roof over the entry. The projecting gablet has applied timber mouldings to the fascia, a tie-beam element, and further ornament in the triangle formed by the fascia and the beam. The verandah posts, with their timber capitals, and bressumer appear original, with new corrugated iron cladding; the post mouldings suggest that there was once ornament such as cast-iron friezes and brackets.

The front door is 6-panel with side and top lights and the rear doors are paired, 4-panel with upper panels glazed, top lights and with half-height side lights. A secondary double door entry to a large receiving room is on the east side, with panelled side and top lights. The front and side window bays have double-hung sash windows with top lights over. Another door (also with 4 panels, top light and upper panel glazing) faces west.

Inside, there are original plaster cornices, passage arch, and moulded joinery at openings. The window bays have segment arched alcoves internally. Coloured glass is used in top and side lights, typically using Jacobean patterns; the front door has small leaded glass top panels. Sash locks survive, along with the front door case lock and brass door knobs. Plain and tiled fireplaces (one with tiled hearth) remain along with large cast-iron IXL brand (Geelong) stove and timber mantel, cedar kitchen cupboards set beside the chimney breast.

### Planting

To the north of the house is a concrete base slab (function?) and to the west is an elevated tank and windmill that appears, to date from its use as a farm. . .Mature exotic trees include two Monterey cypress ('*Cupressus macrocarpa*') to the north-west of the house yard, some mature fruit trees in the former orchard to the south-west of the house, some willows and a number of pepper trees north of the house, and two Chinese fan palms ('*Trachycarpus fortunei*') to the south of the house in the front garden. The latter two trees are notable and typical of Victorian and Edwardian-era gardens. Squared bluestone blocks define former garden beds at the front of the house, while the house itself is set on a slight mound.

'A square-top picket fence surrounds the house.

'The Fences Act 1968' sculpture

A gateway to the Edendale Farm drive at one end of the Gastons Road car park with:

. ledged and braced timber gates, flanked by post and rail hardwood fences consisting of weathered tree trunks, capped with rusted metal hats (top hats) and helmets (police helmets) as stylised human figures, attached tree branches with steel caps and twisted rods welded to the caps and screwed to the trucks as 'arms' and 'hands';

. a Griffin-like figure at one end, with rusted sheet metal wings strapped to a tree trunk;

. Roman numerals stamped into the trunks numbering each right to left;

. a gabled roof mail box set behind the fence on one side; and

. native grass landscape surrounding the gateway and fences.

Integrity

Edendale

The condition is externally good, apart from blocked roof gutters (grass) and plant growth around mouldings.

The integrity is externally substantially intact with some intrusions: window lights have been sheeted over (security); a concrete verandah floor added to the north and the timber verandah floor removed elsewhere; a skillion has been added at the rear and part of the verandah enclosed (north-west and north east corners), unrelated roof gutters have been fitted. Inside, one fireplace has been replaced and new kitchen joinery added to former pantry.

Sculpture

A painted metal service box is located behind the fence at one end, appearing incongruous so close to the work.

Heritage Study / Consultant	Nillumbik - C13 Heritage Stage 2 Final Report Revised Citation , Graeme Butler and Assoc., 2001; Nillumbik - Shire of Eltham Heritage Study , David Bick, 1992; Nillumbik - Edenvale Conservation Management Plan, Context Pty Ltd, 2007
Construction Date Range	
Architect / Designer	
Municipality	NILLUMBIK SHIRE
Other names	
Hermes number	118815
Property number	

*This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the*

*local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online*