THE WHITE HOUSE

ADDRESS: 1370 Mahers Road, Bonegilla

STUDY No.: 2C HO No.: ..... HERMES No.: 27746

DATE: 1890s

CONDITION: Fair

INTEGRITY: Good



Façade, (Wodonga City Council, June 2024)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

What is significant?

The White House at 1370 Mahers Road, Bonegilla is significant. It was built as the stationmaster house at (Old) Tallangatta, likely during the early 1890s, and relocated to the site during the late 1950s, when the earlier township was to be flooded by the expanding waters of the Hume Dam.

The significant elements of the house are the symmetrical and multi-gabled roof form, the weatherboard wall cladding, recessed entry and multi-paned windows, and shutters.

The non-significant elements of the house are the chimneys, masonry deck, large, horizontally orientated windows to the north and south gable ends, and rear skillion bays and porch. Other non-significant elements at the site are the masonry garage and carport, the skillion roof shed, and the landscaping and trees.

How is it significant?

The White House 1370 Mahers Road, Bonegilla is of historical and representative significance to the City of Wodonga.

Why is it significant?

The White House is historically significant as one of the few surviving former public works buildings of the Old Tallangatta township, formerly the Stationmasters House. Tallangatta was a major passenger and goods station on the Wodonga-Tallangatta Railway (later Wodonga-Cudgewa railway), serving the rich agricultural lands of the Mitta Mitta River flats and surrounding pastoral areas. Whilst not initially located within the municipality, it was transported during the mid-1950s to a location close to the railway, and so continued to be associated with it, due to the inundation of the township with the expansion of the Hume Weir, when the many houses from Old Tallangatta were relocated. As such, it also reflects the more common phenomenon of physically moving timber houses as part of the fluctuating fortunes of rural settlements. (Criterion A)

The White House is of representative significance as a largely intact example of the output of a public works department during the late 19th century. The timber house is distinguished by its distinctive gable roof form with a symmetrical façade comprised of two gable ends (intersecting with another cross gable) and use of multi-paned sash windows. (Criterion D)

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The house is readily visible from the public domain, being located relatively close to the front boundary for a rural location and about 150 metres south of the Cudgewa-Wodonga rail trail (former railway corridor). There are various bush and shrubs to the front of the site and larger trees to the rear and south.

To the south on the front boundary is a masonry garage with a gable roof and to the rear a skillion roof shed, both dating to circa mid-1950s or later.

The White House has a symmetrical format with a gable roof, unusually with three gable sections including six gable ends – two parallel gables on the east-west axis and another cross gable on the north-south axis. The roof is clad in corrugated sheet metal and pierced by two, squat rendered masonry chimneys, which are presumably truncated versions of the original type. The gable ends include a vent at their apices. The soffits are unlined. There are also small skillion sections in the rear corners.

The walls are clad in painted weatherboard with slatted boards to the rear parts where the terrain slopes away. A verandah wraps around the front part of the house (to the cross-gable) and is supported by plain timber posts and has a deck with a concrete surface on a brick base.

The central entry is recessed with a four-panelled door and sidelights. The windows are timber-framed and mostly multi-paned, double hung sashes with timber shutters (jalousies) to the front. To the cross-gable ends are non-original three light windows with a large central fixed pane with a hood supported on a steel bracket.



Front entry (Wodonga City Council, June 2024)



Typical window (Wodonga City Council, June 2024)



North-west corner (Wodonga City Council, June 2024)

HISTORIC THEMES

6.7 Making homes for Victorians

HISTORY

According to Pennay and Randall during the Stage 1 Heritage Study, the *White House* was the former residence of the station master at Old Tallangatta, which was moved to its current location during the late1950s.

The threat of inundation to Tallangatta commenced at the weir's expansion in 1914, however, the enlargement of the weir meant that submersion was now imminent. In preparation for the enlargement of the Hume Weir, which was to double in size, the town of Tallangatta was relocated. A new site was identified 8 kilometres west in Bolga and by 1956, Tallangatta's 900 residents prepared to move permanently ('Back to Tallangatta', 1956). During 1956, many houses were relocated to 'New Tallangatta' (*The Town That Moved*, 2016). Presumably the subject building was moved as part of this phase of relocations to its current location in Bonegilla ('Roads to New Tallangatta would cost £760,000', 1949, pp. 2).

An aerial photograph of the township taken in the months prior to the closure of the town in 1956 (following) shows the former location of the building near the train station.

Work on the Wodonga-Tallangatta branch line commenced in 1887 and the station was opened at Tallangatta in July 1891. No contact was identified in the *Victoria Government Gazette* for house at Tallangatta but were others in 1891. The house may have been completed by June 1892 by which time a station master had been one appointed according to the following:

> Mr. Moylan, railway station-master at Tallangatta, has courteously supplied us with the following summary of the live-stock consigned from Tallangatta station during the month of May (*Upper Murray and Mitta Herald,* 1892*)*.

The building is typical of Victorian Railways Departmental residences of the period such as the contemporary Moreland Stationmaster's house pictured below.



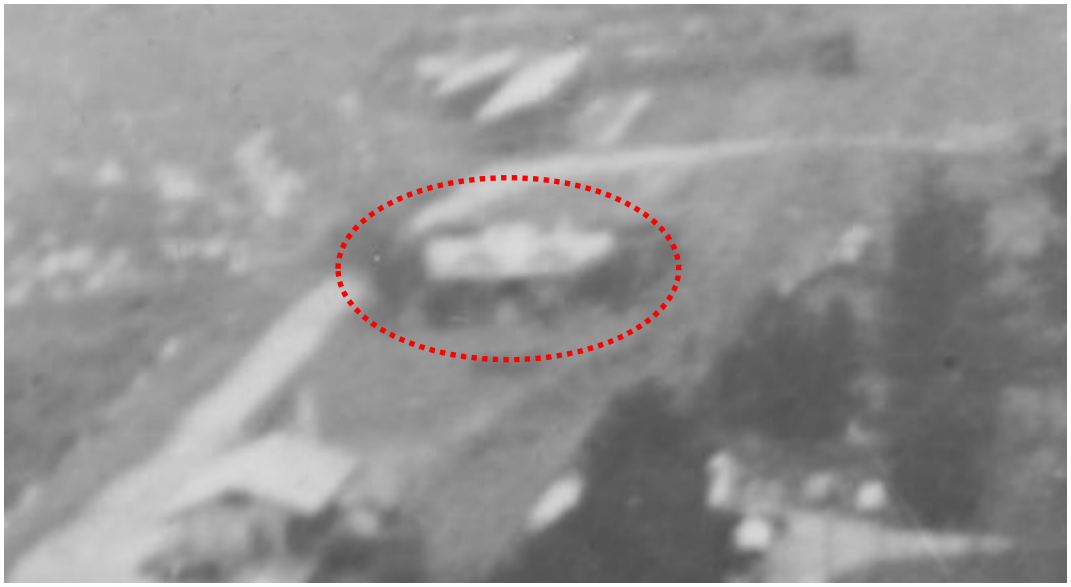
Moreland Stationmaster's house in 1991 (Picture Victoria, ID17132)



A home being relocated from old Tallangatta with onlookers (State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, 1956)



1956, aerial view of Old Tallangatta with *the White House* (circled)



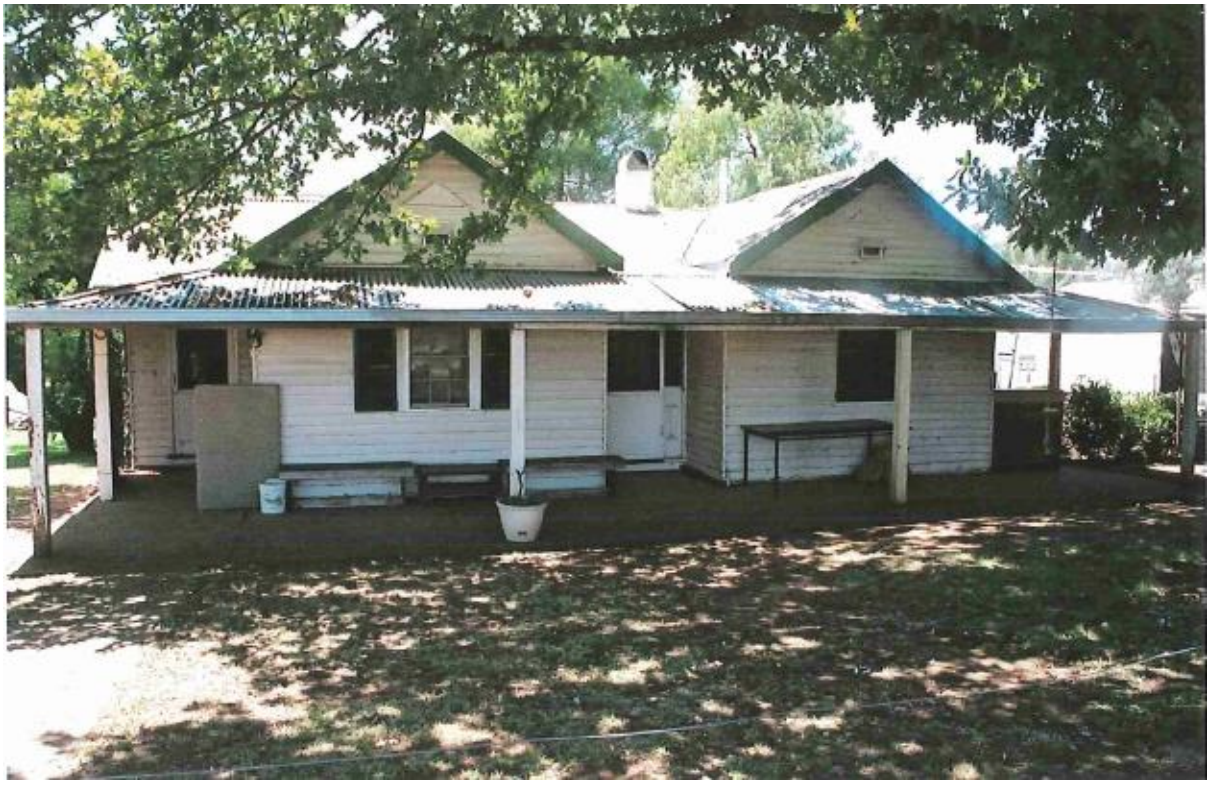
Detail of the house, 1956

The current site was vacant in 1940 (Dec 1, MAP1353, Frame 10186, Geoscience).

The house is evident on a 1963 aerial (5 November, CAD7, Frame 32) however is low resolution. The following aerial from 1972 is much clearer. It shows some of the same outbuilding but also others which have been removed. At that time also, there had been a larger tree to the front boundary which would have largely obscured the house from the street.



Aerial, 28 May 1972, with the subject house highlighted (dashed) and its relationship to the railway corridor to the north (arrow) (CACD7532, frame140, Geoscience Australia)



The White House in 2002 (Randell & Pennay 2004)

COMPARISON

Whilst relocating buildings is not a defined theme, it was relatively common in rural areas and the cover of the Wodonga 'Thematic Environmental History' (Randell & Pennay, 2004) features an image of the Schultz Bros moving a 19th century timber-framed house across the Wodonga Creek bridge (n.d).

The subject place is the only house designed by a public works unit identified in the municipality and/or be included in the Schedule to the heritage Overlay, although there are two earlier masonry public buildings from the mid-1870s included: the Wodonga Railway Station, Elgin Boulevard, Wodonga (HO10) and Former Wodonga Post Office, 67 High St, Wodonga (HO41).

In terms of Victorian period residences, there is no clear comparator, especially given the uniqueness of the gable roof form of the subject place. Of the small but varied group of houses included in the Schedule others are either of a different material palette and/or form.

- HO3: De Kerilleau Homestead, Lawrence Street, Wodonga. Built in 1870, two storey, symmetrical façade, red brick with two level, cast iron verandah with French windows.
- HO11: Brick residence, 10 Stanley Street, Wodonga. Ca 1890s, single storey, asymmetric façade, hipped roof and polygonal bay, cast iron verandah detailing.
- HO12: Brick Cottage, Cookinburra Road, Barnawartha North. Circa1890s, brick with gable roof, symmetrical facade.
- HO14: Glen Avon, 392 Wodonga-Yackandandah Rd, Staghorn Flat. 1898 and 1907 (essentially Federation period), timber with hip roof and cast iron verandah.
- HO15: Torranceville, 8 Bank St, Wodonga. 1869, vernacular, single storey, stone with several phases of brick additions, largely hipped roof.

- HO34: Stone Cottage, 41 Church Street, Wodonga. Circa 1850s, single storey, symmetrical façade, stone walls (overpainted) with brick to the openings and a gable roof.
- HO38: Stoneleigh, 50 High Street, Wodonga. Circa 1850s, symmetrical façade, walls of granite rubble with brick lintels to the openings and a hip roof.
- HO49: Stenzel Cottage, 665 Kiewa Valley Hwy, Baranduda. This circa 1882 gable roof house is constructed from wattle and daub.

There are also a few, more modest Victorian period (or early Federation period) houses within the Lawrence Street Precinct HO48), which are not ready comparators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EXTENT OF LISTING

It is recommended that *The White House* at 1370 Mahers Road, Bonegilla, is included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Wodonga Planning Scheme with external paint controls.

The extent of the listing should include the timber house on Crown Allotment 1\PS530629 with a curtilage of up to 10 metres about it, where possible, as outlined on the following aerial.



(Nearmap, 22 June 2024)

PLANNING SCHEME CONTROLS

Planning Controls	Y/N
External Paint Controls Apply?	Y
Internal Alteration Controls Apply?	N
Tree Controls Apply?	N
Solar Energy System Controls?	Y
Outbuildings or Fences Not Exempt Under Clause 43.01-4?	N
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register Under the Heritage Act 2017?	N
Prohibited Uses Permitted?	Y
Aboriginal Heritage Place?	N

REFERENCES

'Back to Tallangatta', *Wodonga and Towong Sentinel*, 29 January 1956, p2,http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article69621964

Picture Victoria, https://www.picturevictoria.vic.gov.au/site/coburg/chs/17132.html)

Randell F & Pennay B 2004. *City of Wodonga Heritage Study Stage 1*, WODONGA CITY COUNCIL

'Roads to New Tallangatta would cost £760,000', 4 October 1949, p2, *Border Morning Mail)*, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article264037259

State Rivers and Water Supply Commission photographer 1956. 'House Removal, Tallangatta', http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/253917

The Town That Moved, 2016., *Culture Victoria*, https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/tallangatta/tallangatta-the-town-that-moved/

Upper Murray and Mitta Herald, 9 June 1892, p2