

Heritage Overlay No.: 112
Citation No.: 372 (HO112)
Place: House & Outbuildings, Greigs Road

Other Names of Place: -
Location: 65-543 Greigs Rd East, Truganina
Critical Dates: Constructed c.1910 (between 1907-1916).
Existing Heritage Listings: None
Recommended Level of Significance: LOCAL



Statement of Significance:

The property at 65-543 Greigs Rd, Truganina, is significant as a rare, predominantly intact example of a small farm complex of Federation styled buildings in the Melton Shire. These buildings consist of a main house and an outbuilding, all being similarly designed with gambrel roof forms. Established c.1910, the significance of the place is enhanced by the long drive flanked by mature eucalypts and peppercorn trees and the rural setting. The property is also significant as one of the more substantial grazing-farming complexes built as a result of the break up of the Clarke *Rockbank* estate in 1906.

The main house at 65-543 Greigs Rd, Truganina is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level (AHC D.2, E.1). It demonstrates original design qualities of a Federation homestead style. These qualities include the gambrel roof form, together with the broken back encircling

verandah and two minor gables within the main roof that project at the front and comprise rectangular bay windows below the verandah. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the single storey height, symmetrical composition, deep red painted galvanised corrugated steel roof cladding, horizontal timber weatherboard wall cladding, three face brick chimneys with rendered bands and multi-corbelled tops, turned timber verandah posts with projecting capitals, decorative brackets and timber fretwork valances, timber framed casement windows, timber framed door openings, stuccoed gable infill and the timber truss decoration in the projecting gables at the front. One similarly-designed timber and galvanised corrugated steel outbuilding, with gambrel roof forms, together with the long drive flanked by mature eucalypts and peppercorn trees, also contribute to the significance of the place.

The property at 65-543 Greigs Rd, Truganina is historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A4, B2). It was built as a consequence of the early twentieth century break-up of the pastoral estates, a turning-point in the history of Melton Shire. It is one of the more substantial and intact farm houses and complexes that were built on the Clarke family's massive *Rockbank* pastoral estate at the time. Its original acquisition by WJT ('Big') Clarke in 1865 is indicative of the unsuitability of much of the stoney and dry land for farming, and the particularly difficult seasons of the early 1860s; its incorporation into the Clarke pastoral empire at this time was common throughout the Shire. It was purchased by well-known real estate agent WS Keast when the *Rockbank* estate was broken up and sold by Sir Rupert Turner Havelock Clarke in 1906. It was occupied for most of the late twentieth century by well-known local grazier and former Werribee Mayor Baden Powell.

Overall, the property at 65-543 Greigs Rd, Truganina is of LOCAL significance.

Description:

The property at 65-543 Greigs Rd, Truganina has a rural setting with a long drive lined with mature eucalypts and peppercorn trees. The property has a mainhouse and three outbuildings characterised by gambrel roof forms.

The symmetrical, single storey, horizontal timber weatherboard, Federation homestead styled main house is characterised by a gambrel roof form, together with a broken back encircling verandah. Two minor gables project within the main roof at the front and comprise projecting rectangular bay windows below the verandah. The roof forms are clad in deep red painted galvanised corrugated steel. Three early face brick chimneys with rendered bands and multi-corbelled tops adorn the roofline.

An early feature of the design is the encircling verandah. It is supported by turned timber posts with projecting capitals, decorative brackets and timber fretwork valances.

Other early features include the timber framed casement windows, timber framed door openings, stuccoed gable infill and the timber truss decoration in the projecting gables at the front.

Nearby the main house is a large galvanised corrugated steel outbuilding comprising a former men's quarters, coach house and stable. It has an elongated gambrel roof form clad in galvanised corrugated steel. Broad overhangs with exposed timber rafters are features of the eaves. Other early features include the timber framed multi-paned double hung windows, timber framed doorways, timber verandah posts and brackets, and the timber ventilators in the gable ends of the gambrel roof. The original stables and mangers are intact. The northern end

of the building, which was presumably the men's quarters was rebuilt by a film production company, including the doors, chimney and internal lining, and restored to seem old.

Of similar design are the other two outbuildings with their gambrel roof forms clad in galvanised corrugated steel. One of the outbuildings has horizontal timber weatherboard wall cladding, while the other has galvanised corrugated steel walls (representing the fowl house). The fowl shed was demolished in 2005. There are broad eaves with exposed timber rafters, timber ventilators in the gable ends of the gambrel roofs, and timber framed window and door openings.

History:

Contextual History

The house is situated on Allotment 2 of Section 25, Parish of Derrimut, of 141 acre 2 roods and 22 perches, which was purchased from the Crown by John Flinn on 19th May 1854.¹ While he initially had a number of small farmers as neighbours, most of the Crown land around Flinn had been purchased by WJT ('Big') Clarke.²

The property, situated to the east of Mount Atkinson, has good volcanic soil, but is also stoney and difficult to crop.³ Flinn, like the majority of small farmers in the Shire, would have struggled in the wretched seasons (drought, wheat rust and pleuro-pneumonia in cattle) in the early 1860s. Like most of the farmers who had purchased small Crown Allotments in areas dominated by Clarke, he sold the property to Clarke at this time. He conveyed the property to Clarke on 30th April 1865, and it was incorporated into his massive *Rockbank* pastoral estate.⁴

By the end of the nineteenth century historical changes were afoot. In addition to new taxes and the inherent difficulties of the pastoral industry, a new generation of farmers was restlessly surveying the vast pastoral estates about them. After Sir WJ Clarke's death in 1897, his son Sir Rupert Turner Havelock Clarke Bart. inherited his title, estate and membership of Parliament. In that year he mused in Parliament about cutting up 40,000 acres of the Clarke estate to lease to dairy farmers. He was under some local pressure to make land available for farming, and declared himself keen not to 'disappoint public expectations.'⁵ The Victorian Municipal Directory 1898 entry for Melton Shire made the first of a series of unprecedented reports on movements by big local landholders such as Rupert Clarke, Harry Werribee Staughton, and Harvey Patterson to sell and lease (often under the 'share system') large portions of their estates to small farmers and graziers.⁶

This 'break-up' of the large estates coincided with major developments in farming in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, as new science, technologies, fertilisers, transport and markets enabled huge productivity increases. With inventions such as the Babcock separator, the development of local co-operative creameries and butter factories, and advances in refrigeration creating new export markets, dairying in particular boomed.

¹ Lands Victoria: Put Away Plan: D38, 1a, (1854);.

² Parish Plans, Parishes of Derrimut and Phyweitjorrk

³ Mrs Craig (former owner of the property), personal conversation, 7/11/2005

⁴ PROV, VPRS 460/P0/35850 (Document 330).

⁵ *Sunbury News*: 31/7/1897, 7/8/1897, 4/9/1897.

⁶ *Victorian Municipal Directory*, 1898, and following years.

Consultants: David Moloney, David Rowe, Pamela Jellie (2006) Sera Jane Peters (2007)

And so the beginning of the twentieth century marked a major new era in the history of Melton. In 1905-06 Clarke's grandson, Sir Rupert Turner Havelock Clarke Bart., Clarke began subdividing and disposing of the vast *Rockbank* estate (and most of *Rupertswood-Red Rock* and *Bolinda Vale* estates) that had been so carefully acquired and tendered by his grandfather and father.⁷ While much of his land was subsequently purchased by established neighbouring farmers and smaller graziers, it also provided the opportunity for new farming families to make a living in the district.⁸

History of the Place

On 17th November 1906 a portion of the Rockbank estate was auctioned, 'on the ground at Deer Park', by WS Keast & Co.⁹ At the auction the property on which 65-543 Hopkins Rd, Truganina is situated was part of Lot 18. Together with the adjoining Lot 19 to its south (a total of 11 contiguous Crown Allotments) it was purchased by 'William Stephen Keast of Collins Street Melbourne, and John Eli Lindley of the same place'. These parcels were the cheapest of the land sold, the price being £3 per acre, while many allotments (mainly those north of the railway and closer to the city or water) fetched £6 per acre, and a number up to £13 per acre. Lots 18 and 19 were the only properties purchased by the well-known real estate agent (and property auctioneer) himself.¹⁰

The house was built on the site by 1916,¹¹ although it is not known whether Keast or Lindley built it. The tree-lined driveway is also shown in the 1916 map. The property, in the two titles, has since had numerous owners, including AJ Holden (a large purchaser of the Clarke land), but the original 1320 acres (c.535 hectares) appear to have stayed in the same ownership through these changes.¹²

In around 1949 the property was leased from William Verner Amess by well-known local grazier Baden Powell, who purchased the property in 1969. The family held the property until 2004. Baden Powell was a large grazier, with numerous properties in the area. He was a Councillor of the City of Werribee during the 1960s and early 70s, and served as Mayor. The property was used mainly for sheep, and also some cattle, grazing. A little farming was undertaken, with some barley crops, although the rocky land did not lend itself to cropping.¹³

During this time the house and outbuildings were rented out. The distinctive outbuildings – the shearer's quarters, coachhouse and stable – were renovated by a film company. These renovations are thought to have included relining of the interior of the shearers quarters, the placement of filming holes in the walls, replacement of doors and windows and rebuilding of

⁷ Michael Clarke, *'Big' Clarke* (Queensberry Hill Press, Melbourne, 1980), *passim*; Sir RTH Clarke Bart. sold the vast section of the Rockbank Estate that lay south of the Western Highway in November 1906; it would appear that he sold the northern portion about a year earlier. (PROV VPRS 560/P0, 35850); also CT Vol.3211 Fol.642206, pertaining to an 8000 acre portion south part of this estate; and also Shire of Melton Ratebooks from 1905-06 which record local farmers as owners of parts of the *Rockbank* estate.)

⁸ Melton gained one of its most famous sons, Hector Fraser, international trap shooter, when his father John Fraser came to the area 'when the Rockbank station was cut up into farms (Alex Cameron, 'Melton Memoirs', p.20)

⁹ *ibid*, 'Particulars, Terms and Conditions of Freehold Lands in the Parishes of Derrimut, Pywheitjorrk ...'

¹⁰ PROV, VPRS 460/P0/35850: Statutory Declaration by William Howat (15/5/1907), Titles Office Transaction No.1287669.

¹¹ Army Ordnance Map: 'Sunbury', 1916.

¹² Certificate of Titles, Nos: Vol 4252 Fol 850349; Vol 4252 Fol. 850350

¹³ Mrs Craig (daughter of Baden Powell), personal conversation, 7/11/2005.

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the chimney. The outbuildings and the house became settings for many film and television productions, including the Flying Doctor, Blue Healers, Dogwoman, Witchhunt, Dunderstone, and TAC Commercials. The shearing shed itself was lost in a storm in the 1980s.¹⁴

Thematic Context / Comparative Analysis:

Melton Historical Themes: ‘Farming’

Comparable examples:

Historical Comparison:

The sale of the vast Clarke pastoral estate as small farms in the early twentieth century was a turning point in the history of Melton Shire. Only 24 houses and substantial sites associated with this event now remain. Of these places, heritage citations have been prepared for 11 places, including 65-543 Hopkins Rd, Truganina . These places are:

Places for which heritage controls are proposed:

Place No.438	House, <i>Bonnie Doon</i> , Rockbank (1906)
Place No.120	House, <i>Gollers Court</i> , Melton Highway Sydenham (1906-11)
Place No.372	House, 63 Greigs Rd, Rockbank (c.1910)
Place No.360	House, <i>Mount Cottrell</i> Homestead, Rockbank (c.1910)
Place No.407	House, 1/6 Judd Court, Rockbank (c.1910): one of six houses on Clarke Estate reputedly by the same builder (c.1910)
Place No.237	House, 2120 Ryans Road, Melton: one of six houses on Clarke Estate reputedly by the same builder; with scarce hand-pump still attached to underground tank (c.1914)
Place No.457	House (former Casey), 107-121 Water Reserve Road, Rockbank
Place No.102	House, <i>Arrunga</i> (early 20C)
Place No.075	House, 2-180 Davis Road, Diggers Rest (c.1914).
Place No.152	House, <i>Plumpton Park</i> , Diggers Rest (c.1922)
Place No.103	House (Tyquins), 932 Holden Road, Diggers Rest (1931)

Places for which heritage controls are not proposed:

Place No.084	House, 219 Diggers Rest – Coimadai Road, Diggers Rest
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¹⁴ *ibid*, and ‘Peter’ (tenant), 20/2/2002.

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Place No.470	House, Beattys Road, Rockbank, much altered
Place No.401	House, <i>Fairview Park</i> , 686 Leakes Road, Rockbank (1905-08)
Place No.315	House, Beatty's Road, Rockbank (early 20C)
Place No.456	House, Water Reserve Road, Rockbank (c.1900-10, 1960s)
Place No.299	House, <i>Penlee Farm</i> , Mount Cottrell Road, Mount Cotterell
Place No.348	House, <i>Kintbury</i> , 318-386 Faulkners Road, Mount Cotterell
Place No.452	House, <i>Stoneleigh</i> , Troups Road, Tarneit
Place No.453	House, <i>Camelot Lodge</i> , 230 Troups Road, Rockbank
Place No.371	House, 405 Greigs Road, Rockbank
Place No.107	Trees, Holden Road, Diggers Rest: large avenue of cypress trees, remains of <i>Lyndhurst Lodge</i> .
Place No.095	Outbuilding, bluestone blacksmith, Finches Road, Melton; date 1913 inscribed.
Place No.344	Ruinous house near Kororoit Creek, ruinous, concrete.

Most surviving Clarke estate places are located in the centre and north of the Shire, in the Parishes of Kororoit and Holden. In the southern parishes of Derrimut and Pywheitjorrk, which were vast Clarke landholdings, only eight places survive, two of which are recommended for heritage controls.

Architectural Comparison:

The house and outbuildings, 65-543 Greigs Rd, Truganina, is a representative and contextually more intact example of a small early twentieth century farm complex in the Melton Shire, when compared with similar early twentieth century properties:

- *Glen Elgin*, Gisborne-Melton Road, Toolern Vale (Place No.039). This property has an altered timber main house with complex roof forms and several outbuildings including substantial brick stables, timber open shed, and two rand rubble cottages dating from the interwar period. While the property at 65-543 Greigs Rd, Truganina is not as substantial as a complex, the main house is considerably more intact and its outbuildings are of similar design.
- Small Farm Complex, 845 Greigs Road, Rockbank (Place No.374). This property is comprised of a moderately intact early twentieth century vernacular styled farm house and outbuilding. This property is considered more altered and does not share the design quality of the main house and outbuildings at Greigs Rd, Truganina .
- *Mt Cotterell Homestead*, 167 Faulkners Road, Rockbank (Place No.360). A moderately intact early twentieth century farm complex, the main house is an altered

Victorian vernacular styled building with nearby twentiethcentury machinery shed, stables, underground tank with rivetted ship tanks above and remnants of a shearing shed. While featuring a larger number of outbuildings, the main house, given is vernacular style, is not as intact or of the same design quality as the property at 65-543 Greigs Rd, Truganina .

Condition:

Fair-Good

Integrity:

Substantially intact

Recommendations:

Recommended for inclusion in the Melton Planning Scheme Heritage Overlay.

Recommended Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls:

External Paint Controls:	<i>No</i>
Internal Alteration Controls:	<i>No</i>
Tree Controls:	<i>Yes – mature eucalypts & peppercorn trees flanking the long drive, and peppercorn trees with the house yard (rear of dwelling)</i>
Outbuildings and/or Fences:	<i>Yes -one gambrel roofed outbuilding within the main house yard (west of dwelling)</i>