HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name	BOONDEROO, HOUSE AND OUTBUILDINGS		
Address	67 McNiffs Road REDESDALE	**Grading**	2008 Local
Building Type	House		
Assessment by	Context Pty Ltd		

Recommended Heritage Protection	**VHR** No **HI** No **PS** Yes
Architectural Style	Victorian Period (1851-1901) Vernacular
Maker / Builder	Unknown

Integrity

Altered

History and Historical Context

History of the Shire of Metcalfe

Note: The following history is a series of excerpts from *Twigg, K. and Jacobs, W (1994)* **Shire of Metcalfe Heritage Study Volume 1 Environmental History**, *Ballarat.*

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.

Less than a year after Mitchell's return to Sydney with glowing reports of the stocking capabilities of the land in the south, the first overlanders arrived in the district and soon thereafter laid claim to the rich basaltic plains of the Campaspe and Coliban Rivers. The pastoral occupation of the Shire was completed by 1843 and the process of shaping the landscape to fit the demands of white settlement gathered pace.

Over the next decade many of the earliest pastoral runs were subdivided; Bowman's Run, for instance, was split in two to form Stratford Lodge and Sutton Grange [1]. It was also a period of improvements around homesteads.

During the 1850s the pressure of supplying sufficient food to the newly discovered gold diggings and the growing demand for land by miners led to the survey and sale of large areas of land in proximity to the gold fields.[2] At the time of the first land sales in the 1850s there were no restrictions on the amount of land an individual could buy and most squatters managed to purchase between 3,000 and 6,000 acres of the old leasehold. However the land sales also attracted wealthy entrepreneurs and successful miners. At Stratford Lodge almost the entire leasehold was offered for sale and between 1856 and 1857, William Degraves, successful flour miller and William Williamson created something of a stir by buying between 12000 and 13000 acres each.

In September 1851 the Mount Alexander gold rush exploded after a small notice in the Argus announced a discovery in the Mount Alexander Ranges. Serle has suggested the Alexander rush set the standard for all subsequent rushes and argues that at no other gold field was gold spread so shallowly and liberally over such a large area.[3] The temporary nature of many early gold rush workings is witnessed by isolated ruins or a cluster of buildings which once formed a small settlement. By contrast the townships which survive from this period still retain the layout, the commercial street design and many of the residences and solid public buildings of their gold field origins.

By the late 1850s it was clear that road making was needed and it was agreed that the responsibility for works should be given to each local district. The Metcalfe Roads board was proclaimed on 14 August 1860 and wasted little time in seeking money for road construction. At its first meeting it was moved that the Board 'with as little delay as possible.obtain a portion of the government grant for the present year.'[4] Rates were also levied on residents and by 1865 this must have amounted to over £1000 for this level had to be reached before a district could be proclaimed a Shire. The Shire was proclaimed in July 1865 and at this time its area was substantially increased by the voluntary addition of Elphingstone, West Faraday, Harcourt and Barkers Creek.

A seventeen mile branch line was opened to Redesdale in 1891 leaving the Melbourne-Mount Alexander and Murray River Railway at Redesdale Junction to the north of Kyneton, and then continuing through the stations of Green Hill, Edgecombe, East Metcalfe , Emberton and Barfold before terminating at Redesdale . The stations consisted of little more than a tin shed and a water tank but they rapidly became a focal point for the surrounding communities.

History of Redesdale

The first scattered buildings of the township of Redesdale grew up near Monro's Crossing (Campaspe River) on the Kyneton Heathcote Road, catering to miners en route to the Heathcote old fields. During the early 1860s telegraph coaches followed this route daily carrying mail between the gold fields and Kyneton. Nevertheless, Redesdale was scarcely considered a place of significance and when Mr Bain suggested making a road to Redesdale in 1860 there was much amusement with someone responding he might was well make a road to the moon.[5]

More extensive settlement of the area in the 1860s by the Catholic settlers prompted the survey of the Redesdale Township and the sale of the first township blocks in 1871. Building work was characterized by the use of bluestone and by 1870 the main road boasted a police station, hotel, a Catholic Church, a post office, a bakery, a drapery and butchery with slaughter yards out the back.

During this period Redesdale established itself as a solid agricultural township. After the construction of a branch line railway in 1891 the township became an important railhead.

History of *Boonderoo*, 67 McNiffs Road, Redesdale

The house at 67 McNiffs Road is built on the north-west corner of Crown Allotment 75, granted by the Crown to Patrick Seymour on the 14th March 1863. Much of the land in the area around Bendigo was opened up following the cancellation of leasehold and the availability of much smaller allotments to farmers. Patrick Seymour was a farmer, and the 69 acres of Crown Allotment 75 was located just to the south of the township of Redesdale. He also owned another allotment, which covered an area of 73 acres, located on the north side of what would become McNiffs Road.[6]

In 1870, Seymour mortgaged the property to William Henry Greene.[7] Taking out a mortgage was often one of the means available to farmers to finance development or construction of their property, and it can be assumed that Seymour used his newly acquired capital to build the house on allotment 75. Seymour's original house was of two rooms and was built of double bluestone. The chimney on the right hand side of the building indicates which was the original structure [8]. Bluestone was extensively quarried in the region and is likely to have been utilised in the construction. One such quarry was located near Napthali Ingham's Quarry Hotel in Axedale.[9]

Seymour apparently needed further capital, and took out another mortgage to Greene on the 15th March 1870, followed in 1872 by another mortgage to Nathaniel McClure.[10] Seymour's finances must have been somewhat dire, as the series of mortgages was continued over the following years, with a total of five mortgages granted to him between 1870 and 1881. The final of these was to John McNiff, Seymour's neighbour, who became the owner of the land on the 3rd March 1887.[11]

The series of mortgages was perhaps a means of financing the extension of Seymour's property. In 1872, Seymour bought a small 16 acre allotment, from Bridget Connolly, the wife of Edward Connolly.[12] The land was located adjacent to Seymour's, but on the opposite side of the government road that had previously bordered Seymour's property. It is also probable the mortgages were utilised to undertake changes to the property, with the property being extended with a further two rooms of weatherboard added on the left hand side of the existing structure, and a bluestone outbuilding constructed for use as a kitchen. [13]

John Mc Niff was the hotel keeper of the Redesdale Hotel, though he also owned extensive lands in the vicinity of Redesdale. McNiff had established the hotel in the 1860s and ran it until his death in 1901.[14] The acquisition of Seymour's land extended McNiff's holding to a total of 225 acres, which covered a number of Crown allotments and extended up to the edge of the town of Redesdale.[15] Part of his holding was acquired by the Victorian Railway Commissioner on the 25th February 1890, but this portion did not effect the house that Seymour had built. [16] The transfer was presumably as part of a resumption of land for the construction of the new line for Kynteton and Redesdale. Construction of the line commenced in February 1888 and Redesdale station opened in 1891.[17]

McNiff died on the 5th March 1901 and thereafter some of his property, including the house at 67 McNiffs Road, was transferred to his widow, Anne McNiff, and Hugh Rawson. Rawson worked as a draper in the nearby town of Kyneton. In 1909, a portion of the property came under the ownership of James McNiff and Peter McNiff, who were probably the sons of Anne and John. Both men were farmers who worked in the Redesdale area. They had assumedly worked the land owned by John McNiff before, and probably continued to do so. James and Peter McNiff took out a series of mortgages following their acquisition of the property, including one to Ellen and Joseph McNiff in 1910.[18]

Following the death of James McNiff in 1929, Peter McNiff and Ellen Bunce became the owners of the whole estate. By 1944, Peter and John McNiff were the joint proprietors of the land. In 1952, Peter McNiff became the sole owner of the

property. [19]

By the 1970s, the house at 67 McNiffs Road had been partially renovated and community consultation has indicated that it was also extended and the original weatherboard part was clad in bluestone. [20]

[1] Randell, J. O. (1982), *Pastoral settlement in northern Victoria, Vol. 2: The Campaspe District,* Chandos, Burwood, p. 23.

[2] Powell, J.M. (1970) *The public lands of Australia Felix; settlement and land appraisal in Victoria 1834-91 with special reference to the Western Plains*, Oxford University Press, New York, p .67

[3] Serle, Geoffery (1963), *The Golden Age: A history of the colony of Victoria 1851 - 1861,* Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, p. 23

[4] Metcalfe Roads Board Minutes, 10 September 1860

[5] For further information on the former Shire of Metcalfe, see Twigg, Karen & Jacobs, Wendy (1994), *Shire of Metcalfe Heritage Study*, Ballarat, Victoria.

[6] Plan of the Parish of Redesdale, undated.

[7] Certificate of Title, Vol. 21, Fol. 135.

[8]Draft citation feedback sheet received from property owner, 2008

[9] Randell, J. O. (1985). *McIvor: A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote,* Shire of McIvor, p. 274

[10] Certificate of Title, Vol. 21, Fol. 135.

[11] Certificate of Title, Vol. 21, Fol. 135.

[12] Certificate of Title, Vol. 550, Fol. 889.

[13] Information from current property owner, 2009

[14] Rowe, Bill (1989), *Redesdale: Yesterday and Today My Last Hurrah,* the Author, Redesdale, Victoria, p. 9.

[15] Certificate of Title, Vol. 1893, Fol. 21.

[16] Certificate of Title, Vol. 1893, Fol. 21.

[17] McLaren, Bruce (1994), *Historical Notes on the Redesdale Junction to Redesdale Railway,* Courtesy of the Greater City of Bendigo, p. 1.

[18] Certificate of Title, Vol. 3360, Fol. 842.

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

4 Transforming the land

4.4 Farming

Description

Physical Description

67 McNiffs Road began as a double bluestone two roomed house, with a bluestone chimney on its western face.It is believed that shortly after this, a wide hallway and two rooms were added in weatherboard to the left hand side of the structure. These two rooms backed onto a brick chimney. It is believed at around the same time of construction a bluestone outbuilding was erected that was for use as a kitchen. This originally had a corrugated iron flu, which has now been replaced with brick. This outbuilding has been added to at some point in bluestone, however, unlike the original part of this structure, this was built with foundations. It is believed that remains of its original shingle roof can still be seen, and the fireplace still retains some original features. [1]

67 McNiffs Road now appears as a late Victorian house with hipped roof and a straight profile verandah. Both the internal and external bluestone walls of the original house have been retained, however the weatherboard component to the left of the original structure was reclad with recycled bluestone in the 1970s, using stone sourced locally from a demolished cottage [2] . The stonework of the house is of squared and snecked rubble in large and small blocks and there is a distinctive use of pale basalt blocks randomly located in the walls, and there is slight differences between the original and later stonework. The verandah is likely to have been reconstructed as it is built from turned posts and has cast iron brackets attached to a timber verandah beam. There is no frieze. The two chimneys described above are still remaining, one of stone and one of painted brick. The windows are plain double hung sashes, and the door has side and highlights. The small stone outbuilding originally used as a kitchen is still remaining. It is also bluestone with a brick chimney. The gable end has been clad in weatherboard and the stone has been painted. The main building has had a rear extension in the 1970s, which has been constructed using recycled local bluestone.[3] An contemporary extension has been constructed adjacent to the house.

[1] Information from current property owner, 2009

[2] Information from current property owner, 2009

[3] Information from current property owner, 2009

Physical Condition

Good

Conservation Policy

Guidelines (Specific)

The following specific conservation actions are recommended, should the opportunity arise:

None specified.

Comparative Analysis

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67 McNiffs Road is less intact than other comparable examples including 121 Mt Lofty Road, Redesdale.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The late Victorian bluestone house and bluestone outbuilding at 67 McNiffs Road, Redesdale.

How is it significant?

The house and outbuilding are of local aesthetic significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

Why is it significant?

The house is a representative example of a late Victorian rural homestead, originally built as double bluestone two roomed house with a bluestone chimney on its western face. The house is interesting for its illustration of changing building techniques. The house was built in distinct phases, with a later weatherboard structure added to the left of the building, which was later reclad with bluestone, and a bluestone kitchen constructed at the rear. The house is notable for the quality of the stonemasonry which is laid in an unusual pattern of large and small blocks utilizing the shades of dark and light basalt stone and there is slight differences between the original and later stonework. *(Criterion D)*

Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria:

Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion C Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects.

Criterion D Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

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

Criterion G 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 their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

Criterion H Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

Recommendations 2008

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Fences & Outbuildings	Yes
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	Yes
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No

Other Recommendations

It is recommended that 67 McNiffs Road, Redesdale be added as an individual place to the Heritage Overlay of the Greater City of Bendigo Planning Scheme with the schedule entry as shown above. The extent of registration is defined by a map. The recommended Incorporated Plan is the 'Permit Exemption Incorporated Plan - Former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye.'