



*27A Feiglin Road SHEPPARTON EAST*

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## History and Historical Context

### Settlement

From early 1843 H G Ashurst and Co was in control of the Tallygaroopna Run and by Sherbourne Sheppard in May 1844. Travelling to the UK in 1846, Sherbourne left power of attorney with Henry Arthur Smith, with his friend and fellow-Irishman Brabazon Purcell running the station. In 1849 Smith, owed large sums by the absent Sheppard for his service, gained court approval to sell 6200 of Sheppard's sheep to Edward Khull, and the Khulls took over control of the station in late 1849. After a physical confrontation which resulted in Sheppard re-occupying the run, and a number of subsequent court cases brought by Khull, Sheppard was clearly in control of the run by September 1852. For a subsequent period Hugh Glass was then listed as licensee, as Sheppard owed him money. In July 1854, prior to travelling to England to marry the daughter of J B Were, Sheppard changed ownership to a partnership consisting of Sheppard himself and his friends A A C Le Souef and W H Atkins. Ownership transferred to stock and station agents in July 1857 and the run was sold to Charles Ryan and Robert Hammond in May 1859, and in February 1886 William Fraser took over the run.

After the Land Act 1869 came into force, Fraser obtained a number of allotments, some 'dummied' under his children's names, for which he was later challenged and found guilty, some allotments being forfeited. Fraser's Allotment 25, 26 and 27, Parish of Shepparton covered parts of the south section of the Study area and became part of Shepparton Estate No 2 under Closer Settlement, from early 1912. Also comprising some of the Study area were other allotments selected under the Land Act 1869 which then became part of Estate No 2: 23A and 23D (PS Dowson), 23B (James O'Dea), and 23C (Edmund Doyle).

The Shepparton Estate 2 was established in 1912. During its establishment the area was known locally as Settlement 2, today the area is recognised as Orrvale. Successful settlers who obtained land through the Closer and Soldier Settlement Acts were generally those with family members and extended family with whom to pool effort, enlarge the area of land held, and could diversify into side activities to counteract the variability of the fruit seasons. Success was also supported by the development of intensive irrigated agricultural and this is

especially pertinent with regard to the orchard industry.

The Shepparton Estate 2 (and 1) was part of the Tallygaroopna squatting run, one of the large stations in the lower Goulburn River region. Before the Tallygaroopna run was formally recorded, however, it seems the Study area was part of the huge swathe of territory extending from Mitchellstown to the Murray River of both sides of the Goulburn which was occupied by the Manton brothers, Frederick, Henry, Charles and John. The Mantons also held other stations further south, and Wyuna west of the Goulburn River.

## Jewish Settlement

A community of Jewish settlers became established in Settlement No 2 from 1913. The first group, eight families, arrived on 14 April 1913. This was the second year of the Shepparton Estate 2.

### The first 1913 arrivals

Moshe Feiglin: Allotment 17

Raphael Beresinsky: Allotment 3

Bere Feiglin: Allotment 19

Isaac Rubenstein: Part Allotment 1

Samuel Gorr: Allotment 20

Nehemiah Rosenbaum: Allotment 21

B. Bendel: Part Allotment 1

J. Moritz: Allotment 22

The geographical nucleus of this community was the area bounded by Poplar Avenue, Archer Street, Channel Road and Doyle's Road (originally Doyle's Lane). All but the Gorr and Rosenbaum families were within this area, with the latter immediately to the east of Doyle's Road; other later arrivals were more dispersed. This community of Orthodox Lubavitch Jews stood out as distinct from the other settlers in Shepparton Estate 2 (Settlement No 20, their beliefs and daily religious practices setting them apart. However, they had a reputation for helping other settlers.

Each of the eight families had received a loan of £200 from the Jewish Agricultural Settlement Fund, a newly-established organization (constituted on 6 March, 1913) by a group of prominent Melbourne Jewish identities and philanthropists to aid Jewish immigrants who wished to settle on the land. David Feiglin notes that its aim was to deflect Jewish immigrants from problematical and impoverished lives in the city onto land settlement.<sup>[1]</sup> This is borne out by a plea to the international Jewish Colonisation Fund in early 1914 for assistance regarding Jewish immigrants to Australia. The organisation felt it was not in *'the best interests of the Jewish community at large if their honourable desire were to be frustrated by the lack of aid and encouragement, and they were consequently compelled to congregate in the cities and fall back upon the undesirable occupations of huckstering and peddling, some of them perhaps being ultimately reduced to sacrifice their self-respect by the acceptance of eleemosynary [charitable] doles from our charitable institutions'*.<sup>[2]</sup>

The Jewish settlers' hard work, industry and dedication to success was notable. An article in the *Jewish Herald* in late September that year captures the determination exhibited by these families, who, unlike many other Closer Settlers, brought agricultural experience, if not of the new conditions.<sup>[3]</sup>

In the five months, it was reported, Raphael Beresinsky and his brother in law had cleared the 17ha (41 acre block), erected a boundary fence, and twice ploughed 6ha (15 acres), which was now showing 'a nice crop of oats'. Four hectares (10 acres) were ready to be sown with lucerne (the crop Elwood Mead<sup>[4]</sup> encouraged settlers to plant), and 2ha (5 acres) had been planted with peach, apricot, orange, cherry and pear trees, underplanted by a crop of peas; the fruit trees had been coated with a solution of lime and sulphur to discourage hares. A plot of land was ready for the planting of a summer crop, and well-built sheds and a cottage erected. A poultry run, kitchen garden was 'already well-stocked with vegetables', and a nursery set up to propagate vines.

In contrast Sam Gorr had chosen dairying (Departmental encouragement of dairying proved to be misleading, the blocks soon proving to be inadequate in size), and had constructed a redgum milking shed roofed with galvanised iron, pigsties and a fowlhouse. On his 22 ha (53 acres), 4 ha (10 acres) were planted in flourishing lucerne, 6ha (15 acres) in oats, 10ha (25 acres) in late oats, 3ha (8 acres) with millet and 4ha (10 acres) with lucerne, and he had just harvested 30 tons of millet for fodder. He was milking nine cows, this alone earning £2.10 per week.

Moshe Feiglin, Bere Feiglin, Moritz, and Bandel and Rubenstein (who worked together on Allotment 1), while all planting a range of crops including lucerne, had also hedged their bets with small acreages of the fruit trees soon to be the hallmark of the Shepparton East area.

However, in common with the other settlers, they were all experiencing blocks that were too small to support the dairying which had been the presumption of the authorities. Mead, not deflected from his advocacy of dairying based on the irrigated cultivation of lucerne, in reporting progress of the Jewish settlers to the Fund noted the 'good cultivation record' but politely pointed out 'the small numbers of cows in relation to the volume of crops', and wondered 'what they will do with their crops in order to get a revenue for them. They ought now to begin to get an income from something, and cows seem to be the most reliable stand-by.'<sup>[5]</sup>

### Synagogue

It is unclear when the synagogue was established, but it seems from newspaper reports that a synagogue of some type was in operation by at least June 1920. Services were first held in Isaac Cyprus' house, who allotted one room for a schule (synagogue). In November 1915 the community applied to the senior Jewish congregation in Victoria, the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation at the Bourke Street synagogue, for help in erecting a synagogue and school (at this time the construction of the synagogue in Carlton was also being mooted). The community was referred back to Laurence Harris, a Jewish tailor and Labour Party and community stalwart living in Shepparton, who was 'acting as a representative of the Jewish farmers'. The community had borrowed a Sefer Torah (a handwritten Torah) from the city synagogue a few months after their arrival.<sup>[6]</sup>

On 19 April 1926, the board members of the Jewish Agricultural Settlement Fund purchased the synagogue site, Allotment 16, a .41ha (one acre) block at the south-western corner of Poplar Avenue and Doyles Road. This had been in the hands of settler FW Stagg, but was advertised for sale by tender by the SRWSC<sup>[7]</sup> on 22 October 1925. Given that synagogue services were reported from June 1920, and that various accounts refer to Stagg's house as becoming the synagogue, it seems likely that the congregation had been utilizing the two-room dwelling by arrangement with Stagg.

The community established a 'Hebrew School' for religious instruction at the end of 1917, with financial assistance from S Slutzkin. The teacher, S Rosner, had been located by the Jewish Education Board. The religious instruction was intense: the classes were held every evening except Friday, from 5pm to 7.30pm following attendance at the local Orrvale State School, and on the Sabbath from 2pm till 5pm. Fourteen students were attending in February 1918, three months or so after the classes commenced, and it was claimed there had not been a single absentee from any class. This rigorous regime, reflecting the intensity of the ardent Orthodox Lubvitch views of the community, was criticised as overly harsh by a number of writers to the *Jewish Herald*, and it is unclear how long it prevailed, <sup>[8]</sup>

Within three years of the original Jewish settlers taking up their holdings at Orrvale, the following Jewish families from Melbourne also acquired properties on an individual basis: Messrs Isaac Dabscheck & Sons (Abe and Woolf), Robert Rothberg, Louis Rothberg, and Eli Wynn (a cousin of Samuel Wynn, founder of Wynn's Wines). The latter three took up their holdings a few miles to the east of the original settlers, whilst Dabscheck purchased land in a central position of the Jewish settlement. It is noteworthy that this second group consisted mainly of established Melbourne businessmen residing in Melbourne, who purchased as a business venture rather than as farmers. They retained their properties for varying relatively short periods of time and eventually sold out to both Jewish and non-Jewish buyers who lived on their properties and successfully farmed them. Of the original settlers, the brothers-in-law Bendel and Rubenstein returned to Melbourne within a couple of years and their holdings were taken over by Messrs Sonkin and Jacob (Jack) Rosenbaum (son of N. Rosenbaum). The Sonkin family remained on the settlement for a few years only.<sup>[9]</sup>

Moshe Feiglin had applied on for a Conditional Purchase Lease of a Farm or Agricultural Labourer's Allotment for Allotment 17, Parish of Shepparton, County of Moira on 31 March 1913. Feiglin was thirty-five years of age, and gave his address as Collingwood, where he had been working as a labourer. He had been in Victoria for five months, arriving in October 1912. Born in Gorky (now known as Nizhny Novgorod) in central Russia, Feiglin had fled the Russian pogroms with his parents and siblings to safety in Palestine. The family farmed there, unsuccessfully, and Moshe subsequently worked on the newly-establishing vineyards of Baron von Rothschild, but the family was felt that emigration would give greater success.

Moshe Feiglin's application noted that he proposed to utilise the 18ha (44 acre) allotment for dairying, the use being heavily pushed by Elwood Mead, although he presciently noted on the application that he understood fruit-growing. He desired the Commission (the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, which managed Closer Settlement in the irrigated areas) to erect a Design 3 house for him. The extant house at 27 Feiglin Road matches design 3 in *Victoria Australia's Irrigated State, How to obtain Homes in the Irrigated Areas*, Bulletin No2, page 9. (Refer to images)

The cost of the property was £787, to be paid off in instalments. Moshe Feiglin, along with the seven other Jewish immigrants, received a loan of £200 from the trustees of the Jewish Agricultural Settlement Fund on 10 April 1913, to be repaid at 4% interest.

The Feiglin family, with Moshe as patriarch, was central to the establishment and continuation of the Jewish community at Orrvale, with Moshe Feiglin emerging as the leader of the community. The family and initial community were Lubavitch Chassidim or Chabad, an Orthodox branch of the Jewish faith led internationally by a dynasty of Rebbe (Rabbis) based by this time in the USA. At first, the community lacked a minyan, the quorum of ten males necessary to conduct public religious services, and Feiglin travelled to Melbourne and secured another settler, Isaac Cyprus, a cabinet maker, who took a block in close to the other Jewish settlers. Moshe Feiglin and family were also part of the Misrachi Zionist movement, promoting Israel as a religious, non-secular state. The Feiglin family were prominent in the Victorian arm of this organisation throughout the mid-twentieth century.<sup>[10]</sup>

To gain income during the initial few years while their dairy farms (soon to be replaced by orchards) were becoming established, most of the male Jewish settlers worked on the earlier-planted orchards at Ardmona, living on site during the week and learning but returning to Orrvale for the Sabbath. Moshe Feiglin was not forced to do this, having made contact with experienced agriculturist William West (brother of John West, the irrigation pioneer) in search of vine cuttings; he was given a job by West, later becoming farm manager for West's property, Closer Settlement Allotment 52 around two miles (3.2 kilometres) to the north-east of Feiglin's block.<sup>[11]</sup>

The family became hard-working, progressive orchardists, instituting many improvements in orchard practice, such as pioneering the use of ethylene to ripen pears and thus gaining an advantage on other orchardists at the markets, further developing the orchard sprayer used at the time, and other. Other ventures conducted by this entrepreneurial family included a successful fruit-drying venture for ten years (including producing dried fruit for the USA and Australian Armies during WW2) until the orchards were sold, and the harvesting of young palm fronds from palms on the Banks of the Murray River and elsewhere around the district for use during the festival of Succoth (a Jewish pilgrimage festival). <sup>[12]</sup>

The Feiglin family developed a very successful (fruit)case-making business under the name M Feiglin and Sons, establishing sawmills in the mountain ash areas of Powelltown and Millgrove, and providing a high quality kiln-dried product to convey fruit to market which became very popular. Case-making factories were set up at Orrvale, Mooroopna, Tatura and Koondrook.

Shirley Randles on the synagogue:

*It was a rectangular timber building with several windows. Inside was the Ark and in front were seats where the men sat. Then there was a small partition and several rows for the women.*



Shirley Randles gives a description of the Jewish Community Hostel:

*Compared to the small synagogue, the hostel was a large, rambling structure. It had a large hall and a stage. Behind the stage, several rooms and a kitchen were used for living quarters. On the west side of the hall a narrow room ran the length of the building. Its windows were covered with flyscreens, but no glass.*<sup>[13]</sup>

As much as possible, the well-respected committee created a self contained community that took responsibility for its members. It was united both by religion and as immigrants in a new land. The committee met, discussed and acted to fulfil the needs of the Jewish community. Although Moshe Feiglin was known for helping other orchardists and farmers

Members of the community were consistent donors to Israeli causes: the Jewish National Fund, Herzl Forest Fund, Young Zionist League, Judean Women's Committee. The Feiglins also donated generously to a range of local and wider causes: the erection of the Mooroopna War Memorial, the Mooroopna Hospital, British victims of 1940 bombing raids, the *Argus* Bushfire Appeal of 1944.<sup>[14]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> David Feiglin, 'The origins and development of the Jewish Agricultural Settlement at Orrvale, Shepparton', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, November 2004 Vol. XVII Part 3, p 341.

<https://www.ajhs.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/AJHS-1-23-TOC-202-287.pdf>

Accessed 28/11/2022.

<sup>[2]</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 2/1/1914, p 8.

<sup>[3]</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 26/9/1913, p 7.

<sup>[4]</sup> Elwood Mead (1858-1936), irrigation engineer and advocate of planned rural settlement, was born on 16 January 1858 at Patriot, Indiana, United States of America. At the Colorado State Agricultural College he received a professorship in irrigation engineering, the first of its type in the USA. IN 1907 he arrived in Victoria after accepting an invitation from the Victorian government to become chairman of its newly formed State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. The government-controlled irrigation in Victoria owed a great deal to the early efforts of Prime Minister Alfred Deakin who expected Mead to advise at both national and State levels. Mead embraced the opportunity to demonstrate the social utility of an enlightened irrigation programme. He also supported a higher-yielding uses of water and land. The Water Act was passed in 1909 despite the fierce opposition of large landowners. Mead's influence on rural development was increased by his assumption of overriding control in the planning of closer settlement in Victoria's irrigation districts.

<sup>[5]</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 7/11/1913, p 12.

<sup>[6]</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 19/11/1915, p 9; 11/9/1914, p 10.

<sup>[7]</sup> State Rivers and Water Supply Commission

<sup>[8]</sup> *Jewish Herald*, 8/2/1918, p 17.

<sup>[9]</sup> Ibid p 343.

<sup>[10]</sup> *Australian Jewish News*, 25/7/1947, p 11 and passim

[11] David Feiglin, op cit, p 345.

[12] Aaron Feiglin, *Growing up with the trees*, 2008, p 120-130.

[13] Shirley Randles, 'No Locked Doors: Jewish Life in Shepparton on Shepparton', Shepparton Interfaith Network. <https://sheppartoninterfaith.org.au/?p=391> Accessed 28/11/2022.

[14] *Shepparton Advertiser*, 16/6/1950, p 1123/9/1940, p 4; *Argus*, 15/2/1944, p 5

[15] *Australian Jewish News*, 25/7/1947, p 11 and passim

## Description

### Physical Description

27(A) Feiglin Road Shepparton East demonstrates many of the architectural characteristics of 19th and turn of the 20th century vernacular housing. The main body of the house includes two rooms with a hipped roof and a skillion to the rear. The building is timber framed with timber square edged weatherboard cladding and the roofing is corrugated galvanised roofing with shallow eaves. The front elevation is symmetrical with a central door and double hung sashes to either side. The sashes have a central timber glazing bar and this creates a four paned window aesthetic. The verandah is a replacement and is not original. The posts are timber and there is a timber picket palisade across the front.

The skillion to the rear is clad with timber weatherboards and there is a brick chimney at the rear.

27 (B) Feiglin Road, Shepparton East demonstrates architectural characteristics that are typical for the c1940s period. This includes the shallow pitched hipped roofs, the projecting front and recessed verandah. The rendered masonry verandah columns and the rendered low masonry wall with the contrasting brick band features all contribute to this particular expression of the bungalow style. The triplet timber framed windows to the gable front and the paired timber framed windows to the recessed section are of note for their decorative features.

They have been designed with a geometric expression. The double glazed front doors have the Star of David expressed through the design of the timber glazing bars.

In addition there are features that are specific to the cultural practices of this Jewish community. This includes the use of a side entrance which was used by the community for payment and other commercial transactions. The side entrance is distinguished by a cantilevered canopy with timber fretwork and decorative fascia boards. To the rear of this building there were also male and female toilets - now demolished but potentially the archaeological remains are extant. The mikvah (bath for cultural cleansing) is still extant but filled in with earth.

27(C) Feiglin Road, Shepparton East is similar in design to 27(B) Feiglin Road, demonstrates many of the same features as found at 27(B) Feiglin Road. These include the shallow pitched roofs with the main roof falling to form the verandah roof. A recessed verandah with low masonry wall - albeit this has a scooped out profile instead of a stepped profile. The decorative features on the masonry columns and low verandah wall also vary with the 27 (c) having bold diaper shaped exposed brick features and brick capping to the verandah wall. The same style of windows are found and these include the timber framed triple windows to the recessed section and paired timber sashes to the projecting gable front.

Both houses are notable for their similarity and this same style is also shared by another Jewish designed house at 130 Poplar Avenue, Shepparton East.

### Comparative Analysis

There is no other comparative settlement from this period that was supported by the Jewish community in the region.

There was a similar settlement in Berwick and this was established in 1927 but by 1937 the settlers had left. There is no identified surviving fabric from this settlement.

## Statement of Significance

### What is significant?

27 Feiglin Road, Grahamvale is significant.

This includes the three houses known as 27A, 27B, 27C Feiglin Road, Shepparton East.

The houses 27A, 27B, 27C and 130 Poplar Avenue as a group of places are significant.

### How is it significant?

27 Feiglin Road, Shepparton East is of local historical, social, cultural, spiritual and aesthetic cultural heritage significance to the City of Greater Shepparton.

### Why is it significant?

The three houses at 27 Feiglin Road, Shepparton East (27A, B & C) are of historical significance as they provides tangible evidence of the development of the Shepparton Estate 2 and the Closer Settlement Policies of the early 20th century.

They are of historical significance for their association with the community of Jewish settlers who arrived at Shepparton Estate 2 with eight families in 14 April 1913.

27B is of historical significance as it provides physical evidence of how staff were paid through the construction of a side entry and porch where payments were made to the community workers.

The remaining evidence of the mikvah (traditional cultural cleansing bath) is of historical significance.

#### (Criterion A)

27(A) Feiglin Road, Shepparton East is a rare surviving example from the initial Closer Settlement period.

The surviving features of the mikvah are rare.

#### (Criterion B)

The house 27(A) Feiglin Road, Shepparton East, are of aesthetic and architectural significance as it is a typical representative example of the type of houses promoted by the Victorian Government in a pamphlet (1911) published as part of the push for the establishment of irrigated blocks in the Goulburn Valley.

The houses at 27(B) and 27(C) Feiglin Road, are of aesthetic and architectural significance as they are representative of the Bungalow style as found in the region.

#### (Criterion D)

The three houses at 27 Feiglin Road, Shepparton East are of social, cultural and spiritual significance as they were the home of Moshe Feiglin and his family. Moshe Feiglin was the patriarch and leader of the Lubavitch Chassidim community, an orthodox branch of the Jewish faith. Cultural practices were observed at this place and this includes all of the three houses.

27B Feiglin Road is of social, spiritual, cultural significance as it retains archaeological evidence of the ritual bathing area used by women in the community when they are menstruating and the provision of male and female toilets.

27C is of cultural and spiritual significance for the design of the paired front door which has the glazing bars set out to represent the Star of David.

#### (Criterion G)

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.