

Historical archaeological site card

Heritage Inventory number and name

BARRABOOL FLOUR MILL SITE
H7721-0553

Date received

Tuesday, 27 May 2025

Date accepted

16/6/2025

Hermes Number

212914

1. Place details

Place name:

BARRABOOL FLOUR MILL

Heritage Inventory Number (if any):

Other or former names:

Municipal Council:

Address:

BUCKLEY FALLS RESERVE OFF 41A RIVERGUM DRIVE,
HIGHTON, CITY OF GEELONG, -38.14927, 144.30335

Geographical coordinates (GDA94 or WGS84)
expressed in degrees and decimals of a degree:

Mapsheet name and number (1:100,000 only):

2. Cadastral location

County:

Grant

Parish:

Barrabool

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Township:

Section:

Allotment:

Standard Parcel Identifier (SPI): RES1\PS548431

3. Details of site owner or land manager (where known)

First Name:

Surname:

Business or organisation name: City of
Greater Geelong

Position title: Local Council

Address:

Email address:

Telephone:

4. Details of site occupier (where known)

First Name:

Surname:

Business or organisation name:

Position title:

Address:

Email address:

Telephone:

5. Aboriginal cultural values

Site has known Aboriginal values NO

Site is recorded on the Victorian
Aboriginal Heritage Register NO

6. Current description of site

Please provide description:

The mill was a substantial five-storey rectangular building constructed of locally quarried bluestone with a corrugated iron roof and measured 40ft x 100ft. The mill machinery was driven by a large undershot water wheel (described as 43ft diameter, but this may be the circumference) being supplied along a bluestone lined raceway for a distance of about 800 feet (244m) from the Barwon River where a stone weir had been constructed. The mill was demolished very thoroughly so that only broken stone and scattered small artefacts are visible on the ground surface (demolished ruins of flour mill, scattered cut bluestone blocks spread down slope, scatters of glass and ceramic, in particular to north west of foundations, quarry hole probably from mill construction to south, 400m stone walled water race to Baum's Weir in north). However, the distribution of bluestone fragments clearly marks out the former extent of the buildings, while some squared blocks indicate the form of construction. Further intact foundations and buried walls and floor levels are said to be beneath the rubble. The weir and water race, however, are quite intact, only stopping short of the mill site by about 20m.

Date recorded: Wednesday, 22 February 2023

On Victorian Heritage Register

On Heritage Overlay

Associated sites: Yes, ruins of Highets Farm buildings and canning factory at top of hill to the west, Baums Weir to the north west.

7. Place history

Please provide a brief history of the place (at least 1 to 2 paragraphs):

Robert Jamieson arrived in Port Phillip in 1841 following his younger brother William, '...with his share of his father's modest estate and a loan of approximately £100 from his Uncle Richard Jamieson from Wandel Mill Farm, Wandel, Lanarkshire'. There is no further evidence of them having milling skills, and in Victoria they first became pastoralists at Port Fairy and then Darlots Creek (known as Castlemaddie). In 1849 they moved to Geelong and bought land near the Barwon River, where they built the Barrabool Flour Mill at Buckley's Falls by about 1849 or 1851. John later bought much suburban land at Geelong.

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The mill site was in an area reserved by 1848 for milling. Lieutenant Governor Charles La Trobe had called for tenders in that year for the erection of masonry dam across the Barwon River for the purposes of supplying water to the town for domestic and power purposes. The mill was capable of grinding 1500 lbs of wheat per hour. In 1851, Jamieson sold the mill site to John Highett (presumably the mill was completed or still under construction at that stage).

John Highett (1810-1867) was from a family of minor landed gentry of Weymouth Dorset. He migrated initially to Van Diemen's Land in 1830 with considerable capital and influence and 'respectable testimonials'. Highett crossed to Port Phillip in about 1836 and is claimed to have been the first to drive stock across the Dandenong Creek. He bought a block of land in central Melbourne in 1837, squatted near Carrum till 1839, and took up two runs near Mount Hesse which he had visited in 1836, and was living at 'Petworth' on the Merri Creek in 1840. In 1842 the partners bought land at Barrabool with W C Haines. From 1849 Highett bought many of the smaller blocks near Buckley Falls, including the site of the mill by 1851, which was run for them by Frederick C Morris.

Figure 86 Barrabool Mill from the Barwon River, later Starch Works, Fyansford Manufacturing Company, c.1887-1904.
Source: accession H13265, State Library of Victoria.

A flood washed the wheel away around 1852 and rights to the use of the river water were the subject of dispute in 1874-5 when the proprietors of the nearby Barwon Paper Mill began the construction of their works on the opposite bank, eventually bringing about the closure of the mill.

John Highett sold the mill and surrounding property by 1888 and the buildings were used by the 'Fyansford Starch Factory' using rice as the raw material. Sometime later it was converted into a jam factory. The buildings were still visible in 1962, but were subsequently demolished by the land owner and the site of the mill mostly cleared, although the weir and water race are still evident.

8. Analysis of site (interpretation)

Include phases in the development of the site, functions and activities represented, as well as current place use:

Although the site has been 'cleaned up' by Geelong Council, burying most of the mill site, historic photos indicate the structure cut into the hill site, which would retain the foundations and lower walls beneath the demolition rubble, other areas to the top of the hill have surface scatters of domestic and industrial refuse including glass bottles and ceramic crockery. The quarry and water race are clearly evident.

9. Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The site of the Barrabool flour mill and later starch factory along with the water race, weir and quarry used to source construction stone at Buckley Falls Park, Highton.

How is it significant?

The Barwon mill is of archaeological and historical significance at the local level

Why is it significant?

Barrabool mill was one of the largest water powered flour mills in the district and represents the first phase of industrialisation of the Barwon river and south Geelong generally. The site has considerable archaeological potential, in particular for understanding the design of early power systems including the waterwheel and steam engine.

10. Suggested Protection :

11. Threat

Is the place under any threat? If so, what is the threat?

12. References / Informants

Please list books or other sources that may provide historical information about this place.

13. Attachments

- Site card supporting documents-1 GV.jpg
- Site card supporting documents-2 GV.jpg
- Site card supporting documents-3 GV.png
- Site card supporting documents-4 GV.png
- Site card supporting documents-5 GV.png
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14. Recording archaeologist's details

First Name:

Surname:

Business or organisation name:

Position title:

Business or company address:

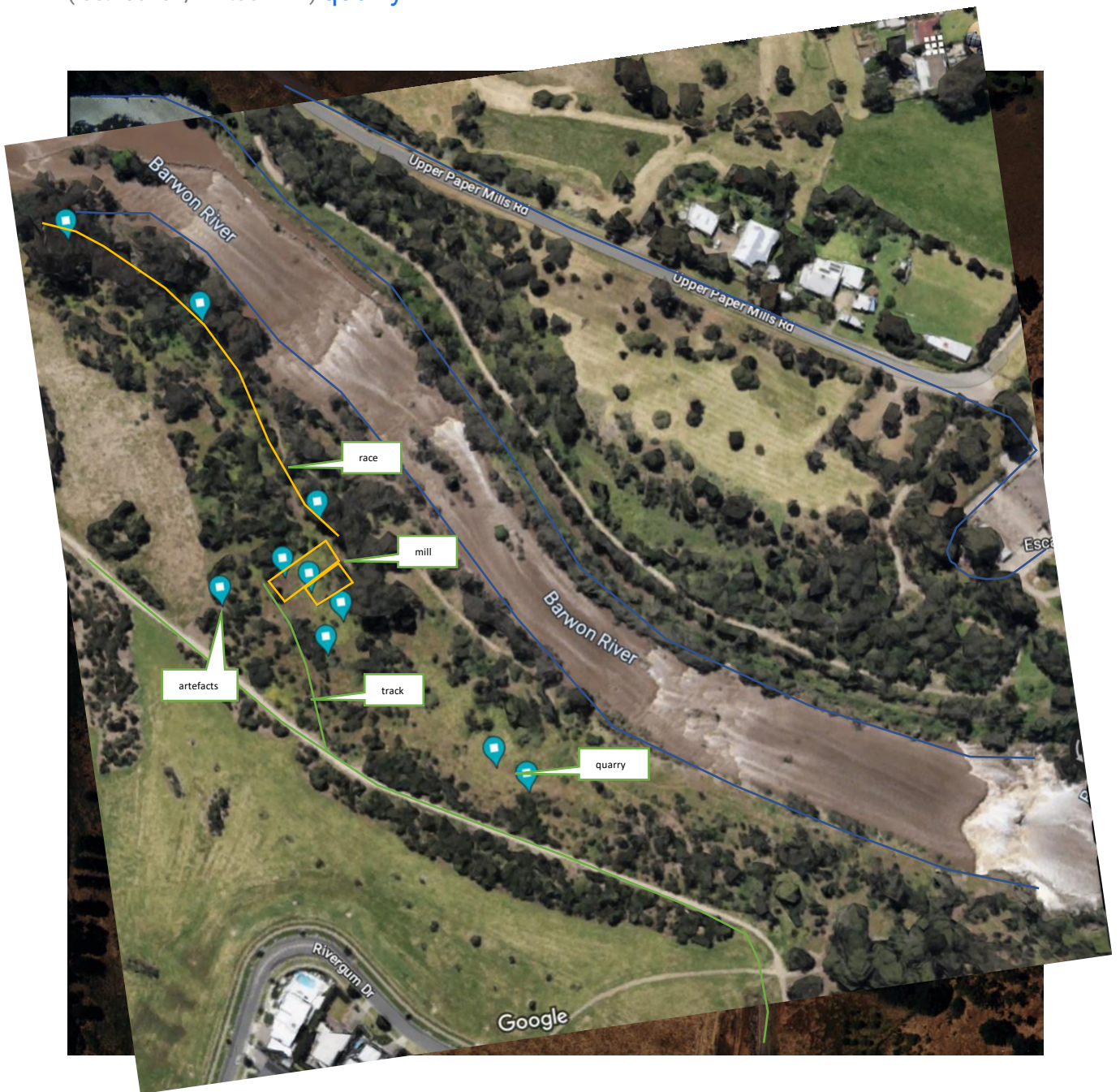
Email address:

Telephone:

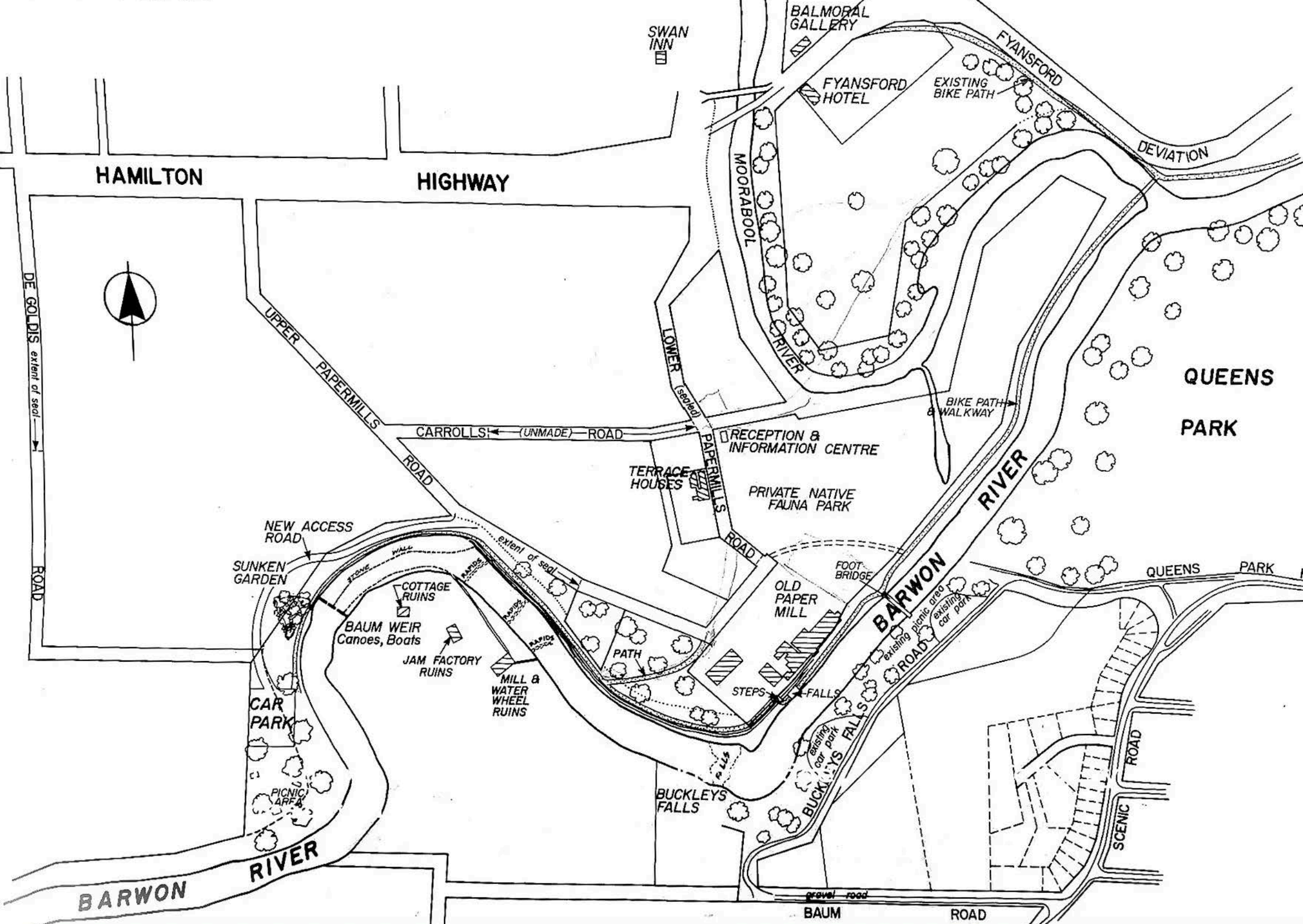
15. Declaration

I state that the information I have given on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge.

- (-38.149463, 144.302922) Artefacts
- (-38.147902, 144.302411) Race collapse
- (-38.149172, 144.303486) Race
- (-38.148285, 144.303011) Race
- (-38.149381, 144.303254) Artefacts
- (-38.149458, 144.303379) Brick
- (-38.149596, 144.303524) Rubble and concrete
- (-38.149726, 144.303426) Spalls
- (-38.150399, 144.304367) quarry
- (-38.150284, 144.304217) quarry



SITE PLAN



Barrabool Mill, Plan

line of race

mill site

quarry

N ↑

Metres



Gary Vines 1 August 2023

Vertical

Mon Jan 4 2010





STARCH WORKS
FYANSFORD