

Address	2 Goomalibee Road, BENALLA		
Heritage Overlay	HO number to be allocated		
Heritage Overlay Map (proposed)			
Designer/s		Dates	1920s
Significance	Local	Builder/s	
		Survey Date	March 2024

Site visit required



Figure 1 The Homestead constructed in the 1920s (Source: LAWD)



Figure 2 The Homestead constructed in the 1920s (Source: LAWD)



Figure 3 The Homestead constructed in the 1920s aerial perspective looking west (Source: LAWD)

Assessment against criteria

The following analysis is based on Victorian Government Planning Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay (August 2018).

Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).

Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

Criterion C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to understanding our cultural or natural history (research potential).

Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).

Criterion E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

Criterion F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The homestead 'Marangan' at 2 Goomalibee Road, Benalla is significant.

The context as found in the surrounding setting and landscaped gardens is significant.

Place Citation HOXX Marangan 2 Goomalibee Road, BENALLA

Significant fabric includes, but is not confined to: the face brick walling; the terracotta roof tiling; the chimneys; the encircling verandah with the masonry plinths and paired timber verandah posts, the rendered gable front to the portico and the timber framed windows.

Alterations and additions from the c1980s and later are not significant.

How is it Significant?

The homestead 'Marangan' at 2 Goomalibee Road, Benalla is of local historical and aesthetic heritage significance to the Benalla Shire.

Why is it Significant?

'Marangan' at 2 Goomalibee Road, Benalla is of historical significance as it provides evidence of one of the earliest established rural properties in the Benalla district. It is the place, where from 1843, the first Colonial Government Commissioners lived and they were responsible for the administration and development of the local pastoral district surrounding Benalla. The property attained a status within Benalla and district and is still one Benalla's most highly regarded properties. The place was one of the first pastoral settlements in the district that developed a vineyard (c1850s) and it became one of best recognised vineyards in the colony of Victoria. Criterion A

The homestead 'Marangan' at 2 Goomalibee Road, Benalla is of aesthetic significance as a fine example of a large Interwar Bungalow Homestead building. The primary architectural distinction lies in its restrained symmetrical composition, reinforced by the two hipped roofs and central portico, the striking return verandah with paired timber posts and face red brick plinths. Features such as the rendered gable front portico, paired timber framed windows and its tall and slender chimneys contribute to its aesthetic significance. Criterion E

Additional Controls

External paint controls apply	Yes
Internal alteration controls apply	No
Tree controls apply	Yes
Outbuildings or fences not exempt under Clause 43.01-4 All outbuildings	Yes
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Heritage Act 2017	No
Prohibited uses permitted	No
Aboriginal heritage place	No
Solar energy system controls apply	Yes

Place History

In General

The following history was produced by historian Dr Jacqui Durrant.

The name 'Marangan' is the Aboriginal name for the large waterhole in the Broken River that was the basis for the formation of Lake Benalla.¹ The property known as 'Marangan', located on the Broken River, was established as the official residence of the Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Murray district, appointed in 1843,² five years prior to the survey of Benalla. Recalling this early stage in Benalla's history, Marangan is situated in proximity to the original route of the Melbourne to Sydney Road. Since this early colonial period, Marangan has been associated with high social status; and has been long considered a 'jewel in the crown' of Benalla properties. This status was further accentuated by the construction of a substantial 'arts and crafts' styled homestead in the 1920s by the Cowan family of graziers.

The first resident of Marangan was Commissioner of Crown Lands (CCL) Henry Wilson Hutchison Smythe, who was simultaneously appointed a Magistrate in 1843.³ At the time, Smythe was 30 years old. Known as 'Long Smythe,' (he was a commanding 198 centimetres tall), Smythe had started in the government service as a surveyor and cartographer, and despite his age, was a man of considerable experience.⁴ However, at the time of his appointment, Smythe had been moved-on from the Department of Survey, after Assistant Protector of Aborigines, Edward Stone Parker, had received a complaint from John Hepburn that while stationed near Geelong, Smythe (a married man) kept 'Aboriginal women and girls cohabitating with him, under circumstances that would outrage public decency, and to the great scandal and annoyance of the surrounding district.'⁵ It is not known for certain whether Smythe continued this conduct in Benalla.

Commissioners of Crown Lands were responsible for administering the pastoral district, with duties including the prevention of unauthorised occupation of crown land; regulation of the boundaries of pastoral runs; prevention of encroachment and settlement of disputes; prohibition of cattle stealing and the impounding of stray beasts; collection of fees payable for government licences and collection of the stock assessment tax.

¹ 'Picturesque Victoria. Around Benalla.' *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 24 July 1884, p.1. For variant spellings, see also: 'BENALLA IN 1875.' *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, Thursday 12 August 1875, p.3; and Ian Clark (ed.), *The Journals of George Augustus Robinson, Chief Protector, Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate, 1839-1852*, Ian Clark, Melbourne, 2014, entry for: 23 February 1841.

² *Victorian Government Gazette*, Gazette 77, Date: Friday, September 15th 1843, p.1187.

³ *Victorian Government Gazette*, Gazette 47, Date: Thursday, November 26th 1846, p.301.

⁴ Iain Malcolm Stewart, 'Henry Wilson Hutchinson Smythe', in in Gordon Forth (Editor); *The Biographical Dictionary of the Western District of Victoria*; Hyland House, South Melbourne. 1998; pp 147-148.

⁵ Edward Stone Parker to Chief Protector, George Augustus Robinson, Melbourne, 17 February, 1843, VPRS 11/P0000, 196: Referring to complaints received about Mr Smyth for cohabiting with several Aboriginal women and girls, Public Records Office of Victoria.

In November 1852, Smythe was also appointed the Resident Gold Commissioner of the Ovens Goldfield, May Day Hills (Beechworth),⁶ residing mainly in Beechworth and periodically returning to Benalla.

Technically, a 'Commission' was a royal appointment, so in a symbolic way, the Commissioners embodied sovereign power, and it is through this connection that the property Marangan gained its original social status.

Smythe drowned in the Broken River on 8 May 1853 while in a fit of delirium.⁷ He was replaced as Commissioners of Crown Lands by William Piper, who also took on the role of Police Magistrate.⁸ On Marangan, Piper 'planted a vineyard, built wine vaults, and engaged in the [wine] industry extensively until his retirement.'⁹ In 1859, the homestead comprised a brick rendered house with a shingle roof, with a detached kitchen [Figure 1].

William Piper retired in 1869, returning to England,¹⁰ and R. P. Boger took on the vineyard.¹¹ At the time, Boger was an auctioneer in Benalla with Watts.¹² By this time, the position of Commissioners of Crown Lands had been replaced by that of District Surveyors, with other functions being fulfilled by the Benalla District Roads Board, created in 1868¹³ (the forerunner of the Shire Council). Although Marangan was no longer an official residence, it remained a highly desirable piece of real estate, arguably, for men who wished to demonstrate their social standing.

Boger sold the property in July 1871,¹⁴ to squatter¹⁵ and Justice of the Peace, Robert McBean of Kilfera station, who in turn, immediately put Marangan up for lease.¹⁶ At the time, the property was described as 'comprising about 330 acres (133.5 hectares) of splendid land, 70 acres (28.7ha) of which has been cultivated, the remainder being first-class grazing land. The property is so well-known that it is almost unnecessary to state that the VINEYARD, of about 12 acres, is second to none in the colony for its

⁶ Smythe's weekly reports as a Gold Commissioner started on Friday 19 November, 1852, when he found the Commissioner's camp at May Day Hills (Beechworth) in the process of being 'judiciously pitched'. See: Series Consignment P0000, Unit 83, document 52/8477, VPRS 1189, Public Records Office Victoria.

⁷ VPRS 24/ PO unit 14, item 1853/245 Male, 'Henry J Wilson Hutchinson SMYTHE Cause of death: Drowning; Location of inquest: Benalla; Date of inquest: 11 May 1853'.

⁸ Gazette 30, Date: Saturday, May 28th 1853, p.701.

⁹ VICTORIA'S COUNTRY TOWNS Their Rise and Development No. 13. -- History of Benalla

Article - Weekly Times (Melbourne, Vic. : 1869 - 1954) Saturday 1 September 1928 - Page 5

¹⁰ 'BENALLA July 22.' *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, Thursday 29 July 1869 - Page 4.

¹¹ 'Advertising,' *The Benalla Ensign and Farmer's and Squatter's Journal*, Friday 27 August 1869 - Page 1.

¹² 'Advertising,' *The Benalla Ensign and Farmer's and Squatter's Journal*, Friday 14 January 1870 - Page 3

¹³ 'TELEGRAPHIC DESPATCHES. VICTORIA. BENALLA, Monday. ROAD BOARD ELECTION.' *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, Tuesday 20 October 1868 - Page 2'

¹⁴ 'The Benalla Ensign. Published Weekly. BENALLA, SATURDAY, JULY 22, 1871.' *The Benalla Ensign and Farmer's and Squatter's Journal*, Saturday 22 July 1871 - Page 2.

¹⁵ 'WANGARATTA POLICE COURT. Tuesday, 22nd April. (Before Mr Walter Butler, P.M., and the Mayor.)', *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, Tuesday 23 April 1872 - Page 2.

¹⁶ 'Advertising', *The Benalla Ensign and Farmer's and Squatter's Journal*, Saturday 22 July 1871 - Page 3.

production of wine'.¹⁷ McBean also took on Boger's role in the auctioneering business, which became 'Watts and McBean'.¹⁸

McBean sold Kilfera station in December 1877,¹⁹ and went to live at Marangan,²⁰ at which time the wine produced at the 'Marangan vineyard, belonging to Mr MacBain... [was said to have] not only & local celebrity, but has obtained prize medals at exhibitions.'²¹ However, in June 1885, Messrs. Watts and McBean advertised the sale of household furniture at Marangan,²² suggesting that McBean had sold the property.

The next owners appear to have been Mr and Mrs A. Burness, who became known in the 'surrounding districts as owners of [the] large vineyard at Marangan'.²³ The Burness family held the property at least until 1890,²⁴ but sold it to Robert Lithgow, who rooted out the vines and put the plot of ground to grazing use.²⁵

Lithgow held a clearing sale at Marangan in 1905,²⁶ suggesting that he also sold the freehold of Marangan at this time. The property was purchased by Alex Tone and his brother John.²⁷ Alex Tone, the son of the long-time town councillor from Wangaratta, Alexander Tone, came to live at Marangan,²⁸ as did his sister, Marianna Peirce, where she was described on the electoral roll as a 'farmer'.²⁹

The Tone children put Marangan up for sale in 1909,³⁰ but it did not sell immediately. Initially the property was withdrawn from sale under the Closer Settlement Act,³¹ with an eye to breaking it up into 40 acre (16 hectare) farms. However, closer settlement did not proceed, and property was finally sold intact in 1912 to

¹⁷ 'Advertising' - Ovens and Murray Advertiser (Beechworth, Vic. : 1855 - 1955) Wednesday 25 June 1873 - Page 3.

¹⁸ 'DEATH OF MR. ROBERT M'BEAN A BENALLA PIONEER,' Benalla Standard, Tuesday 30 August 1910 - Page 4.

¹⁹ 'COMMERCIAL INTELLIGENCE The Argus Office, Tuesday Evening.' The Argus, Wednesday 5 December 1877 - Page 4.

²⁰ 'OBITUARY MRS. M'BEAN,' Benalla Standard, Friday 17 June 1921 - Page 3.

²¹ 'PICTURESQUE VICTORIA. AROUND BENALLA.' Ovens and Murray Advertiser, Thursday 24 July 1884 - Page 1.

²² CURRENT TOPICS. The North Eastern Ensign, Friday 5 June 1885 - Page 2.

²³ 'PERSONAL', Benalla Standard, Tuesday 20 August 1935 - Page 5.

²⁴ Family Notices - The Age, Saturday 25 October 1890 - Page 3,

²⁵ North-Eastern Ensign PUBLISHED AT BENALLA. FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 1905. "A Blind Leader of the Blind." The North Eastern Ensign, Friday 7 April 1905 - Page 2; VICTORIA'S COUNTRY TOWNS Their Rise and Development No. 13. -- History of Benalla,' Weekly Times, Saturday 1 September 1928 - Page 5.

²⁶ COMMERCIAL LOCAL MARKETS. Detailed Lists, Results, Guides - Benalla Standard, Tuesday 30 May 1905 - Page 3.

²⁷ 'OBITUARY Mr. Alex. Tone,' Benalla Standard, Tuesday 11 September 1917 - Page 3.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Electoral roll, Division of Indi, Subdivision of Benalla, 1908.

³⁰ 'Advertising,' Benalla Standard, Tuesday 9 March 1909 - Page 2.

³¹ 'Advertising,' Benalla Standard, Tuesday 26 September 1911 - Page 2.

Henry Woods.³² Meanwhile, Alexander and Marianna Tone purchased the wine and spirit merchant business in Bridge-Street, Benalla.³³

Henry Woods sold Marangan to Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Jackson from Violet Town in May 1918.³⁴ However, by July of that year, Marangan had been purchased by Thomas Vaughan Cowan and Miriam Cowan — graziers formerly of Yin Barun, and at that time, of Emu Plains station.³⁵ The Jacksons immediately purchased another desirable property on the Broken River, 'Riverview,' in Garden Street, Benalla, which had been the property of C. Turnbull of what had become 'Watts, Turnbull & Co' auctioneers.³⁶ The Cowans appear to have been responsible for the erection of the sprawling Marangan homestead — the date of construction possibly as early as 1920,³⁷ but certainly some time during the 1920s.

During his time at Marangan, T. V. Cowan was a respected Benalla councillor, described by architect and fellow councillor Harold Hanlon as 'brimming over with kindness [and] always [trying] to do his; best for rate payers.'³⁸ Having lived at Marangan for around 17 years, the Cowan family retired from life on the land, and sold Marangan in 1935 to Mr David Austin Brown and Edith Olive Brown of Camberwell.³⁹ (At the same time, the Cowans engaged local architect Harold Hanlon to build a group of three houses in Benson Street for themselves and their married children.⁴⁰)

The Browns sold Marangan around 1944 to Frank Ryan,⁴¹ having also engaged Harold Hanlon to building them a fashionable Spanish mission styled house in Gray Street, Benalla, around 1940.⁴²

³² 'IMPORTANT LAND SALES.' Benalla Standard, Friday 2 February 1912, Page 3.

³³ OBITUARY Mr. Alex. Tone, *ibid.*

³⁴ 'VIOLET TOWN.' Benalla Standard, Friday 3 May 1918 - Page 4.

³⁵ 'IMPORTANT SALES OF COUNTRY PROPERTIES North-Eastern District', *Benalla Standard*, Friday 12 July 1918 - Page 3.

³⁶ 'EXTENSIVE LAND TRANSACTIONS' *Benalla Standard*, Friday 26 July 1918 - Page 4.

³⁷ 'Heritage-rich Marangan, Benalla, on market for first time in 50 years,' <https://www.lawd.com.au/heritage-rich-marangan-benalla-on-market-for-first-time-in-50-years/>, accessed 1 May 2024.

³⁸ 'RETIREMENT OF CR. T.V. COWAN. OWING TO ILL-HEALTH.' *The North Eastern Ensign*, Friday 15 November 1935 - Page 2.

³⁹ 'Country Property Sales,' *The Argus*, 8 October, 1935, p.3; Electoral roll, Division of Indi, Subdivision of Benalla, 1937.

⁴⁰ Electoral roll, Division of Indi, Subdivision of Benalla, 1937; For report of the house design, see: 'LOCAL AND GENERAL', *Benalla Standard*, Friday 6 December 1935 - Page 5.

⁴¹ 'Social Happenings for Holidays,' *Benalla Ensign*, Friday 7 January 1944 - Page 3.

⁴² Pers comm. Marie and John Hanlon, to Jacqui Durrant, 13 February 2024.

The Ryans sold Marangan to leave for Melbourne in 1950,⁴³ after which 'the property and its mansion' was purchased by Lockhart Little, of the Western district.⁴⁴ However, Little sold the 'much improved' Marangan in 1953,⁴⁵ to J. A. Balfour.⁴⁶

During its time as a grazing property, Marangan has grazed both sheep and cattle, including having been home to a Red Poll cattle stud. However, the social status of the property has always outweighed its relatively small size.

**Relevant Historic Themes as identified in the *Benalla Rural City Gaps Heritage Study: Thematic History*
Prepared by Dr Robyn Ballinger**

2. Peopling Benalla Rural City's places and landscapes

2.2 Exploring, surveying and mapping

4. Transforming and managing land and natural resources

4.1 Farming

Physical Description

The large homestead building has been designed in the Bungalow style.. The primary facade (front) reads as a low spreading single storey bungalow with an encircling verandah. The façade has a symmetrical form with a central gable roofed portico with two flanking pavilions with large hipped roofs falling in an unbroken line to create the verandah roof. The central portico is restrained in terms of detailing with a large rendered archway below the rendered gable front. The verandah has paired timber posts resting on brick plinths, the exposed rafters make a subtle contribution to this discrete and restrained elevation. The timber framed windows vary in style and have an irregular placement. The tall and slender chimneys provide an elegant contribution to the façade.

The rear of the building consists of an opposing two storey gable wing.

⁴³ 'PERSONAL,' Benalla Ensign, Thursday 17 August 1950 - Page 4.

⁴⁴ 'PERSONAL,' Benalla Ensign, Thursday 17 August 1950 - Page 4.

⁴⁵ 'Advertising,' Benalla Ensign, Thursday 9 July 1953 - Page 3.

⁴⁶ 'Advertising,' Benalla Ensign, Thursday 24 June 1954 - Page 5.