

## HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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<b>Name</b>	House		
<b>Address</b>	767 Axe Creek Road AXE CREEK	<b>Grading</b>	2008 Local
<b>Building Type</b>	House		
<b>Assessment by</b>	Context Pty Ltd		




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

High

## 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 the land, Mitchell named the area *Australia Felix*.<sup>[1]</sup>

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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 House, 767 Axe Creek Road, Axe Creek

The property 767 Axe Creek Road comprises Crown Allotment 4 and part of 6, Section 9, Parish of Sedgwick. The house

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is located on Allotment 6, which was first granted by the Crown on 31st December 1856 to C Forbes (while T Haines purchased Allotment 4 that same day). Allotment 6 then went through a series of owners in the 1870s, including Sally Dalton, Malcolm Tolmie, Susan Daly and John Boyd Watson (a major mining magnate and investor for Bendigo), all of Sandhurst (Bendigo). The Watsons then held the property until 16 March 1891, when they sold it to Hugh McLennan, who was a large landowner in the vicinity.[9] McLennan is listed in titles records as a drover, and probably was employed in this capacity upon his own land.

Hugh McLennan mortgaged his land to James Charles Walter on the 30th January 1893, and this could have been a means through which he raised the necessary finance to undertake construction on his allotment. He probably did not have the time to undertake such work, however, as he sold the land John Gregory Edwards on the 21st October 1893.[10] It is more likely that development on the land was undertaken by Edwards, who owned the property for over twenty years, until his death in April of 1915. Edwards appears to have been a man of substantial means, and he is recorded in titles records as a 'gentleman' and later a 'newspaper proprietor'. [11] This was the *Bendigo Independent*, which he was noted as owning 'for very many years'. [12] He was also a prominent member of the Axe Creek community, and served as the President of the school committee for some seventeen years. [13]

After his death, Edwards' property was inherited by Amy Angelina Edwards, Emily Theresa Edwards and Lilian Alice Edwards, who are assumed to have been his daughters. The three are recorded as 'gentlewomen' in the titles. They owned the land for a number of years before selling to Raymond John Edwards on the 30th January 1923. [14] Raymond Edwards was a grazier and ran cattle or sheep on the land.

Raymond Edwards died in August 1955, and the property was granted to his widow, Norma Maori Edwards, listed as residing at "Illira", in Forest Street, Bendigo. [15] Parts of Edwards' substantial allotment were sold off over time, until lots 4 and 6 were eventually sold to Brian John and Jane Edwards on the 1st October 1984. [16]

[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, Victoria, p. 99.

[9] Certificates of Title, Vol. 629, Fol. 706; Vol. 647 Fol. 359; Vol. 1060, Fol. 942.

[10] Certificate of Title, Vol. 2381, Fol. 095.

[11] Certificate of Title, Vol. 2381, Fol. 095.

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[12] 'Bendigo Newspaper Changes', *Argus*, 02/11/1918, p 18.

[13] Mitchell, Barbara (2005), p. 87.

[14] Certificate of Title, Vol. 2381, Fol. 095.

[15] Certificate of Title, Vol. 2381, Fol. 095.

[16] Certificate of Title, Vol. 9601, Fol. 141.

## Primary sources

Certificates of Title.

'Bendigo Newspaper Changes', *Argus*, 02/11/1918, p 18.

## Secondary sources

Earth Tech Engineering Pty Ltd (2002), *Heathcote - Strathfieldsaye Thematic History*, City of Greater Bendigo, Bendigo.

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

Mitchell, Barbara (2005), *On the Creeks: Early Life at Strathfieldsaye in the Valley of the Three Creeks - Axe, Emu and Sheepwash*, Barbara Mitchell, Bendigo, Victoria.

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

4.1 Living off the land

## Description

### Physical Description

767 Axe Creek Road is an unusual house of substantial size with two wings of unequal length. The projecting gable end is clad in weatherboard forming a large arch. There are three rendered chimneys with mouldings at the top. The verandah is decorated with a cast iron frieze and brackets. The house is set in a garden with established trees and shrubs and there is a backdrop of large gum trees behind. The house has an unusual form in that it consists of a long wing with gabled roof intersected by the cross gable which is the same height as the main roof. The house appears to be built all at the same time as all the chimneys are identical and the verandah brackets fit neatly either side of the projecting gable. The large arched porch is unusual when constructed of weatherboard, as this architectural feature is more commonly found in

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Edwardian and Interwar houses constructed in brick.

## Physical Condition

Good

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The house and garden, including mature trees, at 767 Axe Creek Road, Axe Creek are significant.

*How is it significant?*

The house and garden are of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

*Why is it significant?*

Historically, for its associations with long-term owner, John Gregory Edwards, for whom the house was built c.1893. Edwards was the proprietor of the *Bendigo Independent* newspaper for many years and a prominent member of the Axe Creek community, where he served such functions as President of the school committee for 17 years. The house is also significant for associations with John Boyd Watson, a Bendigo mining identity. The house and garden are tangible evidence of his important presence in the community from 1893 until his death in 1915. *Criterion H*

Aesthetically, the house is unusual in Axe Creek for its substantial size, unusual detailing, such as the timber entrance arch, and for its setting in a mature garden with established trees and shrubs. *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*

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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	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 767 Axe Creek 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 defined by a map. The recommended Incorporated Plan is the 'Permit Exemption Incorporated Plan - Former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye.'