

STANE BRAE

Warrandyte State Park

Place No. 259

ADDRESS

5 Stane Brae Court
Wonga Park

Last Update

DESCRIPTION

The former Stane Brae house site is marked by a group of large oaks, once part of the homestead garden, and now within the Warrandyte State Park. Other garden remnants include a cedar, hawthorn hedging, japonica, bulbs. The position of the house and some of the garden bed layout is still apparent.

Nearby is the site of another house, recently demolished. The brick dairy (?) building and garden plantings mark the site. John Upton advises that this is the house relocated here after the 1962 bushfires.

There are extensive remains of the military activities on the slopes to the south-west (?) of the current house. The visible evidence includes concrete bases for structures (most using local stone as a base), extensive areas with small level areas (presumably tent sites), and a variety of metal artefacts. In one area, many anchovy tins were found and dated to the 1950s by the Stilwells. On the eastern side of the entry road, sloping towards a small creek, are other concrete structures, one of which remains substantially intact. It appears to be a small ammunition store with a protective wall (perhaps for grenade practice).

The original track into the property was from close to the corner of Hartley and Jumping Creek Roads; a current entry may be using part of that track.

Condition Not known

Integrity Not Known

Threats Not known

Key elements

Designer

HISTORY

Stane Brae, a hilly riverside property in Crown Allotment 4C, was leased in 1872 by William North, a Richmond printer. By that time, North had erected a four-roomed slab house, yards, 98 chains of three rail and log fencing and nine acres of cleared and cultivated land on his 76 acre property, surveyed in 1867.[1]

The property has a long history as a grazing property. During the early decades of the present century and later it was owned and occupied by the Ramsay family of graziers. The Ramsays have also been described as “Kiwi” boot polish manufacturers.[2] Just prior to this it was owned by Reginald A. Stock and Harry Ramsay, graziers. When the partnership dissolved, Ramsay took over Stane Brae. Stock was a brother of the manager and actuary of the National Mutual Life Association which, in the late 1880s, owned vast areas of Wonga Park river frontage lands.[3]

In 1908, Harry Ramsay, grazier, was rated for Stane Brae, house and 729 acres in Crown Allotments 4A, 4B, 4C and part of 5, valued at 105 pounds.[4] This low valuation for such a large area probably indicated the rugged, hilly nature of the land. According to one account, Ramsay extended the Stane Brae homestead in order to establish a guest house, and ran a regular horse-bus service between Wonga Park and Croydon.[5] A search of resort records might confirm this. Ramsay still owned the Stane Brae property at the beginning of the First World War.[6]

In June 1918, Harry Ramsay enlisted and leased his Stane Brae property. He applied for an annual grazing lease of 4E, 4D and part of the adjoining Camping Reserve (120 acres) so that his wife, Jean Staniforth Ramsay, could run a few cattle there during his absence. This was granted. On his return, Ramsay applied for the selection of 4D, and 4E, still held under licence by his wife, pointing out that he was now “a returned soldier” and entitled to some repatriation privileges. However, later, in 1930, Allotments 4D, 4E and 4F (101 acres) were reserved for recreational purposes and went into public ownership.[7]

During the 1920s Stane Brae continued in Ramsay family ownership, its valuation increasing. By 1924-25, when owned by Dr John Ramsay and occupied by Henry Doughty Ramsay, grazier, and still including 729 acres in 4A, 4B and 4C and part of 5, its value had more than doubled to 250 pounds. In that year, its ownership passed to Lane Bros Motors in Collingwood.[8]

Concrete ammunition stores said to remain on the Stane Brae property [9] may relate to its use by the Army during and after the Second World War. In the early 1940s Stane Brae and its neighbour, Yarra Brae, and Jumping Creek Reserve nearby, were taken over for war service training. According to one account, the camp was on Stane Brae and the combat training areas on Yarra Brae. There were trench systems, gun emplacements and a “substantial rifle range.” [10] John Upton recalls the RAAF training camp as the I.P.D. Bivouac Camp, where many thousand RAAF personnel trained.

An examination of Reserve Files, Lands Department documents, confirms that there was an RAAF rifle range on the Stane Brae property, which was reopened in the 1950s for the Ringwood Rifle Club. A February 1958 request also asked for permissive occupancy of a portion of the adjoining Recreation Reserve along the river in the interests of public safety. A 1954 map prepared by Southern Command, Australian Rifle Clubs, Department of the Army, indicated the location of the rifle range site. It extended across 4A and 4B and into the Recreation Reserve. This map indicated Stane Brae homestead in 4C with Stane Brae Road (a private road) from the homestead across 4A and 4B to connect with Jumping Creek Road at a point half a mile from Wonga Park Store.[11] A road through 4D, 4E and 4F was under discussion as early as October 1910 when Ramsay asked that this road might be left as he owned the adjoining 4C and this was the “existing way through this Crown land. At present there (was) a bush track.”[12]

It was reported in the local press of December 1958 that the 10th Field Squadron had assisted the Ringwood Rifle Club to complete the new rifle range at Wonga Park, presumably on the earlier site. Posts had been erected to enclose the area and rifle butts constructed. On 9 December 1958, it was reported that the bulldozing reconstruction of the “Old Rifle Range” had begun on “private land east of the reserve.” This land was fenced off from the reserve.[13]

The early ripple iron homestead at Stane Brae was burned down in the 1962 bushfires. In its place, another house was moved onto the property from Balwyn by Mr. V. Philpotts. The property continued as a cattle grazing property with pig farming.[14]

An August 1986 report on Access Tracks at Warrandyte State Park contained references to the river properties at Stane Brae and Yarra Brae. It was recommended that an all weather track was necessary across Stane Brae for park maintenance and fire control. There was a necessity, too, for an all weather track from the “Stane Brae boundary across the very steep hills to join up with other internal tracks”.[15]

Creation Date	1872	Change Dates	
Associations		Local Themes	
	Harry Ramsay		5.01 - Squatters, selectors & small farmer

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE Stane Brae has regional significance as an important large riverside property associated with the district’s early pastoral history. During the early decades of the present century and later it was owned by the Ramsay family of graziers. It has historical significance for the evidence of the Stane Brae homestead and for remains of a concrete ammunition store and a rifle range which relate to the property’s use by the RAAF and the Army during and after the Second World War. (Criterion A4, B2, H1)

LEVEL

RECOMMENDATIONS

Heritage Register Listings

Register	Reference	Zoning	Status
None Specified			

Extent

Heritage Schedule

External Paint Controls:	On VHR:	VHR Ref No:
Internal Alteration Controls:	Prohibited Uses:	

Tree Controls:

Aboriginal Heritage Place:

Outbuildings or Fences:

Incorporated Plan:

Incorporated Plan Details

Description:

Conservation Management

Extra Research

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- BIBLIOGRAPHY**
- [1] Land File No.01254/121.
 - [2] Slade MSS.
 - [3] Border Country, pp.33, 69.
 - [4] Shire of Lillydale RB 1908-9 No.1989.
 - [5] Border Country, p.69.
 - [6] Shire of Lillydale RB 1915-16 No.3142. NAV 105 pounds.
 - [7] Land File No.01254/121.
 - [8] Shire of Lillydale RB 1924-25 No.4566.
 - [9] Discover Wonga Park, Place No.18.
 - [10] Border Country, pp.66,68.
 - [11] Ringwood. Drawing SS-226A, 22 Oct.1954 in RS 3961, Jumping Creek Reserve, later Warrandyte State Park.
 - [12] Land File No.01254/12. Grazing Block No.3613.
 - [13] RS 3961.
 - [14] Discover Wonga Park, Place No.18.
 - [15] RS 11395.