
RAVENSWOOD HOMESTEAD



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1 ravenswood homestead
near bendigo front view
nov80

Location

4912 CALDER HIGHWAY RAVENSWOOD, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0315

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO630

VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 11, 2008

What is significant?

The Ravenswood homestead was built by Frederick Fenton on Bullock Creek on his property near Bendigo probably c1866. Originally known as the Mount Alexander North run and occupied from c1840, the Ravenswood run was acquired by Stewart and Robert Gibson in 1848, with Frederick Fenton replacing one brother almost immediately due to ill health. The discovery of gold in 1851 at nearby Mount Alexander, and at the northern tip of the Ravenswood run, drew large numbers of diggers to the area, and Fenton reportedly made money selling provisions to them and agisting their horses. After becoming the sole owner of the Ravenswood run in 1857, he built the first substantial homestead on the property.

In 1869 Fenton sold the property to Robert Moffat, the owner of a number of stations, largely in northern Victoria. The pastoral lease of the property was cancelled by the government in 1874 and Ravenswood was acquired from the executors of the late Robert Moffat by Harry Leigh Atkinson, a successful Sandhurst doctor and mining investor, reportedly in 1891. The homestead remained in the Atkinson family until 1962.

Ravenswood homestead is built of face brickwork with hipped roofs. The main two storey house has a centrally located single storey brick entry porch, with arched opening and simple arcaded balustrade above. A single storey concave verandah, supported on paired timber columns, flanks this porch and returns around the south side of the house. A grouping of five columns supports the verandah at the corner. To the north, the verandah terminates in a parapetted wall. Window openings are rectangular, with simple bay windows to the lower south facade.

Various brick additions were made to the house, probably by Atkinson in the 1890s. These include an addition across the north facade comprising a single storey dining room and adjoining two storey section. This addition includes a rendered dining room bay with heavily modelled classical architraves.

Other additions include a detached brick kitchen wing with scullery, laundry and servants' rooms to the north, and an adjacent brick stables building. A granite gatehouse, of square proportions, was added to the property at some stage.

How is it significant?

Ravenswood homestead is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Ravenswood homestead is of historical significance for its associations with the early development of the Bendigo district, in particular the gold rush. Bendigo was a major gold mining centre in Victoria and the first gold discoveries in the Bendigo area were made in the vicinity of Ravenswood.

Ravenswood homestead is of historical significance for its associations with Robert Moffat and Harry Leigh Atkinson. Moffat, together with his brother, was amongst the wealthiest squatters in his time and Atkinson was a shrewd land investor who became one of the largest land owners in Victoria.

Ravenswood homestead is of architectural significance as an early, and possibly the first, substantial homestead built in the district. A refined example of a simple Regency composition, the building exhibits fine face brickwork and brick detailing. The later, classically derived dining room bay, provides an interesting contrast to the earlier plain exterior.

[Online Data Upgrade Project 2008]

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:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component.

General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: A Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan.

General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works must submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates 1857,

Heritage Act Categories Registered place,

Hermes Number 967

Property Number

History

The Ravenswood homestead was built by Frederick Fenton on Bullock Creek on his property near Bendigo probably c1866. Originally known as the Mount Alexander North run and occupied from c1840, the Ravenswood run was acquired by Stewart and Robert Gibson in 1848, with Frederick Fenton replacing one brother almost immediately due to ill health. The discovery of gold in 1851 at nearby Mount Alexander, and at the northern tip of the Ravenswood run, drew large numbers of diggers to the area, and Fenton reportedly made money selling provisions to them and agisting their horses. After becoming the sole owner of the Ravenswood run in 1857, he built the first substantial homestead on the property.

Evidence suggests that the house was built c1866. In March 1865 a tender notice appeared in the *Bendigo Advertiser* for two hundred thousand bricks for Mr Marzetti at Ravenswood. The 1866 Marong rate book lists Frederick Fenton as having land, 2 slab huts and woolshed with a NAV of 344/10/6. The 1867 rate book lists the property with a brick house and buildings, instead of slab huts, and the NAV was raised to 400 pounds. A sale notice in the *Argus* of 14 October 1868 refers to the 'comfortable two storey house recently built at considerable cost'.

In 1869 Fenton sold the property to Robert Moffat, the owner of a number of stations, largely in northern Victoria. The pastoral lease of the property was cancelled by the government in 1874 and Ravenswood was acquired from the executors of the late Robert Moffat by Harry Leigh Atkinson, a successful Sandhurst doctor and mining investor, reportedly in 1891. The homestead remained in the Atkinson family until 1962.

The draft statement of significance and the above history were produced as part of an Online Data Upgrade Project 2008. Sources were as follows:

F. Cusack. *Bendigo: a History*. Melbourne 1973

M. Bickford, F. Cusack et al. *A Ravenswood Muster, Back to Ravenswood*. 1972

Photographs, John T. Collins, Picture Collection State Library of Victoria, 1986

Author unknown. 'Ravenswood Building Study', Master of Arts in Public History, undated

A. Sutherland. *Victoria and its Metropolis*. Vol IIB, p 266. Melbourne 1888

F. McKenzie Clarke. *Early Days on Bendigo*. Carlton 1979

Information on the date of construction of the house was received from Rita Hull, who has written a book on the history of the Ravenswood property, in 2013. This information has been added to file 601867.

Plaque Citation

Closely linked with early settlement and gold discovery, this 1860s Regency house was potentially the first substantial homestead built in the district. Later additions included brick stables, a granite gatehouse and the classically derived dining room.

Extent of Registration

Shire of Marong. No.315. Ravenswood Homestead, Ravenswood.

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No 100 Wednesday, October 9 1974 p.3650]

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/>