

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name	Railway House		
Address	9 Railway Court KNOWSLEY	Grading	2008 Local
Building Type	Railway Residence/Quarters		
Assessment by	Context Pty Ltd		



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

Altered

History and Historical Context

History of the Shire of McIvor

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. Much of the former Shire of McIvor 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. Campaspe Plains was subdivided in 1852, and John Hunter Paterson established Derrinal Station on a portion of the land. His license was transferred to William Speed in 1853, and then Alfred Leonard Wilton in 1865. The license was eventually forfeited in 1880.^[2]

The discovery of gold at Bendigo and 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]

Development of the McIvor district was led by Heathcote, where facilities emerged in conjunction with an increasing population brought on by the gold rushes. The town site of Heathcote was surveyed by Phillip Chauncey and first land sale at Heathcote held on the 24th January 1854.^[4] The Heathcote and Waranga District Road Board was formed in 1861, and became the Shire of McIvor in 1864, encompassing a number of the small towns in the district.

Religious and educational facilities were established early in the development of the Shire, initially at Heathcote, then gradually spreading to other small towns in the district. Following the cancellation of leasehold, land holdings were of a smaller scale and pastoralists were gradually overtaken by farmers. Pre-emption rights allowed squatters to purchase up to 640 acres of their pastoral leases and many took advantage of the opportunity to establish smaller holdings. Grazing, agriculture, dairying and viticulture were mainstays for the region. Alongside agriculture, the timber industry was of vital importance to the district and a number of sawmills were established. Gold and alluvial mining continued in the district for a number of years after the height of the gold rushes.

Construction of the railway from Wandong to Bendigo took place in three stages and was officially opened in October 1888. The railway encouraged further development of the region and provided an easy means of transportation of both goods and people to and from the district. The development of the Eppalock weir in the 1930s, and its incorporation into Eppalock Reservoir in 1960-65 provided local farmers with an accessible water source for their crops. ^[5]

In 1994 the Shire of McIvor was amalgamated with nearby Shires to form the City of Greater Bendigo.

History of Railway House, 9 Railway Court, Knowsley

The Knowsley Railway Station was constructed along the railway line from Heathcote Junction to Bendigo. The line from Bendigo to Heathcote Junction formed part of a larger system of railway lines that developed following the passing of the Railway Construction Act No. 8212 of 1884. The Act became commonly known as the 'Octopus Act', and had been in part prompted by public protest around the need for further development of railways in Victoria.^[6] This need was similarly felt in Heathcote following the development of the diggings at McIvor in the 1850s. The massive influx of population prompted a need for the establishment of facilities that could supply them with basic necessities. Furthermore, the railway was seen as a means through which local agriculturalists, as well as the timber industry, could expand their markets in towns and cities further afield.

Initial debate around the railway centred on the route it would take. There was much support for a route that would connect Wandong and Bendigo via Heathcote, but Mr. Thomas Bent, the Minister for Railways, endorsed a route from Wandong. Construction of the railway took place in three stages; from Wandong to Kilmore, Kilmore to Heathcote, and finally Heathcote to North Bendigo Junction. The contract for the segment of the line from Heathcote to North Bendigo

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Junction, which incorporated the Knowsley siding, was let to A. O'Keefe in 1887, for his tendered sum of £168,818.[7]

Construction commenced at the Bendigo end of the line, and extended slightly beyond the junction at Bendigo, measuring a total of twenty eight miles. The contract for the work called for a completion date of the 30th April 1888, but O'Keefe only finished the work on the 1st October of that year. [8]

Andrew O'Keefe was of Irish descent and had arrived with his family in Bendigo in 1854. Following from his father, who was a contractor in the area, Andrew O'Keefe worked on the Bendigo to Echuca railway during its construction in the early 1860s, after which he established himself as an extensive contractor in the district. O'Keefe worked on tramways, railways lines and the construction of the Laanecoorie weir, as well as finding further employment as the manager for Kimbolton station.[9] He was a prominent member of the local community, and an entrepreneurial one. Upon his death in 1904, O'Keefe was the owner of a substantial pastoral estate.[10]

Knowsley station was one of the original sidings on the line. Knowsley was a mixed station, supporting both passengers and good services. The house at 9 Railway Court was built on land that was allocated to the Victorian Railways Commissions on the 12th July, 1887 and it is assumed that the place was constructed soon thereafter. The Commission was granted a portion of land that covered an area of just over 23 acres, and covered parts of Crown Allotments 10 and 11.[11] No information with regard to the house at 12 Bywater Street has been located, but it appears that this place was also associated with the railway. Community consultation has revealed that the house is perhaps part of the former Knowsley railway station which was relocated on the block at some stage and renovated.[12]

During the 1870s and 1880s, standard plans for railway station buildings and residences were used. By the 1880s, economising measures in railway construction meant the construction of timber stations became standard practice. Towards the end of the 1880s, the majority of stations were built in accordance with the 'St James' plan, a timber portable station with two small porches.[13] These were a portable construction, reflecting the transience of many of the smaller sidings along rural lines.

By the 1920s, Knowsley supported three services per week, which ran on Monday, Thursday and Saturday.[14] Knowsley remained a staffed station until 1927[15]. Passenger services on the line were withdrawn in 1942. The line closed on the 3rd of December 1958.[16]

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

[2] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 31.

[3] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 31.

[4] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 21.

[5]Heritage Victoria, (n.d), *Eppalock Weir*, Hermes entry 6482

[6] Turton, Keith W. (1968), *Farewell to the Timber Line: The History of the Heathcote Junction to Bendigo and Associated Railways*, Rooster Press, Ascot Vale, p. 3.

[7] Turton, Keith W. (1968), p. 9.

[8] Turton, Keith W. (1968), p. 9.

[9] Healy, Mary (1988), *Railways and Pastures: the Australian O'Keefes, a tribute to their pioneering efforts*, Spectrum Publications, Richmond, p. 51.

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[10] Healy, Mary (1988), p. 61.

[11] Certificate of Title, Vol. 1929, Fol. 667.

[12] Community consultation.

[13] Heritage Victoria for Victorian Rail Track (March 2002). *VicTrack Infrastructure on the Victorian Heritage Register*, Melbourne, p. 16.

[14] Victorian Railways, *Bradshaw Guide* (1905) www.victorianrailways.net/timetables/bradshaws/bradgpage19.html page 19, accessed 23/02/2009

[15] Turton, Keith W. (1968), p. 17.

[16] Turton, Keith W. (1968), p. 25

Primary sources

Certificate of Title, Vol. 1929, Fol. 667.

Community consultation.

Secondary sources

Victorian Railways, *Bradshaw Guide* (1905), www.victorianrailways.net/timetables/bradshaws/bradpage19.html

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Randell, J. O. (1985), *McIvor, A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote*, Shire of McIvor, Heathcote, Victoria.

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Relevant Historical Australian Themes

3.0 Connecting Victorians by transport and communication

3.3 Linking Victorians by rail

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Description

Physical Description

The railway at Knowsley is recalled in the name Railway Court where there are two timber houses that have been built from standard railway plans. The railway house at 12 Bywater Street has been altered and extended, however the house at 9 Railway Court is more recognisable since it retains the 12 pane sash windows. The original house design consisted of the gable front and the wing with the verandah formed by the extension of the roof line at a different pitch. The other wing is probably a later addition. The brick chimney is detailed with some string coursing.

Physical Condition

Good

Conservation Policy

None Specified

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

Railway House at 9 Railway Court, Knowsley, including all of the fabric of the 1887 timber building is significant.

How is it significant?

Railway House at 9 Railway Court, Knowsley is of local historic, social and architectural significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

Why is it significant?

As very little remains of the railway infrastructure of the line from Bendigo to Heathcote Junction, Railway House at 9 Railway Court, Knowsley is historically and socially significant for demonstrable links with the railway and the expansion of passenger services, local industry and markets. The Knowsley Railway Station was one of the original sidings constructed along the railway line from Heathcote Junction to Bendigo. The contract for this segment of the line was let to A. O'Keefe in 1887 and the house at 9 Railway Court was built around the same time on Victorian Railways Commission land. It is likely that the house is part of the former Knowsley Railway Station which was relocated on the block at some stage and renovated. *Criterion A*

The house at 9 Railway Court is architecturally significant as a rare example of a late nineteenth century railway station in the study area. The house appears to be built in accordance with the 'St James' plan of timber portable stations with two small porches. As the portable construction reflected the transience of many smaller sidings along rural lines, the persistence of the house at 9 Railway Court is important, especially in the light of line closure in 1958. 9 Railway Court is a more intact example than a second timber house at 12 Bywater Street, that was also built from standard railway plans but has been altered and extended. The house at 9 Railway Court retains the 12 pane sash windows, the gable front and the wing with the verandah formed by the extension of the roof line at a different pitch. The other wing is probably a later addition. *Criterion D*

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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*

Recommendations 2008

External Paint Controls

No

Internal Alteration Controls

No

Tree Controls

No

Fences & Outbuildings

No

Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted

No

Incorporated Plan

Yes

Aboriginal Heritage Place

No

Other Recommendations

It is recommended that the houses at 9 Railway Court, Knowsley be added as an individual place to the Heritage Overlay of the City of Greater Bendigo with the schedule entry as shown above. The extent of registration is defined by the title boundaries. The recommended Incorporated Plan is the 'Permit Exemption Incorporated Plan - Former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye.'