

History & Heritage

A publication of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
Bendigo & Region Branch



Under Threat and In Need of Support



Snap, Send, Solve A Community Campaign

see page 3

Newsletter, February 2022

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The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) is the state's largest community-based heritage advocacy organisation actively working towards conserving and protecting our heritage for future generations to enjoy, representing 30,000 members across Victoria. As Victoria's premier heritage and conservation organisation, the National Trust has an interest in ensuring that the wide range of natural, cultural, social, and Indigenous heritage values of the municipality are protected and respected, contributing to strong, vibrant and prosperous communities.

Bendigo Branch needs your help

This newsletter is in urgent need of more people who will help promote heritage issues. It needs people who can help with production and have computer skills that can improve its readability, its circulation and most importantly, produce interesting stories that get authorities and our community thinking about the issues and their solutions.

Can you assist? Give Peter a call, 0447473674, or drop an email to natrustbendigo@gmail.com

Bendigo & Region Branch Meeting

Monday 28 February, 5.30pm, Federation Room Shamrock Hotel, Williamson St Bendigo.

The meeting will report on the progress being made to preserve Nanga Gnulle in Strathdale, the Beebe Observatory in Kennington, the Bendigo School of Mines in the Bendigo CBD and the Miners Cottage located at 10 Hill St Iron Bark which was discussed at the January Council meeting.

There will be an opportunity to raise issues of concern. Following health guidelines, those attending need to be double vaccinated. The meeting is open to those interested in history & heritage issues.

Demolition by Neglect - Report & Policy on places in the Heritage Overlay

The full report can be read at https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/DemolitionbyNeglect_ReneeMuratore_for_NTAV_Sept_2013.pdf

The National Trust commissioned this report in 2013 and engaged Renee Muratore to investigate. Some excerpts:

“Demolition by Neglect at its most basic and general level can be defined as: The destruction of a building through abandonment or lack of maintenance. Deliberate Neglect is defined as an owner who is deliberately not maintaining a building, or not securing a building, despite having the means to do so, with the aim of gaining a demolition permit.”

One of the recommendations coming from the report includes; “Increase community activism through the strengthening of local law enforcement capabilities. Introduce ‘Snap, Send, Solve’ across all Councils.” (Geelong, Ballarat and Mornington Branches of the National Trust have been active over the years in raising concerns about local properties).



92 Victoria St Eaglehawk, another neglected heritage property that is open to vandalism. Image courtesy of Peter Cox

Snap, Send, Solve – Report Issues to Local Council Designed for iPhone and it is a free application.

Perhaps this could be further investigated to see if council would be interested in such a project. It could be used for reporting planning breaches but could also be used for citizens to report on a wide range of issues. The National Trust wrote to council last November- in part

“The National Trust is concerned about vacant neglected heritage buildings in Greater Bendigo. Often, such properties are left unattended and neglected, and are open to vandalism to the extent that the only

alternative is demolition. While there are many buildings that fall into this category, it has been brought to our attention that “Nanga Gnulle” at 40 Harley St Bendigo—which both Council and the National Trust fought to protect under a Heritage Overlay from 2017-2019—is an example where the owner is not protecting or adequately securing the property, and extensive vandalism has occurred leaving the house to further abuse. In response to such issues, this year the State Government introduced the Planning & Environment Bill 2021 to introduce stronger powers to enforce the protection of heritage buildings.

The Planning & Environment Act 1987 now gives local councils the power to enforce protection through the following amendments under section 6B:

A planning scheme may make provision for the additional matters.... for any of the following purposes—

- (a) To further the objectives of planning in Victoria within the area covered by the scheme*
- (b) To deter persons from unlawfully demolishing heritage buildings or allowing heritage buildings to fall into disrepair*
- (c) To prevent persons from obtaining a benefit from unlawfully demolishing heritage buildings or allowing heritage buildings to fall into disrepair*

(It needs to be noted that the Branch organised a site meeting with the owners of Nanga Gnulle, consultants & contractors and the site was made secure immediately.)

While the council has not responded to a request for a meeting to discuss the issue the Manager of Strategic Planning did respond.

“I refer to your letter dated 16 November 2021, as well as your email below to Councillors on 26 November 2021, regarding recent changes to the Planning and Environment Act (known as the Planning and Environment Amendment Act 2021). I understand that Ross Douglas has previously provided information to you regarding the compliance issues you’ve listed below.

The Planning and Environment Amendment 2021 came into law on 23 March 2021, and in relation to heritage places, the legislative changes allow a planning scheme to:

- Regulate or prohibit the development of land which had a heritage building that was unlawfully demolished (in whole or in part) or fallen into disrepair.
- Not grant a permit for the development of land which had a heritage building that was unlawfully demolished (in whole or in part) or fallen into disrepair, unless the development reconstructs, repairs or reinstates the heritage building.

Unfortunately, the legislative changes cannot prevent demolition / disrepair. The changes are a deterrent and are considered reactive, as changes to planning schemes can only be considered *if demolition / partial demolition has occurred without approval*. If demolition has occurred, justification for a planning scheme amendment to regulate or prohibit future development is unlikely to be supported, unless:

- A person is charged for the offence;
- The Magistrates Court finds a person guilty of the offence under section 126 of the Planning & Environment Act 1987.

If there is a conviction, City officers would then be in a position to investigate potential planning scheme controls to regulate / prohibit the development of the land that had a heritage place on it. Once the strategic basis and justification for the planning scheme amendment is determined, the amendment would then need to run through the usual course of authorisation, exhibition, Panel Hearing, adoption and approval.”

The matter needs to be discussed to determine the branch’s next step to gain better protection.

Cover Pictures - Demolition by Neglect

- Nanga Gnulle – While protected by a heritage overlay, the house has been vandalized but has now been secured by its owners. A residential sub division is proceeding around the property.
- John Beebe's astronomical observatory in Kennington has now been referred to an independent panel hearing by council to determine its worthiness of a heritage overlay.
- The Miners Cottage at 10 Hill St Ironbark has been subject to a number of development applications and a hearing at VCAT. It is located in the Ironbark Historic Precinct where neighborhood character demonstrates the social history of Bendigo
- Bendigo School of Mines is now vacant and in need of \$15 million for restoration. While it has been a positive step by Bendigo TAFE to declare it as a Community Precinct, the community needs to be involved to gain much needed funds to restore the buildings. With both Federal and State elections being held this year, now is the time to advocate for this historic site.

Images courtesy of National Trust Bendigo Branch

Observatory status goes to Independent Panel Hearing.



L: John Beebe, 1866-1936. He became a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. Image: David Bolton, Courtesy of Langleyestate.com.au



R: The Observatory at 55 Condon St East Bendigo in 2004. Image courtesy, Bendigo Branch Newsletter November 2019.

The branch will be part of the process to determine the heritage overlay on 55 Condon St Kennington where John Beebe's house and observatory is located on two acres. Here is what the branch submitted-

Proposed Planning Scheme Amendment, C271gben, applying a heritage overlay to part 55 Condon St Kennington.

The Bendigo & Region Branch, National Trust of Australia (Victoria) broadly supports the proposed amendment, C271, to protect the buildings and vegetation at 55 Condon St Kennington.

The buildings, including the La Rocca Residence and the East Bendigo Observatory are described in the citation which demonstrates their significance to the history of Bendigo. The vegetation contains trees that are in excess of 100 years old.

Built by John Beebe in 1900 the buildings are representative of the city's early endeavours into scientific research. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1917. His work as an architect, both in Bendigo and in other states, also contribute to the history of the place. While in Bendigo he worked with renowned architect William Vahland.

After being contacted by neighbours and National Trust members, the branch contacted Council in 2019 alerting it that the property was for sale and that it was not protected with a heritage overlay. It was advertised as a 'developers dream' and as the buildings are in disrepair, were in danger of demolition. Members contributed a great deal of information which has now been included in the citation.

The property was taken off the market at that time. But two years later the Council had still not acted to protect the property with an overlay. Representations were again made to council which resulted in this amendment.

The property was recently put back on the market, however, prospective buyers were aware of the historical significance of the property.

While it is understood that no consideration will be given to any future use, the property is under contract to a buyer who plans to build a childcare centre on the site incorporating the Observatory.

Unfortunately, the current and prospective owners have denied Council and the National Trust access to the site to assess the amendment. This is a crucial part of the planning process. All parties need to consult with one another to gain a satisfactory outcome that will preserve what is significant while at the same time consider plans that make the amendment viable for works to be undertaken to make the site sustainable going into the future. To our knowledge this has not occurred.

The National Trust is eager to see what is significant on this property preserved for future generations and is pleased to participate in the planning process.

There really is unity in community! by John Ellis

If a week is a long time in politics, well, 24 hours is a long time in municipal affairs! The news is still sinking in for Chewton. The church that was on the agenda for disposal now isn't after council's December meeting.

At that meeting Cr. Henderson gave a background to the 2017 decision to dispose, before going on to move a motion that took into account all of the submissions received through Council's engagement process. Her motion was to overturn the previous Council decision to sell, to request Council Officers prepare a staged plan for repair and restoration of the church building and to consider a submission for inclusion in the 2022/2023 Council budget for the first stage of works to the Church building.

This was seconded and discussion that followed referred to the large amount of community interest demonstrated and the Chewton Domain Society's input. It was pointed out that council was in the best position to restore the building.

160 years old! Built in 1861 this church successively served the Wesleyans, Methodists, Uniting Church adherents before being purchased by Metcalfe Shire. Mount Alexander Shire has owned it since 1995 - and has now resolved to retain it! Planning and seeking funding are now on the agenda...

Congratulations to all those who worked tirelessly to keep this building in public ownership. Congratulations Chewton and the Mount Alexander Shire Council.



Wesleyan Church, Chewton, De Gruchy & Leigh, Lithographer, for Crouch & Wilson, Architects, Melbourne, C.1870. Image courtesy State Library Victoria

Cottage looks great!

High fences and old sheds have been removed from around the historic Queen Elizabeth Oval Cottage in Rosalind Park and new turf and irrigation have been installed. This work has really opened up the area and we think it looks great!



Queen Elizabeth Oval Cottage. Image courtesy of City of Greater Bendigo

Greater Bendigo Council January Meeting

At this meeting Council considered a planning application for 10 Hill Street, Bendigo 3550 - Construction of a Second Dwelling on a Lot, Alterations and Extension to Existing Dwelling; Construction of a Carport and Fence; Removal of Trees and 2 Lot Subdivision.

Council Officers recommended

Pursuant to section 61 of the Planning and Environment Act (1987), Council issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit for construction of a second dwelling on a lot, alterations and extension to existing dwelling; construction of a fence; and 2 lot subdivision at 10 Hill Street, BENDIGO 3550 subject to the conditions at the end of this report.

Councillor's motion

Moved: Cr Fyffe Seconded: Cr Alden: Pursuant to section 61 of the Planning and Environment Act (1987), Council issue a Notice of Decision to Refuse to Grant a Permit for construction of a second dwelling on a lot, alterations and extension to existing dwelling; construction of a carport and fence; removal of trees; and 2 lot subdivision at 10 Hill Street, BENDIGO 3550, on the following grounds:

1. The proposal represents an over development.
2. The proposal will adversely affect the heritage significance of the place and precinct.
3. The proposal is not in keeping with the character of the area.

The motion was CARRIED

In 2010 the Council carried out the Ironbark Heritage Study and invited the community to participate in surveys, in providing information about their properties and in public meetings. Residents took up the invitation with vigour and formed a strong partnership with Council in formulating the final report.

The Heritage Study says:

"The study area is rich in authentic locations, sites and structures of surviving material culture of transnational homes of the Cornish and German emigrant miners, particularly early miner's cottages. There is also evidence of later changing patterns of intergenerational 'identity' formation. It is possible to see how

the first settlers built make shift temporary homes, which later became transitional, relocatable, and also how their descendants began to identify with the area, making it their permanent home.”

And further- “Cities are like jewels, visible treasures of human action and development. As social stories they mark territory. They become counterpoints in the landscape, signifiers of culture created by generations and generations of people, both in their single and collective existences. The city of Bendigo, perched on the edge of the great dry inland of Australia, was created by 15,000 miners....”

Eight (8) objections were received, with the grounds of objection being

- Existing dwelling, Extent of demolition, Demolition of verandah, Setback of addition to Miners’ cottage
- New dwelling, Siting (in proximity to rear boundary), Two-storey nature (and the precedent this would create), Visual bulk, 3+ bedrooms does not respond to the housing stock needed
- Overdevelopment, the two-storey dwelling being built on a 207square meter block. ▪ Neighbourhood character
- Heritage
- Amenity impacts (visual amenity, overlooking, overshadowing, noise, privacy) ▪ Application history (and previous VCAT findings)

Twelve years after the Study, it is good to see residents and councillors working together to preserve this historic area. Congratulations! Perhaps it is now time for all to consider that the Victoria Hill Mining Reserve and the Ironbark Heritage Area, in which it is located, be considered for full recognition on the Victorian Heritage Register.



Victoria Hill Mining Reserve. Image courtesy of Bendigo Branch Newsletter

Graeme Robertson Cast Iron Collection

As reported in the Branch Newsletter in October 2021, The National Trust (Vic) took the initiative to conduct a Significance Assessment on the collection. The Branch has been informed that HistoryAtWork has been appointed to conduct the assessment. The professional history and heritage consultancy describes their approach to a Significance Assessment as:

Exploring the collection's history, provenance and ability to reflect the history it represents, comparing it with similar collections, considering its condition, completeness and integrity; and assessing it against a set of eight criteria. Our findings are provided in a comprehensive report with a Statement of Significance and, invariably, recommendations.

www.historyatwork.com.au



L: E.G. Robertson who formed the Collection. Image, Mark Strizic, 1968, courtesy of State Library of Victoria. C&R: Examples of cast iron collected by Graeme Robertson. Images courtesy of Euan McGillivray

New home for Bendigo Historical Society

The Bendigo Historical Society dates back to 1935. The Society slowly began collecting items and extended an invitation to all local citizens to attend meetings and contribute to exhibitions. BHS went into recess from time to time, re-emerging in 1958.

In the time between 1974 and 2020, the collection has grown to over 40,000 items, with over 30,000 catalogued and the majority stored to national standards. The Society engaged hundreds of volunteers to undertake this vital 'backroom' work – currently over 6,000 hours each year. This ensures the preservation of significant material for future generations.

A home for BHS was elusive. Various places were used by the Society including rooms at Charing Cross, the Mechanics Institute at Eaglehawk, Trades Hall and the Temperance Hall in View Street. In 1974 BHS moved into the historic 1858 Survey Office 'Dudley House' in View Street - a building owned by the Bendigo City Council where the Society operated an historical museum for 25 years. The BHS vacated Dudley House in 1999. The collection was moved to various storage locations, including sheds at Fortuna Villa, Finn Street Recreation Reserve, two rooms at the Eaglehawk Mechanics Institute and private homes. Some items were stored or displayed by other organisations in Bendigo, such as the Bendigo Art Gallery and the Eaglehawk Court House.

In 2006 the Society's collection was moved into the de-commissioned Bendigo Gaol. This provided space for sorting and cataloguing work by members and volunteers. However, in 2011 the collection was relocated to a new secure facility in Nolan Street in part of the Bendigo Regional Archive Centre. It provided optimum conditions for storing the historical collection, though now is over capacity. Large items are stored in four onsite shipping containers. In May 2013 BHS gained access to Specimen Cottage in Hargreaves Street as a front of house facility. The Society no longer has access to Nolan Street or Specimen Cottage.

Magnificent local benefactor

This year, 2022, a generous local benefactor has provided BHS with an opportunity to have a new permanent home at 11 MacKenzie Street, Bendigo. This arrangement will see BHS have a building in a superb location to house and manage the collections as well as set up displays. The City of Greater Bendigo is also assisting with a funding package.

For further information: Euan McGillivray, Vice President, Bendigo Historical Society mcqh@optusnet.com.au
0438 133 770



11 MacKenzie Street, Bendigo, new home of Bendigo Historical Society. Detail of front door, 11 MacKenzie Street Images courtesy of Euan McGillivray

National Trust Heritage Festival 18 April – 2 May 2022

Registration for events closes Monday 11 April

For more information visit <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/ahf/vic/>

The Bendigo Historical Society Events

9 April

Discover the story of the Great McIvor Gold Escort Robbery 1853. Norm Harris and Kay MacGregor will lead the tag-a-long tour with many interesting stops along the way. Cost \$15 (non-members \$20). 9.15am meet Axedale Hall depart 9.30am. A map and itinerary will be provided on booking. Bookings essential. 0472 975 068

15 May

Beating the Bounds. Roger Muller, surveyor and others will guide us on this ancient ritual and tour of the early boundary stones of Bendigo. This will be a car tour with a map - Cost \$15 (non-members \$20) Bookings essential. 0472 975 068

More Bendigo Historical Society Walks into History for 2022, Everyone welcome



6 March - "Belgravia – where the bloody hell is that?" Pip and Dennis Johanson explore this fascinating area of Bendigo. Meet at the QEO View Street entrance.

3 April - "The Wonders of Mining at Victoria Hill" Billy Allen – geology and mining history extraordinaire. Meet at Victoria Hill (opposite the Goldmines Hotel)

1 May - "Stripping off Deborah" James Lerk explores mines of the Deborah line of reef. Meet at Old Violet St – between Pitt and Olive Streets. NB. This is a car tour with a map – at least 2-3 hours. Cost: Non-members \$15.00. Members \$10.00. Bookings essential – 0472 975 068

5 June - "Wesley – Forest Street Uniting Church" Judith McCarthy explores this very early church of Bendigo. Meet at the entrance at 2.00 p.m. NB Afternoon start time.

26 June - "Bendigo's Grand Old Dame – Villa Fortuna" Paul Banks will lead a tour of this grand mansion of Bendigo, followed by Devonshire tea. Meet at the Chum Street entrance. Cost \$45.00 pp. Bookings essential. 0472 975 068

7 August - "A picture gallery such as would do credit to this City". (P. Hayes, Mayor 1887). With Heather McNeill. Explore the early years of the building and items from the first collections of Bendigo Art Gallery. Meet at the View Street entrance of the Gallery.

4 September - "Stories of Bendigo's Chinese Precinct" With Leigh McKinnon. Meet at the Lotus Flower Chinese Precinct.

2 October - "A meander through the White Hills Cemetery". With Carol Holsworth. Meet at the main entrance.

6 November - "Balak Kalik Many – Walking Together". A short stroll through Dja Dja Wurrung's history of Bendigo. Meet at TAFE courtyard.

4 December - "A Cricketer's tour of the QEO and caretaker's house museum." with Dennis Johanson and Stan Cue (former curator). Meet at the View Street entrance of the QEO.

Your views are sought on the issues

The branch welcomes your ideas, contributions and photographs for the newsletter which is published bimonthly.

You can keep up with the current advocacy issues at the Trust Advocate blog at <http://www.trustadvocate.org.au/>

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and recognize the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past, present and future.