

No. 316: Former Fulham Park

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Address | 1267-1289 Beattys Road, Grangefields |
| Significance | Local |
| Construction Dates | Circa late-1860s |
| Period | Victorian |
| Date Inspected | 6 February 2018 |



Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The remnants of the Victorian stone cottage at the former Fulham Park and the nearby riveted vessels (~~movable elements~~). The modest, circa 1860s cottage has a symmetrical format and retains an early chimney to each side.

How is it Significant?

The remnants of the cottage and the nearby vessels are of local historical and representative significance to the City of Melton.

Why is it Significant?

Historically, the remains of the cottage are significant as a relic of early settlement in the Melton area and was likely constructed during the selection era of the 1860s when a number of small farmers settled in the Rockbank district. The site is also significant for its association with the operations of the Cockbill family who established a successful pig and poultry stud at Rockbank during the early 20th century and also operated a knackery. The riveted vessels located to the south-east of the cottage are likely some of the only fabric that remains from the industrial activities of the Cockbill Brothers who operated in the area for almost 50 years.

Having been partly damaged by the devastating 1965 Toolern Vale fire, the ruin is also a testament to the destructive fires which destroyed many buildings in the municipality. (Criterion A)

The circa late-1860s cottage is a representative example of a Selection era dwelling, of which few survive in the Melton area. Although now ruinous, the remains of the basalt building are typical of small farm cottages constructed in the western volcanic plains in that era. Typical characteristics include the modest size, symmetrical composition with central doorway and the use of undressed basalt. (Criterion D)

Description

Remains of the former Fulham Park consists of a modest basalt cottage located close to Beattys Road and two riveted vessels located to the south-east of the cottage which are associated with the early to mid- 20th century farming and industrial activities of the Cockbill family.

The site has an open-rural setting, though the cottage is set back from the Beattys Road boundary by only about 8 metres. The basalt cottage is symmetrical to the front with central doorway and window opening to each side. The building now has a flat metal roof with a band of modern brickwork laid in stretcher bond to the upper part of the front wall (possibly to create a fall for the roof). A 1965 photograph of the cottage following fire suggests that it may have originally had a transverse gable roof.

Stonework is a mix of regular coursed (likely original) and random coursed (probably later alterations) types. Some sections of wall, including the upper part of the west wall, appear to have been rebuilt, possibly following the 1965 fire. All basalt is undressed and that to the west side has tooled lines to the larger mortar joints.

There is an early chimney to each side of the cottage, a regular brick one to the west and a wide basalt type to the east with brick stack (the top of which has been removed). The curved profile of that to the east suggests that it may have been used as an oven, though typically kitchens were not part of the main house.

The openings and adjacent stonework/brickwork have been partly altered, possibly due to earlier collapse. The front door opening has a brick segmental arch with brick extending partway down one side. Both these bricks and those to the west chimney are varied in colour and appear to be a later type. All early joinery has been lost and the two window openings to the front as well as that to the east have timber lintels. Early metal vents remain to the front and east side. There is a large crack to both the west wall and the basalt chimney.

To the south-east of the cottage, a pair of tall vessels constructed of riveted steel remain. These vessels are each supported on four metal legs and are likely associated with the processing/manufacture of stock feed at Cockbill's Fulham Park. Closer to the cottage (also to the south-east) another early item of machinery remains and is possibly an oil pump located above a well. Whilst this was only assessed from the road, a well is known to have been located to the east of the house when Cockbill established his poultry farm at the site. Also visible from the road, are large heaps of basalt.



North-east corner of cottage



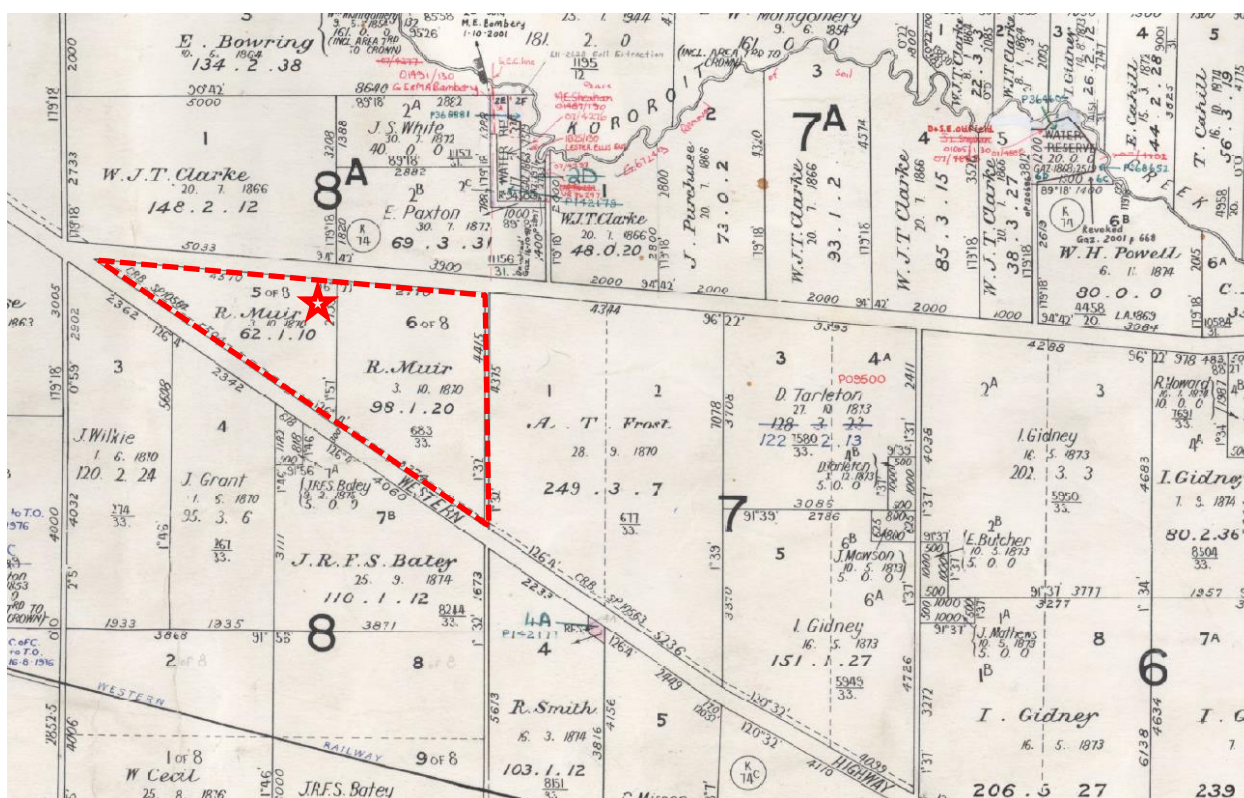
Riveted steel vessels (left) and other machinery located to the south-east of the cottage

~~To the rear at the south-west corner is a circular cover (evident in aerials) which may relate to a well.~~

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History

The subject site was part of allotment 5 of Section 8, Parish of Koroit which was granted, along with the adjoining allotment to the east (no.6), to R Muir on 3 October 1870. The combined size of these lots was about 160 acres (about 65 hectares).¹ Muir had leased the site from April 1867 and by August 1869 had made substantial and permanent improvements in accordance with the Land Act of 1869.² Under this Act, a person holding a lease could purchase the land if they had occupied an allotment for three years and had fenced and cultivated that land as well as made substantial and permanent improvements to the value of one pound per acre.³ It is possible that the extant basalt cottage was erected for Robert Muir by this time.



Parish Plan, K74 (4). Allotments 5 and 6 are indicated (red line) as is the approximate location of the subject building (red star)
(Source: PROV)

In the same month that Muir was granted the land, it was transferred to James Ross who sold it the following year to William John Turner Clarke.⁴ Clarke had previously acquired vast areas of land in the Sunbury and Melton areas and his already large fortune grew considerably as demand for food and supplies increased during the Gold Rush. Following Clarke's death in 1874, his Victorian properties, worth about £1,500,000, were transferred to his eldest son William John Clarke. After the death of William John, his estate was distributed among his wife and 10 children.⁵ The large Rockbank Estate, of which the subject site was part, was given to his son Rupert. The Rockbank Estate was reported to have an area of about 54,000 and extended south-westerly from Sir Rupert Clarke's estate at Sunbury to within a few miles of Footscray and the Werribee district.⁶

¹ Parish Plan, K74 (4), Parish Plan Schedule 2972, p2

² Land Selection File, Section 33, Land Act 1869, PROV, VPRS 629/P0/Unit 4, item 683

³ *The Land Act, 1869*, Victoria. Substantial and permanent improvements included dams, wells, cultivation, fencing, clearing, or draining of an allotment and the erecting of a habitable dwelling or farm or other buildings.

⁴ Certificate of Title, Volume 401, Folio 123

⁵ *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (online database), entries for William John Clarke and Sir Rupert Clarke, accessed March 2018.

⁶ *Weekly Times* (Melbourne), 21 August 1897, p2

In 1902, a 'second subdivisional sale of the Rockbank Estate', consisting of 2458 acres divided into 10 farms, was advertised for sale. Lot 8 of this sale was described as.

Lot 8 contains 160 acres. This block has a double frontage to main roads, and has a comfortable cottage and outbuildings. This lot is under lease to Mr Toohey until 1st January, 1904.⁷

This lot was sold to John Cockbill, Melbourne at £7 5 per acre,⁸ and was the same parcel granted to Muir in 1870, consisting of both allotments 5 and 6 of Section 8.

By 1917, Messrs. Cockbill Bros had established a poultry farm, known as Fulham Park, on the site. Improvements that had been made since the property was purchased from Clarke were reported to have included the planting of 3000 trees for shelter purposes and the grading of land to allow for the planting of lucerne which provided green food for the poultry and was irrigated by an 80 foot well. Poultry sheds to the design of Mr A. Hart, the Government Poultry Expert were erected on the site for 700 laying birds (white leghorns). On another part of the farm 500 pigs were kept in three large sheds as well as a barn that was said to be 'stocked to the roof with grain'. Also on the property was a steam boiler for steaming barley, a corn crusher and other machines for providing food for the fowls. Additionally, there were stables for 18 working horses and a half-mile trotting track laid down on the farm. At the time, it was reported that 'old stone walls' remained at the site.⁹

By 1918, there were reported to be about 3000 White Leghorns, 1000 of them breeding birds. To foster egg production, the owners had begun experimenting in the manufacture of concentrated meat meal made entirely of animal matter. Following tests on their own poultry, the proprietors also manufactured the product for other poultry farmers in Victoria and interstate.¹⁰ Such products, including bonemeal, were also manufactured by Cockbill's as a supplement for cattle and pigs and blood and bone manure made for fertilising crops.¹¹

In 1919, William Cockbill was registered as a joint proprietor of the subject site and became the sole proprietor in 1944 following the death of his brother John Cockbill.¹² At this time, the family also owned at least 100 head of Ayrshire cattle,¹³ and by the mid-1940s Mr W Cockbill had also established a pig stud at Rockbank which was managed by Mr E Andrea. Stock for the stud was imported from Britain and was also obtained from well-known Victorian studs.¹⁴

~~In 1962, according to the following aerial, there was a cluster of buildings at the north end of the site with other elongated sheds further south near an oblong track or the like. It is not possible to detect the riveted vessels at this level of resolution.~~

⁷ *The Argus*, 25 October 1902, p3

⁸ *The Age*, 8 November 1902, p13. Allotments 5 and 6 of Section 8 were registered in the name of John Cockbill, bone dust manufacturer in February 1903.

⁹ 'Fulham Park Poultry Farm, Rockbank', *Melton Express*, 29 September 1917, p3

¹⁰ 'Fulham Park Farm' *Weekly Times* (Melbourne), 1 June 1918, p51

¹¹ *Frankston and Somerville Standard*, 28 March 1923, p6 and *Weekly Times* (Melbourne), 14 December 1940, p10

¹² Certificate of Title, Vol 2919 Folio 747

¹³ *The Argus*, 15 February 1947, p23

¹⁴ 'Imported pigs are doing well at Rockbank', *Weekly Times*, 17 December 1947, p15



1962 aerial

(Source: Landata, Melbourne-Geelong Project, Run 5, Frame 48)

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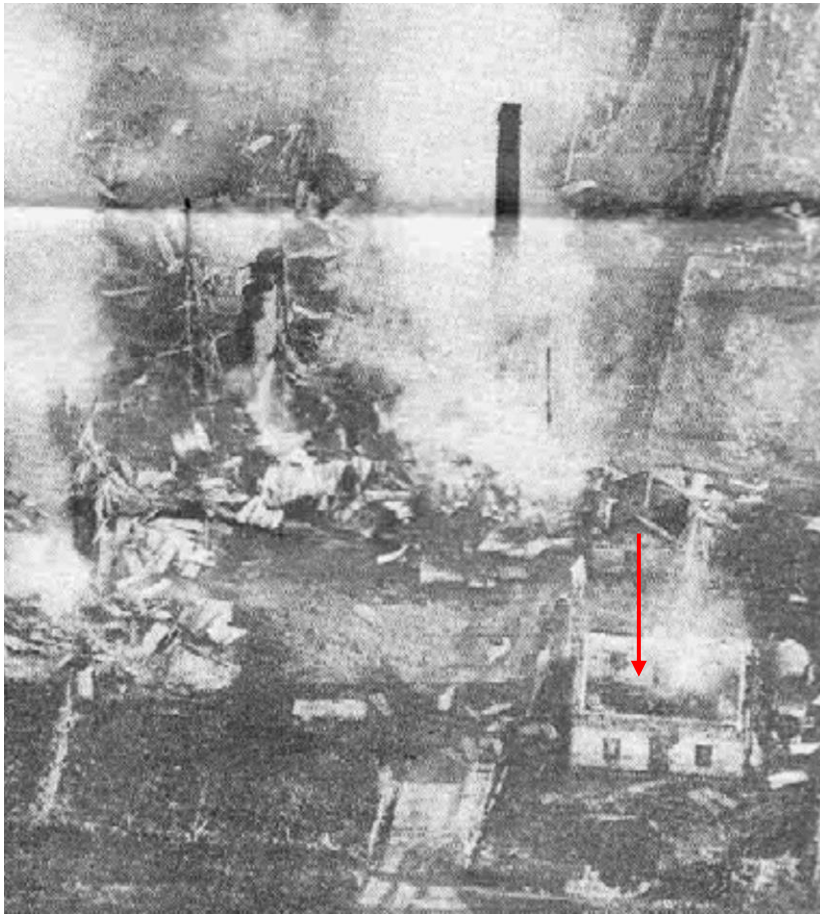
1962 aerial

(Source: Landata, Melbourne-Geelong Project, Run 5, Frame 48)

William Cockbill died in March 1965,¹⁵ only a few days before Fulham Park was destroyed by fire. The fire burned across the Toolern Vale, Melton and Rockbank area in March 1965 and destroyed 18 houses, a general store and hall when it swept across the flat farming land fanned by strong, hot north-westerly winds. In a newspaper article describing the fire, the subject site was described as Cockbill's knackery and it was noted that both the knackery and the houses attached to it were destroyed by the fire. It was also noted that 'hundreds of poultry were burned in the fires, but pigs and horses at a knackery on the Western Highway [...] were saved'.¹⁶

¹⁵ Certificate of Title, Vol 2919 Folio 747

¹⁶ *The Sun* (Melbourne), 12 March 1965, p2



Two columns of smoke – the only remains of a pig slaughterhouse on the Western Highway near Rockbank after the Toolern Vale fire swept through the area. The pigs were rescued from the inferno. The remaining basalt building is indicated (Source: *The Sun*, 12th March 1965, p29)

Eleven years after the fire, the site was transferred to Frederick Rowe and Ben Ami Frenkel. The site was subdivided into 5 smaller lots in 1984 by Ben Ami Frenkel and Phillip Samuel Benjamin.¹⁷

Thematic Context / Comparative Analysis

City of Melton Historical Themes:

Pastoralism

Farming

Industry

Known comparable places in the City of Melton

Historically, this is one of a small number of modest nineteenth century cottages remaining in the municipality. Similar places include:

- HO29 - Former 'Yangardook' Cottage, 575-685 Gisborne Melton Road (Place no. 037): Circa 1860s basalt cottage restored in the 1970s. ~~It has a hipped roof and similarly symmetrical~~ It has a hipped roof and similarly symmetrical façade.
- HO38 - Stone Cottage, 189-193 Blackhill Road, Toolern Vale (Place no. 61): Basalt cottage which had been constructed by the late 1860s and restored during the late 20th century, subsequent to a fire. It has a gable roof.

¹⁷

Certificate of Title, Vol 9436 Folio 964

- HO61 - Basalt Cottage, 2-88 Mt Cottrell Road, Melton (Place no. 144): Late 1860s house with associated dry stone walls.
- HO83 - 'Raglan's Cottage', 237 High Street, Melton (Place no. 221): an altered basalt and brick cottage formerly associated with the Raglan Hotel. It has a hip roof and red brick quoining.
- HO113 - 'Payne's Cottage', 638-688 Greigs Road East, Rockbank (Place no. 373): circa 1860 basalt cottage, partly intact. It has a gable roof and red brick lintels.

Located close to the subject site, at 107-121 Water Reserve Road (HO119, Place no. 457), was the Chickadee Egg and Poultry Farm, and chicken hatchery.

Condition

Poor – ruinous, cracking evident to basalt walls. Original roof and joinery missing.

Integrity

Much altered.

Previous Assessment

The site was first identified as being of potential heritage significance in Stage One of the *Shire of Melton Heritage Study, 2002*. It was then identified as 'Fulham Park' (former): bluestone cottage, two vertical metal boilers.¹⁸ In the final report for Stage Two, the site was included in Schedule 3A as a 'conservation desirable places'. It was one of 57 such places.

Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

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|------------------------------|-----|
| External Paint Controls | Yes |
| Internal Alteration Controls | No |
| Tree Controls | No |
| Outbuildings and/or Fences | No |

¹⁸

David Moloney, *Shire of Melton Heritage Study Stage One 2002: Places of Potential Heritage Significance*, p82

Recommended extent of overlay

The proposed extent of the heritage overlay would include the cottage and the surrounding land, ~~(within at least 10 metres of the cottage)~~. It would also include the two riveted vessels ~~(movable items) which could be relocated closer to the cottage if desired~~, with a curtilage of 5 metres about them.



Recommended extent of Heritage Overlay
(Source: Planning Maps Online)