



ATTACHMENTS

**Under Separate Cover
Council Meeting**

6.00pm Tuesday 24 May 2022

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Heritage Assessment: 4 Wallace Street Meredith Vic 3333: || 10 May 2022

Locality: Meredith, Victoria, 3333.

Place address: 4 WALLACE STREET

Citation date 2022

Place type (when built): Homestead (two houses attached as one and a former stable and buggy shed)

Recommended heritage protection: Local Government Level: Local Planning Scheme: Yes
State Government Level: Vic Heritage Register: No
Heritage Inventory (Archaeological): No

Place name: Clontarf Homestead



Architectural Style: Victorian : Regency - oldest house which is facing Wallace St.
(Era : Style) Federation : Georgian - house attached to the rear - facing Mercer St.

Designer / Architect: Not known

Construction Dates: c1870s and C1900.

Statement of Significance

This statement of significance is based on the history, description and comparative analysis in this citation. The Criteria A-H is the Heritage Council Criteria for assessing cultural heritage significance (HERCON). Level of Significance, Local, State, National, is in accordance with the level of Government legislation.

What is significant?

The homestead known as Clontarf at 4 Wallace Street Meredith including the Victorian Regency styled house and the Federation Georgian house attached behind it, and the stable and buggy shed, are significant to the town of Meredith. The important form, materials and detailing as noted in the report are significant.

All other outbuildings are not significant.

How is it significant?

The homestead known as Clontarf (pre 1884 house, c1900 house and early stables and buggy shed with timber paling shingles) is locally significant for its historical and aesthetic values to the Meredith in Golden Plains Shire.

Why is it significant?

The homestead known as Clontarf is **historically significant at a local level** as it has a long and clear association with the period of Meredith's development as a country township from the mid Victorian period when Meredith was an important town on the track from the port of Geelong to the Ballarat and Buninyong goldfields. Clontarf is an early house from the Victorian era, and strongly associated with two prominent Meredith families, O'Brien and Wells, who made an influential contribution to the Meredith community over a period of 183 years, from at least 1884 - 2021, however documentary evidence and physical evidence show the Victorian Regency house to be older than 1884. It is set in the corner and on the front title boundary of the very large area of land, indicating that it may have provided lodgings for travellers when first built there prior to 1884.

Henry O'Brien, born in Clontarf, Dublin, Ireland was active in Meredith from 1860 to 1905 and called tenders to 'repair' a cottage in 1884, possibly in preparation for his marriage the following year, after which he and his wife Helena lived there. The word CONTARF is painted on the top-light, above the front door. It was noted in 1905 that Henry O'Brien also had an "enclosed wooden stable and buggy shed, very old" on the property which is likely to be the outbuilding with roof cladding of timber paling shingles.

Henry O'Brien ran a hay and corner store in 1871 and amassed a large portfolio of land and properties in Meredith and the outlying areas. After the death of his business partner, Thomas Connor in 1888, Henry continued to operate as a general storekeeper. He opened a new store on the northeast corner of Wallace and Staughton Streets in 1890, and in January 1900 Henry was appointed as a Justice of the Peace.

After both Henry (1905) and Helena (1921) died, childless the property changed hands on various occasions over the next four years until it was purchased by the Wells family in 1925.

Alfred Ernest Wells, known as a grazier from Meredith, purchased the two-acre property in 1925. Alfred married Elsie Caroline Synot in 1918. This was an important local wedding, as Elsie was the daughter of Meredith farmer and Councillor, John Synot. Alfred and Elsie welcomed the births of four children over the ensuing seven years. Like his parents before him, Alfred involved himself in community and civic activities in Meredith. Historically, sporting clubs have dominated a major role in rural communities and Meredith was no different from other regions of Australia. At the Meredith Shooting Club during the winter of 1919, Alfred was the successful recipient of the novice trophy. The following year, Alfred was part of the organising committee of the Meredith Amateur Turf Club Annual Races in 1920. His involvement with the turf club was maintained for years to come. Alfred was also a keen footballer and continued to play with the Meredith team for many years after his wedding.

When subscriptions were called to support the erection of a memorial to the local fallen soldiers during the Great War, Alfred duly responded. In 1928 Alfred was appointed Chairman of the newly formed school committee.

Alfred Ernest Wells was a member of the Meredith Masonic Lodge. He was a pallbearer for a fallen brother in 1924, at which time he held the position of "W. M." As a 'Worshipful Master', Alfred was a senior officer of the lodge.

In 1930 the Country Roads Board decided to widen and realign the main thoroughfare from Geelong to Ballarat. In Meredith, the 90° angle of the corner of Wallace and Sutherland Streets was redesigned to a curve. To accommodate this restructure, part of the Wells property was forcibly acquired on 9 October 1930. It is thought that the funds provided to Alfred Wells allowed him the opportunity to increase the size of his family home. According to the Meredith History Interest Group, Alfred and his family moved into the Meredith township in 1925 so their children could easily to school. It is a 15km trip from Bamganie to Meredith, after which, in 1930, they relocated the second house from the Wells family farm "Castlewood" at Bamganie, south of Meredith and renovated the interior of both houses so that they functioned as one house internally, thus increasing the overall value of the property. It was very common for timber buildings to be relocated during the Victorian era, and there are many examples of this in Meredith. The second home was likely to have been constructed circa 1900 at Bamganie, south of Meredith and moved to the back of the house at 4 Wallace St to enlarge the front house in 1930 when the rateable value of the property increased substantially even though the size of the land was diminished at that time. Facing Mercer Street, the second house joins the west side of the original building by a central wall. Other renovations at this time included the walls and ceilings of both houses being lined with cement sheet or masonite (with asbestos? which was readily available in the 1930s).

By at least 1947 Alfred was an officer of the Rural Fire Brigade, holding the position of Lieutenant and was tasked with the responsibility of equipment officer. During the 1950s he was a keen golfer, as was his daughter Lorna and he fulfilled the position of club president in 1949. Community involvement continued when Alfred attended the Meredith RSL Ball with his wife Elsie and daughter Lorna in 1954. Elsie and Lorna were photographed with other local ladies, watching the activities on the dance floor (Figure 24).

Alfred's endeavours extended beyond these passions, and he followed the guidance of his father-in-law by representing the people of Meredith and Bannockburn on the local council. Alfred was a successful candidate in the Bannockburn Municipal elections in August 1946, representing the Meredith Riding. Continuing as a councillor for many years, Alfred was elected as Bannockburn Shire President in September 1953 and was granted an allowance of £90. Alfred retired from local council activities in 1955 and died in 1972.

The last Wells family member, Lionel lived all his life in Meredith, ran a business as a carter and continued to live there as a bachelor until he died in 2021. Today the private residence is vacant and has been vandalised with floor boards removed via closed windows rendering many of them broken.

(Criteria A & H)

The homestead known as Contarf is **aesthetically significant at a local level** as a pair of buildings, built in the Victorian Regency style and Federation Georgian style. This Regency style was mainly used in NSW and Tasmania in the early 1800s and less common in Victoria which was settled after 1837. The architecture has an elegant plainness with simple forms and sparse classical details typical of the Victorian Regency style. The significant Regency styled architectural elements of the building include the symmetrical facade with encircling verandah, the low pitched hip roof, self supporting concave corrugated iron verandah roof, twelve paned timber sash windows with fine timber glazing bars, and the elegant timber valance between the decorative timber verandah columns and the elegant timber fireplace surrounds. The upper parts of the weatherboard cladding, are very early, as 'chew' marks indicate some may have been locally steam milled or spot milled sawn timbers.

The fabric and style which is typical of the 1880s late Victorian era (indicating work which may have been done when the cottage was repaired in 1884), include the moulded top of the unpainted rendered chimney, the window and door frames, the colonnade of classical chamfered timber posts with timber capitals, timber panelled front door with glazing to the highlight with the name of the house "CLONTARF" hand painted on the glass.

The fabric and style which is typical of the Federation Georgian style includes the hipped roof clad in galvanised corrugated iron, convex bull-nose verandah clad with galvanised corrugated iron, exposed eaves rafters, unpainted red brick chimneys, symmetrical front facade, 2 pane double hung timber windows, front doorway.

The views of the historic pair of houses as seen along Wallace Street is significant as a unique and strong visual historic marker, particularly looking north along Wallace Street to the intersection of Mercer st.

(Criterion E)

Notes:

The interior walls and ceilings of both houses appear to be lined with asbestos cement or masonite sheets most likely installed in 1930 when the Wells family would have received compensation for a large portion of their land. The 90 degree corner of Wallace and Sutherland Streets on the route between Geelong and Ballarat was compulsorily acquired by the Country Roads Board to realign it into a sweeping curve. Asbestos was first introduced into Australian homes in the 1920s being at its peak in the 1940s. Although the interior has Victorian Regency styled timber fireplace surrounds worthy of retention, overall the interior has been substantially altered with parts of the timber floors having been removed recently and noting that the asbestos lining is unviable. Therefore the interior is not recommended for heritage controls and it will not be discussed in detail in this report.

The infilled structure on the south elevation verandah of the pre 1884 house is not significant.

The former stables and buggy shed with timber paling roof cladding is in very poor to ruinous condition and so it is recommended that measured drawings to scale 1:50 be cross-referenced to detailed and annotated photos. After the submission of this documentation, to the satisfaction of the Shire's Heritage Advisor, a copyright free copy should be lodged at the local heritage society, as well as Council and a demolition permit issued.

Statutory Recommendations

This place is recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Golden Plains Shire Planning Scheme to the extent of the title boundary as shown on the map.

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings or fences which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-3	No
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place	Not assessed

Map of recommended boundary for Heritage Overlay



4 Wallace St Meredith, Vic.
The blue line represents the existing title boundary.
The red line represents the recommended HO boundary.

History

Meredith and Crown Allotments:

Indigenous People and Squatters

Prior to the British settlement of Victoria In 1835, the town now known as Meredith occupied part of the traditional lands of the indigenous Wadawurrung people, in particular the Dja Dja Wurrung People Clan, one of 25 clans belonging to the Kulin Nation tribe. The traditional owners of this district spoke the Wathaurong language.

Hailing from Durham, England, John Norman McLeod was the first squatter to arrive in the district in October 1837. His claim of 24,790 acres was named "Borhoneyghurk", situated on the Moorabool River, 35 miles from Geelong (Beaurepaire). In a letter penned to His Excellency C. J. La Trobe, Esq. on 18 August 1853, McLeod recollected, *"The first natives I saw after taking up my station on the River Moorabool was a party of about 20. I was shepherding my own sheep at the time, as all my men were shearing. I was two miles from the hut, but, as I had my double-barrelled gun with me, I signed to two of them to come and speak to me, as I wished to tell them they must not come too near the hut; and it was many months before I did allow any to come, but sent their provisions to them when they worked for me. I have counted 340 together at their meetings in 1843 and 1844"* (Glenelg & Wannon Settlers & Settlements).

Other early squatters of note in 1838 were John Wallace who held 17,000 acres at Ballark and George Duncan Mercer who claimed 18,400 acres at Mount Mercer (Beaurepaire). These two men later leant their names to main streets in Meredith in the 1850s. Other streets in Meredith were also named after the biggest landholders in the district, whilst the township was named in honour of Captain Charles Meredith from Tasmania (Beaurepaire).

Township

Situated on Coolebarghurk Creek, the settlement of Meredith developed during the 1840s. The Golden Fleece Hotel was an early establishment, operating on the eastern side of the creek in 1846 (Meredith History, Heritage). After the discovery of gold in 1851, Meredith became a resting place and service centre, halfway between the port of Geelong and Ballarat goldfields. "Situated on a plateau, which is generally flat, falling away to the east and north as it drops towards the Coolebarghurk Creek", Meredith was surveyed in 1851-1852, but not published until 1857 (Meredith-Heritage-Precinct-Statement-of-Significance, Golden Plains Planning Scheme). Typical of colonial townships, a basic grid pattern of eleven allotments was laid out, running north/south and east/west (Figure 1). The parcel of land that now comprises 4 Wallace Street, Meredith, is identified as the eastern part of Section 2 on the Parish of Meredith Plan. A large allotment south of the town centre was dedicated to the Mounted Police, whose primary responsibility was to serve as police escorts of the precious gold cargo.

On 30 June 1863 Meredith was proclaimed a District Road Board. Eight years later on 28 April 1871, it was proclaimed a Shire. Steiglitz Riding was created through amalgamation

with the Borough of Steiglitz in 1881. Meredith Shire united with Bannockburn Shire on 15 September 1915.



Figure 1. Meredith Township, Original Survey (Detail), 1857
Source: State Library of Victoria, dq002490

Sale of Crown Lands: First Owners of Allotments 6, 7, 8, 9.

The inaugural sale of crown lands was held at Mr J. B. Hutton's rooms at Yarrow Street Geelong on 28 September 1853. Aspiring investors purchased thirty-two allotments, each consisting of two roods. Corner blocks fetched the highest price, particularly for those that sat upon the main thoroughfare between Geelong and Ballarat, now known as Wallace Street. The sale of crown allotments is identified on the Township of Meredith Parish Plan 2425, which shows that the land that now comprises 4 Wallace Street, Meredith, was covered by four allotments. The rectangular allotments 6 and 7, measured 100 x 500 links (66 x 330 feet), spanning from Sutherland to Mercer Streets. Allotments 8 and 9 measured 200 x 250 links (132 x 168 feet) and were corner blocks, situated upon Sutherland and Wallace Streets, and Mercer and Wallace Streets respectively.

The cadastral plan of Meredith clearly shows the positioning of allotment choices in Wallace Street in relationship to the worn paths that connected Geelong to Buninyong (Figure 2)



Figure 2. Meredith Township, Historic Plan Collection (Detail),

ALLOTMENT 6. 1853 J Finn: On 28 September 1853, Jeremiah Finn paid £102 for allotment 6. His neighbour at allotment 7 was Joseph Rice, paying £114, marginally more for his land. 'D. Hurley' was pushed to pay over triple this amount for a corner block. He purchased allotment 9 for £365 (*Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, 29 September 1853:3; Figure 3).



Figure 3. Township of Meredith Plan (Detail)

Section 2, Allotments 6, 7, 8 & 9 - Became

4 Wallace Street, Meredith

Source: PROV VPRS 16171

ALLOTMENT 7 1853: Joseph Rice has been accredited as the first resident of the township of Meredith, making his home in Sutherland Street in Section 2 Allotment 7, upon land that now encompasses 4 Wallace Street, Meredith. When writing the *History of the Shire of Bannockburn* in 1995, Beaurepaire referred to this house, and the original house that stood upon allotment 8, as “long gone” (Beaurepaire).

Joseph Rice was an Englishman who was born circa 1819. He reportedly arrived in the colony prior to 1840, and as a young man worked as a steward on the steamer *Vesta* (*Geelong Advertiser*, 30 November 1877:2). Joseph married Sarah Wright in Melbourne in 1849 (VIC Marriages 3891/1849) and together they raised a family of nine children over the ensuing 19 years. In the late 1850s Joseph became the successful proprietor of the Black Bull Hotel in Malop Street, Geelong. Joseph assigned auctioneers Buckland & Burnett to sell his property at Section 2 Allotment 7 in Meredith on 26 November 1875 (*Geelong Advertiser*, 24 November 1857:3; Figure 4).

BUCKLAND & BURNETT are favoured with instructions to sell by auction (by their Mr Jeff. Buckland), at their Wool Warehouse, Moorabool-street, on Friday, 26th inst., at 12 o'clock—
Lot 6—Allotment 7, Section 2, Meredith, 2 rods.
 The auctioneers' instructions are positively to sell; they can, therefore, with confidence call attention of investors and others to above sale.
Terms liberal.
 Particulars of title, which is guaranteed, may be obtained of Messrs Taylor, Buckland, and Gates, solicitors, Geelong.

Figure 4. Auction of Section 2, Allotment 7, Meredith, 1875

Source: *Geelong Advertiser*

At the time of his death from dropsy in November 1877, Joseph Rice resided at Newton Hill (VIC Deaths 1110/1877). In preparation of his demise, Joseph had liquidated all of his real estate (VPRS 28/P0000 17/787).



Figure 5. Joseph Rice Headstone, Geelong Eastern Cemetery

Source: Find A Grave



Figure 6. Township of Meredith Plan (Detail)

Highlighting original land purchases by Edward and Richard Gosling (Marked blue)

Source: PROV VPRS 16171

ALLOTMENT 9 1853, D. Hurley' was the first person to purchase the parcel of land upon which the historic house at 4 Wallace Street, Meredith, now stands. It is believed that this man may have been Daniel Hurley who operated the Brien/Brian Boru Hotel in Moorabool Street, Geelong from at least 1851 until 1854 (Geelong and District). He was an Irishman from Killare, Cork, born circa 1817. Daniel married Mary Anne O'Dea at St Francis Church in Melbourne in 1849 (VIC Marriages 721/1849) and together they raised a family of four children, although sadly, their first-born died in infancy. By 1855 Daniel Hurley was the publican at Petrel Hotel, Pakington Street, Ashby (*Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, 29 December 1855:4). There is no evidence to suggest that the Hurley family resided in Meredith. Daniel Hurley was just 45 years old when he passed away from pulmonary consumption at his home in Pakington Street, Ashby on 7 November 1862 (VIC Deaths 8644/1862). He was interred two days later at the Geelong Eastern Cemetery. Daniel died intestate.

ALLOTMENT 8. 1854 Gosling. The parcel of land identified in Section 2 allotment 8 was not sold at the inaugural Meredith land sale. Pioneering brothers Edward and Richard Gosling purchased this land on 27 February 1854. Perhaps they had exhausted their budget five months earlier, after outlaying £61 for allotment 5, section 1, and £500 for the prime piece of land at allotment 1, north of Sutherland Street (Figure 6).

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The Gosling family became well known in the hotel and transport industries in Geelong and its surrounding environs after arriving in the colony from Kilkenny, Ireland.

Three weeks after the inaugural sale of town lots, it was reported:

"The township of Meredith is already progressing at a railroad pace. On Saturday the foundation stone of Gosling's Hotel was laid by Mr Henry Gosling in the presence of Messrs Edward and Richard Gosling, the proprietors. Mr Robert Coxon Young, the architect, Messrs Pearson Clark and Matthews, the contractors for the building, Captain Berry, Sergeant Evans, Mr W Watson, Mr Kawerau and several others. An inscription engraved on a plate of lead was, with a number of coins of the reign of her present Majesty, put in a bottle. The bottle having been put in its place and the mortar spread by the architect, Mr Gosling then laid the stone, who in his address to the company, remarked that it was not only the foundation stone of the Gosling's hotel they were laying, but it was also the foundation stone of the new township of Meredith, and he hoped it would prosper and all connected with it. Champagne was then introduced and Captain Berry having in a neat speech proposed success to Goslings' Hotel which was duly responded to and three cheers given for the proprietors, the company adjourned and spent a pleasant evening at Mr Watson's, who we believe intends shortly to lay another stone to the foundation of the new township of Meredith" (Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer, 19 October 1853:2).

Gosling Hotel was situated on the corner of Wallace and Staughton Streets - a prime location, as it would have been the first resting spot for weary travellers en route from Geelong. The hotel opened in January 1854. Both Edward and Richard Gosling failed to attain long-term benefits from their investments as they each met premature deaths. Edward Gosling was only 38 years old when he passed away on 5 December 1861 (VIC Deaths 9367/1861).

FORSTER & CARR have been favored with instructions to sell by public auction on Tuesday, 11th instant, at 12 o'clock, in their rooms, Yarra Street, Geelong, the following properties:-

Lot 1
Will comprise allotment 9 section 8, township of Meredith, with all the erections and improvements thereon. Upon this lot there is erected that old-established business premises known as
GOSLING'S HOTEL,
Comprising 12 bedrooms, 3 sitting rooms, bay, fireplace, large cellar, and an extensive range of stabling, &c.

Lot 2.
Allotments 6 and 7 section 8, Meredith, each 2 rods;
allotment 8 of section 2, Meredith, 2 rods.

Figure 7. Auction of Section 2, Allotment 8, Meredith, 1862

Source: Geelong Advertiser

Within a year of Edward's death, the parcel of land in the township of Meredith identified as section 2, allotment 8, on the corner of Sutherland and Wallace Streets, was advertised for sale. Forster & Care were sanctioned with the sale by auction on 11 November 1862, along with other Gosling assets. Allotment 8 was listed as 'land' with no reference to improvements from the original purchase (*Geelong Advertiser*, 10 November 1862:3; Figure 7). Richard Gosling survived his brother by seven years, dying in an unfortunate freak accident on 16 March 1868. Richard's death was caused by the cutting of arteries in his arm by the "bursting" of a soda water bottle (VIC Deaths 1213/1868; *Geelong Advertiser*, 16 March 1868:2).

ALLOTMENTS 6, 7, 8 & 9. 1903 - All owned by O'Brien. Confirmation of the sale of at least two of the original crown allotments in section 2, Township of Meredith, has been confirmed. Allotment 8 was sold by auction on 11 November 1862 and allotment 7 was sold on 26 November 1875. Unfortunately, we do not have confirmation of the name of the person who laid down the successful bid at auction of these lots. Henry O'Brien was the owner of allotment 9 by 1884. Sourced evidence has confirmed that O'Brien was a resident of Meredith by 1861, whilst he possibly arrived a year earlier. Henry O'Brien was the owner of all four allotments - 6, 7, 8, and 9, at the time of his death on 12 November 1905 (Table 1). It is possible that his first purchase was from the Gosling estate in 1862 and that he acquired the three other properties as they became available. Most likely, O'Brien purchased Lot 9 after Hurley's death in November 1862, and Lot 7 from Rice's auction in 1875.

4 Wallace St Homestead - O'Brien and Wells Families & Other owners

O'BRIEN FAMILY. 1884- 1921

In 1884 Mr Henry O'Brien was the owner of the parcel of land now known as 4 Wallace Street, Meredith. By this time, he had been a prominent resident of Meredith for at least 24 years, although his exact place of residence remains unknown in the early years. On 17 April 1860 Henry O'Brien provided evidence in a larceny trial against two men who were charged with stealing items from Thomas O'Connor's (sic) store in Meredith. O'Brien declared he was a store-man in the employ of 'O'Connor' (*Geelong Advertiser*, 18 April 1860:2). In 1861 Henry O'Brien was a voter in the Electoral District of South Grant, covering the lands of Sutherland's Creek (*Geelong Advertiser*, 25 July 1861:4). South Grant was an electoral district of the Victorian Legislative Assembly between 1856 and 1877.

In 1865 Henry O'Brien was appointed co-manager of the Meredith Town Commons, alongside Richard Greenfield and Cecil Lyndhurst (*Ballarat Star*, 3 February 1865:2). The commons covered an expanse of 380 acres and was situated south of the township. From at least 1865 Henry O'Brien was a storekeeper in Meredith in partnership with Thomas 'Connor' (*Geelong Advertiser*, 23 August 1865:3). An analysis of the Meredith Rate Books



Figure 8. Meredith Valuation and Rate Book, 1867

Source: Family Search, Film 008070299, Image 1000

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shows the two men were owner occupiers of their store, with a gross annual value of £40 (Figure 8). The rate book did not provide an exact location of each assessed property.

From the Township of Meredith Parish Plan we see that on 20 April 1869 Henry O'Brien purchased Allotments 1-8, Section 12 covering the entire block bordered by Wallace, Staughton, Champ and Wilson Streets (Figure 9).

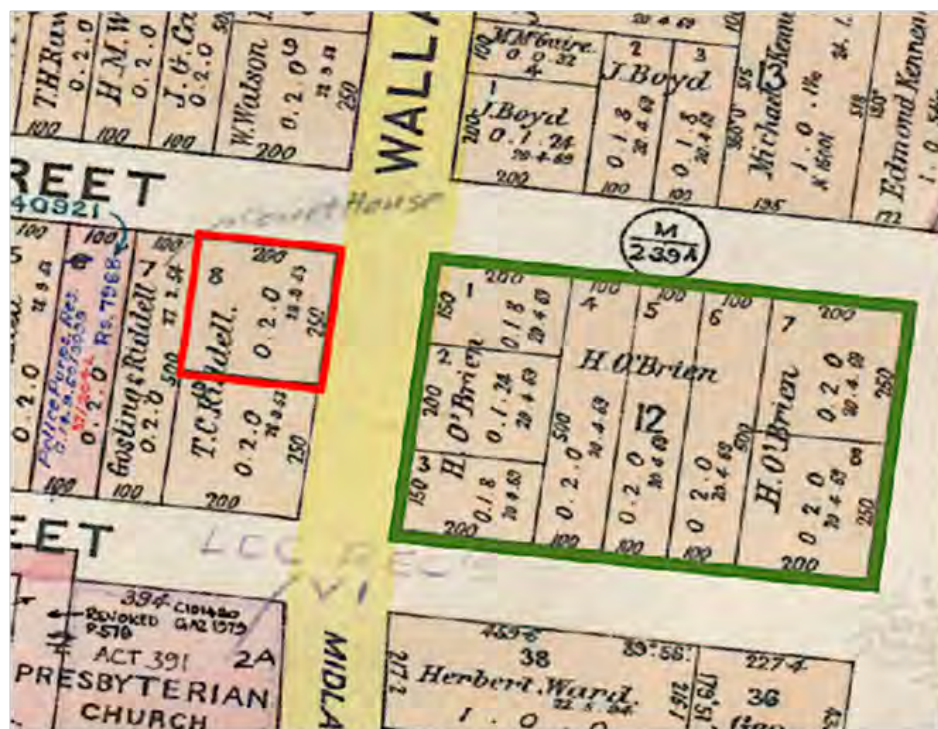


Figure 9. Township of Meredith Plan (Detail)

Highlighting Site of Shire Hall (Marked red) and Connor & O'Brien's Store (Marked green)

Source: PROV VPRS 16171

Despite purchasing this large portfolio of properties in 1869, there were just three listings for Henry O'Brien on the Meredith Valuation and Rate Book of 1870. He is listed as the owner of two properties — a blacksmith shop utilised by Charles Hallinan and a slate quarry and surrounding land rented by Williams. Interestingly, Henry is listed as an occupier of a “store & hay & corn land”, owned by James Haines (Figure 10).

SHIRE of					in Value for the Shire.				
Rating of Class.	Christian Name of Occupier.	Christian Name of Occupier.	Christian Name of Occupier.	Christian Name of Occupier.	Christian Name of Occupier.	Christian Name of Occupier.	Christian Name of Occupier.	Christian Name of Occupier.	Christian Name of Occupier.
1101	R. J. Haines	James	Haines	James	James	James	James	James	James
46	Brett	Henry	O'Brien	Henry	O'Brien	Henry	O'Brien	Henry	O'Brien
47	Henry	O'Brien	Henry	O'Brien	Henry	O'Brien	Henry	O'Brien	Henry
48	Charles	Hallinan	O'Brien	Henry	O'Brien	Henry	O'Brien	Henry	O'Brien
49	William	Williams	William	Williams	William	Williams	William	Williams	William

Figure 10. Meredith Valuation and Rate Book, 1870

Source: Family Search, Film 008070299, Image 1017

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On 28 April 1871 Meredith was proclaimed a Shire. The new rate assessment ledgers of 1871 listed two entries for properties owned by Henry O'Brien - his individually owned "hay & corner store and land" with a net annual value of £25, and his co-owned property with Thomas Connor consisting of a store and land valued at £44 (Figure 11).

SHIRE OF MEREDITH		VALUATION AND RATE BOOK	
186	Hay & corner store and land	£25	
187	Store and land	£44	

Figure 11. Meredith Valuation and Rate Book, 1871

Source: Family Search, Film 008070299, Image 1089

Further research has confirmed that Connor and O'Brien operated their store on the northwest corner of this land, near the Shire Hall. The inaugural shire offices were situated on the southwest corner of Staughton and Wallace Streets, on land originally owned by T. C. Riddell. The offices were opened in November 1864 at an address now known as 27 Staughton Street, Meredith. The following year Cecil Lyndhurst Nugent purchased the land and property. In 1865 Nugent married Martha Gosling, and soon after formed a business partnership with her brother, Thomas, operating the Royal Hotel from 1868. In November 1874 Nugent and Gosling sold their combined half acre of land consisting of the Royal Hotel and the Shire Hall to the Meredith Shire Council for £84 (Meredith History Interest Group). In 1875 the original Gosling Hotel was utilised as 'Ward's Store'. Reports of a fire in March 1875 confirms the proximity to Messrs Connor and O'Brien's store, the Shire Hall and the Royal Hotel (*Geelong Advertiser*, 4 March 1875:3; Figure 9).

By 1879 the property holdings of Henry O'Brien had a net annual value of £113. Unfortunately, the ledgers at this time recorded an alphabetical listing of rateable people, with an accumulated listing of properties owned by that person, rather than itemised listings, indicating neither the size or location of each holding. As such, the rate ledgers do not provide an insight into O'Brien's year of purchase of the property that became known as 4 Wallace Street, Meredith. The value of O'Brien's rateable property remained relatively constant until 1882, when it was deemed to have a net annual value of £115. However, the rate ledger of 1883 shows a dramatic increase to a net annual value of £152, suggesting Henry had purchased another property in the preceding year (Figure 12). It is possible that this was the time that he purchased at least part, if not all of the allotments at 4 Wallace Street, Meredith.

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Figure 12. Meredith Valuation and Rate Book, 1883

Source: Family Search, Film 008070299, Image 1349

In May 1884, Henry O'Brien placed an advertisement in the Geelong newspaper, seeking tenders to repair a cottage at Meredith (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Cottage Repairs, 1884

Source: Geelong Advertiser (Vic. : 1859 - 1929)

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Whilst the specific address of this cottage remains unknown, it is most likely Henry was preparing his future 'family home' at 4 Wallace Street, in readiness for his marriage the following year. In August 1884 Henry made an application to "erect a substantial three-rail fence on the boundary road on which his property abutted" (*Geelong Advertiser*, 28 August 1884:4). Rate ledgers of 1884 and 1885 show a marginal increase to O'Brien's net annual value of £60.

Born in Clontarf, Dublin, Ireland to solicitor Timothy O'Brien, Henry was 36 years old when he married Helena Constance Kelly at St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne on 3 June 1885 (VIC Marriages 2514/1885; *The Argus*, 6 June 1885:1). Unusual for the times, no children were born into this marriage.

Henry O'Brien amassed a large portfolio of land and properties in Meredith and the outlying areas. After the death of his business partner, Thomas Connor in 1888, Henry continued to operate as a general storekeeper (*Geelong Advertiser*, 25 June 1889:3). He opened a new store on the northeast corner of Wallace and Staughton Streets in 1890 (*Geelong Advertiser*, 21 March 1890:4).

On 19 October 1892, Henry O'Brien attended the Meredith Shire Council meeting to make a request. Henry sought "a crossing at the corner of Wallace and Mercer Streets, as the drain had been deepened to such an extent that he was deprived of an approach to his premises". The request was referred to the Clerk of Works (*Geelong Advertiser*, 20 October 1892:4).

The turn of the century coincided with a fitting recognition of Henry O'Brien's civic standing amongst the people of Meredith. In January 1900 Henry was appointed as a Justice of the Peace (*Advocate*, 27 January 1900:17). Yet just four months later, Henry's name was tarnished when he was charged with 'neglecting to advertise' his license to sell gunpowder, and for storing two different types of explosives together, rather than separately (*Geelong Advertiser*, 9 May 1900:2).

As the local Justice of the Peace, Henry O'Brien was tasked with the responsibility of holding inquiries into suspicious or unforeseen deaths of locals in the Meredith district. Henry O'Brien investigated the death of an unnamed man in September 1901 (*The Argus*, 9 September 1901:9) and an inquiry into the demise of William Harper, aka Mick O'Brien in February 1902 (*The Argus*, 11 February 1902:7).

Henry O'Brien fell ill in 1905 and was admitted to St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne. It was in this facility that he passed away on 12 November 1905. Henry was laid to rest at the Kew Cemetery two days later (*Geelong Advertiser*, 15 November 1905:1). Throughout his life, Henry had acquired a large portfolio of real estate in Meredith. Some allotments were original purchases of crown land - Allotments 1-8, Section 12 covering the entire block bordered by Wallace, Staughton, Champ and Wilson Streets - were purchased on 20 April 1869. Many other properties were acquired from Meredith residents as they became available.

During the process of preparing an assessment of Henry's wealth in 1905 in readiness to grant probate, valuator Frederick J. Plant compiled a comprehensive analysis of each parcel of land owned by Henry at the time of his death. Plant described Crown Allotments 6, 7, 8 and 9, Section 2, Township of Meredith, as follows:

"Containing 2 acres of land which is enclosed with one ring-fence of post and 3 rail most of which is in fair order, on Allot 9 there is erected a very old dwelling containing 5 rooms constructed of wood with iron roof and verandah, wooden partitions, papered, brick chimneys, the most of this building and the verandah require renovating. It is insured for £120 and has been since 1884 (This building is occupied by the widow) detached very old wooden kitchen with iron roof not lined. Insured for £10. At the rear of the above, there is an enclosed wooden stable and buggy shed very old. Insured for £20. Wooden fowl house, closet and pigsties, very old and of little value. There is also a recently erected milking shed constructed of slabs with iron roof. Value £15. Enclosed around the dwelling there is a small garden with pickets along the road frontage. I noticed that the fencing on the property is about 8 ft over the building line. I estimate the value of the property at Four Hundred Pounds £400" (VPRS 28/P0000 97/214, Figure 14).

Heritage Assessment: 4 Wallace Street Meredith Vic 3333: || 10 May 2022

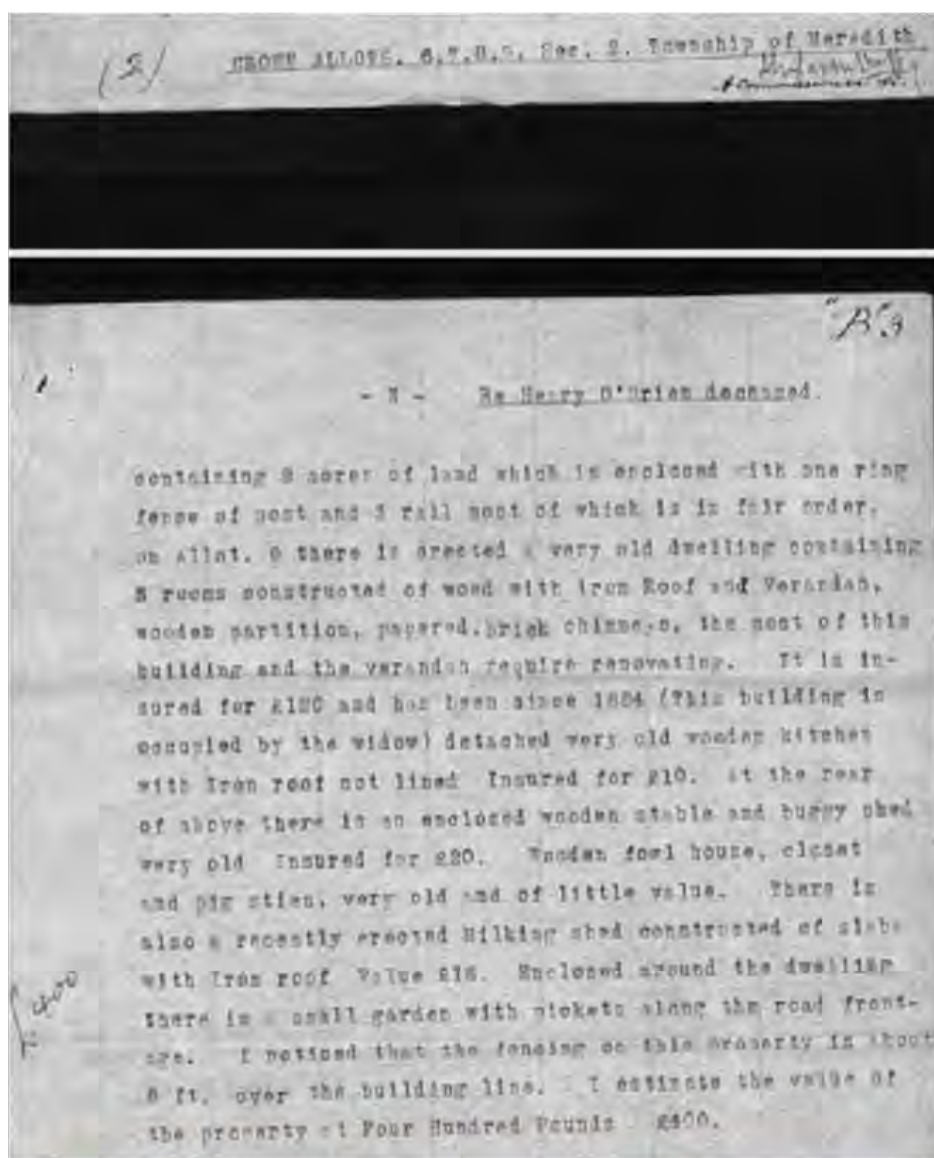


Figure 14. Henry J. Plant's Assessment of Property, 1905

Source: Henry O'Brien Grant of Probate, PROV VPRS 28/P0000, 97/214

A Key Date: 1884 - 5 Room Weatherboard House on Allotment 9 - O'Brien.

Thus, we discover that Henry O'Brien had insured his 5-roomed weatherboard house on allotment 9 since 1884. It is most likely this is the property that Henry O'Brien called for tenders to 'repair' in 1884 - as distinct from 'construct'. Therefore, the house that currently stands on the south corner of 4 Wallace Street Meredith predates 1884 (Figures 15). Due to time restraints in compiling this history, accessing the land selection files pertaining to this property from the Public Records Office of Victoria in North Melbourne, has not been

possible. It is likely this file would provide evidence to an accurate year of construction of the building. Unfortunately the accumulated dossier of files on Henry O'Brien and other records held by the Meredith History Interest Group has also failed to provide data on the year of construction.



Figure 15. View showing the pre 1884 house on the right and second house added later, on the left. 4 Wallace Street, Meredith

Source: Lorraine Huddle 2022

In his will dated 7 November 1905 (five days before his death), Henry entrusted the National Trustees Executors and Agency Company of Australasia with the administration of his estate. The accumulated value of Henry's estate was considerable for the time, ensuring that his widow, Helena, was well catered for. After all expenses were paid, Helena O'Brien was bequeathed assets to the value of £3,800, whilst £5 was left to the parish priest at Meredith (*Ballarat Star*, 5 December 1905:6). Henry ensured Helena was entitled to *"the use and enjoyment of the home at Meredith in which I now live and have lived for many years & also all the land of which I stand possessed in connection with the said house"*, for use during her life. Henry also wanted Helena to maintain the use of the 11-acre parcel of land, known as 'Darling's Paddock' [original crown allotment 1, Sutherland Street] (VPRS 7591/P0002 97/214, Figure 16).

Freehold Title



Figure 16. Detail of Land Holdings, 1907

Source: Certificate of Title, Vol 3211 Folio 147

Under the administration of the National Trustees Executors and Agency Company of Australasia, the parcel of land now known as 4 Wallace Street, Meredith was issued with its original Certificate of Title on 24 September 1907. Under the regulations of the 'Transfer of Land Act 1890', the National Trustees Executors and Agency Company of Australasia became the first freehold owner of 13 acres, one rood and 31 perches of land in Meredith (LV: V3211 F147; Figure 16). This was held in trust for the use of Helena O'Brien.

Remaining true to Henry's wishes, Helena continued to reside in her home at 4 Wallace Street, Meredith for the duration of her life. Helena survived Henry by 16 years, passing away at Nurse O'Neill's Private Hospital in Fairfield on 16 August 1921. From her obituary, we learn that Helena "took an active part assisting" Henry in his business enterprises, in particular, in the operation of the general store at Meredith. It was also noted that after Henry's death, Helena enjoyed a quiet life at her homestead in Meredith, named "Clontarf" (*Advocate*, 11 August 1921:20). Henry named his home 'CLONTARF' in honour of his hometown in Dublin, Ireland. This name was proudly displayed on the window above the front door, remaining intact to this day (Figure 17).



Figure 17. “CLONTARF” Painted on Window Above Front Door, 2022

Source: Lorraine Huddle Photograph Collection

Helena was considerably younger than Henry, and as such was just 64 years old when she died. She was buried with Henry at Kew Cemetery on 16 July 1921 (Boroondara General Cemetery).

After her death, Helena's properties at Meredith were divided and sold separately, forcing the creation of distinct Certificates of Title. The property at 4 Wallace Street Meredith changed hands on various occasions in the 1920s, before the commencement of the Wells family ownership that spanned almost a century (Table 2).

Other Owners: Trigg, Campbell 1922-1924

On 26 June 1922 Alfred James Ernest Albert Trigg became the title owner of the two-acre parcel of land at 4 Wallace Street, Meredith (LV: V4584 F610). Seven months later Alfred's father, William James Trigg, became the title owner of the 11 acres of land in Sutherland Street, previously known as 'Darling's Paddock' (LV: V4660 F851). Alfred James Ernest Albert Trigg was born in Creswick in 1881, however, within three years, his parents relocated to Meredith (VIC Births 22191/1881).

Alfred's ownership of the property was brief. He sold to John Campbell of Meredith on 6 August 1923 (LV: V4584 F610). John Campbell was an unmarried man of 62 years when he purchased the property. He was born in Warracknabeal in 1860 to Scottish parents, who settled at Cargarie, northwest of Meredith (VIC Births 14763/1860). John Campbell spent most of his working life as a grazier, but in April 1923 was appointed as the Bannockburn Shire pound keeper (*Geelong Advertiser*, 14 April 1923:12).

John Campbell met an unfortunate death the following year on 12 August 1924 (VIC Deaths 11302/1924). His body was found in a paddock, "*Some distance from the township of Meredith*" (*Geelong Advertiser*, 14 August 1924:4). At the time of his death, the only piece of real estate owned by John Campbell was the two-acre property at 4 Wallace Street, Meredith. Consisting of "*2 acres and 6 perches on which is erected a five roomed weatherboard cottage with an outbuilding*", the property was valued at £275 — considerably less than the assessment less than 20 years earlier when Henry O'Brien died. John Campbell did not reside at this property prior to his death; instead, he rented it to Thomas Rosser for 12/6 per week (VPRS 28/P0003 198/462). This assessment confirms that the second building had not been added to the property before 1924.

Thomas Rosser was born in Haddon, Victoria in 1873 (VIC Births 19528/1873). He married Catherine Donohue in 1911 but remained fatherless (VIC Marriages 8076/1911). Thomas was a man of 'advanced years' when he attested for service with the Australian Imperial Forces in February 1916. At this time Thomas and his wife were residents of Ballarat East, whilst he worked as a miner. During his unblemished period of service, Thomas served on the battlefields of France with the 39 Battalion. Thomas escaped injury, although he was hospitalised in France in September 1918 due to debilitating rheumatic pain. It was determined that Thomas was medically unfit and he returned to Australia three months later for a medical discharge. Thomas Rosser attained the rank of Corporal by the time he was eventually discharged from service on 2 January 1919 (AIF Personnel Dossiers).

After returning to Australia, Thomas and Catherine relocated to Meredith. Whilst renting the property at 4 Wallace Street in 1924, Thomas was employed as a 'repairer' (Australian Electoral Roll). Thomas and Catherine Rosser returned to Ballarat after the unexpected death of John Campbell, where Thomas gained employment with the railways in 1925. The electoral roll of 1926 shows their address as 9 Rice Street, Ballarat East. By 1929 the Rosser couple moved to 259 Humffray Street, Ballarat. Thomas was employed in a gang of four men working on the railway line near the Caledonian Bridge when a fatal accident occurred. Tragically, Thomas was struck at high speed by the Melbourne train as it was approaching Ballarat. Thomas Rosser had survived the French battlefields during the war but was killed instantly whilst working at 'home' (*The Age*, 25 April 1929:15).

After the death of John Campbell on 12 August 1924, the Ballarat Trustees Executors & Agency Company Limited administered his estate.

WELLS FAMILY 1925 - 2020

A new owner of 4 Wallace Street, Meredith was not confirmed until the following year. On 9 January 1925, Alfred Ernest Wells, a grazier from Meredith, purchased the two-acre property.

Alfred Ernest Wells was the second son and fifth of eight children born to Alfred Wells and Henrietta Hodge. His birth was celebrated at Bamganie, south of Meredith on 12 December 1886 (VIC Births 4770/1886). Alfred was raised at the family property named "Castlewood". Alfred senior was regarded as a well-known and highly respected member of the broader community of Meredith (*Geelong Advertiser*, 17 November 1924:2).

At the Christ Church in Geelong on 13 April 1918, Alfred married Elsie Caroline Synot (Figure 18). This was an important local wedding, as Elsie was the daughter of Meredith farmer and Councillor, John Synot (*The Argus*, 11 May 1918:11). Alfred and Elsie welcomed the births of four children over the ensuing seven years.



Figures 18. Alfred Wells & Elsie Synot, Wedding Day, 1918 and outside their home later in life.

Source: Above Ancestry Family Trees, Janine Dean.
Left Meredith Heritage Interest Group.

THE CONFIRMED CHILDREN OF
ALFRED ERNEST WELLS & ELSIE
CAROLINE SYNOT

Figure 19. Alfred & Elsie Wells children,

Source: Triciastracings.com.au



RODERICK JOHN ALFRED WELLS

Born 22 January 1919 - Died 4
November 2008

ELSIE JOAN WELLS

Born 28 November 1919

LORNA GIBBS WELLS

Born 8 September 1922 - Died 27
November 2010

LIONEL ERNEST WELLS

Born 30 April 1925 - Died 7
September 2020

Alfred and Elsie raised their family at "Hillside" Cargerie, (*Kruger*,) and from 1925 in Meredith, where electoral roll data up to 1937 shows Alfred's occupation simply as a labourer. On the electoral rolls between 1942 and 1972, Alfred declared he was a grazier.

Like his parents before him, Alfred involved himself in community and civic activities in Meredith. Historically, sporting clubs have dominated a major role in rural communities and Meredith was no different from other regions of Australia. At the Meredith Shooting Club during the winter of 1919, Alfred was the successful recipient of the novice trophy (*Geelong Advertiser*, 3 June 1919:5). The following year, Alfred was part of the organising committee of the Meredith Amateur Turf Club Annual Races in 1920 (*The Ballarat Star*, 10 December 1920:3). His involvement with the turf club was maintained for years to come. Alfred was also a keen footballer and continued to play with the Meredith team for many years after his wedding (*The Ballarat Star*, 10 December 1920:3).

When subscriptions were called to support the erection of a memorial to the local fallen soldiers during the Great War, Alfred duly responded (*The Ballarat Star*, 2 April 1924:9). In 1928 Alfred was appointed Chairman of the newly formed school committee (*Geelong Advertiser*, 26 April 1928:9).

Alfred Ernest Wells was a member of the Meredith Masonic Lodge. He was a pallbearer for a fallen brother in 1924, at which time he held the position of "W. M." (*Geelong Advertiser*, 1 May 1924:2). As a 'Worshipful Master', Alfred was a senior officer of the lodge.

A Key Date: 1930.

In 1930 the Country Roads Board decided to widen and realign the main thoroughfare from Geelong to Ballarat. In Meredith, the 90° angle of the corner of Wallace and Sutherland Streets was redesigned to a curve. To accommodate this restructure, part of the Wells property was forcibly acquired on 9 October 1930, considerably diminishing the size allotment 9 that was once owned by the Gosling brothers, as well as smaller parts of allotments 7 and 9 (Figures 20 & 21).

An analysis of the Bannockburn Rate books shows the rateable value of the dwelling and land at this property to be £11 between 1925 and 1929. In 1930 this value increased to £20, despite the size of the property's holdings being diminished due to the land acquisition (Jennings). It is thought that the funds provided to Alfred Wells allowed him the opportunity to increase the size of his family home. It is believed he relocated a second dwelling onto his land at 4 Wallace Street, thus increasing the overall value of the property. Based on the architectural style and materials, the second home was likely to have been constructed circa 1900 at Bamganie, south of Meredith, which was the location of the Wells' family farm "Castlewood" and moved to the back of the house at 4 Wallace St to enlarge the front house in 1930. Facing Mercer Street, the second house joins the west side of the original building



Figure 20. Detail of Land Holdings, 1930

Source: Certificate of Title, Vol 4584 Folio 610



Figure 21. Aerial View, 4 Wallace Street Meredith

Source: Golden Plains Shire Council

by a central wall (Figures 21 and 15). The rateable value of the property remained at £20 until at least 1938 (Jennings).

By at least 1947 Alfred was an officer of the Rural Fire Brigade, holding the position of Lieutenant and was tasked with the responsibility of equipment officer (Weekly Times, 3 September 1947:28; Figure 22). During the 1950s he was a keen golfer, as was his daughter Lorna (Figure 23). The Meredith Golf Club was founded in 1935, but closed during the Second World War. Alfred fulfilled the position of club president when it reopened in 1949 (Beaurepaire). Community involvement continued when Alfred attended the Meredith RSL Ball with his wife Elsie and daughter Lorna in 1954. Elsie and Lorna were photographed with other local ladies, watching the activities on the dance floor (Figure 24).

Alfred's endeavours extended beyond these passions, and he followed the guidance of his father-in-law by representing the people of Meredith and Bannockburn on the local council. Alfred was a successful candidate in the Bannockburn Municipal elections in August 1946, representing the Meredith Riding (*The Argus*, 30 August 1946:6). Continuing as a councillor for many years, Alfred was elected as Bannockburn Shire President in September 1953 and

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was granted an allowance of £90 (*The Argus*, 19 September 1953:4). Alfred retired from local council activities in 1955 (*The Argus*, 13 August 1955:5).

Celebrating a fulfilled life, Alfred attained the milestone of becoming an octogenarian, living



Figure 22. Lieut. A. E. Wells, Meredith Rural Fire



Figures 23 & 24. Left: Alfred & Lorna Wells, Golf Club Members, 1952; Right: Lorna & Elsie Wells, Meredith RSL Ball, 1954

to the age of 86 years. He passed away on 14 November 1972 (VIC Deaths 27455/1972). Probate of Alfred's estate was granted on 26 March 1973 to Alfred's sons, Roderick John Alfred Wells and Lionel Ernest Wells on 11 February 1974. Elsie Caroline Wells, nee Synot survived her husband by seven years. She died at the age of 85 years in 1979 (VIC Deaths 12306 / 1979).

After the death of their mother, siblings Lionel Ernest Wells and Lorna Gibbs Wells became title owners of the property at 4 Wallace Street, Meredith on 18 December 1979. On 23

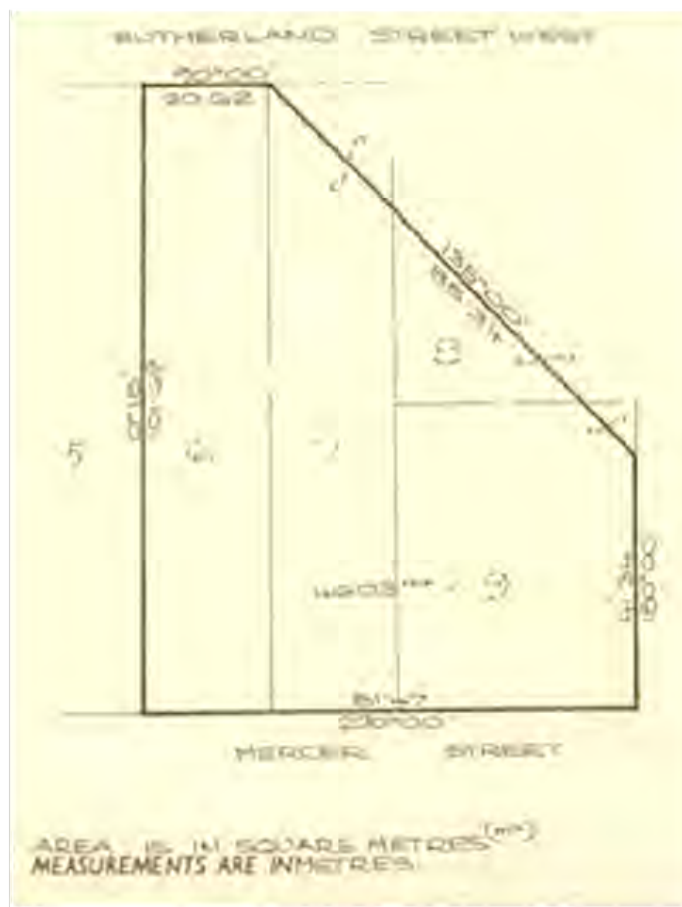


Figure 25. Detail of Land Holdings, 1979

Source: Certificate of Title, Vol 9371 Folio 257

December 2003, Lionel became the sole proprietor of the property (LV: V9371 F257; Figure 25).

Lionel was a very small baby and was referred to as 'Tom Thumb' by the delivering midwife. This name stuck throughout his life, although it was affectionately adapted to "Tommy". In 1936 Tommy contracted polio, forcing him to spend extended periods of time as a patient in the Geelong Hospital. Fears were held for his survival, yet his determination and resilience won through.

As a young man during the war, Tommy carted wood to Geelong. This was the start of a life-long career in the carting industry. In 1952 Tommy purchased two Bedford trucks that

remain in the possession of his niece, Janine Dean. With his employee Ake Lowne, Tommy utilised one truck to transport water and the other to cart gravel. Contracted to the Country



Figure 26. Lionel Ernest Wells

Source: Meredith and District News, October 2020

Roads Board, Tommy helped to construct the Great Ocean Road (*Meredith and District News*, October 2020:38).

Throughout his life, Tommy remained a bachelor, however, his family was of utmost importance to him (Figure 26). After the death of his father in 1972, Tommy retired from trucking to work on the family farm. This allowed him the opportunity to spend time with his siblings and his extended family.

Lionel Ernest "Tommy" Wells passed away on 7 September 2020. Following on from his wishes, ownership of 4 Wallace Street Meredith was transferred to his niece, Janine Elizabeth Dean and her husband, Noel Lindsay Dean on 30 October 2020 (LV: V9371 F257).

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Table 1**Crown Land**

Jeremiah Finn	Lot 6	2 rood, 100x 500	28 September 1853
Joseph Rice	Lot 7	2 rood, 100 x 500	28 September 1853
D Hurley	Lot 9	2 rood, 200 x 250	28 September 1853
Edward & Richard Gosling	Lot 8	2 rood, 200 x 250	27 February 1854
Sale of Land owned by E & R Gosling	Lot 8	2 rood, 200 x 250	11 November 1862
Sale of Land owned by Joseph Rice *Joseph Rice held no real estate at time of his death in 1877	Lot 7	2 rood, 100 x 500	26 November 1875
Henry O'Brien, storekeeper	Lot 9	2 rood, 200 x 250	Cottage Insured in 1884
Henry O'Brien, storekeeper (died 12 November 1905) Probate - 13 Dec 1905	C r o w n Lot 6, 7, 8 & 9	House (Lot 9) and Land	
Helena Constance O'Brien (died 16 July 1921 Fairfield)	C r o w n Lot 6, 7, 8	House (Lot 9) and Land	12 November 1905

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Table 2

Freehold Title

National Trustees Executors and Agency Company of Australasia	Vol 103211 Folio 147	13 acres 1 rood 31 perches Including Lots 6-9 Sect 2, & Lot 1 in Sutherland Street East, originally owned	24 September 1907
Alfred James Ernest Trigg (1881 - 1948)	Vol 4584 Folio 610	2 acres 6 perches	26 June 1922
John Campbell (b. 1860 - died 12 August 1924) 5 roomed weatherboard cottage			6 August 1923
(Estate: Ballarat Trustees Executors and Agency Company Ltd)			12 August 1924
Alfred Ernest Wells (b. 1886 - died 14 Nov 1972)			9 January 1925
Part Transfer to Country Roads Board - Road changed from 90° angle to curve from Wallace into Sutherland Street	Vol 5700 Folio 969		9 October 1930
(Estate: Roderick John Alfred Wells & Lionel Ernest Wells)			11 February 1974
Lionel Ernest Wells & Lorna Gibbs Wells	Vol 9371 Folio 257		18 December 1979
Lionel Ernest Wells			23 December 2003
(Estate: Noel Lindsay Dean & Janine Elizabeth Dean)			30 October 2020
Noel Lindsay Dean & Janine Elizabeth Dean	Vol 112325		17 August 2021

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Description

This section describes the place in 2022. Refer to the History above for additional important details describing historical changes which can be seen in the physical fabric.

Located very close to “the track from the Port of Geelong towards the Buninyong goldfields that passed through the Meredith school grounds” (Huddle p51, 2004) Figure 2, the front weatherboard building is domestic in scale and design, and is located on the north-east corner of Wallace Street and Mercer Street, just east of the Meredith commercial centre. It is diagonally opposite the Meredith State School NO.1420 & Community House at 5 Wallace Street HO132. The pre 1884 homestead is set in the corner and on the front title boundary of the very large area of land, indicating that it may have provided lodgings for travellers when first built there. It was built before 1884 in the Victorian Regency style. Externally it is in fair to good condition and retains a high level of integrity. It may have timber shingles under the corrugated iron cladding, similar to the former stable and buggy shed and if so, it is the house and shed are likely to date from the 1850s - 1860s.

The c1900 house in the Federation Georgian style, which was located and attached to the rear of the pre 1884 house in 1930, is also in fair to good condition with a high level of integrity.

The interior walls and ceilings of both houses appear to be lined with asbestos cement sheets or masonite most likely installed in 1930 when the Wells family would have received compensation for a large portion of their land. The 90 degree corner of Wallace and Sutherland Streets on the route between Geelong and Ballarat was compulsorily acquired by the Country Roads Board to realign it into a sweeping curve. Asbestos was first introduced into Australian homes in the 1920s being at its peak in the 1940s. Although the interior has Victorian Regency styled timber fireplace surrounds worthy of retention, overall the interior has been substantially altered with parts of the timber floors having been removed recently and noting that asbestos lining is unviable. Therefore the interior is not recommended for heritage controls and it will not be discussed in detail in this report.

The outbuilding (former stables and buggy shed) is in poor to ruinous condition.



Figure D1. One example of the important historic streetscape views of the two houses on the corner of Mercer St and the main road (Wallace Street) between Geelong and Ballarat - which has been mostly unchanged for over 90 years.



Figure D2. View of the former stables and buggy shed with timber paling roof, as seen from the front yard of the rear, c1920 house.



Figure D3. Window details on the pre-1884 house showing the 12 pane double-hung timber sash, moulded timber window frames, and 'chew' marks on the upper weatherboards and an example of the early nails used to fix the early weatherboards.



Figure D4. Pre 1884 house showing the timber weatherboard clad walls, the window and door openings with broken window panes, and the self supporting convex corrugated iron verandah roof cladding, which is supported on classical timber posts at the outside edge of the verandah.



Figure D5. Interior view of a front room in the pre 1884 house showing the 'Regency' styled timber fireplace surround on the right, 'missing floor boards' in the centre, cement sheet/masonite ceiling and wall cladding and damaged window glazing on the left. Note. If the existing cement/masonite internal wall and ceiling linings are removed care must be taken to record in photographs and measurements of the linings behind them. The original linings are likely to be timber boards with wall paper over them as noted in the 1905 valuation as 'wooden partitions, papered'.



Figure D6. Top light above the front door of the pre 1884 house with the name "CLONTARF" hand painted.



Figure D7. Detail view of the timber valance, capital and chamfered post. The quad gutter is a later addition as it would have been galvanised iron ogee profile.



Figure D8. Timber front door.



Figure D9. East elevation of the former stables and buggy shed with timber paling roof shingles. This building is likely to be contemporary with the pre 1884 house.



Figure D10. Interior view of the roof structure and the underside of the timber paling roof shingles.



Figure D11. Interior view of the south elevation of the former stables and buggy shed, showing the timber structure with very large timber adzed slabs forming the wall. This building is likely to be contemporary with the pre 1884 house.

Sources

All photos taken in 2022 by Lorraine Huddle unless otherwise noted.

Comparative Analysis

Moranghurk's c1840s house, has a similar elegant Regency style verandah timber valance as that on the pre 1884 house, and walls made of hand sawn timber slabs, fixed vertically as in the former stables and buggy shed at Clontarf, although the latter are somewhat more crudely finished and overall there is little in common with Clontarf.

Houses located in the Meredith township. A review of the evidence supporting the protection of the places listed in the Meredith Heritage Precinct Heritage Overlay, reveals that there is only a map and general history of the precinct, but there are no photos or history of the places that are significant or contributory, to the heritage values of the precinct. However, the photos taken in 2012 by the Shire's Heritage Advisor Dr David Rowe are available on the Victorian Heritage Database and these were reviewed to determine if there are any houses with similar Victorian Regency architectural features described above, at 4 Wallace Street and it appears that there are none, nor are the Meredith Historical Interest Group aware of any similar houses in Meredith township.

From the above investigations it can be concluded that the pre 1884 house is unique in Meredith township.

Management Guidelines

Whilst landowners are not obliged to undertake restoration works, these guidelines provide recommendations to facilitate the retention and enhancement of the culturally significant place, its fabric and its setting, when restoration works or alterations to the building are proposed. These recommendations also identify issues particular to the place and provide further detailed advice where relevant.

This significant buildings are in fair to good condition externally, apart from the former stables and buggy shed which is in poor condition.



Figure D12. The blue line is the existing property boundary, the red line is recommended HO boundary and the green polygon on the aerial map above shows the preferred area for new development so that the important views (from Wallace and Mercer Streets) of the historic houses are maintained.

1. Setting

- 1.1. Retain clear views of the front section and side elevations from along both Wallace and Mercer Streets.
- 1.2. Ensure signs and services such as power poles, bus shelters, signs, etc are located so that they do not impact on the important views.
- 1.3. New interpretation storyboards should be placed to the side of the building not directly in front of it.
- 1.4. Paving
 - 1.4.1. For Victorian and Federation era historic buildings, as these are, appropriate paving could be pressed granitic sand or asphalt, red bricks, or concrete. If concrete is selected, a surface with sand-coloured- size exposed aggregate would be better with the Victorian style.

2. Additions and New Structures

- 2.1. New structures should be restricted to the rear of the property as shown in the green polygon on the aerial map above in Figure D12.
- 2.2. Sympathetic extensions are preferred. E.g. New parts that are in the same view lines as the historic building as seen from the street, should be parallel and perpendicular to the existing building, no higher than the existing building, similar proportions, height, wall colours, steep gable or hip roofs, with rectangular timber framed windows with a vertical axis. But the parts that are not visible in those views could be of any design, colours and materials.
- 2.3. Where possible, make changes that are easily reversible. E.g. The current needs might mean that a doorway or window in a wall is not used, or located where an extension is desired. Rather than removing any evidence of the doorway, frame it up with timber and sheet it over with plaster, weatherboards, etc.
- 2.4. If an extension is to have a concrete slab floor, ensure it will not reduce the air flow under the historic building.

2.5. Avoid hard paths against the walls. Install them 500mm away from the walls and 250mm lower than the ground level inside the building to allow moisture to evaporate from the sub floor space. See section 7.

2.6. New garden beds

2.6.1. These should be a minimum of 500mm from the walls, preferably further, and the ground lowered so that the finished ground level of the garden bed is a minimum of 250mm lower than the ground level which is under the floor, inside the building. Slope the soil and garden bed away from the building, and fill the area between the garden bed and walls, with very coarse gravel up to the finished level of the garden bed. The coarse gravel will have air gaps between the stones which serves the function of allowing moisture at the base of the wall to evaporate and it visually alerts gardeners and maintenance staff that the gravelled space has a purpose. The reason that garden beds are detrimental to the building, is by a combination of; watering around the base of the wall, and the ground level naturally building up. The ground level also rises, due to mulching and leaf litter and root swelling, above a safe level such that it blocks sub floor ventilation, and the wall is difficult to visually monitor on a day to day basis, due to foliage in the way.

3. Accessibility

3.1. Ramps - where visible from the street.

3.1.1. Removable ramp construction

3.1.1.1. A metal framed ramp (with any type of contact walking surface) which allows air to flow under it, to ensure the subfloor vents of the building are not obstructing good airflow under the floor, will allow the sub floor area to evaporate moisture, reduce termite and rot attack to the subfloor structure.

3.1.1.2. Ensure water drains away from the subfloor vents, and walls and any gap between the wall and the ramp remains clear of debris. Insert additional sub floor vents if the ramp has blocked any of them.

3.1.1.3. The hand rails on the ramp should not be a feature, which would detract from the architecture. Plain thin railings painted in the same colour as the walls, so that they blend in, would be appropriate.

4. Reconstruction and Restoration

If an opportunity arises, consider restoring and reconstructing the following as needed.

4.1. Roofing, spouting and down pipes

4.1.1. Use galvanised corrugated iron roofing, spouting, down pipes and rain heads.

4.1.2. Don't use Zincalume or Colorbond.

4.1.3. Use Ogee profile spouting, and round diameter down pipes.

4.2. Fences

4.2.1. The front fence was originally timber pickets and a timber picket fence no higher than 1.2m would be appropriate, so that views from the streets of the houses are maintained.

4.2.2. Reconstruct timber paling or galvanised corrugated side fences, not Colorbond or Zincalume.

5. Care and Maintenance

5.1. Retaining and restoring the heritage fabric is always a preferable heritage outcome than replacing original fabric with new. The early weatherboards with 'chew' marks and early nails are particularly important as are the 12 pane double-hung timber windows and their frames and other features identified in this report.

5.1.1. Further assistance is available from the Shire's heritage advisor.

5.2. Roofing, spouting and down pipes

5.2.1. Use galvanised corrugated iron roofing, spouting, down pipes and rain heads. It is preferable to use short sheet corrugated iron and lap them, rather than single long sheets, but it is not essential.

5.2.2. Do not use Zincalume or Colorbond.

5.2.3. Use Ogee profile spouting, and round diameter down pipes.

5.3. Joinery

5.3.1. It is important to repair rather than replace where possible, as this retains the historic fabric. This may involve cutting out rotten timber and splicing in new timber, which is a better heritage outcome than complete replacement.

5.3.2. Reconstruct the damaged and missing timber sash windows to match the two intact windows on the east and south sides.

6. Water Damage and Damp

6.1. Always remove the **source** of the water damage first (see Care and Maintenance).

6.2. Water falling, splashing or seeping from damaged spouting and down pipes causes severe and expensive damage to the timber walls.

6.3. Repairing damage from damp may involve lowering of the ground outside so that it is lower than the ground level inside under the floor, installation of agricultural drains, running the downpipes into drainage inspection pits instead of straight into the ground. The reason for the pits is that a blocked drain will not be noticed until so much water has seeped in and around the base of the building and damage commenced (which may take weeks or months to be visible), whereas, the pit will immediately fill with water and the problem can be fixed before the floor rots or the building smells musty.

6.4. Damp would be exacerbated by watering plants near the walls. Garden beds and bushes should be at least half a metre away from walls.

6.5. Subfloor ventilation is critical. Check that sub floor vents are not blocked and introduce additional ones if necessary. Ensure the exterior ground level is 250mm or more, lower than the ground level inside the building. Good subfloor ventilation works for free, and is therefore very cost effective. Do not rely on fans being inserted under the floor as these are difficult to monitor, they can breakdown as they get clogged with dust, etc, and there are ongoing costs for servicing and electricity.

7. Services

7.1. Ensure new services and conduits, down pipes etc, are not conspicuous. Locate them at the rear of the building whenever possible, and when that is not practical, paint them the same colour as the building or fabric behind them, or enclose them behind a screen the same colour as the building fabric that also provides adequate ventilation around the device. Therefore, if a conduit goes up a red brick wall, it should be painted red, and when it passes over say, a cream coloured detail, it should be painted cream.



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12/04/2022

Minister for Planning
The Hon. Richard Wynne, MP
Minister for Planning - C/o Grampians Regional Office
Level 3, Mair Street
BALLARAT VIC 3350

GPS Ref: OUT22/4F178EA5
GPS File: 36200195

Dear Minister

Request for Interim Heritage Overlay for 4 Wallace Street, Meredith

An application has been made to Golden Plains Shire Council for demolition consent under Section 29A of the Building Act 1993 to demolish the dwelling and outbuildings at 4 Wallace Street, Meredith.

The site has been identified to be of potential heritage significance, with features indicative of being built in the early 20th Century. During the Golden Plains Shire Stage One Heritage Study (2004) the site was given a priority rating of 'three' for assessment (individual place – individual heritage), however the assessment was not progressed as part of the Stage Two Heritage Study due to the limited funding available. Advice from Councils Heritage Advisor is that the property is likely to be worthy of a Heritage Overlay, with further research required to confirm this. The background information currently known about the property is attached.

Council has commissioned a heritage assessment to confirm heritage significance, and to support the property being included in the Heritage Overlay in the Golden Plains Planning Scheme if appropriate. The outcome of the assessment will be provided as soon as it is available.

Council requests a ministerial amendment under Section 20(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to apply an interim Heritage Overlay to the property, thereby suspending the request for consent.

This matter is proposed to be further considered by Council at its forthcoming meeting on 24th May 2022. At that meeting, Council's endorsement of this request will be sought along with a resolution that Council seek authorisation to prepare a planning scheme amendment to introduce a permanent Heritage Overlay for the subject property.

In terms of the General Practice Note *Ministerial Powers of Intervention in Planning and Heritage Matters*, it is considered that this request meets criteria three and four, namely:

The matter will be the introduction of an interim provision or requirement and substantially the same provision or requirement is also subject to a separate process of review (such as the introduction of permanent controls in a planning scheme).

The matter will raise issues of fairness or public interest, where:



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- *there is a need for urgency and the public interest would be served by immediate action.*

The relevant property owner will be advised of this request for an interim amendment.

Should you have any queries regarding this matter please contact Daniel Murrehy, Strategic Planner for the Golden Plains Shire on 5220 7162 or at daniel.murrehy@gplains.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Phil Josipovic

Director Infrastructure and Development



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Background Information on 2 Wallace Street, Meredith

Property Number	36200195
Property Address	4 Wallace Street, Meredith 3333
Parish	MEREDITH
Township	MEREDITH TP
No of Parcels	4
Property Area	0.64 Ha; 6400.0 M2
Planning Zones	TZ
Planning Overlays	DDO1 (100 %)



Notes: Two Joined houses with large pine trees on site and outbuildings. Well's house (ref L. Fink)



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The date of the first dwelling at the front of the property is unconfirmed.

It was occupied by Alfred Ernest Wells between 1926 and 1929 [Bannockburn Shire Rate Books]. The property remains in the ownership of the Wells family.

The property in 1926 was still owned by the Estate of John Campbell, grazier. He died in 1924 and his Inventory of Assets (Real Estate) gave the following description:



John Campbell, Grazier, 6 Oct 1924, VPRS 28/P0003, 198/462, Public Record Office Victoria.

Name: Houses, Wallace Street, Meredith New Place Property No. Database No. 615

Find by name or street or then address or word search view report

Main Location / Site Info. Photos and documents History Description Recommendations References

4 Wallace Street, Meredith

Address Number 4 Qualifier Street 1 Wallace Street Street 2 Town Meredith Postcode 1111 LocNo PlanNo

Statement of Significance Overall significance Nil

Notes: Two joined houses with large pine trees on site and outbuildings. Wells house. (ref L. Fink)

Photo December 2002. Source: Lorraine Huddle Pty Ltd.

Legislative Registers

Nominated	Registered
Victorian Heritage Register No.	
Heritage Inventory No.	
Precinct Heritage Overlay No.	
Precinct Heritage Overlay Name	
Individual Heritage Overlay No.	
New Precinct Overlay No.	
New Precinct Overlay Name	

Other Registers

Number
National Estate RNE - Database
RNE Legal Status
National Trust (Vic.) File
Nat. Trust Classification
Priority GPBS Three Individual Place
GPBS - Stage Two
Priority