

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name UPPER AXE CREEK NORTH STATE SCHOOL NO. 1788

Address 149 Patons Road AXE CREEK **Grading** 2008 Local

Building Type School - State (public)

Assessment by Context Pty Ltd



Recommended Heritage Protection VHR No HI No PS Yes

Architectural Style Victorian Period (1851-1901)

Maker / Builder Unknown

Integrity

Fair

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

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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 were 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]

History of Axe Creek

Axe Creek was incorporated into the parish of Strathfieldsaye when it was surveyed in 1854. Much of its development occurred in conjunction with the nearby towns of Strathfieldsaye, Eppalock and Emu Creek, which were all located within 20 miles of one another. The land provided good soil for cultivation, a fact that was not missed by pastoralists, who continued to move into the region. The proximity of the creek was of added benefit to farmers, and provided a good water source for their crops and animals and providing rich soils that were suitable for the planting of orchards and vineyards. By the 1880s, there were several major winegrowers operating in the vicinity of Axe Creek.^[7] Bendigo was a source of stable markets for the produce of Axe Creek, including its wines, fruits and vegetables.

The influx of prospectors during the 1850s and the frequency of travellers along the road to Bendigo prompted the construction of a number of hotels in and around Axe Creek. One of these was the Axe Creek Bridge Hotel was in operation in 1863, and was also used as a polling place for the district.^[8] The wine industry developed from the 1860s, and a number of German immigrants who settled in the region planted successful vineyards. The wine industry was devastated following a Phylloxera outbreak in the 1890s, and many vineyards were converted to orchards after that time.

The timber industry was also important to the development of Axe Creek. Construction of the railway from Bendigo to Heathcote in the late 1880s was beneficial to timber cutters, who prior to that time had carted their stocks to and from Bendigo, where they found a stable market in the mining industry.

Denominational schooling facilities had been established by the 1860s, and a state school opened in 1876.

Contextual history of education in the former Shire of Strathfieldsaye

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Prior to 1873, education in Victoria was optional, fee-paying and primarily carried out through religious institutions. Education was in some way 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.[9] 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.[10]

Governor LaTrobe spearheaded the establishment of the National Board of Education in Victoria in 1851, which owned 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. [11]

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. [12] 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.[13]

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.[14] 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 Upper Axe Creek North State School No. 1788

An application was made for the establishment of a school at Five Road end, Axe Creek on the 4th June 1875 to cater for the thirty four school aged children in the district. This was to be Upper Axe Creek North State School No. 1788.[15] Despite the location of two schools nearby, a portable school was transported to the site from Melbourne in 1876, with the work undertaken by William McCulloch & Son for the sum of £28.[16] The structure was said to have weighed close to 7 tonnes and 'complete with teacher's quarters, two closets and two iron tanks.'[17]

Land for the school was originally meant to have been purchased from Mr. Daly, but the school was ultimately located on two acres of land purchased from Matthew and William Charlton on Allotment 2, Section 9, Parish of Sedgwick.[18] The total estimated cost of the school was estimated by the Department to be £156/2/6, and by 1876 the school was completed and operational.[19]

The school appears to have had a problematic beginning, with low attendances being questioned by the District Inspector and the Head Teacher's ill health leading the school to be closed on several occasions until a suitable replacement teacher was found.[20] In 1878 local families petitioned the Hon Minister of Public Instruction requesting the school to be moved

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to a more central position.[21] A year later this discussion was still continuing, with the District Inspector recommending that a central, permanent school be erected to serve the students from nearby schools. On September 29 1880, a storm caused two toilets to be blown over and subsequently repaired.[22]

In 1882 Head Teacher Elizabeth A. Wishart took over and reported that the teachers living quarters were unacceptable, requesting that they be become 'fit to reside in'.[23] The Board of Advice again reported to the Department that the school should be shifted to a more convenient site on a trial basis. The site of the school continued to remain a topic of deliberation, and in 1883 the Board wrote to the Department yet again requesting the school be moved.[24] The school was relocated in 1884 to a site one kilometre south of the present school site. The school eventually closed on the 1st March 1899 and the school building relocated to Mosquito Creek in 1906.

The Axe Creek North School was re-established in 1912 and constructed on a small half acre allotment. Axe Creek North School continued to run as a single room school until 1918, when the building was relocated to another site on the block. An additional one and a half acres of land was purchased from Mr. Hargreaves in 1920.[25] In 1920, a further school building was relocated to Axe Creek from the Black Eagle School and the school was renamed Eppalock. The original single room school building was used as a storage facility, though the date of its conversion to this function is not known.

In 1951, some minor works to the tanks and outbuildings of the teachers' residence at Eppalock were undertaken.[26]

In 1953, Derby State School was dismantled and re-erected at Eppalock State School No. 1788. A plan of the school site shows the new building erected to the west of the already extant school building.[27]

Upper Axe Creek North State School No. 1788 continued to expand with increasing enrolments. The relocated building from Black Eagle School was eventually demolished.

[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.

[7] Earth Tech Engineering Pty Ltd (2002), Heathcote - Strathfieldsaye Thematic History, City of Greater Bendigo, Bendigo, p. 26.

[8] Mitchell, Barbara (2005). On the Creeks: Early Life at Strathfieldsaye in the Valley of the Three Creeks - Axe, Emu and Sheepwash, Barbara Mitchell, Bendigo, Vic, p. 99.

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

[10] Earth Tech Engineering Pty Ltd (2002), p. 51.

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- [11] Peterson, Richard (1993), p.1.
- [12] Peterson, Richard (1993), pp. 1 - 3.
- [13] Burchell, L. E. (1989), *Survey of One Room State Schools 1900 - 1940*, L. E. Burchell, Victoria, p. i.
- [14] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 151.
- [15] Mitchell, Barbara (2005), p. 78.
- [16] Mitchell, B, (2005), p. 78.
- [17] Mitchell, B, (2005), p. 78.
- [18] Mitchell, B, (2005), p. 78.
- [19] Mitchell, B, (2005), p. 78.
- [20] Mitchell, B, (2005), pp. 78-79.
- [21] Mitchell, B, (2005), p. 79.
- [22] Mitchell, B, (2005), p. 80.
- [23] Mitchell, B, (2005), p 80
- [24] Mitchell, B. (2005), p. 80.
- [25] Axe Creek/ Eppalock Committee, (1981), *Axe Creek Eppalock Recalled*, Axe Creek, Victoria, p. 7.
- [26] Eppalock SS 1788, VPRS 795, P0000, Unit 2337, Public Records Office of Victoria.
- [27] Eppalock SS 1788, VPRS 795, P0000, Unit 2337, Public Records Office of Victoria.

Primary sources

Eppalock SS 1788, VPRS 795, P0000, Unit 2337, Public Records Office of Victoria.

Secondary sources

Axe Creek/ Eppalock Committee, (1981), *Axe Creek Eppalock Recalled*, Axe Creek, Victoria

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

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

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

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

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

8. Building Community Life

8.2 Educating People

Description

Physical Description

Plans show that the former Eppalock school was relocated from Derby to its present site in 1953. It is a one room timber school building with steeply pitched gable roof and weatherboard cladding. The roof is ventilated with gable vents and tube ventilators through the roof. Plans show that the single classroom was designed to be 36' x 20' and there was a porch of 11' x 11'. It appears that the porch is missing and a doorway has been boarded up as the current set of steps lead to a blank wall. The four windows have twelve pane sash windows and the gable ends have small finials. The room was heated by a stove on a concrete slab. Plans show that new chalkboards were added when the school was relocated to its present site.

Physical Condition

Good

Conservation Policy

Regular painting should be carried out.

Comparative Analysis

This is one of a number of small schools in the study area built by the Education Department. It is a representative example of a one room school.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

Upper Axe Creek North State School no. 1788 including all the fabric of the c.1912 timber building is significant.

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How is it significant?

The Upper Axe Creek North State School no. 1788 is of local historic and social significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

Why is it significant?

The Upper Axe Creek North 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. *Criterion A*

The school is of social significance for the Axe Creek community as a site of continuous education since 1912. *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*

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	No
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	Yes
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No

Other Recommendations

It is recommended that the School at 149 Patons Road, Axe Creek be added as an individual place to the Heritage Overlay of the Greater Bendigo City Planning Scheme with the schedule entry as shown below. 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.'