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| **Name** | Vine Hill Villa | | |
| **Address** | 287 Mannes Lane AXE CREEK | **Grading** | 2008 Local |
| **Building Type** | House | | |
| **Assessment by** | Context Pty Ltd | | |



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

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| **Designer / Architect** | Mauermann, E | **Architectural Style** | Victorian Period (1851-1901) |

**Integrity**

High

## History and Historical Context

### History of Shire of Stathfieldsaye

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 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]

**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.

**History of German immigrants**

German migrants played a significant role in the establishment and development of the districts in and around Bendigo. The German connection with the district began with the import of five hundred German stonemasons in 1859. The

Germans were employed on the Melbourne to Sandhurst railway line, after the previous workforce had rallied around the eight hour day and imposed a strike. The migrant workforce undoubtedly experienced difficult beginnings, but following the expiration of their covenants the following year, many sought to remain in the area and went about the process of finding employment.[9]

Political turbulence in Germany and the discovery of gold at Bendigo and later McIvor brought a large number of migrants to the fledgling colony, eager to try their hand at a share of the perceived riches. A number of liberal and radical German citizens were forced or chose to leave their homeland[10], and the prospect of riches on the goldfields undoubtedly contributed to the proportion of their number who chose to seek out a life at the McIvor diggings. Eventually, German-speaking diggers comprised the third-largest ethnic group on the Victorian goldfields.[11] By the 1850s, a number of German clubs and societies had formed in Bendigo and surrounding towns[12] and German enclaves were well established at German Gully, Diamond Hill, Victoria Hill, New Chum Gully and Ironbark.[13]

While many German migrants continued to work the goldfields, to others it became apparent that wealth was more difficult to come by than it had appeared and many migrants sought alternative means of supporting themselves and their families. A number of German migrants were influential in the development of the viticulture industry, and had brought with them substantial knowledge which they put to work in their new ecological context. Many Germans who had been working the goldfields began to switch to more agricultural pursuits in the 1860s and a number became successful vignerons.[14]

**History of Vine Hill Villa, 287 Mannes Lane, Axe Creek**

Vine Hill Villa was built on part of allotment 3 of section 9 in the Parish of Strathfieldsaye, that was granted by the Crown to W. Somerville on the 21st December 1854.[15] Somerville's land covered an area of 35 acres, two roods and three perches and he paid £184.14.0 for the allotment.[16]

Somerville sold part of the allotment to Thomas Lowndes in 1857 for the sum of £124.16.0, and gifted a further portion to John Hargreaves, his son in law, in 1881.[17] It was Lowndes portion that Vine Hill Villa was later built.

Thomas Lowndes sold his allotment to Ambrose Lowndes, presumably his brother, on the 22nd April1874 for the sum of £330. Ambrose Lowndes took out a mortgage to George and Guylott Barker the following day, raising the considerable sum of £270. This money was assumedly used to finance the construction of Vine Hill Villa.

Vine Hill Villa was designed by the architect Emil Maurmann and constructed circa 1888. Maurmann had been commissioned by the owner, Ambrose Lowndes to work on the project Maurmann was also involved in the design of renovation of Fortuna Villa, the former home of George Lansell, who had made his fortune mining quartz in the vicinity of Bendigo.

Along with a number of other vignerons in the district, Ambrose Lowndes was a German migrant, and he had established a substantial orchard and vineyard at his property at Vine Hill by the 1890s. The orchard and vineyard covered and area of approximately twenty eight acres, though Lowndes was apparently focussed on the orchard over his viticulture enterprises. His vineyard was undoubtedly destroyed following the discovery of the vine louse Phylloxera in the district in 1884, after this his extensive orchards presumably became his mainstay.

Maurmann was a German architect, who trained under Vahland and Getzschmann at the Bendigo School of Mines. He was also responsible for the design of St. Stephen's Church of England in Emu Creek, which was constructed in 1888.[18] Emil Maurmann was one of a series of German migrants that influenced the development of architectural practise in and around Bendigo. Maurmann was born in Saxony and emigrated to Australia in 1885. Soon after his arrival he travelled to Bendigo, where he joined architects Vahland and Getzschmann in their practice, as a structural engineer. After bringing his family from Germany to Bendigo in 1889, Maurmann departed Victoria for Western Australia during

the depression of the 1890s. Mauermann relinquished is practise in Bendigo in 1896, and it was thereafter taken over by his former pupil, architect F. W. Lehman.[19] One of his more notable buildings was the design of the Bendigo Art Gallery.[20]

Following the death of Ambrose Lowndes circa 1905, Rachel and William John Lowndes assumed possession of the property as the executors of his will. The property remained in the Lowndes family until it was bought by Thomas McGauchie in 1929 for the sum of £1,625. His family owned the place until 1935, when it was sold to David Gerrand, who lived there until his death in 1969.[21]

[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,* Bendigo, Vic, p. 99.

[9] Lawler, Geoffrey (197?), *The Vahland School,* Fifth year thesis for the Department of Architecture, Melbourne University, pp. 2 - 3.

[10] Lawler, Geoffrey (197?) p. 1.

[11] Cusack, Frank (1998), *Bendigo: The German Chapter,* German Heritage Society, Victoria, p.15.

[12] Cusack, Frank (1998), p. 16.

[13] Cusack, Frank (1998), p. 57.

[14] Cusack, Frank (1998), p. 53.

[15] Research notes for old law search application AP 76804.

[16] Research notes for old law search application AP 76804.

[17] Research notes for old law search application AP 76804.

[18] Mitchell, B. (2005), 148.

[19] Miles Lewis Architectural Index, State Library of Victoria.

[20] Miles Lewis Architectural Index, State Library of Victoria.

[21] Research notes for old law search application AP 76804.

**Primary sources**

Research notes for old law search application AP 76804.

**Secondary sources**

*The Age,* Domain liftout, 9/8/2008, p. 3.

Miles Lewis Architectural Index, State Library of Victoria.

Cusack, Frank (1998), *Bendigo: The German Chapter,* German Heritage Society, Bendigo.

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

Lawler, Geoffrey (197?), *The Vahland School,* Fifth year thesis for the Department of Architecture, Melbourne University

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

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

**Relevant Historical Australian Themes**

4. Transforming the land.

4.4 Farming.

## Description

**Physical Description**

287 Mannes Lane is a refined building with projecting gable and return verandah. It has stylistic similarities to many buildings constructed by the Public Works Department in the nineteenth century. This is particularly evident in the brickwork detailing, decoration and paired timber columns, andcurved timber brackets. The chimneys are of finely detailed brickwork with rendered mouldings. The house is complemented by a mature garden containing peppercorn trees and palms. The verandah has been reconstructed in recent years. The brickwork to the gable end is designed with a

slightly recessed panel and cream brick fleur-de-lys either side of the vent.

### Physical Condition

Good

## Conservation Policy

### Guidelines (Specific)

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

The brickwork should not be painted.

## Comparative Analysis

Vine Hill Villa is without direct comparison in the study area. However, the urban area of Bendigo contains similar buildings.

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

Vine Hill Villa, at 287 Mannes Lane, Axe Creek, including all the fabric of the red brick house and mature garden containing peppercorn trees, mulberry, river gums and palms is significant.

*How is it significant?*

Vine Hill Villa, at 287 Mannes Lane, Axe Creek, is of local historic and architectural significance for the City of Greater Bendigo.

*Why is it significant?*

Vine Hill Villa, at 287 Mannes Lane, Axe Creek, is historically significant for its association with the settlement of European vignerons in the region. The owner, German immigrant Ambrose Lowndes was a vigneron and orchardist. He commissioned the design by Maurmann and Vine Hill Villa was constructed circa 1888. The site is also important for its contribution to an understanding of an ongoing tradition of grape growing in the Bendigo region. The extensive orchards at Vine Hill Villa presumably became the mainstay of the property after the setbacks associated with the *Phylloxera vastatrix* outbreak in nineteenth century Victoria. *Criterion A*

Vine Hill Villa, is architecturally significant for its association with Emil Maurmann, a German architect who trained under Vahland and Getzschmann at the Bendigo School of Mines. Maurmann is well known for his influence on the development of architectural practise in and around Bendigo in the late nineteenth century. One of his more notable buildings was the design of the Bendigo Art Gallery. The red brick building, with projecting gable and return verandah, is stylistically similar to many buildings constructed by the Public Works Department in the nineteenth century. This is particularly evident in the brickwork detailing and decoration and paired timber columns with curved timber brackets and the small round vent in the gable end. The chimneys are of finely detailed brickwork with rendered mouldings. The

verandah has been reconstructed in recent years. The garden containing peppercorn trees, mulberry, river gums and palms gives context to the house. *Criterion E*

**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

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

**Other Recommendations**

It is recommended that the house at 287 Mannes Lane  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 defined by a map. The recommended Incorporated Plan is the 'Permit Exemption Incorporated Plan - Former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye.'