

READ FARM COMPLEX (FORMER)

Place No. 249

ADDRESS 404 Yarra Road (former 9057), and 6 Toppings Road
Wonga Park

Last Update 5/09/2005

DESCRIPTION The Read Farm complex comprises a house, sheds and orchard remnants located at the corner of Yarra Road and Toppings Road. The house, which faces Yarra Road, is a late Edwardian weatherboard bungalow of four main rooms, a gabled-hip corrugated-iron roof and a rear skillion. The verandah detailing is very distinctive, with large curved Baroque brackets on square posts, and a zig-zag valence at each end.

A cypress windbreak is located close to the south side of the house, and a woven wire fence and gate encloses the property along Yarra Road.

At the rear of the house is a corrugated iron-clad shed, which is now situated on the adjacent property at 6 Toppings Road. It has a main gabled roof with a skillion extension at one side. Internally, it is constructed of rough-hewn and sawn timber posts and beams. This may have once been the fruit handling shed.

To the south of this shed is a smaller skillion-roofed shed with metal framed cattle pens. Adjoining this is a small cattle yard and loading race. Both of these elements appear to be of a later date than the shed and house. Further down the hill is a more recent (postwar) house and a remnant lemon orchard.

A cool store further to the east at 16 Toppings Road thought to have been associated with the orchard has been converted to a house.

Condition Good **Integrity** Minor modifications

Threats None apparent **Key elements** Buildings
Fence/gate
Tree(s)

Designer

HISTORY The first two-roomed section of this Edwardian orchard house was reputedly built by Heber Read in 1902 as the Read family home.[1] Read was shown as the owner of Lot 62 (of 24 acres) on the corner of Toppings Road and Yarra Road in the 1897 National Mutual subdivision plan.

Heber Read earned the money to build the house by going to Western Australia to cut sleepers, a lucrative occupation compared to what was available in Victoria at the time.[2]

Shire of Lillydale rate records confirm that in 1906 Heber Newton Read, farmer, owned 24 acres in Lot 62, Section 11, valued at six pounds.[3] It is said that Read completed his purchase of Lot 62 in 1907.[4] Rate records confirm that in that year a house was recorded on Lot 62 with a valuation of 13 pounds. By 1908, Read was rated as an orchardist.[5] That year he was awarded first prize at the Wonga Park Show for his cucumbers.[6]

The Reads became well-known district residents. Three Read children, Les, Nell and Winnie, were included in the 1912 photograph of the opening of the new Wonga Park State School.[7] By 1918, Read's house and 24 acres had increased to 24 pounds in value, and Read owned the adjacent Lot 63 in Toppings Road valued at twelve pounds.[8]

The value of the property increased by 1920 when it was rated as a house on 51 acres (Lots 62 and 63) valued at 65 pounds, and by 1924 the valuation had increased to 75 pounds.[9] In that year, reputedly a two-roomed house from the adjoining property had been 'bought by the Reads, carted up the hill and attached to the back of the existing house and joined with a breezeway.' It is said that the house has not been altered since that time and retains its original weatherboards. Herbert Read (son of Heber) took over the house when he was 40. [10]

Photographs of the Read house were included in the 1984 James history. There is a c1930 view of Read's orchard with the farm house and shed next to the house. Another photograph shows the front verandah of the house.[11] The shed at the side of the orchard house is said to have been

purchased at a 1930s auction from the authority building at Eildon Weir. It was dismantled and re-erected at Reads. The family paid 13 pounds for the shed.[12]

SOURCES

- [1] Discover Wonga Park, Place No.11; Border Country, p.92.
- [2] Herbert Read: Workshop Place 21.
- [3] Shire of Lillydale RB 1906-7 No.1856.
- [4] Border Country, p.38.
- [5] Shire of Lillydale RB 1907-8 No 1863;1908-9 No.1993.
- [6] Border Country, p.42.
- [7] Border Country, p.43.
- [8] Shire of Lillydale RB 1918-19 Nos.3610, 3611.
- [9] Shire of Lillydale RB 1920-21 No.4217; 1924-25 No.4581.
- [10] Discover Wonga Park, Place No.11; Herbert Read, pers. comm.
- [11] Border Country, pp.42,92.
- [12] Discover Wonga Park; Herbert Read, pers. comm.

Creation Date 1902

Change Dates

Associations

Local Themes

Read family

5.02 - Orchards & market gardens

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

What is Significant?

The former Read farm complex comprises the house constructed in stages from 1902 as well as the adjacent corrugated iron clad shed (thought to have been used for fruit handling) and associated mature trees, situated at 404 Yarra Road and 6 Toppings Road (part), Wonga Park.

How is it Significant?

The Read farm complex (former) is of historic significance to Manningham City.

Why is it Significant?

The Read farm complex has historic significance as a representative and now rare example of the small farm operations that were established in Wonga Park in the early part of the twentieth century. It has associations with Heber Newton Read, pioneer district farmer and orchardist, and the Read family maintained ownership for many years. The surviving elements of the property and its layout including the house, associated sheds and mature trees are typical of small farms of the period and illustrate how the area appeared prior to post-war suburban development. (RNE criteria A4, B2, D2, H1)

LEVEL

Local significance

RECOMMENDATIONS

Heritage Register Listings

| Register | Reference | Zoning | Status |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------|--------|
| Manningham Planning Scheme | HO189 | | Listed |

Extent

HO189 should be reduced to only include:

- The whole of 404 Yarra Road
- The parts of 6 Topping Road containing the former fruit-handling shed and remnant lemon orchard.

This is shown on the plan in Appendix B.4 in Volume 1 of Manningham Heritage Study Review 2005.

Heritage Schedule

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|----------------------------|----|---------------------------|
| External Paint Controls: | No | On VHR: | No | VHR Ref No: |
| Internal Alteration Controls: | No | Prohibited Uses: | No | |
| Tree Controls: | Yes | Aboriginal Heritage Place: | No | |
| Outbuildings or Fences: | No | Incorporated Plan: | No | Incorporated Plan Details |

Description:

Conservation Management

In order to conserve the heritage significance of this place, it is recommended that the following conservation objectives, as appropriate, be given priority in the future maintenance, development or management of the place:

1. Conserve the fabric of the building/s or other built elements, which is identified as contributing to the significance of the place. This includes the original fabric as well as fabric that may demonstrate important successive stages in the historic development of the place and/or provide evidence of changing architectural styles or techniques.
2. Discourage the demolition of significant or contributory buildings unless the demolition is only of part of the building and it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the responsible authority that, as appropriate:
 - The fabric to be removed is not significant, or
 - The fabric to be removed is not of primary significance and its removal will not adversely affect the significance of the place, or
 - It will assist in the long term conservation of the place, or
 - It will facilitate the historic use of the place and will not result in the loss of fabric considered to be primary significance.

Note: The poor condition or low integrity of a heritage place should not be used as justification for its demolition, particularly if it appears the condition of the heritage place has deliberately been allowed to deteriorate.

3. Where there is a complex of buildings and other elements the aim should be to conserve or reveal the historic visual relationship between the buildings and other elements in order to demonstrate the historical use and/or layout of the place.
4. Conserve significant plantings on the property, and maintain a visual relationship between the plantings and the significant buildings on the property.
5. Encourage the removal of non-significant or intrusive elements, particularly where this would assist in understanding or interpreting the significance of the place.
6. Ensure that the siting and design of new development does not overwhelm the historic setting of the building and the site as a whole by becoming a dominant element or by interfering with key views to and from the site.
7. Encourage any new development on the property to relate and be complementary in form, scale and materials to the significant buildings and other elements, but be clearly contemporary in design.
8. Retain views of significant building(s) and plantings from the street.
9. In the case of subdivision of the property, encourage the retention of the significant buildings, trees and related elements on one lot.

NOTE:

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this citation is accurate, it is possible that more detailed investigation may reveal further information about the significance of the place. For example, in most cases an internal inspection was not made of buildings at the time of initial assessment. In the time since the place was first assessed it is also possible that the condition of buildings or trees may have changed.

The information contained in this citation should therefore be reviewed at the time that it is proposed to make changes to the property. This would likely require a more detailed assessment of any significant or contributory element that is affected by any proposed buildings or works. Once this more detailed assessment has been made, a review of the significance of the place should be carried out by Council's Heritage Adviser or an appropriately qualified professional.

Extra Research At the time the Wonga Heritage Study was completed the address of this heritage place was 9057 Yarra Road (cnr. Topping Road). The current street no. is 404 Yarra Road (all properties along Yarra Road have been renumbered.)

- BIBLIOGRAPHY** Context Pty Ltd, (1996), Wonga Park Heritage Study. Report on Stages 1 and 2, City of
Manningham, Doncaster
Context Pty Ltd, (2005), Manningham Heritage Study Review, City of Manningham, Doncaster