

**BACCHUS MARSH HERITAGE STUDY.****Ref: 354**

Richard Peterson Architect &amp; Conservation Consultant. Daniel Catrice Historian 1994.

<b>NAME:</b> ---	
<b>PREVIOUS NAME:</b> Springfield, Former Farmers Arms Hotel, Tipperary Flats.	
<b>ADDRESS:</b> Lot 2, Western Highway (approach).	
<b>TITLE DETAILS:</b>	
<b>USE:</b> Derelict.	
<b>PREVIOUS USE:</b> Homestead, hotel	
<b>SIGNIFICANT DATE:</b> 1847-67 <b>CONSTRUCTION DATE:</b> 1847-50 <b>SOURCE:</b> 2	
<b>CRITERIA:</b> H1,2,3,6. Ar3; So2/ H1/ H4/ H4; Sc2.	
<b>HISTORIC THEME:</b> Townships/ Agriculture/ Transport/ Conserving.	
<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>STYLE:</b> Early <b>STORIES:</b> 1 <b>DETACHED.</b>
<b>MATERIALS:</b>	<b>WALLS</b> Brick <b>ROOF</b> Iron <b>STRUCTURE</b> Lb
<b>CONDITION:</b> Poor	<b>INTACTNESS:</b> Fair
<b>THREATS:</b> Neglect. Redevelopment.	
<b>SIGNIFICANT INTACT ELEMENTS:</b>	
FORM.	
ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL. ROUTE. CONTEXT: 352, 353, 380	
<b>SIGNIFICANCE:</b>	
<b>TYPE:</b> HISTORICAL. ARCHITECTURAL. SCIENTIFIC. SOCIAL.	
<b>LEVEL:</b> STATE	
<b>DESIGNATION EXISTING:</b> HBCR. PLANNING SCHEME. NTR.	
<b>RECOMMENDED CONTROL/NOMINATION:</b> HBCR. RNE. PLANNING SCHEME. AREA 5.	
<b>MAP NO:</b> R3.05	<b>SURVEY:</b> RP <b>DATE:</b> 2.4.94 <b>NEGS:</b> 27.26-27A & 28.7



VIEW FROM SOUTH (HIGHWAY)

**HISTORY:** John Leahy, a native of County Tipperary, Ireland, selected 160 acres (64.8ha) at the eastern end of Bacchus Marsh in 1846, and with his brothers-in-law, John and Michael Egan, built this brick homestead, Springfield, on a rise overlooking the Portland Road.<sup>1</sup> The trio purchased the land in February 1847; the erection of a homestead probably commencing after the grant of security of tenure.<sup>2</sup>

Leahy was a prominent and respected figure in Hopetoun, which was then known as 'Tipperary Flats' for the many residents of Irish birth. The first Catholic Mass in the district took place in a barn on Leahy's property.<sup>3</sup> He donated the land for the Catholic Cemetery, and half of the cost of construction for the first Catholic Church. From 1851, the church was also used as a schoolhouse, the first teacher, Michael Callanan, living at Springfield until he resigned and joined the Police Force to serve on the goldfields.<sup>4</sup>

By 1854, Springfield was known as the Farmer's Arms Hotel. Now a publican, Leahy provided refreshment for the many thirsty travellers *en route* to the gold fields.<sup>5</sup> By 1865, Leahy had ceased the inn-keeper's trade, and in 1867, he sold the house and land to William and Henry Grant.<sup>6</sup> After 1880, the property was part of the Broadlands Estate, owned by Henry 'Money' Miller.<sup>7</sup>

John Leahy died at Bullengarook, near Bacchus Marsh, on August 2, 1870.<sup>8</sup> His former homestead was classified by the National Trust in 1972, and registered by the Historic Buildings Council in 1991.

**VISUAL DESCRIPTION:** An elevated brick hip-roofed early homestead complex. There appears to be two hip-roofed symmetrical double-fronted houses adjacent and facing the highway. The western house has an external chimney on the left hand side. The right hand house has a rear chimney. There appears to be a barn at right, rear with a double gabled roof facing. The front is obscured by dense foliage. The HBC annotated floor plan<sup>9</sup> indicates the configuration of rooms. It shows a gable-roofed stables at the rear at left, facing. Closer inspection is necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> Osborne, *The Bacchus Story* pp.35,38.

<sup>2</sup> Historic Building File No. 605084 K, Historic Buildings Council, Department of Planning and Development.

<sup>3</sup> Love, *St Bernard's Church, Bacchus Marsh* p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Stewart, *The Early History of Bacchus Marsh Schools* p.21.

<sup>5</sup> Historic Building File. *loc. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Bacchus Marsh Express, 13 August 1870.

<sup>9</sup> Historic Building File, *loc. cit.* Note: the address is incorrectly shown here as Millers Road. Miller Road is an early road recently reinstated as Millers Road, but this property does not bound onto it, only to the Western Highway.

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS:** There are seven pre-gold rush buildings in Bacchus Marsh, all of them significant.

The Manor House (1846-7, ref: 218), and Hobler's Cottage (1846-8 ref: 249) also have claim to being Bacchus Marsh's oldest building. (Neither are on the Ballarat Road.) This is the earliest building on the Ballarat road and the earliest hotel.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Springfield is an early pre-Gold Rush brick homestead, built by local figure John Leahy in 1847-50. From 1854 until 1865 it became the Farmers Arms Hotel. Leahy was a pioneering benefactor of the Catholic Church in Bacchus Marsh. There are contributory outbuildings including barn stables and planting. It is the earliest building surviving on the important Ballarat Road route to the gold fields and the earliest hotel building.

The complex is of State historical significance as a pioneering pre-Gold Rush building. It is a representative embodiment of the way of life and social values of this early colonial period. It also demonstrates an association with locally important and influential figure, John Leahy. It has State architectural significance as a rare, relatively intact surviving example of a pre-gold rush homestead.

Its historical significance also derives from its embodiment of an agricultural way of life in this early period and its demonstration of the effect of its location on the transport route to the goldfields in changing its use from agricultures to hospitality.

Finally, it has historical significance in demonstrating since 1972, the effect of a social movement toward conservation of our built heritage and social significance as being the centre of conservation action and for being known and valued by the community as part of its sense of identity.

It has scientific significance for its archaeological research potential.

**INTACTNESS:** Fair. Brickwork is painted. There is a skillion addition at the right hand side. Roof cladding has been removed. There are no verandahs, presumably there never were, but a porch has been removed, from the entry to the left-hand house.

**CONDITIONS & THREATS:** Poor. The buildings are neglected and derelict, exposed to rain and weather. Repairs and maintenance are urgently needed to ensure watertightness and security.

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354B

TRACED FROM VICROADS  
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

LEAHY  
354

UNION HILL SITE  
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MORTON  
CEMETERY  
353

STYMMINGTON'S  
BREWERY  
SITE  
352

MILLER  
ROAD

WESTERN  
HIGHWAY

WESTERN  
FREIGHT

