

SCOTT’S HOMESTEAD

Address	103 Olliers Road, Mount Rowan	Date Inspected	September 2023 & August 2024
Construction Date	c. 1900-14	Period	Federation



Scott’s Homestead from Olliers Road.
(Source: RBA, August 2024)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT?

Scott’s Homestead at 103 Olliers Road, Mount Rowan, is significant. It was constructed on a small-scale (5 acre) farming allotment during the Federation period. It has not been possible to determine a more exact construction date nor the identity of who from amongst the property’s earlier owners was responsible for the development; however, it was likely the widow Catherine Scott (née Timothy) – wife of a well-known local farmer, William Scott – who was the longest resident of the place during the Federation era.

The significance of Scott’s Homestead is attributed to its original form and fabric, namely its hipped/gabled roof and 'broken back' return verandah, including short-sheeted corrugated metal cladding, exposed rafter ends, two red brick chimneys, walls of square-edged weatherboard, front entrance (excluding flyscreen), timber-framed casement windows (possibly double-hung sashes to the west elevation), some with hoods, and all coloured/patterned glazing and leadlighting.

The Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) in the backdrop of *Scott's Homestead* is also significant.

To the northeast of the homestead is an original or early gabled corrugated metal outbuilding that has been partially re-clad and altered. While complementary to the legibility of the place as a small farmstead, it has not been deemed significant because of its diminished intactness.

Non-original elements at the place are also not significant.

HOW IS IT SIGNIFICANT?

Scott's Homestead is of historical (Criterion A) and representative (Criterion D) significance to the City of Ballarat.

WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT?

Scott's Homestead is of historical significance as an illustration of more modest agricultural activity in the Mount Rowan area during the early 20th century. Such undertakings, while prevalent at the time across Ballarat's hinterland, have generally left fewer tangible traces, as opposed to the larger, more affluent agricultural estates (often established in the mid-to-late Victorian era). (Criterion A)

Scott's Homestead is of representative significance as a generally intact and good example of a Queen Anne-style Federation-period timber residence, distinguished by its hinterland location and dominant roofscape. The dwelling's more pared-back form and detailing, compared with other town-based examples of the type in Ballarat, is reflective of its hinterland location and the tighter economic means of smallholders at the time. Nevertheless, the inclusion of some decorative flourishes – the bracketed half-timbered gable end, tripartite casement banks, and leadlighting – and the contrast of the symmetrical facade and asymmetrical east elevation are still demonstrative of the idiom's emphasis on achieving an architectural presence even when means were limited. The Monterey cypress to the rear of the homestead is associated with the formative development of the place and, along with the generous garden, enhances its legibility as a rural development. (Criterion D)

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

Historically, the boundaries of Mount Rowan – which fall within the Country of the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples – have been indefinite. At their broadest extent, the district encompassed the area from its namesake – the extinct volcano that dominates the landscape between Cummins (north) and Sims (south) roads – to Burrumbeet Creek in the south and southwest. Then north towards Sulky, east past Midland Highway (formerly Creswick Road), and northwest to the edges of the township of Miners Rest. The landform is of flat volcanic plains dissected by fertile alluvial terraces and underground springs with some low-relief cone-like hills, of which Mount Rowan is the largest. Prior to European settlement, this area was characterised by open eucalypt forest.¹

The post-contact history of Mount Rowan has been one defined by relative consistency, having emerged from the early 1840s as a lightly populated rural landscape – devoid of an urban centre (that role was initially served by Miners Rest) – on the northern outskirts of Ballarat and Wendouree.

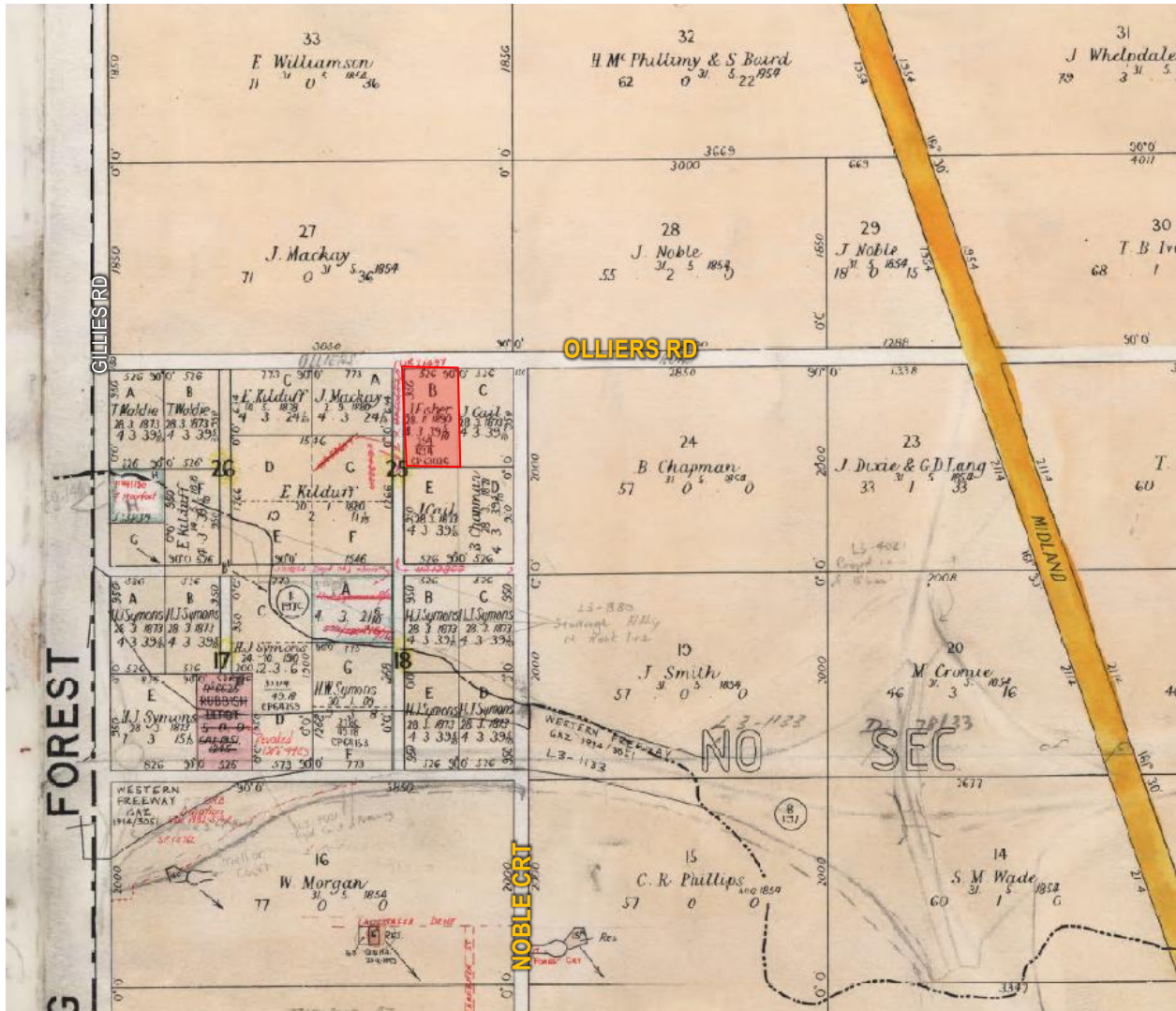
Much of Mount Rowan was initially encompassed within Thomas Waldie's (d. 1884) pastoral run known as Wyndholm (at its peak, over 18,000 acres), on which he obtained a Pre-emptive Right to 640 acres by 1854.² Private sales commenced at pace in the locality from the mid-1850s, with small to medium-sized mixed farms (agricultural/pastoral) rapidly emerging, alongside some limited company-led deep lead exploration and quartz crushing. Mining activity appears to have largely ceased by the early 20th century, with the area characterised in 1905 as a 'post town' encompassing a state school (no. 757, closed 1946), one store, and 'a small, rather scattered population of about 200.'³

The *City of Ballarat Thematic Environmental History* (July 2024) provides the following contextual summary:

Mount Rowan is a small farming locality north of Ballarat, close to the Creswick Road, and takes its name from a volcanic hill of the same name. The Burrumbeet Creek crosses the area to the south. Crown land allotments were sold for farming from the mid-1850s. A common school was established in the mid-1860s and a Presbyterian Church was built c.1870. A state school was built in 1876 (VGG, 1876) and a local post office was also provided. By the 1930s, there was sparse settlement in the locality (Military map, 1935). The state school closed in 1946 (Watson 2001). A new government secondary school opened in 2019.⁴

PLACE-SPECIFIC HISTORY

The subject land derives from Allotment B, Section 25 in the Parish of Ballarat, Country of Ripon. This approximately four-acre (1.6 ha) parcel was acquired by a local Scottish farmer, James Fisher, in November 1890 for £15.⁵ It formed part of a defined section in the parish, now bounded by Olliers Road (north), Gillies Road (west), Noble Court (east), and loosely by Giot Drive (south), that was promoted initially at their sale in the early 1870s as 'suburban allotments' and included gridded cross streets that do not appear to have been established.⁶ It possibly represented an early attempt at more intensive development in Mount Rowan that failed to materialise.



Extract from the Parish of Ballarat with Allotment B, Section 25, shaded red. Note that the pictured cross streets (Sections 17, 18, 25, 26) did not eventuate. (Source: Parish of Ballarat map, B126, Ballarat Sheet 2, PROV)

Fisher transferred this holding to another Mount Rowan farmer, James Kelly, in February 1891.⁷ The Shire of Ballarat Rate Book for that year listed a 'Res[idence]: 5 [rooms]' with a net annual value of £10, occupied by Kelly at the subject land.⁸ Considering the existing residence's Queen Anne style character, a design mode that by the early 1890s was only beginning to appear within metropolitan Melbourne, its employment in a rural locality for a modest farmstead seems highly unlikely. As such, it is presumed that an earlier dwelling occupied by Kelly at the property was later replaced by the extant during the early Federation period, as examined below.

It is not possible from the municipal rate book to identify when such a development took place as the entries consistently recorded the presence of a five-roomed residence (materiality not given, NAV £10) at the property over the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There is no change in the rate book description to signal the replacement of the earlier dwelling.

Land title evidence is also ambiguous on this front. Kelly sold Allotment B to Samuel Falls in February 1900. Falls then transferred it to another local farmer, William Scott – a ‘very old and much respected resident of Mount Rowan’ – in May 1902.⁹ Scott had, in fact, died beforehand in March of that year, so the title had passed via executors to his wife Catherine Scott (née Timothy) in August 1903.¹⁰

The widowed Catherine (c. 1840-1914) remained at the property until her death, at which her probate noted the ‘improvements’ at the place as consisting of a ‘W.B. [weatherboard] Dwelling, stable, outhouse + fencing.’ The information in Catherine Scott’s probate does not suggest any major agricultural or pastoral activities at the property other than the presence of 21 fowls, which is suggestive of smallholder poultry farming.¹¹

This description equates with the existing house; however, whether it was built during the later phase of Kelly’s ownership (1891-1900), the briefer tenure of Falls (1900-03) or at some point for Catherine Scott (1903-14) cannot be resolved from the available evidence. Whatever the scenario, the residence is a Federation-period development, having likely been completed between 1900 and 1914. Given Scott’s length of occupancy, her name is afforded to the place by this assessment.

Scott’s relatives advertised the place for sale in the pages of the *Ballarat Star* in February 1918:

Choice Little Property at Mount Rowan ...

5 ACRES of Choice Land ... 2 miles from the Wendouree R.S., School and Post Office, Tram Line, Lake and Gardens, on which is erected a very neat W.B. Cottage of 6 rooms and iron roof; dairy, washhouse, stable, feed-house and buggy shed, fowl-house and pig-sty, and here is a good well close to the house.

The Property is especially adapted to poultry farming, and where a couple of cows and a few pigs can be kept, as the land is rich chocolate and is practically virgin land.

There is a neat garden, in which a good patch of lucerne grows in profusion.

*This place is especially suitable for a working man, who desires to live out of town, it being very handy to the City and almost within the suburb radius.*¹²

By the interwar period, it appears that at least some of these outbuildings had been removed. The place is depicted in an aerial photograph dated 1934, which is reproduced below.¹³ It shows the extant hipped/gabled form of the primary dwelling with back skillion wing as well as the existing elongated gabled shed to the southeast (note the extant forward and rear skillion volumes are not apparent) and the surviving rear Monterey cypress planting.

The broader property (Allotment B) appears to be given over to paddocks with a noticeable western windbreak and planted boundaries and internal divisions.



Aerial photograph, dated March 1934, of *Scott’s Homestead* (close-up below) with Allotment B outlined in dashed red. (Source: Map2806, Run 6, Frame 13241, Geoscience Australia)



Close-up *Scott's Homestead*, March 1934.
(Source: Map2806, Run 6, Frame 13241, Geoscience Australia)

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Scott's Homestead is a single-storey Federation-period residence set back from the south side of Olliers Road on generally level land.

It has a contained rectangular footprint with a primary hipped (pyramidal-like) roof clad in short-sheeted corrugated metal, which, if not original, is early fabric (but likely overpainted). Exposed timber rafter ends are also evident. To the short central ridge survives one of two goose-neck finials (a profile fashionable in the late Federation period). A pair of red brick chimneys with moulded caps punctures the west and rear primary roof planes. The main roof is 'broken back' to a front verandah that returns partially to the east, where it terminates at a projecting gabled bay. The latter has a plain timber bargeboard and displays bracketed half-timbered sheeting to the gable end. The verandah's original supports (probably turned timber posts) have been replaced by the slender poles (square profile). Its deck (now concrete) is also a replacement.

It is of timber-framed construction and clad in painted square-edged weatherboards. The façade (facing Olliers Road) is symmetrical. The central entry comprises a high-waisted timber panelled door with an upper glazed panel (either overpainted or sheeted) that is partially obscured by a flyscreen. This door is surmounted by a transom light and flanked by sidelights; the glazing for both elements is coloured and patterned. The lower part of the sidelight features diagonal timber panelling (wainscoting). The windows to either side of the front door are timber-framed tripartite casement windows with leadlighting/patterned glazing to their highlights.



Façade (north elevation) from Olliers Road.
(Source: RBA, August 2024)

This window type is replicated to the east-facing gabled bay but includes a skillion hood (sheeted) with timber fretwork brackets. There is also a single timber-framed casement window (leadlighting to margins) facing the verandah at the inside elevation of this bay. To the west elevation, towards the rear, there are two timber-framed windows (possibly double-hung sashes, concealed), each with a skillion hoods.

Attached to the rear of the primary footprint is a skillion-roofed weatherboard section. Its eastern end has been re-clad or infilled (possibly initially a recessed verandah/porch) with modern metal sheeting.

In the backdrop of Scott's Homestead, to its southwest, is a tall (approximately 19m) Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) with a prominent canopy spread. This tree is evident in the 1934 aerial photograph and is presumed to be associated with the formative development of the place. There are several other plantings in the vicinity of the cottage that appear to originate from the second half of the 20th century, although the existence of a windbreak along the property's western title boundary is a longstanding element.



Scott's Homestead with the significant Monterey cypress prominent in the background.
(Source: RBA, September 2023)

To the southeast of Scott's Homestead is an elongated gabled outbuilding with a roof and walls clad in corrugated metal sheeting (at least some of which are contemporary replacements). Its built form is evident in the 1934 aerial photograph at this location, but the extant skillion volumes to its forward/north and rear/south elevation are later additions. Other than a general utilitarian character, no elements visible from the public domain denote the purpose of this outbuilding (several types are noted in the 1918 *Ballarat Star* advertisement for the property).

The cluster of metal sheds and above-ground tanks to the west of the residence appears to be contemporary, as is existing fencing.



North face of the gabled outbuilding (north elevation) with non-original skillion addition from Olliers Road.
(Source: RBA, August 2024)

THEMATIC CONTEXT

GML, *City of Ballarat Thematic Environmental History*, vol. 2, final report (interim), July 2024:

3.4 Adapting and exploiting the land and its resources

3.4.5 Farming

The gold rushes in the Ballarat district hastened the development of farming in the Ballarat area, which quickly became a highly productive land use owing to the good soils and temperate climate. The sudden influx of thousands of people to the goldfields in the early 1850s led to a high demand for fresh produce, particularly meat, grain and potatoes. Licensed slaughterhouses were also established, which were required under the health regulations. Farming ensured a ready market for agricultural produce and also encouraged the development of flour mills. Yields of wheat in the northern area of the City of Ballarat in the 1870s and 1880s were high, and the area's overall production made up a sizeable component of Victoria's total yield [Blainey, *A History of Victoria*, Cambridge University Press, 2013]. So great was the demand for fresh food at the Ballarat goldfields that supply also came from much further afield, including the rich potato country around Koroit in southwestern Victoria, over 100 miles away [Doyle, *Moyne Shire Thematic Environmental History*, 2006]. By the 1880s, once farm production had become well established, Ballarat was also supplying produce to Melbourne.

3.5 Shaping the city, towns and villages

3.5.5 Building Homes

Victorian-era houses predominate in the early residential areas of Ballarat, including Ballarat East, Ballarat West, Eureka, Mount Pleasant and Canadian. Later periods are also represented by the existing housing stock, especially the Edwardian/Federation and interwar eras. There are fewer houses from the postwar period. In the areas that were later to develop, such as Ballarat North and Alfredton, there are still many Victorian and Edwardian homes but also a greater number of interwar and postwar homes. In Wendouree there is mixture of styles, with a large proportion of Federation and interwar residences, and also a fair share of postwar homes. Generally, the occurrence of postwar housing increases with the distance from the city centre. Many of the postwar homes that have been built in early mining areas, such as Ballarat East, are constrained by the small suburban lot sizes of the 1850s and have been designed accordingly.

[...]

Federation style (Edwardian era)

There was significant residential development in central Ballarat and its earlier suburbs in the early 1900s and up until the beginning of the First World War. Homes of this era were typically single-storeyed, often with an asymmetrical form and a return verandah. Brick was becoming more widely used compared to the Victorian era. Edwardian-era homes in Ballarat (and other buildings of this era) express the design characteristics of Federation style as well as Art Nouveau. They feature window hoods, tall chimneys often with decorative brick banding, and timber fretwork to the front verandah ...

The use of terracotta Marseilles roof tiles, however, which were commonly used in Federation homes in Melbourne, was rare in Ballarat ... Where they were confined to small house blocks, Edwardian homes in Ballarat were diminutive like their single-fronted Victorian-era predecessors.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Scott's Homestead is an example of a Federation-period timber residence with a restrained Queen Anne character. This design mode – an eclectic English revival style 'domesticated' in Australia and heavily influenced by the Arts & Crafts Movement – had entered into the building mainstream by the early 1900s, becoming a hallmark of the Federation years. At least for its early history (early 20th century), the place functioned as a small-scale farm.

Federation-era timber dwellings are relatively well-represented under the Schedule to Clause 43.01 (Heritage Overlay) of the Ballarat Planning Scheme, particularly within precinct-based HOs. However, the majority of these are concentrated within the urban core of Ballarat or along historic arterial routes leading to the centre. To date, rural areas in the municipality have not been closely reviewed from a heritage perspective, despite farming and agricultural development forming pronounced themes in the shaping of Ballarat's cultural landscape.

At the time of the assessment, only five homestead-type properties in the LGA were heritage-listed:

- Ballantrae, 7208 Midland Highway, Buninyong (H0551, HO133). A State-significant, highly ornate, and commodious Gothic Revival-style timber dwelling, built in 1857 – set in extensive landscaped grounds but historically seemingly not a working/agricultural property ('gentleman's retreat').
- Lauderdale (Homestead), 7 Prince Street, Alfredton (H0486, HO1). A State-significant and substantial, architect-designed (J.A. Doane) Free Classical-style homestead (1863) with a corbie gabled outbuilding, both of basalt. Architecturally elaborate (bracketed eaves, dressed quoining, window surrounds, and decorative verandah). Formerly rural, now set within well-established suburban environs.
- Barnfield Cottage and Barn, 195 Kennedys Road, Miners Rest (HO138). No heritage assessment is available; however, the list includes a mid-Victorian period hipped house with bichromatic brickwork to the façade (at least) and a verandah that returns to both sides as well as a basalt outbuilding (squared random courses, roughly worked).
- Roxburgh Dairy Farm (Former), 624 Glenelg Highway, Smythes Creek (HO212). A modest complex with two timber residences dating from the mid-to-late Victorian period respectively, a double-height wooden 'Cow Shed', and some significant plantings (a pair of Canary Island Date palms and several Monterey cypress trees).
- Lintel Grange Homestead Complex, 127 Edmonston Road, Addington (HO232). An evolved mid-to-late Victorian period hipped-roofed farmstead of basalt construction (squared random coursed and finely dressed, tuckpointed façade) with white local granite accents and a classically refined, cast-iron filigree character. Various other

significant elements, including multiple and varied late 19th century outbuildings, Golden privet hedge fencing, and some historic plantings (Weeping Nootka cypress, ash and walnut trees).

These HOs illustrate sizable, relatively upscale masonry instances of mid-to-late 19th-century rural development.

In contrast, the humbler timber Scott's Homestead is representative of a less affluent and intensive but overall common type of farming activities in the municipality, in this case, during the Federation period. The role of the smallholders in Ballarat's agricultural history is well-documented, but, to date, few related surviving places have been heritage-listed.

OTHER HERITAGE LISTINGS

None

RECOMMENDATIONS

HERITAGE OVERLAY SCHEDULE CONTROLS

External paint controls	Yes (weatherboard)
Internal alteration controls	No
Tree controls	Yes (Monterey cypress)
Solar energy system controls	Yes
Outbuilding or Fences	No
Prohibited uses permitted	Yes
Aboriginal heritage place	No

EXTENT OF THE HERITAGE OVERLAY

Scott's Homestead at 103 Olliers Road, Mount Rowan, is recommended for inclusion under the Schedule to Clause 43.01 (Heritage Overlay) of the Ballarat Planning Scheme with a reduced extent of overlay (not title boundaries), as depicted in the aerial photograph below.

The recommended HO polygon extends from the cardinal primary building line to the northern and western property boundaries. And east by 12 metres and south by 19.7 metres (to safeguard the TPZ for the Monterey cypress).



The recommended extent of the heritage overlay for 103 Olliers Road, Mount Rowan, is shaded red. The canopy of the significant Monterey cypress is identified by the yellow arrow. (Source: Nearmap, February 2025)

ENDNOTES

- ¹ See *Native Vegetation – Modelled 1750 Ecological Vegetation Classes*, Department of Energy, Environment, And Climate Action (VIC)
- ² William Bramwell Withers, *The History of Ballarat, from the First Pastoral Settlement to the Present Time*, 2nd ed., 1870, available online, Project Gutenberg Australia, p13
- ³ *The Australian Handbook*, Gordon & Gotch, 1905, p466
- ⁴ GML, *City of Ballarat Thematic Environmental History*, July 2024, vol. 3, p19
- ⁵ Certificate of Title, vol. 2333, folio 459; and James Fisher, publicly available family tree, Ancestry.com.au
- ⁶ 'Advertising', *Ballarat Star*, 29 March 1873, p4
- ⁷ Certificate of Title, vol. 2333, folio 459
- ⁸ *The Shire of Ballarat Rate Book*, 1891, p122, no. 170 (VPRS 13004, PROV Ballarat)
- ⁹ 'Funeral Notice', *Ballarat Star*, 25 March 1903, p5; and Certificate of Title, vol. 2333, folio 459
- ¹⁰ William Scott, Australia Death Index, Ancestry.com.au; 'Obituary [Catherine Scott]', *Ballarat Star*, 13 October 1914, p4; and Certificate of Title, vol. 2333, folio 459
- ¹¹ Catherine Scott, *Grant of Probate*, 1914, PROV
- ¹² 'Advertising', *Ballarat Star*, 20 February 1918, p3
- ¹³ Aerial imagery dated 1933 (RAAF Ballarat) is available online via *Visualising Ballarat* (Historic Urban Landscape Ballarat) but is of a moderately lower quality than the 1934 image reproduced in this citation (see: https://visualisingballarat.org.au/visbal_map.php)