

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name	Edinburgh Tannery	
Address	145 Tannery Lane MANDURANG	Grading 2008 Local
Building Type	Tannery	
Assessment by	Context Pty Ltd	



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

Maker / Builder Unknown

Integrity

Hide shed - High

Tannery - Archeological

History and Historical Context

History of the former 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

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the land, Mitchell named the area *Australia Felix*.^[1]

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.^[6]

[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] Hewat, Tim (1983), p. 107.

History of Edinburgh Tannery, 145 Tannery Lane, Mandurang

The Edinburgh Tannery was built by the Deeham Brothers for Messrs Goudge and Sibley in circa 1855, and went on to become one of the largest tanneries in the district. The location took advantage of the proximity of the Sheepwash Creek and the necessity of an accessible body of water. Under their ownership, the tannery was substantially expanded, though the details of work undertaken have not been revealed by this research, but such was the scope of their enterprise that they produced 5,000 hides per annum.^[1]

Messrs Goudge and Sibley sold to Mr. J. H. Abbott and Co. circa 1890. J. H. Abbott, MLC, was of English origin, and had come to Australia with his family amidst the gold rushes of the 1850s. Abbott established *The Digger's Advocate*, the first newspaper on the goldfields. In January 1858, Abbott was elected a member of the Sandhurst Borough Council, and became Chairman of the same body in 1860.^[2] Abbott was elected to the Legislative Council in 1876 and stood as a

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member for a number of years. He became major of Bendigo in 1891.[3] Abbott established a shoe shop in Pall Mall in Bendigo, from which he sold some of the wares produced at the Edinburgh Tannery.

During the period of Abbott and Co.'s ownership, buildings associated with the tannery included a hide shed, beam shed, rolling loft, currying department and associated storage facilities. Each section of the tannery was managed separately. Mr Wittman was in charge of the tannery itself, Mr. Boundy supervised the beam shed, and Mr. Prince managed the currying department.[4]

The process of tanning was a complex and multi-staged one. Around 500 hides were stored in the hide shed, which were soaked in 'soak pots', first clean water, then lime water and then cleaned. The hides were then taken to the beam shed, where further cleaning took place and the hides soaked. The Edinburgh Tannery had seventy soaking pits in the yard, all of which were filled with tanning liquor made from ground wattle bark soaked in water. Following soaking, the hides were rolled in the rolling loft, a process centred on compressing and solidifying the fibres of the leather. The hides were then cured in the currying department.[5]

Government regulations limited tanneries from stripping wattle bark outside the months of September to January, and space had to be made for the storage of wattle bark on the grounds of the tannery. Bark sheds were built for this purpose, but are assumed to be no longer extant. Bark was disintegrated to ready it for use in the process, and the vast quantities of water required for this process were drawn from the nearby Sheepwash Creek.

Circa 1890, the Edinburgh Tannery produced more than 240 hides per week. Extensions were made to the tannery in order to keep up with demand.

J. H. Abbott and Co.'s Tannery was destroyed by fire on the 18th December 1894. The factory and plant in its entirety was destroyed and damages were at the time estimated to total £10,000. [6] The tannery was rebuilt, but production ceased in 1904.

In 1980, Neville Stilman bought the former Edinburgh Tannery.[7] Restorations of buildings associated with the Tannery were planned, but it is not known if they were carried out.

[1] Togno, Viola (1981), *Edinburgh Tannery, Sheepwash Creek, Mandurang*, p. 15.

[2] Togno, Viola (1981), p. 3.

[3] Togno, Viola (1981), p. 3.

[4] Togno, Viola (1981), p. 15.

[5] Togno, Viola (1981), pp. 15 - 17.

[6] Togno, Viola (1981), pp. 19.

[7] Togno, Viola (1981), no page number.

Sources

Hewat, Tim (1983), *Bridge Over Troubled Waters, A History of the Shire of Strathfieldsaye*, Shire of Strathfieldsaye, Victoria

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

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Spreadborough, Robert and Anderson, Hugh (1983). *Victorian Squatters*, Red Rooster Press, Ascot Vale

Togno, Viola (1981), *Edinburgh Tannery, Sheepwash Creek, Mandurang*

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

5. Building Victoria's industries and workforce

5.1 Processing raw materials.

Description

Physical Description

The site of the Edinburgh Tannery contains some archaeological evidence of the former tannery buildings. This consists largely of masonry rubble, although much building material has been removed. One building from the tannery remains and is reputed to have been used as the hide shed. This is a large open sided shelter with a hipped roof supported on round bush poles. A wide verandah surrounds the central part of the building which is of weatherboard cladding. The roof forms a high hip with a central apex.

There is also a new house on the site but this is not of interest.

Physical Condition

Hide Shed - good

Tannery -ruins

Conservation Policy

The hide shed is in good condition, however timber structures may be subject to rot and termite attack. Ongoing maintenance in the repair of timber and/or replacement of severely damaged timber will be required. The roof is currently in good repair and this should be maintained in order to conserve timber beneath. The structure has no guttering so care should be taken to ensure water is carried away from the base of poles, possibly in surface spoon drains.

Comparative Analysis

There are no comparable buildings of this type relating to the tannery industry in Mandurang. The hide shed is also a large and impressive timber structure which compares to some other farm complexes such as 81 Daniels Lane Mia Mia, although it is built much later.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

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The timber and corrugated iron hide shed and archaeological ruins at 145 Tannery Road is significant. The house is not significant.

How is it significant?

145 Tannery Lane is of local historic and technical significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

Why is it significant?

The Edinburgh Tannery was a large and important industry for the Mandurang area and provided the name of Tannery Lane. The location on the Sheepwash Creek was chosen in order to supply the tannery with the large amount of water required for the process. Although all the early buildings from the 1850s were destroyed in a fire, the tannery reopened after rebuilding in 1894 and continued to operate for another 10 years until closing in 1904. The place has associations with J.H. Abbot who established *The Diggers Advocate* that was the first newspaper on the goldfields. Abbott later served as MLC in 1876 and later as mayor of Bendigo. The tannery industry was integrated with the shoe shop in Pall Mall also established by Abbott. *Criterion A*

The remaining building which is thought to be the hide shed is a fine example of a vernacular building type with high roof form and open sided verandah allowing space for hanging hides. It represents the only building left from the 1894 rebuilding of the Edinburgh tannery. The hide shed is of technical significance for its demonstration of part of the complex and multi tasked process of hide tanning. *Criterion F*

The archaeological remains of the tannery dating from two different periods (1855 and 1894) have potential to lead to a greater understanding of the layout and function of the tannery. *Criterion C*

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*

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*

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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 145 Tannery Lane, Mandurang be added as an individual place to the Heritage Overlay of the City of Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme as shown above. The extent of registration is the whole of the property as defined by the title boundaries. The recommended Incorporated Plan is the 'Permit Exemption Incorporated Plan - Former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye.'