

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: RECREATION RESERVE and SWIMMING POOL

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Henty Highway BRANXHOLME

STUDY NUMBER: 220

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: Branhholme

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

PARISH: PARISH OF BRANXHOLME

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 473J C-11; VicRoadsT3; located off the east side of the Henty Highway on the north-east side of the township of Branhholme and straddling the Arrandoovong Creek.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Contributory



Swimming Pool, Arrandoovong Creek, Henty Highway, Branhholme.

Image Date: 26/03/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the surviving structure of the swimming pool and all of the land within a two metre radius of the edges of the pool, and the memorial gates and plantings within the reserve.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Branhholme Recreation Reserve and Swimming Pool is located on a reserve of over 6.5 hectares which straddles the Arrandoovong Creek immediately to the east of the Henty Highway. The reserve is approached by a large concrete memorial gateway, which is dedicated to those who served and fell in World War Two. On either side of the gate, a row of English Oaks (*Quercus robur*) forms a memorial planting. Immediately inside the gates to the reserve is a single memorial planting marked by a plaque dedicated to those who fell in World War One. The swimming pool is a concrete tank with a weir across the downstream end, fed by the Arrandoovong Creek. There are metal cages and a ladder in the pool. The banks appear to have been maintained as lawns for sunbathing. The reserve also has several later twentieth century structures, including sporting clubrooms, cream brick toilet block and timber ticket booth. A large sporting oval dominates the centre of the reserve.

HISTORY:

According to Agnes Walter in 'Branxholme 1843-1973', "The "Athletic Sports, Cricket, and Recreation Reserve" was gazetted in 1870." Many men from the town have acted as office bearers in the various sporting clubs. The reserve comprised 14 acres and straddled the Arrandoovong Creek. It was bounded on the north by the line of Cox and Queensberry Street, on the south by Brown and Armstrong Streets, on the east by Buccleuch Street and on the west by Creek Street (the Henty Highway). She continues, "Soon Afterwards, "the new cricket ground" (thanks to the Skene family) had been fenced and laid down in English grasses.

Competition cricket was played as early as 1862 in Branhholme and a club was formed in 1862. In March, 1883, Portland played Branhholme, at home, and it was the first time Portland had been defeated that season. "The Branhholme captain was W R Skene of Arrandoovong." But interest must have been intermittent because, by 1911, cricket had not been played on the reserve for twenty years. A rival cricket pitch to the north-west of the town had been favoured. By the mid twentieth century, Branhholme could boast three teams, at different grades, in the Hamilton and District Cricket Association.

Athletic sports were played on the recreation reserve on St Patrick's Day, 1871. As with cricket, interest in athletics was intermittent. Walter states that, although the local storekeeper M M Silberberg was secretary and treasurer of the club in 1872, "In May, 1889, the "first meeting" of the Branhholme Athletic Sports Club was held, with H Ross the secretary.

In 1881, the first football club was formed and played challenge rather than fixture matches. A new club was formed in 1896 but it appears not to have played on the recreation reserve. Walter states that "Since the First World War, football has been played on the recreation reserve".

The Branhholme Swimming Pool was gazetted as a reserve in 1929 and was located south of the recreation reserve and across the extension of Brown Street. It was constructed in the bed of the Arrandoovong Creek at a cost of 200 pounds. The Branhholme Swimming Club was formed in 1930. The pool opened on 28th February, 1931 "with a grand swimming carnival". The Hamilton Spectator was able to write in January 1932 "By gazetted Government regulations, hours of bathing at the local swimming pool have been extended to permit of Sunday bathing between 6am and 10am and 3.30pm to 7pm. The swimming pool has proved itself one of the most popular adjuncts to the town." The swimming pool is now derelict and no longer used for swimming.

A plaque immediately inside the entrance to the reserve notes that a tree, (although which is not certain but either an English Oak, *Quercus* or a Silky Oak, *Grevillea robusta*), was planted in memory of those who

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fought in the first world War. Memorial gates were erected after the second World War. The creek bed is now clogged with elm suckers and there are other exotic species such as olives growing to a considerable size. Elsewhere, the tea tree noted in the first surveys of the township has returned.

The recreation reserve continues to be used for team sports. The changing rooms and toilets appear to date from after the Second World War. The current sponsors are Timbercorp.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 8: Developing Australia's cultural life

8.1 Organising recreation

8.5 Forming associations

8.14 Living in country and rural settlements

8.5.4 Pursuing common leisure interests

CONDITION:

The Swimming Pool and its equipment are in fair condition. The recreation structures and other facilities are in good condition.

INTEGRITY:

The buildings of the recreation reserve are not significant but the swimming pool is relative intact and significant.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The Branxholme Recreation Reserve was gazetted in 1870 and the Swimming Pool Reserve was gazetted in 1929. The reserves which total over 6.5 hectares straddle the Arrandoovong Creek immediately to the east of the Henty Highway. Both represent the efforts, in two centuries, of the town's leading citizens to provide sporting facilities for the benefit of the community. Many individuals, both men and women, have contributed to the management of the reserves and the administration of the various sporting clubs. The reserves also represent an effort to use and develop the creek aesthetically and as a memorial to those who served in the two World Wars. This should be seen in association with the adjacent formal planting along the highway. The sport buildings and public facilities in the recreation reserve are of no particular significance. The swimming pool structure is significant. It retains a high degree of integrity but is in poor condition.

How is it significant?

The Branxholme Recreation Reserve and Swimming Hole are of historical, social and aesthetic significance to the township of Branxholme.

Why is it significant?

The Branxholme Recreation Reserve and Swimming Hole are of historical and social significance for the long term, although intermittent, provision of sporting and recreational facilities. They are of aesthetic significance for their use and development of the natural landscape of the Arrandoovong Creek and its flood plain and as a memorial to those who served in the two World Wars.

COMPARISON:

203 Swimming Pool, Byaduk-Penshurst Road, Byaduk

ASSESSED BY: TPH

ASSESSMENT DATE:

11/12/2003

EXISTING LISTINGS:

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HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR Include in RNE Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Agnes V. Walter	Branxholme 1843-1973	1973	30-32
Harold Bradley	War memorials of Victoria : a pictorial record	1994	