RYAN HOMESTEAD (later BONEGILLA HOMESTEAD)

ADDRESS: 138A & 138 Ryans Road, Bonegilla

STUDY No.: 2C HO No.: ..... HERMES No.: 27896

DATE: circa 1896

CONDITION: Good – house; Poor - outbuilding

INTEGRITY: Fair - house; good - outbuilding



Homestead (RBA, December 2024)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

What is significant?

Ryan Homestead (later Bonegilla Homestead) at 138A & 138 Ryans Road, Bonegilla is significant. The site formed part of the holdings established by Michael Ryan in 1864 and remained in the Ryan family into the late 20th century (at least) the house dates to the late 19th century, possibly 1896 and designed by local architects Gordon & Gordon. The house came to be known as Bonegilla Homestead by the 1940s.

The significant elements of the house are the form of the original front section with hip roof, corrugated sheet metal cladding, two brick chimneys, red brick walls with bands of cream wash and black tuck–pointing, main entry and double hung sash windows, and the and two Italian cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens)* to the front.

The significant elements of the original front section of the eastern outbuilding are gable roof form, corrugated sheet metal cladding, lantern with weathervane, battened fibro-cement sheeting, and small timber multi-paned windows, and a timber door.

The non-significant items are the additions to the house (approximately the eastern half), pool, the skillion additions to the eastern outbuilding, all other cottages and sheds and planting.

How is it significant?

The Ryan Homestead (later Bonegilla Homestead) at 138A & 138 Ryans Road, Bonegilla is of historical and representative significance to the City of Wodonga.

Why is it significant?

The Ryan Homestead (later Bonegilla Homestead) is of historical significance as one of the pioneer pastoral settlements of the district, associated with the first occupant of the grazing run Charles Ebden and later Sir James Frederick Palmer, and Joseph Hoddinot and from 1864, Michael Ryan, members of whose family continued to own the site for well over a century. It is also historically significant as one of a small group of substantial brick homesteads erected in the late 19th and early 20th century during a prosperous period following the stagnation of the 1890s depression. (Criterion A)

The Ryan Homestead (later Bonegilla Homestead) is of representative significance as a mostly intact example of a late Victorian period homestead with a symmetrical façade and is distinguished by the prominent banding – with a cream wash and black tuck-pointing. It is complemented by the framing of the façade by the two Italian cypresses. The original part of the early 20th century eastern outbuilding is indicative of the time with fibro-cement wall cladding and small multi-paned windows, and is distinguished by a roof lantern with a weathervane surmounting it. (Criterion D)

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The property is located near a lagoon and is accessed by a formal avenue (the west arm of Ryans Road), which was recently planted. To the front is the brick homestead, with several outbuildings and cottages to the east and north.

Homestead

The late Victorian period homestead has a U-shaped hip roof clad in corrugated sheet metal and punctuated by two chimneys with projecting and rendered caps. The west part is original with the eastern extensions being alterations to either early or later additions, however built with matching detail to the original front section. The overall footprint is rectangular including the wide verandahs and side skillion sections.

The walls are red brick in garden wall bond (three rows of stretchers to one row of headers). The narrower original front, section is articulated with five (the upper one partly concealed by the non-original verandah roof) horizontal bands of cream wash/paint with black tuck–pointing. The wash is more intact to the front wall across which the verandah only extended initially, than the side walls.



Homestead, north-east corner with non-original section highlighted (RBA, December 2024)



Original brick, note the band of bricks with a cream wash and black tuck-pointing (RBA, December 2024)

The wide wrap-around verandah with a low skillion profile, stained timber-lined soffit, and a concrete deck is not original. It is supported on reproduction, fluted metal columns, grouped in three at the front corners.



North-west corner showing original, front section. NB, addition on rear left, dashed (RBA, December 2024)

The central four-panel front door has a top light and a flat arch over (now painted white). Other original windows are double-hung sashes, which are defined by segmental arched lintels with brick voussoirs and rendered sills.

Outbuilding

A small outbuilding featuring a small timber lantern crowned with a rooster weathervane is located to the east of the house. It has a main gable roof section, with an unlined soffit, and rear skillion roof addition, clad in corrugated sheet metal, in traditional short sheet sizes, painted green (popular during the early 20th century). The walls to the gable section are clad in fibro-cement sheeting which are battened. A small timber multipaned windows to the centre of two elevations and a timber door. The walls to the skillion addition are clad in painted, corrugated sheet metal and there are two large doorways to one side. The building is in poor condition – some sheeting is missing or warped, battens are missing, and the weathervane is dilapidated.



Early 20th century outbuilding (RBA, December 2024)

Another similarly clad building, a cottage with a gable roof nearby to the north has been considerably altered, especially the windows which are aluminium types. It has a brick chimney and a skillion addition to one side.



Early 20th century cottage, altered (RBA, December 2024)



Late 20th century house (RBA, December 2024)

Trees

Whilst there several mature cypress and pines about the homestead and farm buildings, few are evident on the 1969 aerial. The most impressive trees are the two Italian cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens)* in front of homestead and which frame its façade.



Pair of Italian cypresses to front of the homestead (RBA, December 2024)

HISTORIC THEMES

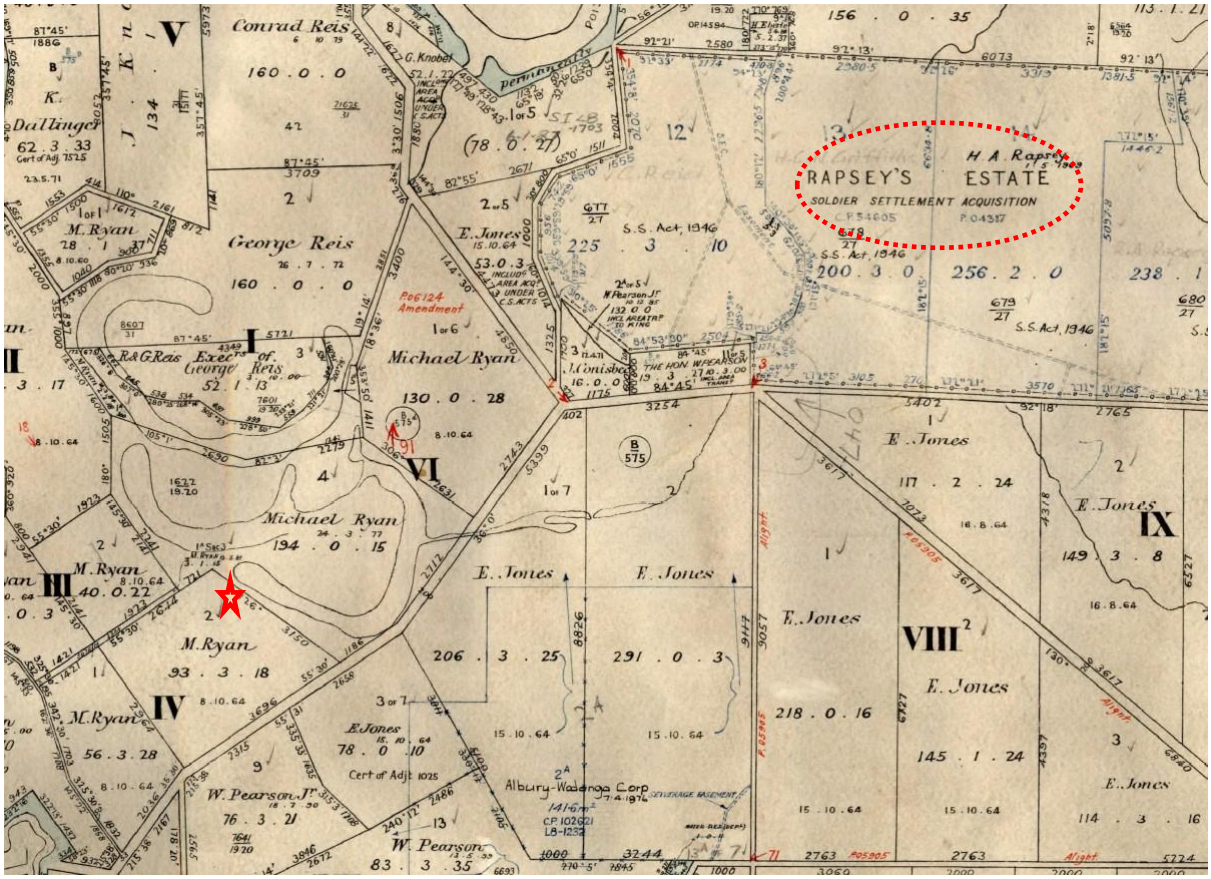
4.3 Grazing and raising livestock

6.7 Making homes for Victorians

HISTORY

The subject site is located at the edge of Crown Allotment 2, Section 4, Parish of Bonegilla a parcel of land comprised of nearly 94 acres which was acquired in October 1864 by an early settler in the area – the Irish farmer and grazier, Michael Ryan. It was one of several Ryan acquired in the vicinity in that year, with others in subsequent decades.

It was through Ryan's 'industry, thrift and perseverance' that his 'small' holding purchased in 1864 came to consist of nearly 1000 acres of 'exceptionally good river flat land' (Bonegilla Parish Plan 2178 1952, 'Mr Michael Ryan', 1909).



Bonegilla Parish Plan, showing approximate location of the subject site. Rapsey's Estate dashed (site of place initially described as the Bonegilla Homestead) (B575(4), Landata)

The locality of Bonegilla was where the first station established on the southern bank of the Murray River and managed by stockman William Wyse on behalf of Charles Hotson Ebden in 1836. The original Bonegilla run consisted of approximately 25,000 acres and was bounded by the Kiewa, Murray and Mitta Rivers on three sides, relating to what are now the localities of Bonegilla, Ebden and Huon. James Palmer bought Bonegilla run for £2,800 from Charles Ebden in 1847, finalising the sale in 1851 but it was Palmer's son, Sir James Frederick Palmer, who held the property. Palmer was the one-time Mayor of Melbourne in 1845 and the first President of the Legislative Council of Victoria under responsible government from 1854.

Palmer subdivided the property in 1864, selling a portion to Michael Ryan under a mortgage agreement with Joseph Hoddinot. The remainder of the property, which came to be known as *Bonegilla Park*, was sold to David Bowen Jones and later, the 'Bonegilla Syndicate', which included Joseph Hoddinot, William Pearson and Matthew Macalister (Trumble 2009, 111/410 Michael Ryan: Grant of probate 1909).

It has not been confirmed when the extant house was constructed but it was likely during the 1890s according to the style of the place, in particular the use of contrasting banding, achieved in this instance by a cream wash over the underlying red bricks. According to an oral history recorded during Stage 1, it was reported that the local, highly renowned architects Gordon & Gordon designed the original part of the existing homestead in 1896, however this has not been able to be confirmed by research into their contemporary output. Previously Ryan is credited with building the first permanent homestead on the site. It is recorded as consisting of horizontal slabs, wattle and daub partitions, and a shingle roof (Randell & Pennay 2004).

Michael Ryan died in 1909, leaving the farming property to his adult children. During the following decades, some of the adult children married and moved to surrounding towns. Three unmarried Ryan daughters remained at the property and together managed the land into the 1930s and 1940s. These women included Maggie, Johanna and Anne ('Tragedy at Beongilla', 1941).

The subject site was depicted on a 1933 map, with two others further to the east along the lagoon. Access to the site was site at this time was from the south, what is now Conisbee Lane.



1933 map, with subject site highlighted (War Office, AU Selection, SLV)

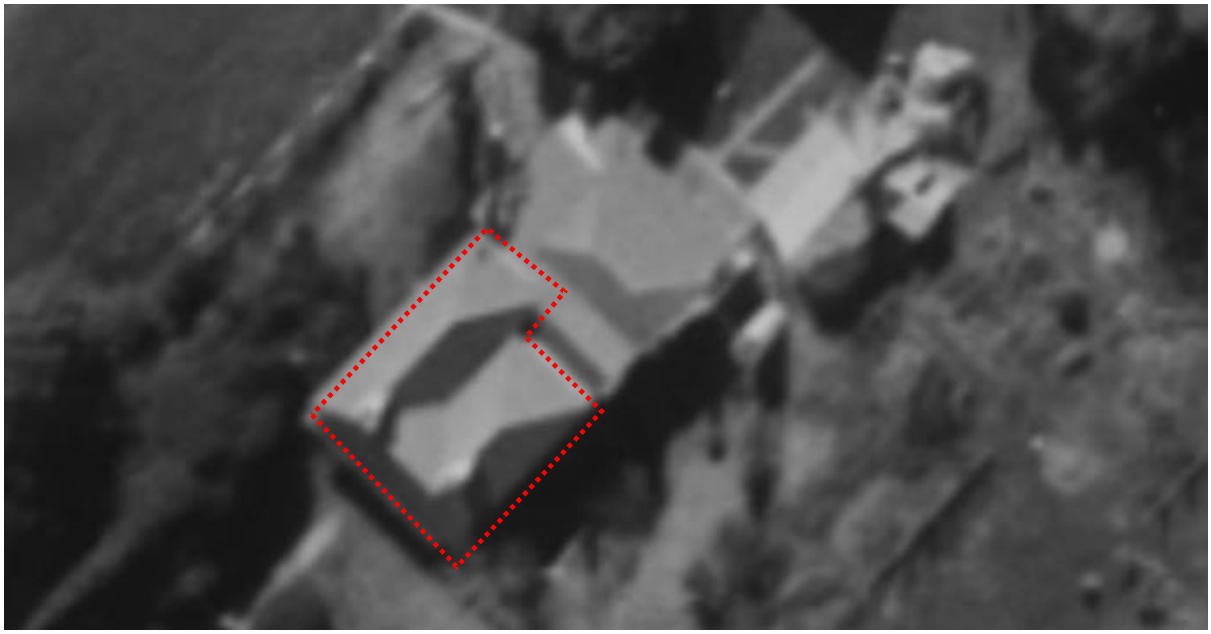
In the 1950s, the Ryan sisters replaced three non-brick walls with concrete blocks and in the early 1990s, the homestead was again extended by descendants of the Ryan family (Randell & Pennay 2004). In 2002, Stage 1 Heritage Study recorded the occupants of the homestead at the time to still be descendants of Michael and Anne Ryan (Randell & Pennay 2004).

The earliest available aerials from 1969 show the Italian cypresses in front of the as established specimens, suggesting they had been planted at least during the early 20th century. At that time, the house had a different roof plan and the verandah was narrower and only extended across the front. Oral history suggests there was a bullnose verandah to the front elevation (Bioisis).

The eastern outbuilding shed is also evident with the extant addition and the current access to the site by Ryans Road had been established, although with no avenue planting. The hipped roof cottage to the far north of the house had not been constructed.



Aerial, 14 July 1969, with the cypresses and east outbuilding highlighted, and homestead in between (CACD7501, Frame 8117, Geoscience Australia)



1969 aerial details, showing the different roof form and likely original extent dashed. Note the lack of side verandahs at that time.

Naming of the Place

A specific name for the place was not provided in articles about Michael Ryan and other family members during the late 19th century and early 20th century. During the 1940s, the name Bonegilla Homestead came to be associated with the place, although that name had been used in relation to another site, further to the east, however possibly only from about 1900.

During the early 20th century, James Smith owned a place variously referred to as *Bonegilla Homestead* or *Bonegilla Park Homestead*, which he had bought it 1904. This was the part of a site about 5km to the north-east which came to be known as Rapseys Estate and was sold in 1936 and where the Mitta Junction camp, used to accommodate the workers who were involved with the construction of the Hume Weir, was established.

In 1931, it was reported that the Catholic School Boys Club who camped along Ryan's Creek took mass at 'the Ryan homestead, whence a very generous hospitality was extended throughout the boys stay ('Catholic School Camp', 1931). Outdoors camps continue to be held along Ryans Creek.

A similarly generic term was employed in 1941 article of a body found in a log by a nephew who was 'doing the rounds of Misses Ryans' Estate at Bonegilla' ('Tragedy at Bonegilla', 1941).

Two years later however in an article about a wedding, it was noted that a reception was held at Bonegilla Homestead, where Miss Ryan (aunt of the bride), assisted by Mrs Taylor (mother of the groom), received the guests (Taylor-Ryan, 1943). During the 1950s there are a few articles connecting the Ryan family with the Bonegilla Homestead. For instance, the following from 1950:

> Member of one of the earliest families to settle in the North-East of Victoria, Mr Thomas Ryan who owned the property "Lydren" at Ebden, died, in Murray' Valley Hospital early yesterday morning. He was aged 72 years. The late Mr Ryan, who until the day before, was in good health, was the youngest son of the late Mr and Mrs Michael Ryan, who owned Bonegilla Homestead ('About People', 1950).

In 1953, 'Miss Johanna Ryan, late of Bonegilla Homestead, died' *('About People',* 1953*).*

COMPARISON

To date, only two grand homesteads from the late 19th century to survive in the municipality have been included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay. These two are places are different to the subject place.

- HO3: De Kerilleau Homestead, Lawrence Street, Wodonga. Built in 1870, two storey, brick with two level, cast iron verandah and French windows.
- HO14: Glen Avon Homestead and barn, 392 Wodonga-Yackandandah Rd, Staghorn Flat. This late 19th/early 20th century single storey commodious timber house is clad in rebated boards and has distinctive cast iron detailing.

The other Victorian period residences included in the Schedule are a varied group in terms of scale and materiality and not readily comparable.

- HO11: Brick residence, 10 Stanley Street, Wodonga. Late 1890s, single storey, red brick with hipped roof but has an asymmetrical façade with a projecting bay.
- HO12: Brick Cottage, Cookinburra Road, Barnawartha North. Circa1890s, brick with gable roof.

- HO15: Torranceville, 8 Bank St, Wodonga. 1869, vernacular, stone with several phases of brick additions, mainly a hipped roof.
- HO34: Stone Cottage, 41 Church Street, Wodonga. Circa 1850s, stone walls (overpainted) with brick to the openings and a gable roof. The windows are relatively small and set close to the central entry.
- HO38: Stoneleigh, 50 High Street, Wodonga. Circa 1850s, walls of granite rubble with brick lintels to the openings (of varying size) and a hip roof.
- HO49: Stenzel Cottage, 665 Kiewa Valley Hwy, Baranduda. This circa 1882 gable roof house is constructed from wattle and daub.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EXTENT OF LISTING

It is recommended that the Former Ryans Homestead at 138A and 138 Ryans Road, Bonegilla, is included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Wodonga Planning Scheme.

The extent of the heritage overlay should include the house, two Italian cypresses (front of house), and the original portion eastern outbuilding with a nominal 10 metre curtilage about them as practical within 1\TP957136.



(Nearmap, 22 June 2024)

PLANNING SCHEME CONTROLS

Planning Controls	Y/N
External Paint Controls Apply?	N
Internal Alteration Controls Apply?	N
Tree Controls Apply?	Y - 2 x Italian cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens)*
Solar Energy System Controls?	Y
Outbuildings or Fences Not Exempt Under Clause 43.01-4?	Y – eastern shed
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register Under the Heritage Act 2017?	N
Prohibited Uses Permitted?	Y
Aboriginal Heritage Place?	N

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