

Sparrovale Model Farm Complex, Charlemont and Armstrong Creek
Statement of Significance
August 2024

Heritage Place:	Sparrovale Model Farm complex, 95-97 Sparrovale Road, Charlemont; 1-87 Groves Road, Armstrong Creek; 225 Baenschs Lane, Armstrong Creek; and 111-215 Sparrovale Road, Charlemont.	PS ref no:	HO2033
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 Former Manager's Cottage Source: Janine Barrand October 2024.	 Intersection of drain with levee bank and site of early windmill.  500 x 34 x 4.5m Barwon Channel excavation and levee bank. Source: Nearmap 2019.
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What is significant?

Former Manager's Cottage ¹

The former Manager's Cottage is a substantial single storey weatherboard farmhouse in the Federation style, built in 1907.

The significant remnant attributes of the house are:

- The original 1907 single storey, asymmetrical, horizontal weatherboard house with complex roof forms clad in sheet metal comprising a dominant hipped roof with minor hips and a gable projecting to the side and street frontage
- Return verandah under the dominant hipped roof
- Gable brackets and gable infill (brackets, panelling, and battening)
- Early timber framed double hung windows arranged singularly under the verandah, and four panel-entry door with glazed upper panel set in a recess with side and top lights
- Early, altered, unpainted brick chimney (once two) – ornamental chimney top removed

Fabric of no significance includes:

- Introduced skillion wings on the west and south elevations
- Introduced verandah posts
- Double hung sash window on projecting gable

Flood and Irrigation Control Works, Barwon Channel Excavation

The flood and irrigation management works are significant as an example of a major drainage and land development scheme engineered by the Geelong Harbor Trust in 1907-1908, now predominantly situated within the adjoining reserve. The significant remnant attributes of the Model Farm landscape include:

- Pronounced landforms of the Barwon River levee banks
- Incomplete section of Barwon Channel, designed to provide a navigable shortcut along the river, with excavated fill appears to be used as Levee fill.
- Remnants of irrigation pipelines, troughs, and excavated drains across paddocks.
- Network of irrigation channels and field drains, including a primary central channel draining east southeast through the levee bank to discharge into Lake Connewarre, long paddocks running north-south served by drains either side and border check banks for flood irrigation. Later drainage channels cutting diagonally through this pattern in places.
- Archaeological sites of water pumps, and windmill, noting Sparrovale Model Farm is listed as Victorian Heritage Inventory Site H7721-0443.

How is it significant?

The Sparrovale Model Farm complex is of historical, technical, and associative significance to the City of Greater Geelong.

Why is it significant?

The Sparrovale Model Farm, inclusive of the built fabric of the former Manager's Cottage along with the historical landforms of the flood and irrigation management works and the archaeological sites of related infrastructure has historical significance in demonstrating the early 20th Century approach of the Victorian Government to developing experimental models and techniques to support farming practise across the state, and specifically in demonstrating the establishment and operation of the Geelong Harbor Trust's Model Farm, Sparrovale, between 1906 and 1934. (Criterion A)

The Barwon channel excavation, albeit incomplete, is of historical significance in demonstrating the work of the Geelong Harbor Trust in exploring options to improve maritime/riverine communications along the Barwon River to Geelong. (Criterion A)

The Sparrovale Model Farm is significant as a rare example of Geelong Harbor Trust's farming enterprise. The former Manager's Cottage has individual rarity value as one of only three known farm dwellings associated with model farms in Greater Geelong, along with being the only building to survive in situ remaining of this once substantial farm complex, and whilst it has been altered, its historical significance remains embodied in the

surviving original Federation era fabric. Note the other surviving building legacy of Sparrovale is all off-site, the woolshed having been relocated and adapted into All Saints Church at Barwon Heads in the 1930s. Other surviving buildings associated with the Geelong Harbor Trust of the Federation era include the locally significant boat houses at Barwon Heads, which have also been altered and adapted. (Criterion B)

The original layout and site planning of the Sparrovale Model Farm demonstrates a high degree of technical innovation in its layout and use of tramways within the farm complex, as captured in historical plans and of which the former Manager's Cottage is a physical remnant; in the layout of the farm paddocks with their integrated network flood and irrigation control measures, water pumps and windmills, which remain extant as landforms or archaeological sites demonstrating attempts to convert swamps into viable agricultural land; and in the excavation of the Barwon Channel as a navigable shortcut and to generate fill for the levee, drainage and irrigation works at Sparrovale, for its attempt to improve transport communications, and for the utilisation of techniques such as dredging and steam excavators common on large civil works. The role of the Geelong Harbour Trust in bringing this expertise to a role they would otherwise have not been familiar with (namely farming) is highly atypical of such a public body. (Criterion F)

The Manager's Cottage (former) is significant for the strong association with the Geelong Harbor Trust and its' engineer A. C. Mackenzie, reflected in the 1907-1908 farm complex design and civil engineering works. The former Manager's Cottage is significant due to its association with Geelong-born Percy Everett, then draftsman to the Geelong Harbor Trust, who was involved in the design of the Manager's Cottage, being one of the earliest examples of his design input in Victoria. Everett became the Chief Architect of the Public Works Department of Victoria (Criterion H).

Primary sources

Sparrovale Model Farm Assessment, Janine Barrand, 1 July 2024. Peer reviewed by David Scott, 23 July 2024.

Peer Review of Heritage Assessment for Sparrovale Model Farm (Manager's Cottage), 95-97 Sparrovale Road, Charlemont, Frontier Heritage, July 2024.

Sparrovale Farm Heritage Assessment, Graeme Butler & Associates, 2019

Sparrovale Farm – Preliminary Heritage Assessment & Issues Arising, D. Scott, City of Greater Geelong, 21 August 2019.

Greater Geelong Outer Areas Heritage Study. Stage 2, Volume 13, Authentic Heritage Services Pty Ltd, 1998-2000.

Sparrovale Farm Heritage Review Biosis on behalf of the City of Greater Geelong, September 2021

This document is an incorporated document in the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme pursuant to section 6(2)(j) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*