

Heritage Overlay No.: 036
Citation No.: 055
Place: 'Greenhills', 1260-1398 Diggers rest-Coimadai Road

Other Names of Place:

Location: 1260-1398 Diggers Rest Coimadai Road, Toolern Vale. (Lot 6, LP 201866)

Critical Dates: Establishment of station: 1837; Construction of present house: c.1903 (extension 1980s).

Existing Heritage Listings: 'Place of Interest' (Rural Heritage Study)¹

Recommended Level of Significance: LOCAL



Statement of Significance:

Greenhills, Toolern Vale, is significant as a predominantly intact example of a Federation style homestead built by Walter Browne in c.1903. The setting of the homestead (including outbuildings, former gardens, dams and relics of dry stone walls) also contributes to an understanding of the heritage values of the place, dating back to the pioneering era of this early pioneering Victorian pastoral property. Historically, *Greenhills* was one of the first pastoral runs, and centres of European settlement, established in the Shire of Melton.

The *Greenhills* pastoral estate, Toolern Vale, is historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A4, B2, H1). It was a noted early Victorian pastoral property established by John Hunter

¹ Johnston, C, *Rural Heritage Study: Western Region of Melbourne* (Melbourne Western Region Inc., 1994), p.176

Patterson, prominent pastoralist and member of the early Port Phillip community, and Victorian MLA and Treasurer in the 1850s. Patterson established the property very early in 1837, making Greenhills one of the very first pastoral runs and centres of European settlement in the Shire of Melton. It was a very large run, of some 40,000 acres extending nearly to Bacchus Marsh in the west, and the largest population centre in the present Shire of Melton recorded in 1841. The station became the basis of the road system and early settlement of the Toolern Vale district, which was initially named after the station. The property was associated with John Batman's daughters Eliza and Adelaide who married the station's Collyer brothers; with Cr A Macintosh, the first President of the Melton Roads Board; MI Browne; Cr Walter Browne JP (who built the present house); and other Victorian pioneering pastoralists including George Hyde and George Urquhart.

The *Greenhills* homestead, Toolern Vale, is architecturally significant at a Local level (AHC D.2). It demonstrates original design qualities of a Federation style. These qualities include the hipped roof forms clad in galvanised corrugated steel, and the encircling verandah featuring a gabled portico at the front. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the single storey height, timber weatherboard wall cladding, strapped brick chimneys with terra cotta pots, paired turned timber verandah posts with solid timber fretwork between, more elaborate timber fretwork valances to one side, timber verandah floor, timber framed double hung windows (including the projecting banks), decorative gable infill and the turned timber finial to the verandah portico.

The *Greenhills* pastoral estate, Toolern Vale, may be of scientific significance at a Local level (AHC C2). It appears to retain evidence of the garden enclosure of a very early pastoral homestation.

The *Greenhills* pastoral estate, Toolern Vale, is socially significant at the local level (AHC G1). It was the subject of an excursion by the Melton and District Historical Society in the late twentieth century. It was identified as a place of heritage significance to the local community in a community forum held as part of this heritage study.

Overall, the *Greenhills* pastoral estate and homestead, Toolern Vale, is of LOCAL significance.