

# History & Heritage

A publication of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria)  
Bendigo & Region Branch July 2022



Cover Story: Rocky Vale Villa, Maiden Gully and the dam beside the Villa. See page 2.  
Photos by Ray Wilson

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### **Next Branch Meeting**

The next branch meeting will be held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> July, 5.30pm, at the Shamrock Hotel taking up the issues from History & Heritage. All members and supporters are welcome to attend and raise issues.

### **History & Heritage – Branch Newsletter**

Everyone has a story that, when combined with others, provide a record of the social history of our region and draws attention to the significance of local built heritage. To receive H&H or contribute a story or photograph, send a message to [natrustbendigo@gmail.com](mailto:natrustbendigo@gmail.com) To help increase circulation send it to your friends and family or sign up your organisation to receive it. To join the editorial group, contact the branch President, Peter Cox on 0447473674. Contribution deadline for the August History & Heritage is Friday 5<sup>th</sup> August.

**For previous editions of History & Heritage** <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/branches-vic/bendigo-branch/>

### **Join the National Trust – Advocate for Preservation! Support! Explore! Enjoy!**

A National Trust Membership is your ticket to the world, with over 1000 destinations to explore. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/membership-vic/> 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.

## Snap, Send, Solve

### Cover Story- Seeing Rocky Vale Villa for the first time



I stumbled past this place Sunday morning out walking & noticed the place has been ransacked, smashed windows and damage. Looks like no-one living in attached dwelling. Seems an awful pity. Ray Wilson.

#### **About Rocky Vale Villa (from the Victorian Heritage Database)**

Location: Maiden Gully VIC 3551

Municipality: Greater Bendigo City

Level of significance: Included in Heritage Overlay HO557

#### **What is significant?**

Rocky Vale Villa, built 1870s-1891 at Maiden Gully.

Rocky Vale Villa is a rustic Gothic Revival two-storey house built of sandstone and granite on a 'L' shaped plan with an engaged tower at the junction of the two gabled wings. The principal elevation faces north. The front door is to the east face of the tower which has a more steeply pitched roof than the two wings. The tower's gable ends have copings, skew corbels overdressed stone quoins, fleur de lis finials in the Gothic manner and a small cartouche reading Rocky Vale Villa. The two wings, with comparatively shallow pitched roofs, also have copings to the gable ends. The roof areas are clad with corrugated galvanised sheet steel, which is not original. The coursed stonework incorporates granite heads, sills and architraves to the windows and gable vents, and granite quoins. The windows have stone block sills, lintels, mullions and architraves. There is a domed well in the yard.

The property has limited prominence in the local landscape due to its location at the end of a private drive. The mid to late 20th century, brick veneer additions in the rear of the building, both attached and freestanding, are non-significant and detract from the interpretation of the place.

#### **How is it significant?**

Rocky Vale Villa is of local historical and aesthetic/architectural significance.

#### **Why is it significant?**

Rocky Vale Villa is historically important in the local context (Criterion A). It is associated with English stonemason William Beebe Snr, who built the property of locally quarried



sandstone and granite over a period of almost 20 years from the early-1870s. The residence is testament to the skill and perseverance of its builder, who died the year the house was completed (1891). Beebe' stonework is found at cemeteries throughout the Bendigo area. The property is also associated with two of Beebe's sons, William and John, who were also local stonemasons and architects, with John eventually forming a partnership with noted Bendigo architect, William Vahland; and William later becoming Mayor of the City of Bendigo (Criterion H). Rocky Vale Villa is a rare local example of a substantial two-storey stone house built in the picturesque Gothic Revival mode, a style commonly found in parts of New South Wales and Victoria from the 1840s until the 1870s (Criterion B). Architecturally (Criterion E), the main north elevation is essentially intact as completed in 1891. Detailing of note includes the engaged tower at the junction of the two gabled wings, the pitched roof forms, stone quoins, and fleur de lis finials, and the coursed stonework which incorporates granite heads, sills and architraves to the windows and gable vents. While there are more adventurous and inventive nineteenth century Gothic Revival dwellings (including outside the municipality), Rocky Vale Villa is particularly focused on the detailing and basics of stone construction. This is perhaps not surprising given William Beebe Snr's profession as a stonemason.

**And from Bendigo Historic Buildings. Mike Butcher and Gill Flanders, 1987**

William Beebe, Snr., a stonemason, took over 20 years to build his two storey and granite house. It was as 'peculiar in its structure as the owner is well known in his ideas'. Certainly, Beebe was a man of firm ideas and was not averse to expressing them in the local newspapers. And his house is unique.

He built Rocky Vale Villa in his spare time using stone quarried on his own land with Harcourt granite for the lintels and quoins. A two-acre orchard of fruit trees once stood in front of the villa, irrigated from the still-existing dam. Beebe did not live to enjoy the fruits of his labour. He died soon after finishing his house in 1891. Two sons, William and John, became stonemasons and later architects in Bendigo.

Editor's note. John built his home and observatory in Kennington.

**Bendigo Station foot bridge in need of some repairs**



Photo provided by Peter Hammond

### State of Buildings at Bendigo Station

The photos below taken at a steam train event in April show that the historic Bendigo Railway Station and its signal box are in desperate need of some restoration and TLC. They are included as elements of Primary Significance within City of Greater Bendigo Heritage Overlay HO618, The Bendigo Railway Complex. What must the many rail enthusiasts who attend these popular events think? The owner VicTrack will hopefully have something in store for the 160<sup>th</sup> celebrations.



Images: Elaine Doling



**160 years of railway will be celebrated throughout the region in October!  
We'll keep you updated on upcoming events in the next issue.**



Photo Bendigo Advertiser

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century hospital overlooks 19<sup>th</sup> Century cottage**

This cottage at 153 Arnold St Bendigo is in a high profile position but what will its future be?  
It is protected by a heritage overlay.



Image: Google Streetview

## Extend Art Gallery into Pall Mall



The Bendigo Art Gallery is on the Victorian Heritage Register, H1172.  
Image: Victorian Heritage Register

The closure of the Bendigo Art Gallery for two years is a decision that needs further consideration.

President of the Bendigo Branch of the National Trust, Peter Cox said today "The Art Gallery has played a wonderful role over many years in featuring many art and cultural exhibitions in Bendigo and injecting much needed economic interest in the city. But rather than just having those exhibitions in the one location in the 'View St Arts Precinct' consideration could be given to extending this Precinct into Pall Mall"

"The City and the State Government have the responsibility to preserve buildings that are designated under local heritage overlays and are also on the State Heritage Register. These include the current Law Courts, the former Post Office building, the Bendigo Mining Exchange and Allan's Walk and the Bendigo School of Mines. Millions of dollars are needed to reactivate these spaces and the Bendigo Art Gallery could play a vital role." he said "It would bring much needed foot traffic to cafes & restaurants and other businesses throughout the CBD while at the same time inject millions of dollars into unused historic buildings which will need those dollars anyway."

"It would also further promote other existing exhibition centres such as the Golden Dragon Museum, the Soldiers Memorial Institute and the Central Deborah Mine, all located along the main roads leading into Bendigo."

"It is a case of not putting all your eggs in the one basket and during these times where many social issues, like housing, mental health and elderly care need funding, the competition for the taxpayer's dollar must be carefully thought through. " Mr Cox said.





Photo: Bendigo Council. Pall Mall in all of its glory is the centre of Bendigo

### **Bendigo Joss House needs certainty**



The Bendigo Joss House in 2020. Image: Minerva Heritage

It is of concern to the branch that the Bendigo Joss House has been closed not only through the Covid period but over past months. It is both a place of worship and is a tourist attraction. The branch wrote to the Council but has not received a response and to Bendigo Heritage Attractions who manage the site.

Heritage Attractions responded. "Recently there has been some disturbing antisocial behaviour at the Joss House and the surrounding areas of this historically significant site. As a result, Bendigo Heritage Attractions (BHA) who currently lease and manage the site from the City of Greater Bendigo (CoGB) have decided to close the site temporarily to



protect the staff and site. BHA and COGB are working through measures to improve security of the site for staff, visitors and worshipers so the site can be reopened as soon as possible.”

The branch suggests that perhaps a partnership with Thales Bendigo, the site’s neighbour, and a partnership arrangement with their security arrangements might be worthwhile considering. Opening times is a management issue which would normally be dealt with quickly and efficiently. The site is too important to have it closed.

## **Castlemaine residents win fight to stop new townhouses being built next to heritage building**

[ABC Central Victoria](#) / By [Shannon Schubert](#) and [Fiona Parker](#)

Posted Tue 7 Jun 2022 at 2:16pm Tuesday 7 Jun 2022 at 2:16pm, updated Tue 7 Jun 2022 at 5:01pm Tuesday 7 Jun 2022 at 5:01pm



The project was a result of years of work, including liaising with town planners and heritage experts. (Supplied: Nicola Loder)

Nicola Loder has been working on a design to build two eco-friendly townhouses in Castlemaine, next to a heritage building, for eight years.

Key points:

- Residents have objected to plans to build townhouses next to a heritage building
- Despite council approving the planning application, VCAT denied it
- Castlemaine has around 50 houses on the state heritage register, and a shortage of housing

"I wanted the new houses to recede into the bush setting. They were to be cloudy and hardwood timber," Ms Loder said. "I like minimal, contemporary design, especially next to a house that you want all the eyes to go up to the old house, which is extremely articulated. "Anytime I did anything more articulated in the design, it created a visual conflict. It stole the view. It was a respectful development."

In 2020, the Mount Alexander Shire Council approved the designs to build the townhouses on Farnsworth Street.

But a group of residents took that decision to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) which decided to reject the application in January last year. Alice Matthiesson is one of the Castlemaine residents who objected to the townhouses. She said the design did not fit the heritage look of the area.



The Old Powder Magazine is one of more than 50 heritage buildings in Castlemaine. (*Supplied: Doncaster Templestowe Historical Society*)



The adjacent Powder Magazine Keeper's Cottage (also called Whitley's House) 47 Farnsworth St Castlemaine, NT Register No. B1976. Image: National Trust Database.

"We thought that the townhouses were totally contradictory to the heritage nature of the area," she said. "It's a heritage precinct. There's also The Old Powder Magazine's keeper house, which has got military significance and national significance. There are quite a few very important buildings in the nearby precinct."

In the VCAT decision, planner Holly Sawyer said the trees on the land were protected by a heritage overlay, and while the building layout was generally consistent with previously approved plans, the size of the buildings did not comply with the heritage overlay. "The increased size of the proposed building envelopes will result in the



buildings dominating the landscape rather than sitting within the bush setting," Ms Sawyer said in the report.

Nearby residents and objectors didn't like the flat roof.

Ms Matthiesson said the design of the houses, with flat roofs, is incongruent with the heritage house next door. The resident said she was not against building contemporary housing on the site, just not the ones proposed. "There's no doubt there'll be two houses built on that site, one on each block. We're just looking for a more sympathetic building style," she said.

The VCAT planner said the size of the proposed buildings did not comply with the heritage overlay.

'No issue with the design' says land owner. Designer Nicola Loder said the flat roof was supposed to complement the bush setting and provide a contemporary contrast. The flat roof was really so it wasn't eye catching and more recessive," she said. "I think it's OK for houses to speak of their time, across time. So, it was a dialogue between a contemporary flat roof design and the historic design [next door]. She said she did not want to ruin the heritage aspect of the area but complement it. I don't think fitting in means mimicking what's there," Ms Loder said. The design was sustainable and did not raise any concerns with Heritage Victoria, she said. "It's a personal decision in the end as to what you like or what you don't like," she said. "Heritage Victoria had no issue with the design, neither did two of the heritage advisers from council." But Ms Matthiesson said the Mount Alexander Shire Council had dropped the ball when it came to heritage preservation. People just need to think a little harder about how they're going to do it," Ms Matthiesson said. "Will it fit in? A little more consultation about roof forms and the overall impact on the area."

Do you have a comment to make about this proposed development? Send to H&H.

## **A Letter from the Mornington Peninsula Branch**

Mr Peter Cox  
President  
Bendigo National Trust Branch

Afternoon Peter

I appreciated the opportunity to talk with you about Branch activities and look forward to meeting with you at some stage.

Our Branch visit to Horsham late last year was so enjoyable that the Committee feel it should be followed up with another one early next year, and Bendigo looks an ideal location.

If we could have some time with you and your committee, it would be an ideal chance to meet and discuss any mutual concerns and interests.

A very broad outline of possible things and places to look at are –

Specimen Cottage, Bendigo Observatory, Deborah Gold Mine, Bendigo Art Gallery, Golden Dragon Museum, Fortuna Villa, Whitehill's Cemetery, Bendigo Pottery.

When you get a chance, I will be very interested to hear your thoughts on any or all of the above.

Kind regards & stay safe (& warm)  
Victor Sullivan, President

## **Bendigo School of Mines**

The branch has been advocating for the restoration of these important buildings for four years, firstly with Bendigo TAFE which declared them as surplus to their requirements and decided to turn them into a Community Precinct. This was welcomed news for the community. On 6<sup>th</sup> May this year the branch met with local state parliamentary representatives Jacinta Allan and Maree Edwards. It was a positive meeting with all in agreement about the importance of the site. The branch asked for a response on the way forward which was agreed to but no response has been received. What are the next steps to get these buildings restored? Parts of the buildings have been vacant for many years. The buildings are on the State's Heritage Register and the branch is concerned that they will deteriorate further. Your views are sought on what the branch needs to do to get this project seriously considered.

## **Meeting with Heritage Victoria**

A very informative meeting was held on the role of Heritage Victoria. As the meeting was recorded it was hoped that a link could be provided for readers to look at but the file was too large. There work includes:

- Recommending which places and objects should be included in the [Victorian Heritage Register](#)
- Deciding whether or not to allow changes to places on the Register
- Recommending which historical archaeological sites should be included on the [Victorian Heritage Inventory](#)
- Deciding whether or not to allow changes to places on the Inventory
- Deciding who can access [shipwrecks](#) and other underwater sites
- [Regulating](#) and [enforcing](#) the Heritage Act 2017

HV also provide [grants](#) to help with the cost of preserving heritage sites. Greater Bendigo has 108 sites listed on the Victorian Heritage Register. The meeting demonstrated how to draw up a local data base so that all sites can be monitored. While there is a formal process to list sites on the Register, there are only two staff members who monitor the sites. Currently these two staff members are working on 165 enforcement cases. Sampson's Cottage, which featured in the April edition of H&H, is one of those cases which HV is working on. It is a classic case of 'demolition by neglect'. Once the local data base is completed people will be needed to check on each site. The branch would like to do the same with Council heritage overlays. If you would like to get involved with this project contact H&H. The future of the Bendigo Law Courts, the former Post Office building, the Bendigo School of Mines and the Bendigo Mining Exchange, situated along Pall Mall, were also raised in the meeting.

## **John Beebe's East Bendigo Observatory and Home**

Planning Panels Victoria held the hearing on 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> June to consider if a heritage overlay should be put on this site. There were three participating parties, Greater Bendigo Council which instigated the heritage amendment to protect the East Bendigo Observatory, Beebe's former home and a parcel of land around the buildings, Strath CCC Pty Ltd who want to develop a childcare centre on the site but want to protect the Observatory but not the home and the National Trust Branch which supported protection of the Observatory and the home but did not take a position on the amount of land to be preserved in front of the house. The Council was represented by its officers while Strath CCC Pty Ltd had legal representation. The Panel has 21 days from the 22<sup>nd</sup> June to present its recommendations to the Council. Council then does a further report to Councillors and the final position of Council



is taken at a public Council meeting. Council then forwards its decision to the Minister for Planning for a final decision on the amendment.

## **Council reports on 2022/2023 budget**

**Heritage Studies expenditure.** \$190,000 was allocated to the heritage program in 2020/21, and nearly \$165,000 was spent on heritage studies and advice. A further allocation is available in future years for the continuation of heritage studies as identified in the Heritage Gap Analysis that was undertaken in 2019.

**Bendigo School of Mines buildings** The City will continue to work with Bendigo TAFE regarding the use and preservation of its buildings, to assist with increasing patronage and visitation to the area. Council currently offers a small Heritage Restoration Loan Scheme which can assist with repairs, restoration and repainting, however the responsibility for heritage places being restored rests with landowners.

**Conservation management plan for Victoria Hill.** We are pleased to advise that signage works at Victoria Hill as part of the Conservation Plan implementation has been included in the 2022/23 budget. What do you make of this response? Do you think it is adequate?

## **Golden Square Heritage Study**



A house in the Rose Street Golden Square Precinct. Image: Minerva Heritage

Part of the Golden Square Heritage Study, namely the Precinct Overlay Review Draft Heritage Reports, can be viewed on the CoGB website-

<https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Services/Heritage/Heritage-Studies/Golden-Square-Heritage-Study>

Hopefully the individual overlay recommendations will be added soon.

**Visit the Maldon Museum**, Shire gardens, High St Maldon, located in the former Maldon Market House, c1859, converted to Maldon Shire Offices and hall in c 1865.

Open Wednesdays & Sundays 11.30am to 2pm. Ph. (03) 54751633

Further information-  
[maldonmuseum.com.au](http://maldonmuseum.com.au)



## **Danger Page Report/follow up on issues as of June 2022**

In the May edition of H&H it was suggested that a 'Danger Page' be included in each copy. It will take some consideration to formulate it. Suggestions are welcomed. Here is a list of issues that the branch has been working on for some time.

**Bridge/culvert at Spring Gully** has been repaired but is still not protected from erosion and riders underneath the structure.

§ The **stone buildings located at the Ravenswood Water Reserve** are in poor condition, need to be secured and a Committee of Management formed to oversee the protection of the site.

§ An independent assessment of **the E. G. Robertson Cast Iron Collection** is currently being undertaken with a report due in the coming months.

§ The storage of the **Doney Photographic Collection** is currently being considered with a report due sometime this year.

§ **The Bendigo Gas Works** have undergone a decontamination program and a draft master plan for the future of the site has been drawn up by Council. Council has informed the site that it will consider reopening the site for tours towards the end of 2022.

§ **Nanga Gnulle** has a heritage overlay to protect the house and a small part of the land around it. It is considered by the branch to be at risk.

§ **The Vahland Fountain** has been vandalized with restoration works to be undertaken over the next couple of months.

§ **The Bendigo TAFE** gates/part fence located beside the MacGillivray Hall have been hit by a truck. Repairs are due to be completed by September.

There are numerous buildings that have been reported that are at risk of neglect and demolition throughout Greater Bendigo. Do these properties get listed here? Your feedback on how this page might work will be appreciated.

Your views are sought on heritage issues. The branch welcomes your ideas, contributions and photographs for the newsletter which is published monthly. You can keep up with the current advocacy issues at the Trust Advocate blog at <http://www.trustadvocate.org.au/> National Trust of Australia (Vic) Bendigo & Region Branch. E [natrustbendigo@gmail.com](mailto:natrustbendigo@gmail.com) President, Peter Cox 0447473674 M C/- 57 Green St California Gully VIC 3556. You are receiving this email because you are a member of the National Trust of Australia (Vic) or have asked us to send you the newsletter. If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please contact the Branch at [natrustbendigo@gmail.com](mailto:natrustbendigo@gmail.com) with unsubscribe in the subject line. 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