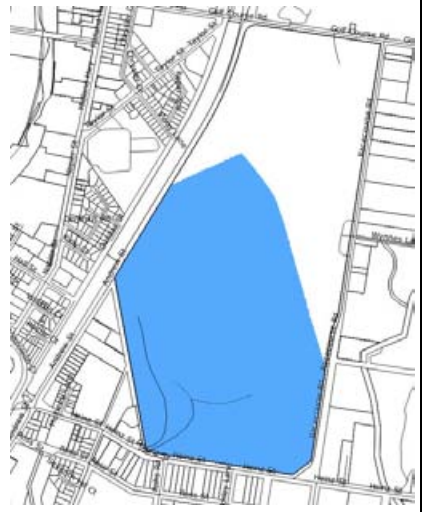


Place name	Bendigo Racecourse	
Address	1-75 Racecourse Road, Ascot	Extent of overlay 
Place type	Racecourse	
Survey date	4 June 2013	
Date of construction	1899 (Lienhop Lodge), 1902 (Grandstand), c.1900s (Manfred Room)	
Recommendation(s)	Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay	



Aerial view of the south of the racecourse (source: www.nearmap.com, 11 July 2013).

Intactness Good Fair Poor

History

The first ever races in the Bendigo district were held in April 1854 at a site 'below the Seventh White Hill', with a grand stand and several booths erected for the occasion.¹ Racing historian Andrew Lemon notes that this site was near the present racecourse site, and it was described by the *Sydney Morning Herald* as 'on the north side of Bendigo below the seventh White Hill on a portion of Linard's Run'.² The Bendigo spring races were held at a course in Epsom in November 1854, with crowds travelling along the road to the site presenting 'an enlivening sight'.³ The gold rush at Epsom began during 1854, and with miners expressing a 'strong opinion that there was gold to be found at the racecourse site', one newspaper ventured that the November races were likely to be the last held at the site.⁴ The choice of a racecourse site in gold-rush era Sandhurst was contentious during the 1850s, due to the risk of reserving such a large portion of land which had the potential to yield gold. Accordingly, in October 1855, a petition from 'upwards of five hundred diggers' was sent to the Government requesting that the Epsom racecourse reserve be made available for mining purposes.⁵

In May 1858, the Bendigo Jockey Club was formed at the Black Swan Hotel, and in 1864 the 'new racecourse at Epsom' was opened.⁶ The new site took in a small portion of the old site, and £600 compensation had been obtained from the Government for the loss of land. The site was fenced in, a timber grandstand erected and a 'splendid course of a little over a mile in length' had been laid out.⁷ Races were held at the site from December 1864, attended by crowds of up to 5000.⁸

The racecourse site, comprising 261 acres and adjacent to the Echuca railway line, was permanently reserved on 27 June 1873.⁹ It was in this period the Bendigo Jockey Club converted the course to left-handed running, in line with the Melbourne courses, and a new timber grandstand was constructed.¹⁰ Regulations for the 'care, protection and management of the Epsom racecourse' were published in the *Government Gazette* in November 1880. At the time, the structures at the site comprised grandstand, members' stand, steward's room, committee room, committee stand, stewards' stand and judges' box.¹¹

It appears that the building now known as Lienhop Lodge may date from 1899, when a number of improvements were undertaken at the racecourse. It is possible that the present form of the Lienhop Lodge was created when the stewards' pavilion building was removed from its original site and used to make additions to the jockeys' room and kitchen.¹² The building is named for Sir John Lienhop, who was the member for Bendigo Province in the Upper House from 1937-1950, and the Victorian Agent-General in London from 1950-1956.¹³ He was also the vice-president of the Bendigo Jockey Club in the 1930s.¹⁴

The 1899 program of works also included the construction of a new pavilion with stewards' room, secretary's room and press room, with verandahs, and a gallery on the verandah giving views to the racecourse. This new pavilion was to be picturesque in appearance, with ornamental shingles on the walls, and was designed by Reed, Smart and Tappin.¹⁵ It is possible that the shingles on a portion of the Lienhop Lodge date from this period.



Airsy oblique aerial photograph of buildings and structures at the Racecourse c. 1920-1930. The c. 1899 Lienhop Lodge is indicated. The image also shows the 1902 grandstand near the Lienhop Lodge, and the 1899 pavilion (since demolished) to the south-east of the grandstand (Source: State Library of Victoria).

In 1902, construction began on a brick grandstand to replace the 1870s stand, which was sold at auction that April.¹⁶ The works were to cost £2,523, of which the club committee borrowed £2,000.¹⁷ The new structure was designed by Ernest J. Keogh, who had won first prize in the design competition.¹⁸ Following completion of the grandstand, the *Bendigo Advertiser* remarked that it was:

probably the finest grandstand out of the metropolis ... designed on commonsense lines, ample provision being made for the comfort and convenience of the public. There is a very pleasant ladies' retiring room, with lavatories, lounges etc., a large cloakroom, and lavatory for gentlemen, a spacious, cool luncheon-room, a publican's booth, with private bar for members only, and a telegraph office – all under the new stand.¹⁹

The new stand could accommodate between 1,000 and 1,500 people 'comfortably'. With the removal of the old stand, the size of the lawn area had doubled, and a luncheon room was removed. The club had also constructed new horse stalls as part of the works.²⁰ The Bendigo Jockey Club offered the racecourse to the Defence Department for use as a training camp for recruits during World War I.²¹ This camp caused the cancellation of the remaining two race meetings that year.²² The camp was shifted to the golf links in July 1916.²³ The site was again used as a camp during World War II.

As can be seen in an oblique aerial photograph of the 1920s (see above) the area around the racecourse was farmland, and the racecourse itself was surrounded by trees. As is the case today, the buildings were sited on the western side of the racetrack. The 1899 pavilion can be seen on the left of the building complex; this building was removed between 1967 and 1980.²⁴ Between 1956

and 1967, a new grandstand was added to the course, increasing seating accommodation for patrons.²⁵ In 1985, new entrance gates were installed, which were dedicated to the troops who had been camped at the site during both World Wars I and II.²⁶

Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes

7.0 Governing Victorians

7.4 Defending Victoria and Australia

9.0 Shaping cultural and creative life

9.1. Participating in sport and recreation

Description and integrity

The Bendigo Racecourse complex is located in a reserve in the Bendigo suburb of Ascot, bounded by Heinz Road to the south, Racecourse Road to the east, Golf Course Road to the north and Andrew Street to the west. The course is approached via a curving triple drive off Heinz Road, which leads to a cluster of administration buildings and public facilities, with the elliptical track to the north-east. Buildings include two main grandstands, Lienhop Lodge and the Manfred Room, as well as a number of auxiliary structures, most of which appear to date from the mid to late 20th century.

The 1902 grandstand is a substantial red brick structure constructed to a design by notable local architect Ernest J. Keogh. The grandstand has a raked form with service areas below the seating section. Double doors with arched highlight windows in the western and southern elevations provide access to the rooms below, while a brick toilet block has been built against the northern elevation. The elaborately hipped and gabled roof, clad with corrugated iron, is supported on iron trusses, while cast iron columns support the front of the roof. The front and open sides of the seating area have a balustrade of timber rail and cast iron lace. The seating comprises long timber benches. Three modern stair cases in front of the grandstand provide access from the lawn.

Lienhop Lodge, thought to have existed in its current form since 1899, is a single-storey painted weatherboard pavilion comprising a series of conjoined but distinct building forms. The southern section is a simple rectangular timber structure with a pitched roof and skillion verandahs to both the east and west elevations. Adjacent to the north elevation is a timber pavilion with a pyramid roof clad in corrugated iron, deep verandah and large windows to three sides; this may be the stewards' pavilion that was moved in 1899. An unusual room with a projecting bay and flat roof is located to its west, the upper walls of which are lined with timber shingles. The three structures are linked by a central square entry porch which opens to the west and is supported by heavy timber posts.

The Manfred Room is a single-storey Federation era building of painted weatherboard with a pitched roof clad in corrugated sheeting. The partially infilled flat-roofed verandah to the north-east and north-west elevations is supported by large square columns and appears to be a later addition.

There are areas of native vegetation to the north, south and east of the track, while the areas around the public facilities are landscaped with native and exotic trees. A row of eight palms lines the path to the west of Lienhop Lodge, with other single specimens nearby and extensive hedging and areas of lawn. Overall the site has a strong landscape quality which contributes to its character as a country racecourse.



The 1902 Grandstand as viewed from the east.



The east elevation of Lienhop Lodge.



The Manfred Room, looking south-west.

Comparative analysis

The Bendigo Racecourse complex was constructed at a time when the popularity of horseracing was booming, particularly in country areas. In this context the Bendigo Racecourse compares with other early racecourses in regional Victoria, including the Hamilton Racecourse complex, which was established in 1859. It comprises two main grandstands, one of which is one of the earliest surviving grandstands in Victoria, constructed in 1873. Other complexes that are still in use today exist at Coleraine, Great Western, Stawell, Peshurst, and Yarra Glen, though these generally have more modest facilities.

The Bendigo Racecourse Grandstand, constructed in 1902, is typical of grandstands constructed at this time featuring raked seating with service areas below and gabled roof above. The Camperdown Turf Club Grandstand (included in the Victorian Heritage Register as H2093) is comparable, constructed in 1902-3 and featuring cast iron columns and a patterned cast iron balustrade, though the structure of the stand itself is timber. The grandstand at the nearby Queen Elizabeth Oval, constructed in 1901, is another brick example that features decorative ironwork.

Assessment against criteria

Criteria amended from VPP Practice Note 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' (September 2012)

Criterion A – Importance to the course or pattern of the City of Greater Bendigo's cultural or natural history (historical significance).

The Bendigo Racecourse complex is of historical significance for its long and early association with the sport of horse racing in Victoria and Bendigo. Opened in 1864, the racecourse has been in operation for almost 150 years on this site. The site is also of interest for its use by the military as a training camp for recruits during both World War I and World War II.



Camperdown Turf Club Grandstand, 1902-3 (source: Victorian Heritage Database)

Criterion B – Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of the City of City of Greater Bendigo’s cultural or natural history (rarity).

N/A

Criterion C – Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Greater Bendigo’s cultural or natural history (research potential).

N/A

Criterion D – Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places and environments (representativeness).

The complex as a whole is a fine and representative example of a regional racecourse which includes all of the elements that would typically be found at such places, including the course itself, grandstand and other related buildings and structures.

The 1902 grandstand is a large and substantially intact example of a Federation-era grandstand.

Criterion E – Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

The Bendigo Racecourse complex is considered to have aesthetic value deriving from the combination of grassed track, grandstand and other key buildings and structures, and the numerous mature native and exotic trees in the landscaped setting.

The 1902 grandstand is of individual aesthetic (architectural) significance as a large and substantially intact example of a Federation era grandstand, with notable cast iron detailing.

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

N/A

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 (social significance).

The Bendigo Racecourse complex is of social significance. Horse racing is one of the oldest and enduringly popular sports in Greater Bendigo, with the first races on the Bendigo goldfields held in 1854. The Bendigo Cup remains a popular horse racing event; the Victorian public holiday for race day is observed locally for the Bendigo Cup Day, not the Melbourne Cup.

Criterion H - Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Greater Bendigo's history (associative significance).

The 1902 grandstand is of interest for its association with local Bendigo architect Ernest J. Keogh. In partnership with Austin he designed a number of hotels, shops, offices and a citizen club in the Bendigo area, and also worked for the Catholic Diocese in Bendigo. By the late 1920s Ernest Keogh was joined by his son K. B Keogh and they continued to undertake work for the Catholic Diocese in Bendigo, and elsewhere.

Statement of significance

What is significant?

The Bendigo Racecourse complex at 1-75 Racecourse Road, Ascot, including the Grandstand, Leinhop Lodge, Manfred Room, the course itself and associated landscaping, is of significance.

How is it significant?

The Bendigo Racecourse complex is of historical, aesthetic/architectural, social and associative significance.

Why is it significant?

The Bendigo Racecourse complex is of historical significance for its long and early association with the sport of horse racing in Victoria and Bendigo. Opened in 1864, the racecourse has been in operation for almost 150 years on this site. The site is also of interest for its use by the military as a training camp for recruits during both World War I and World War II.

The complex is a fine and representative example of a regional racecourse which includes all of the elements that would typically be found at such places, including the course itself, grandstand and other related buildings and structures.

The place as a whole is aesthetically significant for demonstrating the visual qualities associated with grassed horse racing tracks, including the numerous mature native and exotic trees in the landscaped setting.

The Bendigo Racecourse complex is of social significance. Horse racing is one of the oldest sports played in Greater Bendigo, with the first races on the Bendigo goldfields held in 1854. The Bendigo Cup remains a popular horse racing event; the Victorian public holiday for race day is observed locally for the Bendigo Cup Day, not the Melbourne Cup.

The 1902 grandstand is of individual historical and architectural significance as a large and substantially intact example of a Federation era grandstand which incorporates notable cast iron detailing. It is of interest for its association with local architect Ernest J. Keogh, who in partnership with Austin designed a number of hotels, shops, offices and a citizen club in the Bendigo area, and also worked for the Catholic Diocese in Bendigo. Ernest Keogh was later joined by his son and they continued to undertake work for the Catholic Diocese in Bendigo, and elsewhere, from the 1920s.

Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme.

The proposed extent of the HO applies to the area bounded by Heinz Street to the south, Racecourse Road to the east, Andrew Street to the west and the southern extent of Bendigo Golf Club to the north.

External paint controls	Yes
Internal alteration controls	No
Tree controls	No
Outbuildings and fences not exempt under Clause 43.01-3	No
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Heritage Act 1995	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted	No
Name of Incorporated Plan under Clause 43.01-2	Yes – 1-75 Bendigo Racecourse
Aboriginal heritage place	No

Given the size and complexity of the site, an incorporated plan should be prepared to allow for a range of specified works to be undertaken without the requirement for a planning permit under the HO.

The grandstand is considered to be of individual historical and architectural significance. It is broadly comparable to the VHR-registered example at Camperdown (1902-3). Subject to assessment against the Heritage Council's criteria, it is possible the grandstand could be considered to warrant nomination to the Victorian Heritage Register.

Identified by

Lovell Chen, 2013

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- 25 Aerial photographs of the site of 1956 and 1967, Laverton Historic aerial photograph collection, Land Victoria.
- 26 *Annals of Bendigo*, 1985, p. 361