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Heritage Impact Statement

Barunah Plains Homestead, VHR H2313
4484 Hamilton Highway, Hesse

Author Trethowan Heritage

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CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Place Details	1
1.2	Project Details	1
1.3	Reference Documents	3
1.4	Limitations	3
2	Significance, History & Description	4
2.1	Historical Summary	4
2.2	The Cultural Heritage Significance	4
2.3	Policies	10
2.4	Description	11
2.5	Condition	11
2.6	Current Use	11
2.7	Constraints and Opportunities	13
3	Proposal	14
3.1	New Use	14
3.2	Temporary Works and Activities	14
4	Assessment	16
4.1	Impacts, Details and Mitigation	16
4.2	Why the Proposal Should Be Supported	18
5	Summary of Impacts and Conclusion	20
6	Recommended Conditions	21
Appendix A	Victorian Heritage Database Report	A-1

1 Introduction

1.1 Place Details

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) is for Barunah Plains Homestead VHR H2313.

1.1.1 Address & location description:

The subject site is located at 4484 Hamilton Highway, Hesse (Figure 1). The site is located on the northern side of the Hamilton Highway, approximately 20 kilometres west of the town of Inverleigh. The site is skirted by the Warrambine Creek to the west, and other agricultural land to its perimeters. Part of the subject site is covered by VHR H2313 and is known as Barunah Plains Homestead (the heritage place). The heritage place is occupied by various paddocks and agricultural land, a dam, a bluestone homestead and associated outbuildings and gardens.



Figure 1: An aerial image of the subject site, indicated in blue. VHR H2313 extents indicated in orange Source: Vicplan, 2025.

1.2 Project Details

This HIS forms part of a permit application for temporary works and activities at the registered place. Specifically, for use of the site as a 'place of assembly' for the annual Beyond The Valley (BTV) music and arts festival and associated temporary works/activities, on an annual basis for an ongoing period of four years. The festival is held on land within and outside of the registration extents.

In June 2022, infrastructure works, including plumbing trenches and sub-surface water pipes, sub-surface post holes, construction of roadways and new farm gates to enable the festival, were approved under permit exemption P36293. Since this time, the heritage place has played host to the BTV festival, held annually between 28 December and 1 January. Approval for previous iterations of the festival (and associated temporary works/activities) has been permitted on an annual basis under the permit exemption process. This includes permit exemptions P37748 for the 2022/23 event, P38964 for the 2023/24 event, and P40302 for the 2024/25 event. This application has been developed out of a need streamline this process and gain approval to hold the festival for the following 4 years through a single permit.

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As guided by the previous festivals, planning of the 2025/26 festival has commenced and it is expected that the permit is in place, with any recommencement conditions satisfied, to enable the festival to run as required.

1.2.1 Pre-application meeting

Pre-application advice (P40063) was issued by Heritage Victoria Permit Officer Ann Gove via email correspondence on the 14 August 2024. This advice is reproduced as follows:

- *Heritage Victoria has a level of comfort with the proposed works to facilitate future events at the registered place and would be comfortable considering a permit for up to four years.*
- *It is likely that Heritage Victoria could consider the submission of high-level documentation for the purposes of assessing the permit application. As per previous permit exemption approvals Heritage Victoria would seek to condition the requirement for detailed documentation to be submitted prior to the commencement of works for each event season, including a Tree Protection Plan addressing works occurring within Tree Protection Zones, a Pre-Event Condition Report and a Final Event Report.*
- *It is likely that on any approval Heritage Victoria would seek to condition the requirement for condition reporting at conclusion of each event season, addressing impacts, repair actions and recommendations for future protection of landscaping and original building fabric. It is likely that on any approval Heritage Victoria would seek to condition the requirement for a Heritage Protection Plan. Heritage Victoria's policy guidance is attached for your reference.*
- *In accordance with s101(2)(b) of the Heritage Act 2017 any application must be accompanied by reasonable or economic use rationale. Heritage Victoria's policy guidance is attached for your reference.*
- *Any application would need to be advertised.*
- *This is a similar approach/time frames given/required for other substantial events held on VHR sites.*
- *Please note HV generally requests a HPP Heritage Protection Plan, not a Heritage Management Plan now. A tree protection plan is a generally a requirement for any landscaping works/impacts. A Pre-Event Condition Report may not be necessary, however site conditions could alter between events, i.e. flooding, fires, storms etc and I would think is a reasonable inclusion for HV to consider.*
- *The cost of the works should be calculated on setup and removal of infrastructure etc.*

1.2.2 Traditional Owners Information

The heritage place is located on the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung People and the Eastern Maar People. Under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, the Registered Aboriginal Parties for this land are the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

The heritage place is located within an area of cultural heritage sensitivity.

To comply with the requirements of the *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018*, Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMP) 18176 and 18195 were prepared by Heritage Insight Pty. Ltd. in 2022 for the proposed high impact activity (the annual BTV Festival). Both CHMP 18176 and 18195 are approved.

1.2.3 Client

This HIS has been prepared for Untitled Group (UG).

1.3 Reference Documents

This assessment refers to the following supporting documents:

- *Heritage Impact Statement*, prepared by Heritage Insight in 2022 for permit exemption P36293.
- *Historic Heritage Assessment*, prepared by Heritage Insight in 2022.
- *Follow-Up Report*, prepared by Trethowan Architecture in 2023 to comply with the conditions of permit exemption P37748.
- *Follow-Up Report*, prepared by Trethowan Architecture in 2024 to comply with the conditions of permit exemption P38964.
- *Follow-Up Report*, prepared by Trethowan Heritage in 2025 to comply with the conditions of permit exemption P40302.

This assessment should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- *Heritage Management Plan*, prepared by Trethowan Heritage in 2025.
- *Cultural Heritage Management Plan No. 18176*, prepared by Heritage Insight Pty. Ltd. in June 2022.
- *Cultural Heritage Management Plan No. 18195*, prepared by Heritage Insight Pty. Ltd. in April 2022.
- BTV Accessible Areas Site Plan, prepared by Untitled Group in 2024.
- Reasonable and Economic Use Statement, prepared by Untitled Group in 2025.
- Appendix A: Victorian Heritage Database Report – Barunah Plains VHR H2313.

1.4 Limitations

This report does not address any Aboriginal, archaeological, horticultural matters.

An archaeological site located outside of the registration extent of VHR H2313 but associated with the heritage place is listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory as H7621-0034 – *Barunah Plains Dry Stone Walls Enclosure*.

There is currently no Conservation Management Plan (CMP) prepared for the heritage place. As such, this assessment relies on good heritage practice informed by the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 2013* and the VHR listing.

2 Significance, History & Description

2.1 Historical Summary

An historical summary of the heritage place is provided in the Heritage Management Plan, it is reproduced as follows:

This site is located on the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung People and the Eastern Maar People.

Originally known as the Long Water Hole, the land occupied by the subject site was operating as a pastoral run from the late 1830s. James Austin took was known to have taken over the lease of the land from the late 1840s.

The site later passed into the hands of brothers Thomas and Philip Russell, and their cousin John Simson, in 1851. Under the Russell family, the pastoral run was renamed Barunah Plains, and developed into a substantial and prosperous agricultural undertaking. By the 1880s, the Russell family had become large landholders in the Western District of Victoria, with various family members taking over other notable runs. Barunah Plains remained a centre for the Russell family and became renowned as one of the leading merino sheep farms of the State and nation.

A bluestone house was constructed at the site in 1867 to a design by architects Davidson and Henderson. The boom period of the 1880s brought further change, with extensive bluestone additions and alterations. The final stage of the house was designed by Tombs and Durran, architects from Geelong, and completed in 1903. This last stage, also constructed in bluestone, introduced the outstanding Arts and Crafts style interiors to the home. The various outbuildings, many of which are completed in similar stone, were constructed as the property continued to prosper. Extensive gardens were known to have been laid out by at least the 1890s.

In the wake of World War II, the property (which had reached 20,000 hectares by this time) was halved in size in order to be used for the soldier settlement subdivisions. Further losses to the land holdings occurred when successive Russell family members inherited portions, however a branch of the family remained at the house until 1978. A golf course was added to the land in the 1990s, and it was used afterwards for tourist activities.



Figure 2: Undated image of the bluestone homestead building at Barunah Plains Homestead VHR H2313. Source: National Trust of Victoria (Australia).

2.2 The Cultural Heritage Significance

The heritage place is identified as significant at the local and state levels. It is included on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H2313) and the Golden Plains Planning Scheme (HO20). Heritage Victoria is the Responsible Authority.

2.2.1 Victorian Heritage Register (VHR)

The VHR listing covers part of the subject site known as Barunah Plains Homestead VHR H2313 (Figure 3). The registration extents cover a large area of land including the homestead, various outbuildings, suspension bridge, and remnant garden.



Figure 3: VHR registration map for VHR H2313. Source: VHD, 2024.

A statement of significance is included as part of the VHR listing, it is reproduced as follows:

What is Significant?

Barunah Plains including the homestead, stables, dairy and bakehouse, coach house, engine house, farm shed, manager's cottage, cottage, woolshed, shearers' quarters, suspension bridge, gardener's cottage, orchard shed, water tanks, meat houses, rams' shed and remnant garden.

History Summary

Barunah Plains developed into a substantial and prosperous farming complex after acquisition by brothers Thomas and Philip Russell, and their cousin John Simson, in 1851. Originally known as Long Water Hole, the land was a pastoralist run from the late 1830s and leased by James Austin from the late 1840s. During the nineteenth century the pioneering Russell family became extensive landowners in western Victoria and by the 1880s Barunah Plains had developed into a leading merino sheep establishment. A house was constructed on the site in 1867 to designs by local architects Davidson and Henderson, and substantial additions increased the size of the homestead in the boom period of the 1880s. Further additions designed by Geelong architects Tombs and Durran in 1903 contain outstanding Arts and Crafts style interiors. A number of substantial bluestone outbuildings, including a large woolshed, were constructed at the property as it developed into a successful farming complex.

The 20,000 hectare property was reduced to about half its size after soldier settlement subdivision in 1949, however successive generations of the Russell family continued to live at Barunah Plains until 1978. In the 1990s a golf course was added to the property and this operated as a tourist facility for a period of time.

Description Summary

Barunah Plains is a farm complex situated on the Warrambine Creek. It includes a large single storey, bluestone homestead which has been constructed in stages. It consists of a number of protruding bays, turret-like roofs and a return verandah which address lawned areas to the north and east. Exceptional Arts and Crafts detailing can be seen throughout

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the house, in particular in the west wing and central ballroom, where outstanding examples of stained timber, metal and tile work and stained glass are located. Interior detailing from the boom period has also been retained, including embossed wallpaper in the main entrance and a timber lined coved ceiling in the billiard room.

A number of original outbuildings and structures have been retained. The majority are constructed of bluestone, including a large t-shaped woolshed, stables, dairy and bakehouse, coach house, farm shed, rams' shed, manager's house, cottage and water tanks. A corrugated iron clad engine house contains original electrical power plant machinery.

Remnants of the original formal homestead garden and parkland remain. Early structures include a suspension bridge over the Warrambine Creek.

This site is part of the traditional land of the people of the Kulin Nation.

How is it Significant?

Barunah Plains is of historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

Criterion E

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

Criterion H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

Why is it Significant?

Barunah Plains is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

Barunah Plains is historically significant for its association with the early settlement of Victoria, with the development of its important wool industry and for its long association with the Russell family from 1851 to 1978. As one of the most successful merino sheep studs in Victoria, the property is associated with the heyday of the pastoral era in Victoria and the prosperity of the Western District pastoralists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. [Criteria A]

Barunah Plains is architecturally significant for the homestead and its collection of intact outbuildings which help to illustrate the various activities undertaken at the property. Together with the homestead, these buildings display excellent craftsmanship in the execution of stonework. [Criterion D]

Barunah Plains is of aesthetic significance for its outstanding Arts and Crafts interiors, in particular in the ballroom and rooms in the west wing. The interiors of these additions were executed in a highly distinctive Federation Arts and Crafts style and contain unique hand-crafted fittings and elements. [Criterion E]

Barunah Plains is significant for its long association, from 1851 to 1978, with the Russell family who were amongst the most successful settlers of Victoria's Western District and instrumental in the development of the wool industry in Victoria. [Criterion H]

2.2.2 Golden Plains Planning Scheme

The heritage place is protected by the Golden Plains Planning Scheme under Heritage Overlay HO20: *Barunah Plains, 4484 Hamilton Highway, Hesse*. Prohibited uses are permitted under the Clause 43.01: Schedule to the Heritage Overlay.

The following Statement of Significance was prepared to accompany the site's listing on the Golden Plains Heritage Overlay:

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).

2.2.3 Non-statutory listings

The subject site is subject to non-statutory heritage controls. This type of control is typically associated with classification by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), or the Register of the National Estate (now archived).

Non-statutory heritage controls relate to property listings that have no formal or legal weight in the planning scheme. While having no legal recourse, such listings are customarily considered when making planning decisions and are representative of heritage values in the community by local authorities.

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) File Number B1126 covers Barunah Plains Homestead & Garden. In 2011, the Barunah Plains Garden (File Number G13123) was amalgamated with B1126. The statement of significance is reproduced as follows:

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, Mawallok, 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.*

2.2.4 Analysis of the significance

The heritage place is of historical, architectural and aesthetic significance. This significance is embodied in the built form and fabric of the bluestone homestead and outbuildings, the garden, and the setting of the buildings amongst an expansive agricultural landscape. The significance of the place is enhanced by its ongoing historical use for farming and agricultural purposes. The intact complex of buildings illustrates the place's association with the heyday of the pastoral era in Victoria, and the immense prosperity of Western District pastoralists during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Architecturally, significant features include the fine stonework of the homestead and surrounding buildings that demonstrate excellent craftsmanship. Aesthetically, the Arts and Craft interiors of the homestead are also of significance and illustrate the prosperity of the original owners, the Russell family, into the early twentieth century.

Under the VHR listing, the following buildings are indicated to be of *primary significance* to the heritage place, as identified in Figure 4:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • homestead; | • gardener's cottage; |
| • meat houses; | • various cisterns; |
| • engine house including garage; | • gates; |
| • dairy and bakehouse; | • manager's cottage; |
| • coach house; | • bridge; |
| • stables and tank; | • cottage and cistern; |
| • farm shed; | • shearers' quarters; |
| • picket fence; | • woolshed; |
| • orchard shed; | • water tanks; and |
| • suspension bridge; | • rams' shed with cistern. |

The gardens and mature planting are also noted.

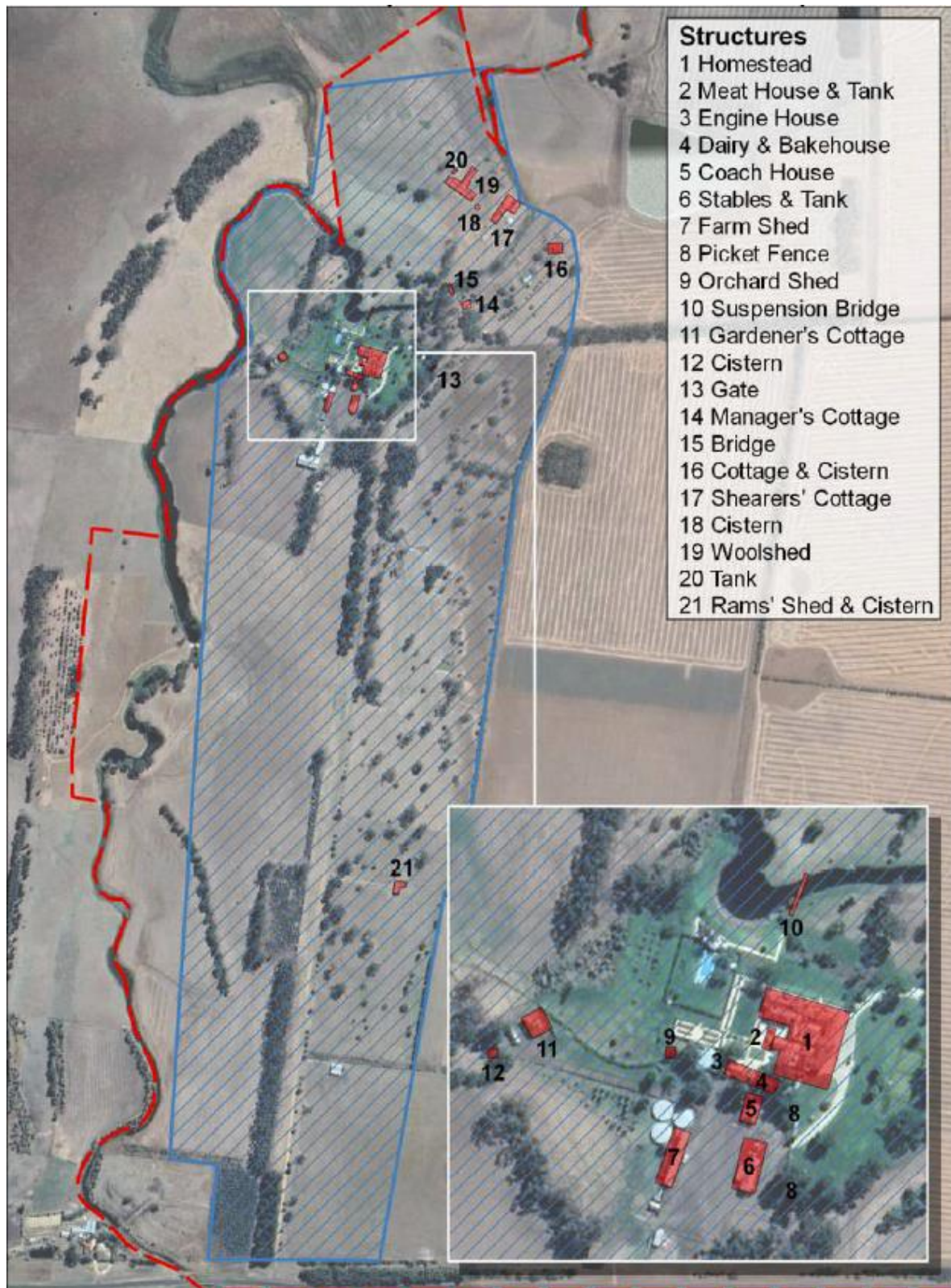


Figure 4: An aerial image of the subject site, denoted in the red border. The blue hatched area indicates the extent of the VHR registration. The individual elements of primary significance are marked out in red. Source: Heritage Insight, 2022.

2.3 Policies

The heritage place is subject to both general¹ and place-specific permit exemptions as a result of the VHR listing. Where there is conflict between general and place specific exemptions, specific exemptions prevail. No CMP has been prepared for the heritage place.

2.3.1 General Permit Exemptions

General permit exemptions (subject to category and/or exemption conditions) relevant to this proposal include:

- 7.0 Safety and security
 - Installation of temporary security fencing, scaffolding or hoardings to secure public safety of prevent unauthorised access.
- 9.0 Vegetation and landscape management
 - Gardening activities, including remediation of grassed areas including aerating, scarification, top dressing, over seeding and fertilising.
- 10.0 Temporary events and structures
 - The installation of temporary structures, such as marquees, tents, market stalls, display cases and furniture, gazebos, and shipping containers.
 - The installation of temporary freestanding services associated with events, including generators and associated service cabling.
 - The installation of temporary freestanding audio-visual and broadcasting equipment, including temporary staging, flooring, rigging, screens, speakers, lighting and associated infrastructure.
 - The erection of temporary freestanding scaffolding towers, projectors and infrastructure associated with lightshows and projections onto, or into airspace within the extent of registration of registered places and objects.
 - The installation of temporary freestanding artworks.
 - The installation of freestanding temporary recreation and entertainment facilities, equipment and structures, such as jumping castles, amusement rides, and sporting equipment.
 - The installation of temporary decorations, such as decorative lights, bunting, tinsel, cut floral arrangements, freestanding garden beds and the like.
 - The installation of equipment and infrastructure associated with firework, laser and drone displays.
 - The parking, installation and operation of temporary micro-tenancies, such as food trucks and coffee carts.
 - The installation of temporary furniture, including tables, desks, chairs, umbrellas and the like.
 - Installation of temporary portable toilets.
 - Installation of temporary operational, promotional, directional and wayfinding signage.
 - Installation of temporary surveillance systems.
 - The erection of freestanding fencing structures associated with temporary events.
- 11.0 Signage
 - Installation of temporary directional, construction or public information signage, limited to:

¹ *General Permit Exemptions*, published by Heritage Victoria, August 2024.

- freestanding signage located on hardstand surfaces
- removable decals to exterior hardstand surfaces, excluding glass
- signage fixed to temporary structures erected in accordance with general exemptions.

2.3.2 Place Specific Permit Exemptions

A place specific permit exemption policy is included as part of the VHR listing. The policy includes several general conditions. Place specific permit exemptions relevant to this proposal and project area include:

- Landscape

The process of gardening, including mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead shrubs and replanting the same species or cultivar, disease and weed control, and maintenance to care for existing plants.

2.4 Description

A description of the heritage place is provided in the Heritage Management Plan, it is reproduced as follows:

The site is located on the Warrambine Creek, which would have been an attractive asset in the earliest days of settlement. The homestead is located on a small bend of the creek, and accessed by a long driveway from the Hamilton Highway.

As described, the bluestone house was constructed in stages as the Russell family grew in prosperity. The northern elevation, with its broad veranda, has a central projecting bay with turreted roof. To the west is the Arts and Crafts addition, with polygonal bay. The eastern elevation features a further projecting bay, with rendered walls, and a small entry porch with columns. Internally, an original courtyard has been converted into a large room with lantern window. The house features outstanding timberwork, metalwork, tiles and stained glass. Other earlier interior features have been retained.

The house is surrounded to the north by established gardens, with some early picket fencing and a gate still remaining in place. The garden and surrounding land features exotic trees, planted by the Russell family, along with mature native specimens. A variety of outbuildings are located directly to the south of the home, mostly completed in bluestone, around service areas. Two bluestone cottages are located to the north east of the homestead, while a timber cottage is located to the west. A large stone woolshed, along with shearers quarters, are located away from the house to the northeast. A stone rams' shed is located further south of the home. Many original or early cisterns and tanks are located across the property.

An early suspension bridge across the creek directly to the north of the house, with another bridge to the northeast to provide access to the woolshed and shearers quarters. Two other early creek crossings are located to the southwest of the homestead.

2.5 Condition

The registered place is generally in good condition however the condition of particular outbuildings varies. For example: The homestead building and gardens are in good condition; and the bluestone dog kennels remain in a longstanding ruinous state. A site inspection was undertaken in 2025 following the 2024/25 event. This site visit confirmed the site and primary heritage assets were in order and outlined the general condition of the heritage place.

2.6 Current Use

The registered place maintains its original agricultural use as a farming property. However, the homestead building and surrounding outbuildings, woolshed and gardens are used for commercial

tourism, events and accommodation purposes. The woolshed has been adapted for use as accommodation.



Figure 5: Entry gates to the Homestead. Source: Trethowan Heritage, 2025.



Figure 6: Northwest elevation of the Homestead. Source: Trethowan Heritage, 2025.



Figure 7: Engine house southwest of the Homestead. Source: Trethowan Heritage, 2025.



Figure 8: North elevation of the Woolshed. Source: Trethowan Heritage, 2025.



Figure 9: Stables and tank visible to the left. Source: Trethowan Heritage 2025.



Figure 10: East Elevation of Rams' Shed with Cistern visible in foreground. Source: Trethowan Heritage, 2025.



Figure 11: Fenceline with trees along the main road, looking into east paddocks. Source: Trethowan Heritage, 2025.



Figure 12: Trees lining the main road near the Hamilton Highway entrance. Source: Trethowan Heritage, 2025.

2.7 Constraints and Opportunities

Some opportunities of this proposal include:

- The setting of the homestead within an extensive agricultural landscape with numerous original and significant outbuildings contributes to the heritage place's significance and integrity and should be maintained as such. It is acknowledged however that the extent of significant outbuildings, gardens and landscape requires a high degree of ongoing maintenance and conservation work to be undertaken. As such, there exists an opportunity to create new economically sustainable revenue stream/s (in addition to the place's ongoing agricultural use) to support the long-term maintenance and conservation of the heritage place and to ensure its ongoing use as a farming property.

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3 Proposal

The following section outlines the proposed works and activities required to enable the use of the heritage place as a 'place of assembly' for the annual BTV Music and Arts Festival.

3.1 New Use

It is proposed to use the heritage place as a 'place of assembly' on an annual basis between 28 December and 1 January for the BTV Music and Arts Festival. The festival area will be located on land within and outside of the VHR registration extents. The festival area will provide live entertainment, food and beverage, accommodation and parking facilities for attendees, staff and performers, as well as hygiene facilities and associated back of house services and storage. To enable this use, a series of temporary works and activities are also proposed.

3.2 Temporary Works and Activities

Temporary works are required to facilitate the festival and will be undertaken prior to, during and after the festival. A system of zoning will be undertaken to limit and/or prevent access to certain areas of the site, the site plan included as part of this application indicates the location of these zones. The proposed temporary works and activities broadly comprise of the following:

3.2.1 On-site camping and parking

On-site camping is located within and outside of the VHR registration, and comprises lightweight tents/marquees brought by attendees as well as some pre-setup tents provided by the festival (such as in the 'Lux' area). Many camping spots will have an allowance for a parked vehicle. These will not be populated until the commencement of the festival. For the majority of the camping spots for attendees, access will be provided from a roadway to the east of the property. A limited amount of camping spots for some patrons and staff will be accessed via the main driveway.

All tents and marquees brought by attendees will be removed upon the conclusion of the festival, as a condition of attendance, and the remaining tents (those provided by the festival) will be removed in the coming days.

Temporary fencing will be installed around access exclusion zones and tree protection zones to protect heritage assets/trees and ensure all camping and parking is kept at an appropriate distance.

3.2.2 Stage infrastructure and above ground temporary works

Proposed stage infrastructure comprises of temporary sub-surface supports and above-ground temporary structures and stages. Temporary structural supports known as 'mega anchors' will be installed to support the temporary stage infrastructure. Mega anchors, consisting of three rods approximately 40-60mm diameter and 2m long, will be driven into the ground to provide structural support. All mega anchors will be removed at the festival's conclusion and any ground penetrations backfilled with sand. Likewise, all above-ground stage infrastructure will be packed-down and removed at the conclusion of the event.

Temporary pylons/poles measuring approximately 7.5-8.5m high and 250-450mm diameter will be installed to support above ground lighting and electrical supply. The pylons will be installed by excavating 250-450mm diameter auger holes to a depth of 2.5m. All pylons will be removed at the festival's conclusion and any ground penetrations backfilled with sand to the current ground surface level so they can be excavated the following year.

3.2.3 Food stalls, hygiene facilities, waste storage and other storage/facilities

Food, hygiene, storage and other facilities will be set-up in the lead-up to the festival. These will include food trucks, toilets and other temporary structures. In many of these cases, these elements will be immediately brought in and removed by vehicles and in some instances timber platforms will be placed under temporary structures, such as toilets. All temporary structures will be removed following the event.

Permanent plumbing and below ground infrastructure was approved under P36293. This infrastructure will continue to service the temporary facilities and will be left in place and undisturbed following the removal of all temporary works.

3.2.4 Management Measures

A series of management measures will be undertaken to assist in the protection of heritage assets on the site before, during and after the festival. Please refer to the Heritage Management Plan included as part of this application for further detail on the proposed measures, including how and where they will be implemented.

The proposed management measures broadly comprise of the following:

- Cultural Heritage indication sessions
- Access Exclusion Zones
- Tree Protection Zones
- Limited Access Zones
- Surveillance and Monitoring
- Site Clean-Up
- Landscape Management Follow Up

4 Assessment

4.1 Impacts, Details and Mitigation

4.1.1 Use

The proposed use of the heritage place as a 'place of assembly' for the BTV festival is unlikely to have any impact on the significance of the heritage place, as demonstrated by previous festivals that have resulted in no harm to the place. The reversible nature of the associated temporary works, in combination with the proposed management measures, will ensure any impacts are mitigated, and all heritage assets/significant trees are protected and monitored throughout the duration of the festival. Furthermore, the limited period of the annual event ensures the place can continue to operate under its primary agricultural function for the remainder of the year, thus mitigating any impacts to the ongoing historical use of the place. Per Article 1.11 of the Burra Charter, the proposed use is considered a *compatible use* that respects and involves minimal impact on the cultural significance of the heritage place.

4.1.2 Temporary Works and Activities

The site plan at Figure 13 outlines the extent of the VHR registration (indicated in green) in comparison to the broader festival site. As demonstrated on this plan, much of the camping space, on-site parking and some of the stage areas are located outside the extent of the VHR registration. As such, the set-up, use and pack-down of these areas will have no impact on the significance of the place, and can be facilitated through access points that do not require entry through the VHR registered land.

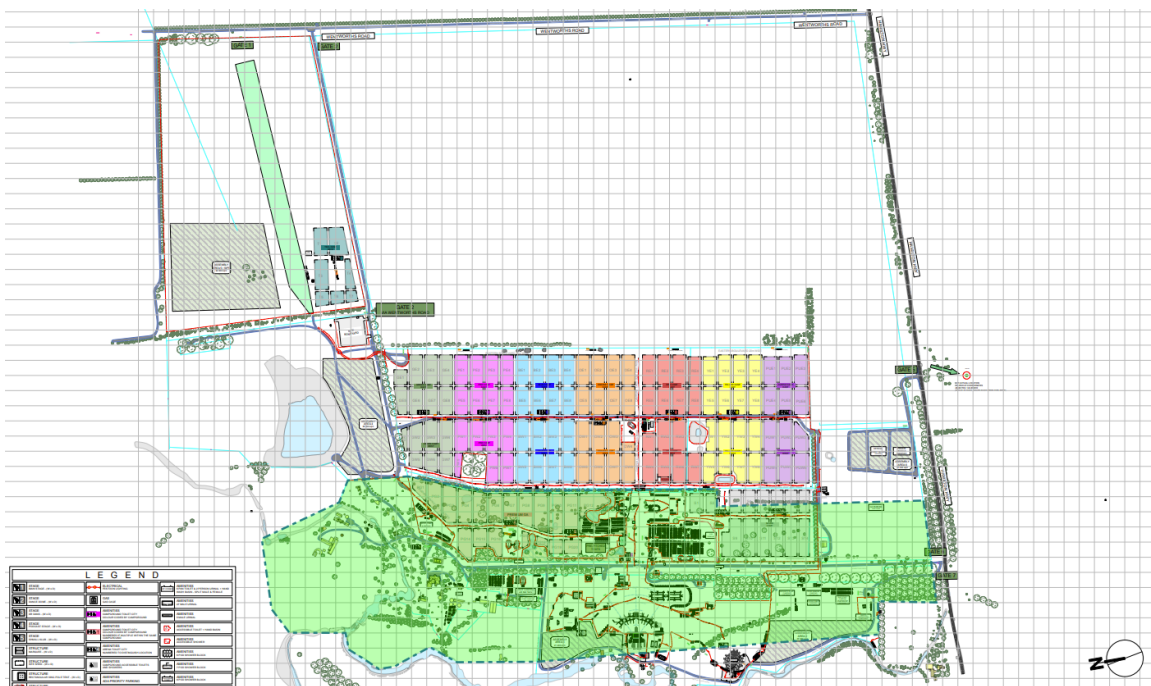


Figure 13: Site plan of the BTV festival area indicating camping areas to the east and stage/facilities to the west. VHR registration shown indicatively by green overlay, noting that much of the camping area is located outside of the registered land. Source: Untitled Group, 2025

On-site camping and parking

Most camping areas are located outside of the VHR registration and thus will have no impact on the heritage place. Where camping areas are located within the registration extent, these will be located only a short distance to the north of the front gates and thus away from the majority of the heritage assets of primary significance. However, where heritage assets are identified within this area (such as the Rams' Shed and vegetation), any potential impacts will be mitigated by protective zones installed prior to the commencement of the event, keeping all camping and parking at an appropriate distance from the assets. These will be removed at the conclusion of the festival, avoiding any long-term impacts on the landscape.

With regard to the camping facilities, the installation of temporary structures, including tents, marquees and gazebos, is exempt under the general permit exemptions (subject to the category conditions). Any impacts will be limited to pegs used to fasten tents and marquees to the ground. These pegs are generally small in nature, and any associated ground penetration will be negligible. Furthermore, all camping facilities will be removed following the event, as is enforced as a condition of attendance, thus resulting in no long-term impact to the heritage place. This is evidenced by the follow-up reports undertaken after the conclusion of the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 events which indicated all temporary structures had been removed.

Parking on land within the VHR registration requires no further work, as vehicles will be parked on the existing grass. Any minor impacts to the grassed areas associated with the parking of vehicles will be mitigated by the landscape management follow-up following the event and grass remediation, if required.

Stage infrastructure and temporary above-ground works

For above-ground temporary work occurring within the VHR registration, all aspects have been designed to be lightweight in nature where feasible, and with the explicit intention that they will be removed following the conclusion of the event. Any ground penetrations resulting from temporary structures are to be backfilled. The stage areas located within the VHR registration are to be erected in advance of the festival, using the existing sub-surface infrastructure (approved under P36293). Any construction work will be limited to the area of the stage, and locations that avoid interference with vegetation have been selected to mitigate against impacts to the landscape. Above ground elements, such as the stage platforms, will utilise structures that do not require further ground penetrations and will be packed down immediately following the festival, thus mitigating any long-term impacts.

Where sub-surface temporary structural supports (pylons and 'mega anchors' for the stage) are concerned, their complete removal at the conclusion of the event and the backfilling of any ground penetrations, will mitigate against any impacts to the heritage place.

In summary, the temporary nature of the proposed stage infrastructure/above-ground works and their complete removal following the event, will mitigate against any adverse impacts to the heritage place. Where impacts to the landscape/grassed areas are concerned, these will be minor, and the grass will regrow in the following weeks/months, as evidenced by previous events. The remediation of the landscape/grass will be monitored by the landscape management follow-up undertaken within two months of the conclusion of the event. Furthermore, the installation of temporary free-standing audio-visual and broadcasting equipment, including temporary staging, speakers, lighting and associated infrastructure (not including sub-surface works, such as the pylons and mega-anchors) are exempt under the general permit exemptions policy, subject to the category conditions.

Other facilities

Food stalls, hygiene facilities, waste storage and other storage areas are also temporary in nature. Some of these facilities are accommodated in a movable format, such as food vending trucks or trailers while others will be provided for in marquees or similar. Under the general permit exemptions policy, the parking, installation and operation of temporary food trucks and other 'micro-tenancies' and the installation of temporary toilets are exempt, subject to the category conditions.

All facilities will be set up gradually on the site in the lead-up to the event and will be removed following, thus mitigating any long-term impacts to the heritage place. Further, timber platforms will be placed under some of the temporary structures (such as the stage and toilet facilities) where necessary to mitigate against damage to the grass and soil. While grassed areas may be disturbed as a result of temporary arrangements, the grass will regrow in the course of the following weeks/months after returning to agricultural use. This is evidenced by previous events and will be monitored by the landscape management follow up undertaken following the event to ensure the landscape/grass is appropriately remediated.

Post event pack-up

A general clean-up of the site will occur after the festival pack-up. This will ensure all temporary structures and any remnant rubbish has been removed from the landscape. Some follow up

management of the landscape will occur if necessary (for example, to ensure that grass is regrowing satisfactorily with the VHR registration). Remediation of grassed areas is exempt under the general permit exemptions policy provided it complies with category and exemption conditions.

Overall, the post event pack up will ensure all trace of the festival is removed, mitigating against any potential impacts and allowing the place to return to its agricultural use. The success of the post event pack-up and site clean-up is evidenced by the follow-up reporting undertaken following the three previous events, in which no remaining temporary works or rubbish related to the festival was identified.

4.1.3 Management Measures

As outlined in the Heritage Management Plan, management measures will be actioned at appropriate times to ensure any identified impact of these works/activities is prevented or mitigated. This includes the installation of zones that limit access to heritage fabric or elements, and provides physical protection during installation of any temporary works and for the duration of the festival. In most cases, these zones are to be erected prior to any infrastructure work going ahead, and in all cases these zones are to be erected before attendees arrive on the site. The installation of temporary security fencing or hoardings to secure public safety or prevent unauthorised access is exempt under the general permit exemptions policy, subject to exemption and category conditions.

Other measures, such as surveillance, will ensure the effectiveness of the physical protection is monitored throughout the duration of the festival. Additionally, cultural heritage induction sessions are intended to educate festival staff on the importance of the heritage place and their responsibilities and obligations to protect the place. The scope and diversity of the proposed management measures are intended to provide a comprehensive protection strategy to effectively mitigate against any potential impact to the heritage place.

The effectiveness of these measures is evidenced in the follow-up reports, undertaken after the conclusion of the three previous events, and indicated the success of the management measures in protecting heritage fabric/elements and mitigating against any impacts to the significance of the heritage place.

4.2 Why the Proposal Should Be Supported

The proposal should be supported as the use and associated works are temporary in nature and are unlikely to result in any foreseeable adverse impact on the significance of the place. The limited period of the event and removal of all temporary works following the event, will mitigate against any long-term impacts and ensure the place continues to operate under its historical agricultural use for the remainder of the year. The undertaking of a series of management measures before, during and following the event, will ensure all heritage elements/assets are adequately protected and the significant landscape setting is appropriately protected and remediated following the event. The effectiveness of these measures is evidenced by the three previous events held at the site which resulted in no permanent harm to the heritage place. Additionally, the majority of the proposed temporary works, including the installation of temporary structures, free-standing temporary staging infrastructure, temporary food trucks, toilets and other 'micro tenancies' are exempt under the general permit exemptions policy, subject to general and category conditions.

4.2.1 Matters which the Executive Director may consider under s101(2)

To assist with the consideration of the relevant matters of s101(2) of the Heritage Act 2017, the response to each matter follows the bold italics as written below:

S102(2)(a) the extent to which the application, if approved, would affect the cultural heritage significance of the registered place or registered object:

The proposed temporary use and associated works, in the event they were approved, present no permanent impact on the cultural heritage significance of the registered place. As discussed under Section 4.1.2, the proposed works are reversible in nature and all materials, equipment and installations are fully removable. Any potential impact on the heritage place is mitigated through the measures detailed in the accompanying Heritage Management Plan, as effectively proven to

present no permanent harm or adverse impact on the heritage place through the follow up Condition Reports conducted after each event.

This is further supported through the statutory approval of previous iterations of the event, proposed use and associated temporary works to be a permit exempt, where it was determined by the Executive Director that the works or activities “do not harm the cultural heritage significance of the place.” No change to the scope of works or use of the heritage place, as previously supported, is proposed in this permit application, except for seeking approval for ongoing use of the heritage place for the purposes of holding the event annually over the New Year period.

S102(2)(b) the extent to which the application, if refused, would affect the reasonable or economic use of the registered place or registered object:

The proposed use of the heritage place for the annual BTV music festival aligns with recent and current uses of Barunah Plains for entertainment and commercial tourism purposes. The historical homestead and agricultural land has a history of diversifying its use, as is reasonable to expect of a farming property, including the development of a golf course at the registered place in the 1990s and use of the land for tourist purposes. In more recent years, the homestead and outbuildings within the registered place have operated as function spaces and group accommodation, alongside operations of the farmland for agricultural and grazing purposes. The proposed use of the and aligns with other uses of the site for commercial tourism and entertainment purposes. It is a *compatible use* with the primary function and cultural significance of the heritage place as defined by the Burra Charter, in that it presents limited and temporary impact on the registered place and is removed after the duration of three weeks to allow the agricultural land to operate for the remainder of the year.

The proposal makes use of the large extents of registered land within the heritage place. If the permit were to be refused, the paddocks where the festival is held and camping areas are located would otherwise be underutilised during the summer months. Additionally, the proposal gives use to existing infrastructure installed under permit exemption P36293, which facilitates services required for the event. This existing infrastructure, as well as the success of previous events demonstrating the effectively temporary and reversible nature of the works, facilitates an economically sustainable use of the place that continue in the medium to longer term without requiring continual change or presenting new impact to the registered place.

Notwithstanding the broader community impact and significant regional economic impact of the Festival, the proposal generates hundreds of thousands of dollars in income. A portion of the income generated from the proposal is intended to assist with ongoing conservation and maintenance of the heritage place. These funds are best seen as additional or ‘surplus’ funds that might not always materialise during periods of drought or years of low crop yield, and the commercial capacity of the place to generate additional income would be limited in the event the permit application was refused.

5 Summary of Impacts and Conclusion

In summary, the proposal comprises of the temporary use of the heritage place as a 'place of assembly' for the BTV festival and associated temporary works and activities to be held annually for the next four years. The limited period of the proposed event and temporary nature of the associated works and activities, which include a comprehensive series of maintenance measures, is unlikely to result in any adverse impact to the place. This is further evidenced by the follow-up reporting and inspection of the site following previous iterations of the festival, which resulted in no harm to the heritage place.

Further, and as demonstrated by recent and current use of the heritage place for small functions and group accommodation, it is reasonable for a farming property to diversify its use. The proposed temporary use for the BTV festival is a compatible use of the registered place and large extents of farmland that remain underutilised over the summer months, with the reversible nature allowing agricultural operations to resume for the remainder of the year.

Overall, the proposal will have no adverse impact on the significance of the heritage place and continues with the approach of previous iterations of the festival which have resulted in no harm to the heritage place. Further, the proposal is necessitated by reasonable and economic considerations which will contribute to the ongoing historic agricultural use of the heritage place and its long-term conservation and maintenance needs.

6 Recommended Conditions

In the event of a permit being issued, the following conditions have been developed for consideration by Heritage Victoria for inclusion:

1. The permission granted for this permit shall expire within **four (4) years** of the original date of issue of this permit unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria.
2. Prior to the commencement of works for the first event approved by this permit, a **Site Plan** outlining the location of stages, camping areas, parking and all other facilities must be submitted to the Executive Director Heritage Victoria for approval. Once approved, the document(s) will be endorsed and will then form part of the permit and cover subsequent events.
3. Prior to the commencement of works for the first event approved by this permit, a **Heritage Protection Plan** must be submitted to the Executive Director Heritage Victoria for approval. Once approved, the Heritage Protection Plan will be endorsed and will then form part of the permit and cover subsequent events. The Heritage Protection Plan must include a sequencing program for the approved works and activities, details of any temporary infrastructure and services required and protection method (including details of any management measures) for the heritage place prior to, during and after each event. The Heritage Protection Plan must also include a tree management and protection plan prepared in accordance with *AS4970 Protection of trees on development sites*.
4. Should further minor changes in accordance with the intent and approach of the endorsed documentation become necessary, correspondence and supporting documentation must be prepared and lodged in accordance with the permit condition for endorsement by the Executive Director Heritage Victoria. If the Executive Director considers that the changes are not minor, an amendment to the permit or a new application will be required.
5. A **Final Event Report** (including photographs) on the landscape and all structures/buildings and inventory sites within the works festival area must be undertaken within two months of the conclusion of every annual event and submitted to Heritage Victoria within 3 months. In the event of any damage, a schedule of works is to be submitted to Heritage Victoria.

The opportunity to review the set of draft conditions, proposed as part of a permit, would be appreciated.



Appendix A Victorian Heritage Database Report

BARUNAH PLAINS



STA_4821.jpg



STB_4826.jpg



STB_4840.jpg



STD_4847.jpg



barunah plains air photo.JPG



image001.jpg



image002.jpg



Cottage at Barunah Plains



image004.jpg



image006.jpg



image007.jpg



image008.jpg



image009.jpg



image010.jpg



image011.jpg



image012.jpg



image013.jpg



image014.jpg



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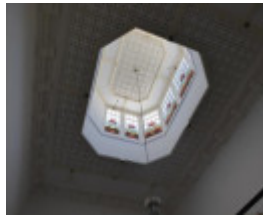


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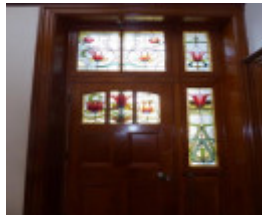


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image034.jpg



Extent Diagram for Barunah Plains in VHR



Permit Policy Diagram

Location

4484 HAMILTON HIGHWAY HESSE, GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Municipality

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2313

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO20

VHR Registration

September 1, 2016

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

Barunah Plains including the homestead, stables, dairy and bakehouse, coach house, engine house, farm shed, manager's cottage, cottage, woolshed, shearers' quarters, suspension bridge, gardener's cottage, orchard shed, water tanks, meat houses, rams' shed and remnant garden.

History Summary

Barunah Plains developed into a substantial and prosperous farming complex after acquisition by brothers Thomas and Philip Russell, and their cousin John Simson, in 1851. Originally known as Long Water Hole, the land was a pastoralist run from the late 1830s and leased by James Austin from the late 1840s. During the nineteenth century the pioneering Russell family became extensive landowners in western Victoria and by the 1880s Barunah Plains had developed into a leading merino sheep establishment. A house was constructed on the site in 1867 to designs by local architects Davidson and Henderson, and substantial additions increased the size of the homestead in the boom period of the 1880s. Further additions designed by Geelong architects Tombs and Durran in 1903 contain outstanding Arts and Crafts style interiors. A number of substantial bluestone outbuildings, including a large woolshed, were constructed at the property as it developed into a successful farming complex.

The 20,000 hectare property was reduced to about half its size after soldier settlement subdivision in 1949, however successive generations of the Russell family continued to live at Barunah Plains until 1978. In the 1990s a golf course was added to the property and this operated as a tourist facility for a period of time.

Description Summary

Barunah Plains is a farm complex situated on the Warrambine Creek. It includes a large single storey, bluestone homestead which has been constructed in stages. It consists of a number of protruding bays, turret-like roofs and a return verandah which address lawned areas to the north and east. Exceptional Arts and Crafts detailing can be seen throughout the house, in particular in the west wing and central ballroom, where outstanding examples of stained timber, metal and tile work and stained glass are located. Interior detailing from the boom period has also been retained, including embossed wallpaper in the main entrance and a timber lined coved ceiling in the billiard room.

A number of original outbuildings and structures have been retained. The majority are constructed of bluestone, including a large t-shaped woolshed, stables, dairy and bakehouse, coach house, farm shed, rams' shed, manager's house, cottage and water tanks. A corrugated iron clad engine house contains original electrical power plant machinery.

Remnants of the original formal homestead garden and parkland remain. Early structures include a suspension bridge over the Warrambine Creek.

This site is part of the traditional land of the people of the Kulin Nation.

How is it significant?

Barunah Plains is of historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

Criterion E

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

Criterion H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

Why is it significant?

Barunah Plains is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

Barunah Plains is historically significant for its association with the early settlement of Victoria, with the development of its important wool industry and for its long association with the Russell family from 1851 to 1978. As one of the most successful merino sheep studs in Victoria, the property is associated with the heyday of the pastoral era in Victoria and the prosperity of the Western District pastoralists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. [Criteria A]

Barunah Plains is architecturally significant for the homestead and its collection of intact outbuildings which help to illustrate the various activities undertaken at the property. Together with the homestead, these buildings display excellent craftsmanship in the execution of stonework. [Criterion D]

Barunah Plains is of aesthetic significance for its outstanding Arts and Crafts interiors, in particular in the ballroom and rooms in the west wing. The interiors of these additions were executed in a highly distinctive Federation Arts and Crafts style and contain unique hand-crafted fittings and elements. [Criterion E]

Barunah Plains is significant for its long association, from 1851 to 1978, with the Russell family who were amongst the most successful settlers of Victoria's Western District and instrumental in the development of the wool industry in Victoria. [Criterion H]

Permit Exemptions

General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Exemptions:

It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.42(4) of the *Heritage Act*). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.66 of the *Heritage Act*).

General Condition 1

All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.

General Condition 2

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

General Condition 3

All works should be informed by Conservation Management Plans prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

General Condition 4

Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

General Condition 5

Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the relevant responsible authority, where applicable.

Specific Permit Exemptions

Exterior of Buildings of Primary Significance

- . Repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- . Removal of non-original items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting wiring, antennae, aerials etc and making good in a manner appropriate to the heritage fabric of the place.
- . Installation or removal of non-original external fixtures and fittings, such as hot water services and taps, of contributory elements in a manner not detrimental to the cultural heritage significance of the place.
- . Installation or repair of damp-proofing by either injection method or grouted pocket method in a manner which does not affect the cultural heritage significance of the place.

Interior of Buildings of Primary Significance

- . Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that preparation or painting does not remove evidence of any original paint or other decorative scheme.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of non-original carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of non-original curtain tracks, rods and blinds.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of hooks, nails and other devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and other wall mounted art.
- . Demolition or removal of non-original stud/partition walls, suspended ceilings or non-original wall linings (including plasterboard, laminate and Masonite), non-original glazed screens, non-original flush panel or part-glazed laminated doors, aluminium-framed windows, bathroom partitions and tiling, sanitary fixtures and fittings, kitchen wall tiling and equipment, lights, built-in cupboards, cubicle partitions, computer and office fitout and the like.
- . Refurbishment of existing bathrooms, toilets and kitchens including removal, installation or replacement of non-original sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- . Removal of tiling or concrete slabs in wet areas provided there is no damage to or alteration of original structure or fabric.

- . Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating provided that the installation does not damage existing skirtings and architraves and that the central plant is concealed, and is done in a manner not detrimental to the cultural heritage significance of the place.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed and any original light switches, pull cords, push buttons or power outlets are retained in-situ. Note: if wiring original to the place was carried in timber conduits then the conduits should remain in situ.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.
- . Installation of plant within the roof space.
- . Installation, removal or replacement of non-original light fittings and lamp shades.

Non-contributory Elements

Demolition and all works to buildings of no cultural heritage significance that do not increase the footprint of the building. This includes all farm structures and buildings not listed above in the proposed permit policy as being of primary cultural heritage significance.

Landscape

- . The process of gardening, including mowing, hedge clipping, bedding displays, removal of dead shrubs and replanting the same species or cultivar, disease and weed control, and maintenance to care for existing plants.
- . Repairs and maintenance to hard landscape elements, such as driveways, stone walls, steps, paths, tennis court, swimming pool, gutters, drainage and irrigation systems, in a manner which preserves the cultural heritage significance of the place.
- . The removal or pruning of dead or dangerous trees to maintain safety and to protect buildings and structures. If the tree is identified as being of primary or contributory cultural heritage significance, the Executive Director must be notified of these works within 21 days of them being undertaken.
- . Replanting of removed or dead trees and vegetation with the same plant species to conserve the significant landscape character and values.
- . Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of Amenity Trees AS 4373-2007.
- . Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Protection of Trees on Development Sites AS 4970-2009.
- . Subsurface works involving the installation, removal or replacement of watering and drainage systems or services outside the canopy edge of significant trees in accordance with AS4970 and on the condition that works do not impact on archaeological features or deposits.
- . Removal of plants listed as noxious weeds in the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.
- . Vegetation protection and management of possums and vermin.

Agriculture

- . Cultivation, cropping, harvesting, grazing stock, and other activities associated with agricultural or pastoral uses, excluding buildings or works associated with those activities other than maintenance or repair or demolition of any non-original fence, gate, dam or structure necessary for the continuation of agricultural or pastoral activities.

Theme

2. Peopling Victoria's places and landscapes 4. Transforming and managing the land

Construction dates 1866, 1886, 1903,

Architect/Designer	Davidson & Henderson, Tombs & Durran,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	1857
Property Number	

History

Contextual History

Western District Settlement

European exploration and settlement of Victoria commenced in the 1830s and large numbers of squatters settled in the Western District of Victoria after the Henty brothers landed in Portland Bay in November 1834. Many settlers came from Scotland via Van Diemen's Land in search of land on which to establish pastoral runs and by 1837 fleets of ships conveyed flocks of sheep from Van Diemen's Land to Geelong, destined for the open plains to the west. By the mid-1840s there were some 282 runs in the rich Western District of Port Phillip and a population of nearly 3,500 compared to almost 11,000 in Melbourne and 1,300 in Geelong.

Amongst the early pastoral settlers in Victoria was the Russell family. George Russell arrived in Van Diemen's Land from Scotland in 1831, and in 1836 travelled to Port Phillip. He became manager of the pastoral Clyde Company, a joint stock concern formed in Scotland in 1836, and, together with his brother Philip, George represented this large Scottish company in Port Phillip.

George Russell moved his headquarters from the Moorabool River near Geelong to the Leigh River at Shelford in the Western District of Port Phillip in 1839. It was here that he secured his Golf Hill (originally Golfhill) homestead by the purchase of 4,231 acres (1,712 hectares) from the Crown in 1842. He farmed cattle and large numbers of sheep on this land and had a substantial brick cottage built in 1846-47. After the Clyde Company was dissolved in 1857-58, George Russell bought the central Golf Hill freehold of 8,500 acres (3,440 hectares) which he eventually enlarged to 28,000 acres (11,331 hectares). He lived there until his death in 1888.

A number of members of the Russell family left Scotland and settled in a similar part of the Western District of Victoria. This included George's first cousin Thomas Russell who, in partnership with his brother Philip and cousin John Simson, acquired the run known as Long Water Hole (later Barunah Plains) from James Austin in 1851. James Austin, and his brother Thomas, had arrived in the district from Van Diemen's Land in 1837 and they both acquired a number of pastoral holdings in Victoria. Austin had already established a sheep stud at Long Water Hole when the run was acquired by the Russell partnership.

Located on the Warrambine Creek, this run was situated to the west of George's property Golf Hill. John Simson and Philip Russell soon withdrew from the ownership and were replaced by three British-based Russell brothers. Together they became constituents of the company known as Thomas Russell and Co. Thomas Russell continued to expand his land holdings at this location, and early in 1857 acquired the adjoining Wurrock station, which became his headquarters.

Thomas Russell was elected councillor and first President of the Shire of Leigh in 1862 and continued in this role for a number of years. In 1868-73 Thomas was member for Grenville in the Legislative Assembly. The Russell family continued their involvement in local government for a number of years. George Russell was President of the Leigh Shire from 1869-71 and James Russell from 1890-92 and 1899-1903.

Other Russell family members settled in the Western District, including Alexander Russell at Mawallok, Beaufort (VHR H0563), Philip (and later James) at Carngham, and George at Langi Willi, Skipton.

The Architects of Barunah Plains

1. Davidson and Henderson - Architects of the first stage of the existing Barunah Plains homestead in 1867.
[Based on various reports by Allan Willingham]

Alexander Davidson and George Henderson were both trained in the office of Edinburgh architect John Henderson (George's father) over the years 1858-62. Alexander Davidson arrived in Victoria from Scotland in 1864 and immediately went to live in Rokewood, north-west of Geelong, near the Barunah Plains station. He was familiar with the Presbyterian minister at Rokewood, John Cooper, and was introduced to many Scottish Western District settlers. As a result he established a successful architectural practice by 1866 and developed contacts and associations amongst the squattocracy in the immediate district. By mid-1867 Davidson had secured the patronage of Thomas Russell with a tender advertised for construction of a stone cottage at Wurrock and cutting drains through the swamp at Barunah Plains that year.

Former architectural associate, George Henderson, arrived from Scotland and joined Davidson in practice at Rokewood in May 1867. This partnership became a highly influential and significant Western District architectural practice for the next ten years. Henderson spent his first weeks in Victoria surveying a swamp at Barunah Plains for drainage. The partnership received its first important commission in July that year - a new homestead at Barunah Plains for Russell and James Kininmouth - and this was closely followed by a commission for additions to Yarima, Cressy for John Elder and additions to Wurrock for Thomas Russell. The design of many homesteads in the Western District of Victoria followed, including a major commission for Thomas Austin in 1869 at Barwon Park, Inverleigh (VHR H0365).

Davidson and Henderson formed an official partnership on 1 January 1869 and the practice moved to Geelong. A large volume of work was completed before the partnership was dissolved in 1877. Davidson continued to practise in Geelong and Henderson returned to Scotland.

Other work by these architects includes: Geelong College (1871, VHR H0883), Titanga, Lismore (1872, VHR H0299), Larra Homestead stables (1873, VHR H0298) and Narrapumelap Homestead, Wickcliffe (1873-78, VHR H0492)

2. The architects of the second stage of the existing Barunah Plains homestead c1886 have not been established.

3. *Tombs and Durran - Architects of the third stage of the existing Barunah Plains homestead in 1903.*

James Durran was born in Geelong in 1861 and his future partner, William Tombs, was born in New Zealand in 1866. Tombs began work in Geelong in 1889 and in 1895 joined the partnership of Watts and Durran. This architectural firm became Watts, Tombs and Durran and later Tombs and Durran.

Architects Tombs and Durran gained a number of commissions throughout the late 1890s and early 1900s, particularly domestic work. These early commissions were located in Geelong, however an increase in commissions in the Western District of Victoria led to the establishment of a branch office in Colac. This practice continued until the death of James Durran in a car accident in 1912.

These architects executed a variety of work including offices, hospitals, banks, hotels and a large number of private residences.

Place History

Barunah Plains Homestead is located approximately 48 kilometres west of Geelong in the Western District of Victoria. This volcanic stony country was occupied by squatters from the late 1830s and was held by the Russell family after acquisition in 1851 until 1978.

Barunah Plains commenced as a pastoral run in the late 1830s. In the late 1840s James Austin applied for the lease of the Long Water Hole run, later to become Barunah Plains. Consisting of approximately 50,000 acres (20,000 hectares) of land between Inverleigh and Cressy, it was a run he had already occupied for some time. Austin had established a sheep run on this property when he disposed of his land, stock and station to Philip Russell, John Simson and Thomas Russell.

In 1854 Thomas Russell's 640 acre (260 hectares) pre-emptive section was clearly recorded on a Department of Lands and Survey Plan. The main allotment was situated on the east side of the Warrambine Creek, with an adjoining 80 acre (32 hectare) allotment to the west of the creek. A home station, woolshed (on adjoining land) and several huts clustered along the Warrambine Creek are shown on this plan and the station reportedly held some 26,000 sheep at this time.

The company, Thomas Russell & Co (Thomas Russell together with brothers William, James and George in Scotland) was formed when Philip Russell and Simson withdrew from the partnership, and the newly formed company had obtained the first freehold rights to the Long Water Hole run by 1856. Thomas Russell continued to expand his land holdings by purchasing substantial tracts of surrounding land after subdivision occurred in the area in the 1850s and he settled on a property to the north-west of the present Barunah Plains. Acquired in 1857, this property became known as Wurrook.

Long Water Hole had been renamed Barunah Plains by the late 1860s. In July 1867 Thomas Russell and James Kininmonth, the resident property manager from the early 1850s, commissioned architects Davidson and Henderson to design a homestead for Barunah Plains, and the next month Thomas Russell engaged these architects for additions to his residence Wurrook. This architectural partnership was not actually formed until early 1869 however Alexander Davidson had already established an architectural business by this time and Henderson arrived as his assistant in 1867. Designs for the Barunah Plains homestead were completed and tenders were called and advertised in the *Geelong Advertiser* on 4 October 1867. McLauchlin and Dobbie of Geelong were awarded the contract and the mason's work was undertaken by Foyle and Baker. The total cost of works was £1596/13/- and the final account for the work was rendered in August 1868.

This original single storey bluestone house at Barunah Plains formed the basis of the homestead that developed over the next 40 years. It was designed with a simple polygonal bay facing north towards the Warrambine Creek, in what has been described by Allan Willingham as amongst the first hesitant excursions into the comparatively unfamiliar language of the Italianate style. This first portion of homestead had a timber framed verandah along the north and east facades.

Thomas's brother George Russell became the sole owner of the Barunah Plains property in 1877. Living in Fife, Scotland, George never visited Australia and sent his son James to manage the property. By 1888 Barunah Plains was a freehold property of 50,000 acres (20,234 hectares). James purchased Barunah Plains twenty years later in 1897 and managed it until his death in 1911. Barunah Plains continued to be managed by the Russell family, firstly by James' eldest son George Kincaig Russell until his death in 1915, then by Trustees before James Kincaig Russell took over the property in 1922, residing at nearby Wingeel. He continued to manage the property until his death in 1966 and his nephew George then managed the property until the family finally sold it in 1978. At this time it had been in the possession of the Russell family since 1851.

Additions were reportedly made to the homestead in 1886. No record of this work has been found however it is physically and stylistically evident that work was undertaken at the homestead in the 1880s boom period. At this time a large bluestone wing was added to the south of the 1867 homestead and this remains largely extant. It is a single storey wing with prominent rendered polygonal bay and adjacent entrance through a pedimented Doric portico. At the time this became the main entrance to the house, with a wide hall and principal rooms either side, all with elaborate interiors. The billiard room to the south may also have been added at this time. A square bay window was added to the room at the south end of the original section and the adjacent original entrance retained.

After the financial crash of the 1890s, the second generation of pastoralists sought to modernise their homesteads and a number turned to the younger generation of Arts and Crafts architects. This included the owners of Barunah Plains who employed local architects, Tombs and Durran, to enlarge and modernise the homestead. In May 1903 Tombs and Durran called for tenders in the *Geelong Advertiser*, 30 May 1903 for bluestone additions to Barunah Plains for James Russell. A year later, in December 1904, Tombs and Durran called tenders for bluestone additions to the woolshed at Barunah Plains (*Geelong Advertiser*, 10 December 1904, p 8) and in April 1908 they called tenders to erect a brick homestead and stables at Barunah Plains (*Geelong Advertiser*, 25 April 1908, p 5). This homestead, named Wingeel, was built for G K Russell on land to the west of Barunah Plains.

The 1903 bluestone addition at Barunah Plains is an extension to the west of the original homestead. It is a single storey section, set slightly forward from the existing facade, with a small connecting conservatory section. The new building contains both a square bay and a polygonal bay with octagonal turret roof. Presumably at this time the original courtyard was enclosed to create a large ballroom with a raised highlight roof. The interiors of all these additions were executed in a highly distinctive Federation Arts and Crafts style and contain unique hand-crafted fittings. High quality examples of stained glass, timberwork and metal work, are seen throughout these additions and also throughout the homestead.

It was reported in *The Pastoral Homes of Australia* in 1910 that an electric lighting plant had been installed in an engine house at the property with the capacity to store electricity in the batteries for a week. This provided power to drive twenty machines during the shearing period. It was also reported at this time that numerous tanks and windmills were working on the estate to water the property.

Like much of the surrounding countryside Barunah Plains was established as a merino sheep stud and developed into a substantial and prosperous establishment by the Russell family. From 1880 Barunah Plains was well represented at wool shows and the estate won numerous prizes. By 1910 Barunah Plains was described as one of the finest wool growing estates in the Western District of Victoria in the publication *The Pastoral Homes of Australia*. Comprising 51,000 acres (20,640 hectares) of volcanic stony rises and hard plains, the land was described as devoid of timber, but healthy for stock with a good climate for wool growing purposes.

The property was consistently described as one of the leading merino fine wool sheep breeding establishments in the country and throughout the first half of the twentieth century many detailed articles about Barunah Plains appeared in newspapers, highlighting its importance as a merino sheep stud. It was described as holding one of the oldest merino flocks in Victoria in *The Australasian*, September 1918. In 1937 it was described as the home of one of the most famous and perhaps best known and largest merino flocks in Victoria and in 1938 as one of the best and most valuable pure merino breeding studs in Australia.

As the homestead and the farm developed from the nineteenth century, numerous bluestone outbuildings were constructed at the property. These include a large T-shaped woolshed, a manager's residence, stables, coach house, bakehouse and rams' shed. The following description of the buildings and gardens was given in *The Australasian* 10 September 1927:

The homestead . is of solid bluestone and of pleasing design, showing workmanship that was only obtained in the early days of settlement . The garden and grounds are generously laid out and most picturesque, while all the outbuildings are substantially put up, mostly of bluestone. The woolshed is of stone, and is provided with 20 machine stand . there are over 70 miles of rabbit-proof stonewall.

In 1929 a booklet was produced about Barunah Plains, which was described as the property of the Executors of the late James Russell. The estate was described at the time as one of the most valuable assets possessed by the State of Victoria. It comprised 46,000 acres (18,600 hectares) of freehold at the time. Like many other properties in western Victoria, a large portion of Barunah Plains was acquired by the Soldier Settlement Commission in 1949. At this time some 21,000 acres (8,500 hectares) of the property was acquired and some 23,000 sheep were sold. As a result the Barunah Plains holding was reduced to almost half of its original size.

The Russell family sold the Barunah Plains property in 1978. It was subsequently opened as tourist accommodation to supplement the farm activities and a golf course was added to the property in the 1990s. The property was sold in 2001 and again in 2016 and no longer operates as a tourist facility.

KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT

J Smith. *Cyclopedia of Victoria*. Vol II. Melbourne 1904

A Sutherland. *Victoria and its Metropolis: Past and Present*, vol 2. 1888

The Pastoral Homes of Australia 1910-14

Barunah Plains, Hesse Victoria; the property of the Trustees of the late James Russell, 1929

M Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday. A social history of the Western District of Victoria 1834-1890*. 1961

Billis & Kenyon. *Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip*. Melbourne 1974

P Watts. *Historic Gardens of Victoria*. Melbourne 1983

National Trust of Australia (Victoria) file

Australian Dictionary of Biography: entries for George Russell, Thomas Russell, James Austin

Barunah Plains Reducing Sale brochure, 1949

Newspapers:

The Australasian, 23 August 1884, p 10; 18 September 1897, p 40; 4 February 1911, p 814 September 1918, p 6; 8 September 1923, p 4; 10 September 1927, p 6; 14 November 1931, pp 27 & 32; 20 July 1935, p 58; 24 July 1937, p 50; 23 July 1938, p 26; 8 March 1941, p 30;

The Pastoral Review, 16 August 1915, p 742

Examiner (Launceston), 18 June 1949, p 11

Geelong Advertiser, 26 September 1978, p 7

Maps:

Parish of Hesse, County of Grenville, 1854

Country Lots, Parish of Hesse, County of Grenville, Dept of Lands and Survey 1859

Hesse, County of Grenville, Dept of Lands and Survey, 1880

Plaque Citation

Owned by the pioneering Russell family from 1851 to 1978, this pastoral property developed into a highly successful Victorian sheep station. It contains a fine collection of farm buildings including a large T-shaped bluestone woolshed.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion

Barunah Plains is of historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion D

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

Criterion E

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

Criterion H

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

Why is it significant?

Barunah Plains is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

Barunah Plains is historically significant for its association with the early settlement of Victoria, with the development of its important wool industry and for its long association with the Russell family from 1851 to 1978. As one of the most successful merino sheep studs in Victoria, the property is associated with the heyday of the pastoral era in Victoria and the prosperity of the Western District pastoralists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. [Criteria A]

Barunah Plains is architecturally significant for the homestead and its collection of intact outbuildings which help to illustrate the various activities undertaken at the property. Together with the homestead, these buildings display excellent craftsmanship in the execution of stonework. [

Criterion D]

Barunah Plains is of aesthetic significance for its outstanding Arts and Crafts interiors, in particular in the ballroom and rooms in the west wing. The interiors of these additions were executed in a highly distinctive Federation Arts and Crafts style and contain unique hand-crafted fittings and elements. [

Criterion E]

Barunah Plains is significant for its long association, from 1851 to 1978, with the Russell family who were amongst the most successful settlers of Victoria's Western District and instrumental in the development of the wool industry in Victoria. [

Criterion H]

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the following place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H2313

Category: Heritage Place

Place: Barunah Plains

Location: 4484 Hamilton Highway, Hesse

Golden Plains Shire

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2313 encompassing part of Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 549946, all of Crown Allotment 17F and parts of Crown Allotments 2002 and 2008 Parish of Hesse, and all of a former unnamed road reserve.

Dated 1 September 2016

TIM SMITH

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 35 1 September 2016 p2146]

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/>