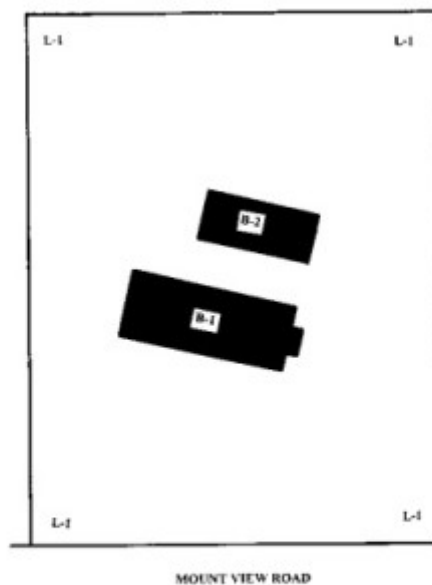


# SIEBELS FARMHOUSE



1 siebels farmhouse mount  
view road thomastown front  
view



NOT TO SCALE



siebels farmhouse extent of registration

## Location

77 MOUNT VIEW ROAD THOMASTOWN, WHITTLESEA CITY

## Municipality

WHITTLESEA CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1212

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO32

## VHR Registration

October 24, 1996

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 11, 1999

Siebel's Farmhouse was erected in 1860 by Johann Gottlob Siebel and replaced an earlier one in which he had lived since first settling in Thomastown in 1850. The cottage is constructed of bluestone with asymmetric gable ends. Although it has been extensively altered it retains many of its early features including its original bread oven and cellar and one timber outbuilding. The letters J G S are inscribed in the keystone over the front door. Born at Zauchau, Silesia in 1813, Johann Siebel had arrived in Australia aboard the *Emmy* in 1849 with his wife Christiane and at least two children as part of a scheme for sponsored German immigration initiated by William Westgarth.

Siebel's Farmhouse is of historic and architectural importance to the State of Victoria.

Siebel's Farmhouse is of historical significance for its association with the State's promotion of German settlement. As one of five remaining farmhouses of the original settlement, it is a significant reminder of the way of life of the early German settlers in Victoria. Siebel's farmhouse is important architecturally as being the only remaining farmhouse of the original German settlement to have its original bread oven and cellar. This contributes to an understanding of the way of life of the early German settlers in Victoria.

As part of the Westgarthtown settlement, Siebel's farmhouse has an important association with William Westgarth, merchant, financier, politician, historian and notable pioneer who was directly responsible for immigrant communities in Victoria.

Siebel's farmhouse is important for its association with Joseph Gottlob Siebel, who was active in the development of the Lutheran Church in both Westgarthtown and Melbourne, serving as both a foundation trustee of the nearby church and school and as a foundation member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Victoria's Synod.

## 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:**

### **EXEMPTIONS FROM PERMITS:**

#### **INTERIOR DECORATIVE SCHEMES**

Interior painting/wall-papering to walls and ceilings, provided the preparation work for painting / papering does not remove evidence of the building's original paint or other decorative scheme.

Removal of existing carpets / flexible floor coverings eg vinyl.

Installation of carpets and flexible floor coverings

Installation of curtain track, rod, blinds and other window dressings.

#### **REFURBISHMENT OF BATHROOMS, KITCHEN**

Refurbishment of bathroom /toilet / ensuite including removal of existing sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, and wall and floor coverings, and installation of new fixtures, and wall and floor coverings and Removal of existing kitchen benches and fixtures (stoves, dishwashers etc.) and floor coverings and installation of new kitchen benches and fixtures, including associated plumbing and wiring, provided the exiting bread oven is not altered.

#### **INTERIOR WORKS TO THE TIMBER BUILDING (B-2)**

All interior works to the timber building (B-2)

Construction dates            1860,

Heritage Act Categories    Registered place,

Hermes Number                4647

Property Number

## History

### Contextual History:History of Place:

The first phase of German migration to Victoria began in the 1840s, following successful settlement of German communities from the late 1830s in South Australia. Impressed by the South Australian example, William Westgarth, a Melbourne importer, undertook a migration program to assist German families settle in Victoria. He sought to encourage the settlement by using the Government-sponsored migration scheme as an incentive. Although only a few Germans who came did actually qualify under this scheme, Westgarth was instrumental in encouraging German settlement in Port Phillip prior to the 1850s goldrushes.

The first settlement of 10 families was established at Germantown near Geelong (now called Grovedale), from immigrants arriving on the "Emmy" and selected for settlement by Dr Thomson and William Westgarth. The Westgarthtown settlement began on 22 June, 1850 with the purchase of 640 acres at £1 per acre by Westgarth and Captain John Stanley Carr, guardian to the young Prince Friederich of Augustenburg. The land was purchased direct from the Government, with the plan to survey and divide it for settlement "by lot, or by mutual agreement" for the newly arriving immigrants.

Germany like most of Europe in the early nineteenth century suffered severe economic conditions. There was no shortage of immigrants escaping from overcrowding, unemployment and food shortages, the latter particularly in the 1840s. For Germans upheavals in the Protestant churches and military service requirements were an added incentive to seek greener pastures. During the seventy years between 1815 and 1885, 5 million people being approximately 10 per cent of the population emigrated, principally to the United States.

The first arrivals at Westgarthtown were, for the most part, from Saxony, Prussia and rural Silesia. The majority were tradespeople rather than farmers. Even so, the first group of families chose lots by ballot after being naturalised, and set about clearing the stony land for cultivation and erecting temporary shelter.

Land (10 acres) was reserved for a church, cemetery school and shop in the centre of the block, adjoining the creek. These resources were paid for by the settlers. The remaining land was subdivided into 16 blocks running east-west on either side of the creek, allowing access to the water by all the landholders. (See Figure 1). The creek (originally called Dry Creek and now known as Edgar's Creek) proved unreliable in summer months, so the settlers were given legal access to a spring in the north of the Section (just north of present day Robert Street).

The ownership arrangements for the subdivision were a complicated arrangement. The land had been purchased in trust by Westgarth and Carr. The title documents for each allotment required the signatures of all parties (each settler, Westgarth and Carr had to sign the landsale/ purchase documents for each other settler, being all part owners of the total section). Most of the mortgages were handles by Wilhelme Brahe, whose brother was to be a member of the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition in 1862.

By 1857, William Westgarth noted with satisfaction that there had been "considerable progress in the form of a scattered village, with a little Lutheran Church and some show of gardening and cultivation." He observed that the German settlers still used their own language, and appeared to be prosperous. Many had benefited from the demand for fresh produce on the goldfields from 1851, supplying milk, butter, cheese, fruit, vegetables and eggs, and driving bullock teams from the ports to the goldfields. Most families had established dairy farms, and supplied milk to Melbourne. By 1862, the Thomastown Dairy was operating at 114 Little Lonsdale Street East. Dairying predominated in the area until the mid 1950s, and ceased altogether in 1972 with the sale and subdivision of the last remaining farmland owned by the Ziebell family (north of the cemetery and farmhouse and now completely built over).

In 1934 Albert Siebel acquired the Murray Road, Preston dairy and named it Pura Dairy. By 1964 it provided 32% of Melbourne's milk, as well as supplying rural Victoria and Tasmania.

The population of Westgarthtown remained stable until the post World War II population boom. A housing development for ex-servicemen was planned on 245 acres, including land purchased from the Seeber and Maltzahn families. It was to be, ironically, another "planned" community. With the influx of European migrants, almost all of the original Westgarth purchase was "sold, subdivided and suburbanised", leaving only the church and cemetery reserve intact.

### William Westgarth 1815-1889

William Westgarth arrived in Victoria on 13 December, 1840 and over the next 17 years, established himself as a

merchant, financier, politician, statistician and acute observer of social life in Victoria. At the time of his involvement with the promotion of German settlers, Westgarth was involved in a variety of causes. Most notably, he was instrumental in founding the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce, the first gas company in Victoria, and the Bank of Victoria.

Westgarth established an import partnership in 1845, and he maintained his interests in the firm (Westgarth, Ross and Spencers) even after returning to England in 1857. The Australian Dictionary of Biography records Westgarth's commitment to democratic ideals such as his campaigning for the end of transportation to the colonies, support for the Melbourne Mechanics' Institute, the abolition of property qualifications, and free selection of land (the 'unlocking of the lands'). In 1854 he was appointed by Lieutenant Governor Hotham to chair the Commission of Inquiry into conditions on the Victorian Goldfields, following the Eureka uprising. One of the consequences of his chairmanship was the encouragement of limited liability mining companies in an attempt to reduce the monopoly of large mining companies on the goldfields.

In 1850 Westgarth became a Member of the NSW Legislative Council and after separation of Victoria in 1851, one of three Members of the Legislative Council of Victoria for Melbourne. Westgarth's initiative in assisting German immigrants to settle in Victoria stemmed partly from his active support for the establishment of enterprising new ventures in the developing colony, based on the importing of skills and traditions of working people. He recorded his regard for the "industry, frugality, sobriety, and general good conduct" of the Germans who had already settled in South Australia in the 1840s, and observed that Victoria already could benefit from such a community, particularly with vineyards and gardens.

History of Place:

From the Whittlesea Conservation Study:

Siebel's farmhouse was erected in 1860 by Johann Gottlob Siebel and replaced an earlier one in which he had lived since first settling in Thomastown in 1850.

Johann Siebel arrived in Australia aboard the Emmy in 1849 with his wife Christiane and at least two children. Born at Zauchau, Silesia in 1813, he had served for several years in the German army as a Grenadier.

Siebel established a dairy farm at Westgarthtown on thirty acres purchased in 1851. Later the farm was enlarged to ninety acres by the purchase of two adjoining properties. Siebel was also active in the development of the Lutheran Church in both Westgarthtown and Melbourne, serving as both a foundation trustee of the nearby church and school and as a foundation member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Victoria's Synod. He died in 1877 aged 64.

Descendants of Johann Gottlob Siebel continued dairying at "Westbourne Park", as the farm became known, until the 1940s. In 1934 a grandson, Albert Siebel, established the Pura Dairy in Murray Road, Preston. From a one cart dairy delivering only to a few adjacent streets, the Pura brand grew to become the best known in Victoria.

## **Extent of Registration**

### **NOTICE OF REGISTRATION**

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1212 in the category described as a Heritage Place:

Siebel's Farmhouse, 77 Mount View Road, Thomastown, Whittlesea City Council.

### **EXTENT:**

1. All of the buildings known as Siebel's Farmhouse marked B-1 (house), B-2 (timber outbuilding) on Diagram 605741 held by the Executive Director of the Heritage Council.
2. All of the land marked L-1 on Diagram 605741 held by the Executive Director of the Heritage Council, being all the land described in Certificate of Title Volume 8540, Folio 630.

Dated 3 October 1996

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette No. G42 24 October 1996 p.2774]

*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/>*