
HOPETOUN CEMETERY AND CHAPEL

Location

BACCHUS MARSH ROAD BACCHUS MARSH, MOORABOOL SHIRE

Municipality

MOORABOOL SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7722-0024

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO16

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 25, 2023

What is significant?

The Hopetoun Cemetery stands on 0.4 hectares of land donated by Messers Leahy, Egan and Egan in 1850, to the Roman Catholic Church for the erection of a Chapel/School.

The building was made of locally produced hand-made bricks, the foundation stone laid by Bishop Goold on October 16th, 1850. It measured 35' x 15' x 14' high was capable of holding 150 people. The Chapel was used as both a house of worship and school by the Irish immigrants who settled the area. The School closed in 1874 and the building survived until c1876 and was then removed. The remains can be seen as stone footing and brick scatters that lie relatively central in the cemetery and are surrounded by old graves set out in a crude axial grid. The boundary is defined by a three-rail post and rail fence on three sides and a cyclone mesh fence, vehicle gate and entrance stile on the front.

The cypress trees along the west boundary are typical plantings of the period, they are old and are in varying stages of health. The cemetery was closed in 1894 by the Board of Public Health as it did not adhere to the Cemeteries Act of 1890 – it kept no records and had no Trustees. New Burial Rights were issued by the Board and burials continued at the cemetery until c1950.

How is it significant?

The Hopetoun Cemetery is of historical, archaeological and social importance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Hopetoun Cemetery is historically important as the earliest known Catholic cemetery in regional Victoria. The Hopetoun Cemetery is historically significant for its association with the pre-goldrush European settlement of rural Victoria, and particularly the development of small agriculturally-based communities in fertile areas such as the Lerderdeg and Werribee river valleys.

The Hopetoun Cemetery is historically important as it contains rare pre-goldrush fabric remains relating to the early settlement of rural Victoria, in the cemetery reserve and the ruins of the Chapel/School house. It shows the only known visible evidence of a church of this period in rural Victoria outside of Portland.

The location of the Hopetoun Cemetery beside the historic old Portland Bay Road and opposite Leahy's residence (VHR 907) combine to make the area, that survives in its original rural aspect, unique to the State.

It is also a rare example of a churchyard cemetery which retains the fabric of its function, and it has the archaeological potential to reveal the remains dating to pre-goldrush period of settlement in Victoria.

[Source: Victorian Heritage Register]

Hermes Number 7660

Property Number

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/>