

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: RAILWAY STATION MASTER'S RESIDENCE (FORMER)

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Station Street BRANXHOLME

STUDY NUMBER: 430

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: Branholme

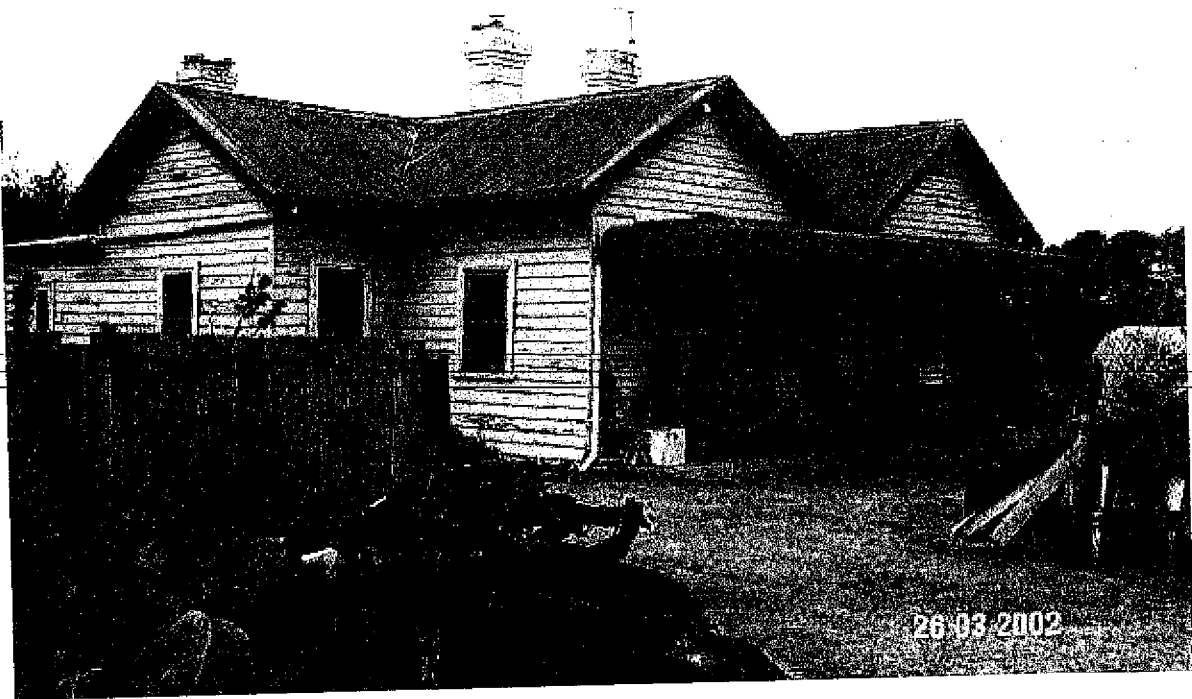
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 4 **SECTION:** 36 **PARISH:** PARISH OF BRANXHOLME

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 473J A-12; VicRoads 72 E7; located on the west side of Railway Parade to the south of the site of the former station.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Railway Station Master's Residence (Former), Station Street, Branholme

Image Date:

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the house and all of the land (interiors have not yet been inspected).

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The former Station Master's Residence located in Station Street in Branhholme is a large single storey, asymmetrical timber house. The house has two sash windows arranged symmetrically on either side of the front door, and the roof is corrugated iron, with simple gables above either side of the front door. A simple corrugate iron verandah is located across the façade. There appear to have been later (perhaps Interwar) timber extensions to the rear of the residence.

HISTORY:

The advent of railways in the Western District was much anticipated and created a strong political activism. The location of the lines, stations and sidings could make or break the viability of a community of whatever scale. Hamilton was particularly concerned that it should become a railway hub and be on the main line to South Australia and Adelaide. The main business of the railways was transportation of passengers and primary produce. The produce became increasingly diverse as the nineteenth century progressed. Importantly, key new industries such as butter factories in smaller towns and the Glenthompson Brickworks were located close to railway transport. But even in the 1880s, much wool, the Western District's principal product, was still transported by wagon to ports on the coast for export. "By the end of the century, wool cartage had been mainly taken over by the Railways, but the issue of freight charges and whether it was cheaper to transport via Melbourne, Geelong or Portland was constantly on the minds of people in the Hamilton district" (Garden, 136).

In 1870 Thomas Higinbotham, Engineer in Chief of Victorian Railways released details of the proposed railway line between Hamilton and Warrnambool which would pass through the township of Peshurst. The announcement was the beginning of a twenty-year long wait for construction to begin. It was a period of prolonged and vigorous campaigning because it was hoped that the line would continue on to Adelaide, confirming Hamilton as the capital of the Western District (Garden, 92-7). The first rail link was the early Melbourne-Ballarat line, soon extended to Ararat. From Ararat, the line could head north-west to Horsham and through the Wimmera to South Australia, or head south-west through Hamilton to the pastoral regions of south-eastern South Australia. There was also a push for a link from Portland through Branhholme to Hamilton, which could extend further into the Wimmera-Mallee, thereby capturing the growing wheat trade.

~~In 1873 a Bill was passed giving the go-ahead for the construction of the line from Ararat to Hamilton, with a link from Hamilton to Portland. The Hamilton-Ballarat line was surveyed in 1875 and finally reached Hamilton, via Glenthompson on 26th October 1877 (Garden, 1984, 97). A number of trunk routes were also opened in the late 1880s, including the Hamilton to Koroit (via Peshurst) line (in August 1890) and the Peshurst to Dunkeld link although these proved to be uneconomic and so closures soon began (Garden, 137). By the 1920s and 1930s, rail services were in general decline as road traffic deprived the railways of a large part of their revenue. Each of the lines feeding Hamilton suffered (Garden, 138).~~

The first railway line through Branhholme was the Portland-Branholme-Merino-Coleraine line constructed in 1876 by Overend and Robb, and opened in 1877. They were the successful contractors for the Ballarat to Ararat line, which was essential for the traffic between those gold towns. The second railway was the line to Casterton, which opened in 1884. At a very local level, the arrival of the railway changed the orientation of the town away from the Portland-Hamilton Road, or Creek Street, now the Henty Highway to the new focus of activity. The station, water tower and other new buildings were constructed on the higher ground on the western side of the town from 1876. The former Station Master's Residence appears to have been constructed after 1900.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

- 3 Developing local, regional and national economies
- 3.8.6 Building and maintaining railways

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HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

- 4 Building settlements, towns and cities
- 4.5 Making settlements to serve rural Australia

CONDITION:

The residence is in fair condition, although the interiors have not been inspected.

INTEGRITY:

The residence retains a good degree of integrity externally. Interior not inspected.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The former Station Master's Residence, located near the former Railway Station in Station Street, Branxholme is a large single storey asymmetrical timber house, with corrugated iron roofs and a corrugated iron verandah across the façade. The house is thought to have been built post 1900, and may have been the second residence constructed for the purpose, as the railway reached Branxholme in 1876. There has been no architect or builder associated with the design. The house is in fair condition, and retains a good degree of integrity.

How is it significant?

The former Station Master's Residence is of historical significance to the township of Branxholme and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The former Railway Station Master's Residence is of historical significance as it represents a previous phase of commercial and industrial activity and trade in Branxholme. The centre of the township moved from the main route between Hamilton and Portland with the advent of the railway, and the Station Master's House would have been considered to be an important residence within the township. The house represents the importance of the railway to the township of Branxholme, from the 1870s until its closure in the middle of the twentieth century.

COMPARISON:

429 Dunkeld Railway Station Buildings, Skene Street, Dunkeld

ASSESSED BY: tfh

ASSESSMENT DATE:

24-Mar-03

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR Include in RNE Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Don Garden	Hamilton, A Western District History	1984	96, 97, 98, 135-8
Walter, Agnes V.	Branxholme 1843-1973	1973	