

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT



ALPINE SHIRE

name:	Schlapp's Walnut Farm Kiln	File No:	AS0422
Address:	253 McIlroy Rae Road GAPSTED		
Place Type:	Kiln other		
Citation Date:	2007	Significance Level:	Local

**Recommended
Heritage Protection**

VHR -

HI -

PS -

History and Historical Context

The valleys of the Alpine Shire have proven ideal for growing nut crops such as chestnuts, walnuts and hazelnuts. The Alpine Shire is a significant Australian nut-producing area. Today, 70% to 80% of Australian chestnut production comes from the Alpine Shire and adjacent areas in Indigo Shire, with minor production from other Australian States. The Bright and Wandiligong areas were major Victorian hazelnut producers, but production dropped in the 1950s and 60s as some groves were replaced with tobacco crops. This was partly redressed with trial plantings at Myrtleford in the 1980s, as part of a wider campaign to increase acreage in the State. The Ovens valley was the largest walnut producer in the State until recent years.

A variety of nuts were grown at various places in the Ovens valley portion of the Shire from the early mining days. Lardi's orchards at Wandiligong included walnut and hazelnut trees, and chestnuts were first planted in Wandiligong in 1879, by E Carlile.

Commercial growing on a large scale began in the 1880s with Abraham White's nuttury at Wandiligong. By 1914, he was producing large quantities of walnuts, chestnuts, hazelnuts (filberts) and almonds, which were packed in hessian bags and sent off by rail. Walnut trees were planted on dredge tailings at Bright in about 1905. Nut growing became a thriving industry during and after World War I. In 1914, E C Dyason, a Bendigo mining magnate and a keen advocate of skiing at Mt Hotham in the 1920s, planted 1500 walnut trees on Moses Creek, and A J Showers planted 500 walnut trees at Bright. Walnuts were also grown at Tawonga South. The Weston family, who had brought walnut trees into the district in the very early years, began a walnut grove at Eurobin in the 1930s. Another significant venture was started by Showers at German Creek.

Schlapp's walnut grove was started in the 1920s by two brothers who took their Agricultural Science Degrees at the University of California. They searched for suitable location for their enterprise of growing walnuts. In 1923, the brothers formed a company called The Valley Nut Grove Pty Ltd, and began to search for a suitable variety to plant. They finally settled on the French "Franquette" and by 1940 had trees growing on 130 acres. A locally developed nut, named the "Myrtleford Jewel" and the "Franquette" are the only varieties now cultivated. In 1973 Schlapp's walnut grove was the largest in Australia.

The processing plant at Gapsted includes a number of sheds built over the years. The main building is a walnut processing shed, a large sprawling building that houses the drying kiln, built in the early days of operation, sorting and bagging machinery, and a retail sales outlet. Other buildings include a tobacco kiln and various workshops & storerooms.

Today, the antique timber nut-drying kilns built by the Schlapp brothers are still an integral part of the operation.

References:



Robertson, K, 1973, Myrtleford - Gateway to the Alps, Rigby, p. 114
Gillian Gasser, General Manager, Valley Nut Groves, Gapsted, 2006, Pers comm
Kaufman, R, 2005, Thematic Environmental History, Alpine Shire (Draft), Unpubl

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

3.9 Farming for commercial profit.

Description

Physical Description

Schlapp's Walnut Grove is situated on the southern side of the Great Alpine Road at Gapsted. The walnut grove was established in the 1920s and by 1973 was the largest walnut grove in Australia.

The walnut drying kiln is located within a large, sprawling, corrugated iron farm building. It is externally framed with oregon timber and lined with ply. The kiln has four separate vertical compartments, each independently operated by levers to open and shut a series of floors. Green walnuts are lifted by a boxed, stepped conveyor belt to the top of the kiln, and conveyed along the length of the kiln on a narrow conveyor belt, boxed on each side. Cut-off gates are used to fill the top of each compartment.

Physical Condition

Good

Usage / Former Usage

1923 - present: Walnut Grove, walnut processing plant

Intactness

Good

Recommended Management

Preserve walnut drying kiln

Comparative Analysis

The walnut drying kiln is unique in its style and age in Victoria, as far as is known, and probably in Australia. The tobacco kiln is typical of post-WWII tobacco kilns in the Shire, prior to the introduction of bulk-curing methods. A number of these kilns survive in the Shire, and their existence in prominent places along the Ovens valley contribute significantly to the agricultural mosaic and character of the valley.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

Nut farming has been economically important in the development of the Shire, and the valleys of the Shire are today among the notable nut-growing areas in Australia. The Schlapp's Walnut Grove was started in 1923 and consists of a large walnut grove with a collection of buildings including walnut & tobacco drying kilns. The Schlapp brothers imported new varieties to the Ovens Valley, cultivated them for their own use and to supply other farms in the valley, and developed new varieties. The walnut drying kiln dates from the early years of



operation, and is located within a large, sprawling, corrugated iron farm building. The kiln is externally framed with oregon timber and lined with ply. In 1973 Schlapp's walnut grove was the largest in Australia.

How is it significant?

Schlapp's Walnut Grove Kiln is of historical and technological significance to the Alpine Shire.

Why is it significant?

The walnut drying kiln is historically significant to the Alpine Shire as a direct link to the first years of operation of Schlapp's Walnut Grove, an important place in the historical development of the nut growing industry in the Shire. It is technologically significant to the Alpine Shire as a unique example of this early type of nut drying kiln, and no other examples are known to survive elsewhere in Victoria or Australia.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion A

ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE COURSE, OR PATTERN, OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

A.1 Importance in the evolution of Australian flora, fauna, landscapes or climate.

A.2 Importance in maintaining existing processes or natural systems at the regional or national scale.

A.3 Importance in exhibiting unusual richness or diversity of flora, fauna, landscapes or cultural features.

A.4 Importance for association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, State, region or community.

Criterion B

ITS POSSESSION OF UNCOMMON, RARE OR ENDANGERED ASPECTS OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

B.1 Importance for rare, endangered or uncommon flora, fauna, communities, ecosystems, natural landscapes or phenomena, or as a wilderness.

B.2 Importance in demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design no longer practised, in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest

Criterion C

ITS POTENTIAL TO YIELD INFORMATION THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

C.1 Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of Australian natural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality, reference or benchmark site.

C.2 Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of the history of human occupation of Australia

Criterion D

ITS IMPORTANCE IN DEMONSTRATING THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS OF: (I) A CLASS OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL PLACES; OR (II) A CLASS OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS

D.1 Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the range of landscapes, environments or ecosystems, the attributes of which identify them as being characteristic of their class.

D.2 Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the range of human activities in the Australian environment (including way of life, philosophy, custom, process, land use, function, design or technique).

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT



ALPINE SHIRE

Criterion E

ITS IMPORTANCE IN EXHIBITING PARTICULAR AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS VALUED BY A COMMUNITY OR CULTURAL GROUP

E.1 Importance for a community for aesthetic characteristics held in high esteem or otherwise valued by the community

Criterion F

ITS IMPORTANCE IN DEMONSTRATING A HIGH DEGREE OF CREATIVE OR TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT AT A PARTICULAR PERIOD

F.1 Importance for its technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement

Criterion G

ITS STRONG OR SPECIAL ASSOCIATIONS WITH A PARTICULAR COMMUNITY OR CULTURAL GROUP FOR SOCIAL, CULTURAL OR SPIRITUAL REASONS

G.1 Importance as a place highly valued by a community for reasons of religious, spiritual, symbolic, cultural, educational, or social associations.

Criterion H

ITS SPECIAL ASSOCIATION WITH THE LIFE OR WORKS OF A PERSON, OR GROUP OF PERSONS, OF IMPORTANCE IN AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

H.1 Importance for close associations with individuals whose activities have been significant within the history of the nation, State or region

Recommendations 2007

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Fences & Outbuildings	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	-
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT



ALPINE SHIRE

name:	Cousin's Battery	File No:	AS0726
Address:	43 Stoney Creek Road GAPSTED		
Place Type:	Battery/Crusher		
Citation Date:	2007	Significance Level:	Local

Recommended Heritage Protection

VHR -

HI -

PS -

History and Historical Context

Settlement at Gapsted appears to have begun in 1854 when highly profitable quartz reefs were opened up, reportedly the first within the Shire. The settlement was originally known as Quartz Reef, and at one stage it boasted 4 hotels, several stores and a population of 400, a larger settlement than that at Myrtle Creek (Myrtleford) at the time. At least 50 reefs were opened, and seven stamp batteries erected. Alluvial mining was carried out along Stoney Creek, and Chinese miners were present on these diggings.

Little is known specifically about this plant other than it was built and used by the Cousins to crush various parcels of ore from reefs in the Gapsted vicinity, probably in the early decades of the 20th Century.

References:

Robertson K, 1973, Gateway to the Alps, Rigby

Flett J, 1979, The History of Gold Discovery in Victoria, Poppet Head Press

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

3.4.3 Mining

4.6 Remembering significant phases in the development of settlements, towns and cities

Description

Physical Description

Situated in lightly timbered (mixed eucalypt) paddock immediately east of a shallow dry gully on the north side of Stoney Creek Road. Standing timber-framed 4-head stamp battery and portable steam engine in a dilapidated corrugated-iron and bush pole shed. To the immediate south of battery is a small weatherboard and corrugated iron shed in a similar state of disrepair, approximately 2.5x3.5 metres. Approximately 20 metres to the east of the battery is a small water-filled dam and remnant water race, which would have originally supplied the plant with water. The battery has had some modification and may have been constructed from parts salvaged from several plants; an adapted cog flywheel to belt drive and odd battery stem tappets support this.

Physical Condition



Battery is in excellent condition. Some timber work and the timber structures of the battery shed and smaller storage shed are gradually falling into disrepair. Site has archaeological potential for smaller artefacts that may contribute to a further understanding of the site.

Usage / Former Usage

Battery was used by Cousins to treat small parcels of ore from near by quartz reefs.

Intactness

Stamp battery and associated features are in excellent condition, and represent the near complete components of the original plant.

Occupancy

Other Associations:

Cousin family of Gapsted

Comparative Analysis

In the more mountainous areas of the Shire, other intact relic stamp batteries are located at the Razorback, Monarch, Guns, Star Extended mines at Harrierville, and the New Chum, Buckland River. Some plants are also still situated on current mining leases and are in relatively good working order. These include the Liffey mine, Wandiligong, the Red Robin mine, West Kiewa River, Mt Orient mine Freeburgh, and the Williams United Wandiligong. Cousin's Battery is the only intact survivor in a rural (farmland) setting, and the only one in the northern part of the Shire.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

Situated in a sparsely timbered open paddock are the near intact remains of Cousin's stamp battery. This plant appears to have been erected in the post-WW1 era by the Cousins who had quartz reef mining interests in the Gapsted area. Little else is known about the plant, which reefs it crushed for and the returns that it produced. It appears to have been intermittently used for several decades and may have continued to operate after WW2.

How is it significant?

Site is of historical, social and technological significance to the Alpine Shire.

Why is it significant?

Cousin's stamp battery is historically significant to the Alpine Shire as an important reminder of a once-important quartz reef mining industry at Gapsted. Cousin's stamp battery is socially significant in its farmland setting, showing how some people engaged in agriculture in the Shire supplemented incomes during hard economic times with the mining of gold. The site is technologically significant as an intact stamp battery complete with the portable steam engine (which was the motive power for the plant), water storage dam and associated race and work or storage shed.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion A

ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE COURSE, OR PATTERN, OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY



A.1 Importance in the evolution of Australian flora, fauna, landscapes or climate.

A.2 Importance in maintaining existing processes or natural systems at the regional or national scale.

A.3 Importance in exhibiting unusual richness or diversity of flora, fauna, landscapes or cultural features.

A.4 Importance for association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, State, region or community.

Cousin's stamp battery is historically significant to the Alpine Shire as an important reminder of a once-important quartz reef mining industry at Gapsted

Criterion B

ITS POSSESSION OF UNCOMMON, RARE OR ENDANGERED ASPECTS OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

B.1 Importance for rare, endangered or uncommon flora, fauna, communities, ecosystems, natural landscapes or phenomena, or as a wilderness.

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HERITAGE CITATION REPORT



ALPINE SHIRE

The site is technologically significant as an intact stamp battery complete with the portable steam engine (which was the motive power for the plant), water storage dam and associated race and work or storage shed.

Criterion G

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Recommendations 2007

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Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Fences & Outbuildings	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	-
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No

This information is provided for guidance only and does not supersede official documents, particularly the planning scheme. Planning controls should be verified by checking the relevant municipal planning scheme.