

# GULF STATION



GULF STATION SOHE 2008



View from paddock to the second parcel looking northwest, 2023



View of homestead from across the dam. Different types of fencing visible. 2023.



h00384 1 gulf station melba hwy yarraglen butchers shop she project 2003



View from garden to the dam, 2023.



Milking shed, 2023.



Sheep dip, 2023.



Vertical timber slab stables. 2023.



Homestead, 2023.



h00384 gulf station melba hwy yarraglen buildings from hill she project 2003



Shingle ceiling in the shed, 2023.



verandah to kitchen block, 2023.



h00384 gulf station melba hwy yarraglen house east side she project 2003



h00384 gulf station melba hwy yarraglen house north east she project 2003



Diagram 384.



aerial extent.



h00384 gulf station melba hwy yarraglen house stables she project 2003



h00384 gulf station melba hwy yarraglen school room she project 2003



h00384 gulf station melba hwy yarraglen shearing shed interior she project 2003



h00384 gulf station melba hwy yarraglen shearing shed west wall she project 2003



h00384 gulf station melba hwy yarraglen slaughterhouse she project 2003



h00384 gulf station yarra glen yea road yarra glen early slab outbuilding jan1983

---

## Location

1029 MELBA HIGHWAY YARRA GLEN, YARRA RANGES SHIRE

## Municipality

YARRA RANGES SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H0384

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO8

## **VHR Registration**

May 12, 1976

## **Amendment to Registration**

June 20, 2024

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

---

## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - June 20, 2024

# **What is significant?**

Gulf Station, a farm complex that grew according to need between the 1850s and World War 1. The complex consists of numerous vernacular timber structures including the homestead, kitchen, schoolhouse, house stable, whelping kennels, working horse stable, pig sty, milking bails, slaughterhouse and sheep dip, shearing shed, and butcher shop set within a garden and farmland setting.

# **How is it significant?**

Gulf Station is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

### **Criterion A**

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

### **Criterion D**

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

# **Why is it significant?**

Gulf Station is historically significant as one of the best remaining complete sets of solid timber slab farm buildings, which are representative of Victoria's earliest farming heritage. As an exposition of early pastoral life, its coherence as a complex is remarkably intact, comprising the total needs of a functioning farm in the second half of the nineteenth century. The significance of the site is enhanced by the survival of remnants of the orchard, flower and vegetable gardens, which enables an understanding of domestic life and the self-sufficiency of the farm. The original post and rail fencing dates to the 1850s and is one of the best surviving examples from this period.

(Criterion A)

Gulf Station is architecturally significant as one of the most complete surviving 19th century station complexes demonstrating vernacular timber construction techniques in Victoria. The Gulf Station homestead demonstrates the change in vernacular building techniques over the nearly one-hundred-year period while in the occupation of the Bell family. The structures range from those of vertical timber slab construction with shingle roof of the 1850s, through extensions in stud frame with split weatherboards, galvanised corrugated iron and the fret cut verandah brackets of the Edwardian homestead wing. The homestead is significant for demonstrating the change over a century in interior finishing techniques of a relatively unpretentious dwelling.

(Criterion D)

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

#### Specific Exemptions

The works and activities below are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the Gulf Station subject to the following guidelines and conditions:

#### Guidelines

1. Where there is an inconsistency between permit exemptions specific to the registered place or object ('specific exemptions') established in accordance with either section 49(3) or section 92(3) of the Act and general exemptions established in accordance with section 92(1) of the Act specific exemptions will prevail

- to the extent of any inconsistency.
2. In specific exemptions, words have the same meaning as in the Act, unless otherwise indicated. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and the Act, the Act will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
  3. Nothing in specific exemptions obviates the responsibility of a proponent to obtain the consent of the owner of the registered place or object, or if the registered place or object is situated on Crown Land the land manager as defined in the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, prior to undertaking works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions.
  4. If a Cultural Heritage Management Plan in accordance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 is required for works covered by specific exemptions, specific exemptions will apply only if the Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been approved prior to works or activities commencing. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the relevant works and activities, Heritage Victoria must be contacted for advice on the appropriate approval pathway.
  5. Specific exemptions do not constitute approvals, authorisations or exemptions under any other legislation, Local Government, State Government or Commonwealth Government requirements, including but not limited to the Planning and Environment Act 1987, the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth). Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to obtain relevant planning, building or environmental approvals from the responsible authority where applicable.
  6. Care should be taken when working with heritage buildings and objects, as historic fabric may contain dangerous and poisonous materials (for example lead paint and asbestos). Appropriate personal protective equipment should be worn at all times. If you are unsure, seek advice from a qualified heritage architect, heritage consultant or local Council heritage advisor.
  7. The presence of unsafe materials (for example asbestos, lead paint etc) at a registered place or object does not automatically exempt remedial works or activities in accordance with this category. Approvals under Part 5 of the Act must be obtained to undertake works or activities that are not expressly exempted by the below specific exemptions.
  8. All works should be informed by a Conservation Management Plan prepared for the place or object. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

## **Conditions**

1. All works or activities permitted under specific exemptions must be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents harm to the registered place or object. Harm includes moving, removing or damaging any part of the registered place or object that contributes to its cultural heritage significance.
2. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the registered place are revealed relating to its cultural heritage significance, including but not limited to historical archaeological remains, such as features, deposits or artefacts, then works must cease and Heritage Victoria notified as soon as possible.
3. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered or exposed at any time, all works must cease and the Secretary (as defined in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006) must be contacted immediately to ascertain requirements under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.
4. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any munitions or other potentially explosive artefacts are discovered, Victoria Police is to be immediately alerted and the site is to be immediately cleared of all personnel.
5. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any suspected human remains are found the works or activities must cease. The remains must be left in place and protected from harm or damage. Victoria Police and the State Coroner's Office must be notified immediately. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the remains are Aboriginal, the State Emergency Control Centre must be immediately notified on 1300 888 544, and, as required under s.17(3)(b) of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, all details about the location and nature of the human remains must be provided to the Secretary (as defined in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006).

## **Exempt works and activities**

1. The continuation of existing agricultural practices including management of livestock, grazing, cultivation, and other processes necessary for usual agricultural operation.

## Theme

### 4. Transforming and managing the land

Construction dates	1854,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	1252
Property Number	

---

## History

The first European settlers in the Yarra Glen area were the Ryrie brothers, who grazed cattle on the rich Yarra River flats. The open flood plain attracted other early pastoralists from Melbourne and during the early 1860s a township was established, known as Yarra Flats. In 1889 the town changed its name to Yarra Glen. The origins of Gulf Station are not clear. John Dickson may have occupied the site of the station as early as 1844. It is possible that part of the existing kitchen wing may be an 1840s structure originally erected as a combined hut and animal shelter.

In 1855, Dickson sold a covenant for the Gulf Station pre-emptive right to William Bell and his son-in-law Thomas Armstrong. The Bells and Armstrongs were both Scottish migrant families. William Bell and Thomas Armstrong bought the freehold for Gulf Station in October 1858. However, it seems that it was Bell's son, William Bell Jr, who mainly occupied the station. Around this time the homestead was built, beginning as a small rectangular cottage.

In 1860 William Bell Jr married Mary Ann Little. The couple had eight children, four sons and four daughters. As the Bell family grew the small cottage at Gulf Station developed into a large family home, with a variety of farm buildings. Both William Bell Jr and Mary Ann's parents also lived at Gulf Station at various times.

Many of the farm buildings, like the earliest stage of the house, are of vertical timber slab construction suggesting an 1850s origin. The slaughterhouse and a portion of a stable building and a kennels/pigsty building are of horizontal slab construction, while the remaining buildings and additions to the house and other buildings are constructed in relatively modern stud construction. Some ten buildings are built in timber slab construction with peeled logs of indigenous gum and stringybark cut and adzed locally used as structural members. Roofs of many of the buildings are of split shingles but are now covered with corrugated iron.

In 1870 William Bell Snr died at Gulf Station, leaving it in the ownership of his son. When William Bell Jr died in 1877, his widow Mary Ann continued to run the station. Eventually, she was helped by her children, most of whom remained at Gulf Station for the rest of their lives.

The station stayed in Bell family hands until the 1951 death of Dinah Bell, last living child of William and Mary Ann. The property was then sold to soldier settler Jack Smedley. In 1976 the State Government purchased the remnants of the property and appointed the National Trust as the Committee of Management.

The remaining structures on site include:

- Homestead
- Kitchen wing and associated rooms, which possibly predate the homestead
- Stables
- Barn and associated milking area

- Kennels, calf shed and pigsty
- Butcher's shop, dairy and associated structures
- Slaughterhouse and sheep dip
- Shearing shed
- Schoolhouse
- Attached and detached fences.

Gulf Station retains remnants of the orchard, as well as flower and vegetable gardens. Several rare and mature Yarra gums also survive on the property along with some original post and rail fencing.

In 2010 an 1870s prefabricated house was relocated from Croydon to Gulf Station. According to oral sources, the house was originally moved from New South Wales, where it was said to have been a former detention centre or a teacher's residence. It is a unique form of prefabricated construction not known elsewhere in Victoria. It was previously located on the Maroondah Highway, Croydon and is registered separately in the VHR (H2024).

Sources:

Meredith Gould Architects P/L. *Gulf Station, Yarra Glen Conservation Policy and Plan*. 1998

S Balderstone, D McIntosh, F O'Neill. *Gulf Station Homestead, Yarra Glen: Conservation Analysis*. 1993

D V Bick. *Conservation Analysis Report on Gulf Station*. 1980

Australian Heritage Commission. *Register of the National Estate*

## Extent of Registration

### Heritage Act 2017

#### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 2017**, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by modifying a place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H0384

Category: Registered Place

Place: Gulf Station

Location: 1029 Melba Highway, Yarra Glen

Municipality: Yarra Ranges Shire

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 384 encompassing all of Allotment 12A Parish of Burgoyne and Lot 5 on Plan of Subdivision 420529

20 June 2024

STEVEN AVERY

Executive Director

[*Victorian Government Gazette* G 25 20 June 2024]

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*