
Balla Balla

Location

Baxter-Tooradin Road,CANNON CREEK, Casey City

Municipality

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO13

Heritage Listing

Casey City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 17, 2022

What is significant?

'Balla Balla', comprising the homestead (including its interior) constructed c.1880 (with possible earlier sections), and its associated gardens (including two Canary Island Palms and an Italian Cypress) and land at Baxter-Tooradin Road, Cannons Creek.

How is it significant?

'Balla Balla' is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Casey (and potential regional significance).

Why is it significant?

'Balla Balla' is regionally significant for its link, by history and part of its fabric, to the early and formative pastoral era in the Westernport and Gippsland districts. The house, by its original construction, relative integrity and style, appears to be substantially from the 1870s or early 1880s and as such is linked with Alexander M Hunter, a well known grazier in the colony at that time. Part of the building can also be linked with Dr Adams who was also a noted figure in the district. 'Balla Balla' homestead is in part the city's oldest known house and the major part of the house is among the city's oldest buildings.

'Balla Balla' is architecturally and aesthetically significant as a relatively intact example of an early dwelling in the now rare Colonial Georgian style. Although the house has been renewed in many sections of the interior, it still has valuable joinery such as the French windows, cupboards and stair. The fireplace mantels are also notable, as is the unusual plan. The mature Canary Island palms and Italian Cypress are of local importance as mature individual specimens and as major remnants of a former period garden setting for the house, although not contemporary with the earliest fabric.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Casey - Casey Heritage Study, Context Pty Ltd, 2004; Casey - Heritage of the City of Casey: Historic Sites in the former Cranbourne Shire, Graeme Butler & Associates, 1994;
Construction dates	1860,
Other Names	Balla Balla Pre-Emptive Right & Homestead,
Hermes Number	63089
Property Number	

Usage/Former Usage

House & farm

Physical Description 1

'Balla Balla' was shown in an early photograph (1940-50s) as a two-storey hipped roof and stuccoed house with a finely detailed two-level hipped roof verandah. (1) To one side of this wing of the house was a single storey gabled and verandahed (hipped roof, slim timber posts) wing with a fretted barge. Part of this verandah had been enclosed, reputedly as a bathroom. The main verandah included open-work or panelled (timber?) supports and friezes, with what appears to be possible added posts. The verandah already looked to be in poor repair.

Today 'Balla Balla' is a one and two-storey, part stuccoed (new) Colonial Georgian style house. It has a simple hipped and slated roof (new slates) over the two-storey section and a gabled and slated roof (new slates) over the single storey wings. These wings are symmetrically arranged either end of the two-storey wing. Another similar wing (containing the kitchen) extends perpendicular to the main wing: some of this wing is thought to have been the oldest (1856) building the site (kitchen, former hut?).

French windows on both lower and upper levels of the central wing show the presence of a two-level verandah. This is currently a new timber post-supported verandah with an open terrace at the upper level, slatted balustrading and a timber frieze which resembles that of the early photograph.

The French windows (part new, some reversed) and slim cemented chimney cornices suggest a date from the 1870-80s for the centre two-storey section. The main entry door in the central wing is the typical central door with top and side-lights. The windows on either side have six-pane double-hung sashes. The side wings also have French windows and fretted barge boards, recently rebuilt to match the original in a wave pattern. These wings also have new hipped roof timber-post verandahs on the north side. The wings are thought to have been added after the erection of the two-storey section and the kitchen.

The lower storey of the elevation, which faces Quail Island and Westernport Bay (rear), is not stuccoed but, instead, faced in red English bonded hand-moulded brickwork (190x65x100mm, close to American size of the time of 190x75x57mm). The bond indicates a 1870s date. (2) It is probably that the whole house was once face brick. Window bays protrude from the side wings in this face. Here there are unusual slim French windows set in each of the three facets in each window bay. A new cement threshold has been created on this face. Otherwise the opening area as they were on the north face, with a transverse gabled wing at one end. Other gabled

structures are close to the house. Two cellars exist under the house, one at the east and the other at the west end near the kitchen, indicating possible further construction stages.

Planting at the rear of the property includes two mature Canary Island Date Palms and one Italian Cypress, possibly planted early in the twentieth century (the palms are visible as about 3-4m high in the 1940s photo).

Inside, the main entry is via an unusual transverse passageway (see also Kitchens - Toomuc Valley Orchard House 1886-). From this room, with its panelled ceiling, there is an arched entry into the stair hall. This arch extends into a minor barrel vault, which supports the return flight of the stair above and gives access to a door to an under-stair space. A black marble fireplace and an unusual slate fireplace survive, along with cedar joinery and side cupboards in the fireplaces.

Sources:

(1) Copy of 1940s photograph held by owner (in 1996)

(2) See Miles Lewis 'Tradition & Innovation in Victorian Building, 1801-1865', MU Thesis, 1972

Physical Conditions

Good

Historical Australian Themes

Settling the land, Working the land

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/>