

## HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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**Name** STRATHFIELDSAYE STATE SCHOOL NO. 1221  
**Address** 9 Uxbridge Street STRATHFIELDSAYE **Grading** 2008 Local  
**Building Type** School - State (public)  
**Assessment by** Context Pty Ltd




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**Recommended** VHR No HI No PS Yes  
**Heritage Protection**

**Maker / Builder** Unknown

### Integrity

Altered

## History and Historical Context

### History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye

The land around the former Shires of Strathfieldsaye and McIvor had a long history prior to the arrival of Europeans. The Jaara Jaara people are the original inhabitants of the area.

The area around Port Phillip was explored by Sir Thomas Mitchell, the Surveyor General of New South Wales, and a large party in 1836, on the homeward leg of a journey to Portland Bay. Impressed by what he perceived as the bounty of the land, Mitchell named the area *Australia Felix*.<sup>[1]</sup>

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The Port Phillip district was opened up for settlement soon thereafter, and much of the land in the Western districts of Victoria, including the former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye, was subsequently dominated by a series of pastoral runs. Most of the area around the town of Axedale and the numerous small towns in its vicinity was licensed to David Jennings as part of the Campaspe Plains run. The run covered an area of more than 144,900 acres and was populated with an estimated 12,000 sheep. A portion of Campaspe Plains was licensed to A. Jennings and George Playne in 1840 and the 67,000 acre station became known as Axedale. In the coming decade the holders of the license changed a number of times. By the time the leasehold over the land was cancelled in 1865, the run had greatly reduced in size.[2]

Following the cancellation of leasehold, land holdings were of a smaller scale and pastoralists were gradually overtaken by farmers. The discovery of gold at Bendigo and the surrounding areas changed the face of the district and brought about new patterns of settlement and expansion. William John Bulling claimed to be the first man to discover gold at McIvor, and he was granted a £400 reward for the find. By 1853, over one hundred prospectors had assembled at Wild Duck Creek in the hopes of striking it rich. This number expanded the following year, and included some 2,000 Chinese immigrants.[3]

The Strathfieldsaye Road District was proclaimed in the Government Gazette on the 12th August 1861, and encompassed within it the parishes of Axedale, Strathfieldsaye, Eppalock, Mandurang, Sedgwick and Lyell.[4] The process of election of the board was punctuated by rivalries between Catholic and Protestant faiths, a characteristic of the district which infiltrates much of its history. Strathfieldsaye met the criterion prescribed to become a Shire in 1863, a transition that was officially proclaimed on the 17th September of that year.[5]

In 1864, Strathfieldsaye Shire was divided into three wards; Mandurang, Strathfieldsaye and Axedale

## History of Strathfieldsaye

The Shire hall at Strathfieldsaye was built in 1869 to accommodate the officers of the new Shire. Prospectors panned for gold in the nearby Sheepwash Creek at the height of the gold boom. Following the dwindling of the gold boom, many former prospectors turned to farming and agricultural pursuits. Orchards were established and flourished in the rich soils of the district, though Strathfieldsaye remained one of the smaller townships in the district. The forestry industry was also of some importance to the township of Strathfieldsaye, especially during the height of the gold rushes.

By the late 1800s, the area around Strathfieldsaye was being used extensively as vineyards, though the industry was devastated by the Phylloxera outbreak in the 1890s. The failing of the wine industry then prompted the development of many of the already established orchards in the vicinity of the town. The provision of dried fruit to prospectors had proved a valuable industry during the gold rushes, and orchardists continued to expand in the district into the twentieth century.

During recent times Strathfieldsaye has expanded in response to growing pressure for residential land, and has gradually shifted away from its previous agricultural focus.

## Contextual history of education in the former Shires of Strathfieldsaye and McIvor

Prior to 1873, education in Victoria was optional, fee-paying and primarily carried out through religious institutions. Education was in some ways regulated by the Port Phillip Denominational Schools Board, which had been established in 1848, and was responsible for the funding and establishment of Church schools.[6] In the districts around Bendigo, education was similarly associated with the establishment of religious facilities. Providing an alternative to religious education, the Heathcote National School was established in 1853, along with a number of other private institutions that were running in the area.[7]

Governor LaTrobe spearheaded the establishment of the National Board of Education in Victoria in 1851, which owned

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and built "vested" schools throughout the state. While designs were based on those used by the Education Committee of the Privy Council in London, they were not standardised. [8]

The Common Schools Act of 1862 manifested a desire to amalgamate schools and do away with denominational influence. Schools were publicly owned and numbered from 1863. Free, compulsory and secular education was introduced with the Education Act of 1872 and became operational the following year. The Education Act became the impetus for the standardisation of designs for schools. Responsibility for their construction rested initially with the Department of Education Architectural Division, but was transferred to the Public Works Department by 1883. [9] One room schools were built according to a series of standardised plans which were determined by the amount and type of seating provided, and there were models for thirty, forty and sixty students.[10]

Development of educational facilities was primarily tied with the development of towns themselves. The first state school constructed in the former shires of Strathfieldsaye and McIvor was built at Heathcote in 1869, and later Mia Mia in 1873.[11] Many of the schools constructed in the district were small portable timber constructions, built in accordance with standard designs by the Education Department and later the Public Works Department. As the population of the small townships around Bendigo increased, so did the need for the provision of schools. Often redundant portable schools were brought in from other locations, and similar circumstances sometimes befell portable schools built for the local McIvor and Strathfieldsaye communities.

The construction of the railway line from Bendigo to Heathcote in the 1880s opened by the district for both import of people and export of produce, and had solidified the nature of many of the smaller townships in the vicinity. This meant the establishment of more permanent educational facilities for some towns, and the establishment of rudimentary ones for others. By the turn of the century a number of regional communities boasted brick schools in place of their previous portable timber facilities. Small portable schools were often extended and renovated, with additional classrooms being added as the need arose.

## **History of Strathfieldsaye State School No. 1221, 9 Uxbridge Street, Strathfieldsaye**

Educational facilities were first established on this site in 1873, but these buildings have subsequently been demolished. In January 1873, Secretary for the Shire of Strathfieldsaye John Bell wrote on behalf of the community and the ninety four school aged children in the district to request the establishment of educational facilities for Strathfieldsaye.[12] A temporary school was opened at buildings occupied by the Shire Council, but frequent closures of the building brought about by Council holidays demonstrated the inadequacy of such an arrangement. John Goodchild was the Head Teacher at the facility, and his wife Rebecca was employed as the work mistress.[13] The Goodchilds had previously operated a school at Bendigo, which they had been forced to close owing to John Goodchild's lack of teaching certification.

The first proposed land at allotments 13 & 14 of Section 1 in the Parish of Strathfieldsaye was reported to have been rejected due to a prior reservation as a cricket and recreation area.[14] A second site was chosen in 1873 by Assistant Di Noyes. The site covered an area of five acres at the corner of Uxbridge and Apsley Streets.[15] The Uxbridge site was gazetted and tenders were called for the building of the new school mid 1874.[16] The builder on the project was Thomas Welsh, who constructed the '30ft by 18ft weatherboard school with three rooms attached' for the sum of £396/3/- 10.[17]

A teacher's residence was built adjacent to the school soon after the construction of the school itself. This decision was amendable to John Goodchild, who remained the head teacher at the school, and was at that time living more than a mile from the school. It was proposed that the new teacher's residence could also be utilised as a post office for the Strathfieldsaye Township.[18]

John Goodchild left the Strathfieldsaye School soon after the new building was opened. The new Head Teacher at the site was Patrick Meares, and classes commenced on 30th January 1875.[19] Enrolments increased and soon demonstrated the

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inadequacy of the new building. The year after opening enrolments at the school totalled eighty in a space that only made provision for sixty students.[20] Recommendations for the expansion of the space were made to the Board of Education, as well as requests for new fencing, and a letter box to be placed at the site for the Post Office that had opened there.[21]

The extant building at the Strathfieldsaye School has been previously used as a school at Diamond Hill, and was relocated to Strathfieldsaye in 1933. The building was initially used as a shelter shed. It is not known when the building had been constructed at Diamond Hill. Increasing enrolments at the school brought much development of the site including the addition of a summer house.[22]

The original school and residence were demolished in the 1960s accompanying the construction of a new school block. The new block was opened on the 5th June 1964, in a ceremony attended by the Hon. J. S. Bloomfield, M.L.A, the Minister for Education. [23] Further additions were made to the site in 1984 and 1988.[24]

The building relocated from Diamond Hill was developed into a classroom in 1971. The school became a training school for students from the Bendigo Teachers College at this time.[25]

[1] Randell, J. O. (1985). *McIvor: A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote*, Shire of McIvor, p. 1.

[2] Spreadborough, Robert and Anderson, Hugh (1983). *Victorian Squatters*, Red Rooster Press, Ascot Vale, p. 150

[3] Spreadborough & Anderson (1983), p. 31.

[4] Hewat, Tim (1983), *Bridge Over Troubled Waters, A History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye*, Shire of Strathfieldsaye, Victoria, pp. 11 - 12.

[5] Hewat, Tim (1983), p. 18.

[6] Peterson, Richard (1993), *Historic Government Schools: A Comparative Study*, Heritage Management Branch, Building Division, Department of Planning and Development, Victoria, p.1.

[7] Earth Tech Engineering Pty Ltd (2002), *Heathcote - Strathfieldsaye Thematic History*, City of Greater Bendigo, 2002, p. 51.

[8] Peterson, Richard (1993), p.1.

[9] Peterson, Richard (1993), pp. 1 - 3.

[10] Burchell, L. E. (1989), *Survey of One Room State Schools 1900 - 1940*, L. E. Burchell, Victoria, p. i.

[11] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 151.

[12] Blake, L. J. [ed.], (1973), *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria*, Education Department of Victoria, Melbourne, p. 466.

[13] Mitchell, B. (2005) *On the Creeks: Early Life at Strathfieldsaye in the Valley of the Three Creeks - Axe, Emu and Sheepwash*, Barbara Mitchell, Bendigo, Victoria, p. 103.

[14] Mitchell, B (2005), p 103

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[15] Blake, (1973), vol 2 p 466

[16] Mitchell, B, (2005), p 104

[17] Mitchell, B, (2005), p 104

[18] Mitchell, B, (2005), p 103

[19] Blake, (1973), vol 2 p 466

[20] Mitchell, B, (2005), p 104

[21] Mitchell, B, (2005), p 104

[22] Mitchell, B, (2005), p 104

[23] Blake, (1973), p. 467.

[24] Mitchell, B.(2005), p.115.

[25] Blake, (1973), p. 467.

## Secondary sources

Blake, L. J. [ed.], (1973), *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria*, Education Department of Victoria, Melbourne

Burchell, L. E. (1989), *Survey of One Room State Schools 1900 - 1940*, L. E. Burchell, Victoria

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## Relevant Historical Australian Themes

8 Building community life

8.2 Educating people

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## Description

### Physical Description

The timber classroom that forms part of the Strathfieldsaye Primary School probably dates from c.1915. It has timber strapping detailing to the gable end and a pair of double hung sash windows. The verandah has been added but is complementary to the original design. The original hopper sashes are still extant.

### Physical Condition

Excellent

### Conservation Policy

None Specified

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The Strathfieldsaye State School no.1221, including all the fabric of the relocated timber classroom, is significant. Other buildings on the site are not significant.

*How is it significant?*

The relocated timber classroom at the Strathfieldsaye State School is of local historic and social significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

*Why is it significant?*

The Strathfieldsaye State School site is historically significant for its association with the provision of early educational facilities, which had an important role in the developing community. The site is historically significant for its combined use with a post office for the Strathfieldsaye Township. The history of the school building, which was relocated from Diamond Hill in the 1930s, is important for demonstrating the pattern of moving portable schools from other locations to service the needs of growing communities. *Criterion A*

The school is of social significance for the Strathfieldsaye community as a site of continuous education from 1875. *Criterion G*

## Assessment Against Criteria

### HERCON CRITERIA

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion A*

Possession of uncommon rare or endangers aspects of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion B*

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Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion C*

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments.  
*Criterion D*

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics. *Criterion E*

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period. *Criterion F*

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions.  
*Criterion G*

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history. *Criterion H*

## Recommendations 2008

**External Paint Controls**

No

**Internal Alteration Controls**

No

**Tree Controls**

No

**Fences & Outbuildings**

Yes The classroom is an outbuilding to the main school building.

**Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted**

No

**Incorporated Plan**

None Specified

**Aboriginal Heritage Place**

No

## Other Recommendations

It is recommended that the former Diamond Hill School now located at the school at 9 Uxbridge Street, Strathfieldaye be added as an individual place to the Heritage Overlay of the City of Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme with the schedule entry as shown above. The extent of registration is the whole of the property as defined by the title boundaries.