

‘Victory’ House

Statement of Significance, May 2023

Heritage Place:	742 Geelong Road, Canadian	PS ref no:	HO226
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- Heritage Overlay Boundary
- Significant vegetation
- Significant buildings

What is significant?

Victory House at 742 Geelong Road, Canadian is Significant. Elements which contribute to the significance of the place are:

- Victory House (dwelling) constructed c.1906 with c.1925 alterations (roof and verandah)
- Mature Cypress hedges.
- Areas of archaeological potential associated with the c.1882 Hardy residence, the 1906 residence, garden elements and outbuildings.

How is it significant?

Victory House at 742 Geelong Road, Canadian is of local historical and associative significance to the City of Ballarat.

Why is it significant?

'Victory' house is associated with goldmining in the Canadian Gully of Ballarat Goldfield. The original dwelling on the site (a miners' residence) was constructed prior to 1889 on a miner's right for R.G Hardy, and the later dwelling 'Victory' was constructed c.1906 for James Wong Chung, manager of the adjacent You Hing mine (also known as Woah Hawp Canton mine between 1182-1896 and 1903-1915). The Canadian Gully, where the subject land is located is one of the earliest and richest areas within the Ballarat Goldfields, established in 1852, it experienced several successive waves of intense alluvial mining from the 1850s followed by deep lead quartz reef mining from the 1860s. The Edwardian dwelling 'Victory' and its smaller predecessor (which may be concealed within the fabric of the outbuilding immediate to the north west of the house) were both constructed within a productive goldmining landscape, surrounded by other miner's residences, also built on miner's rights. While it is known that many Chinese made their homes temporarily and permanently on the Ballarat Goldfields, 'Victory' House is one of the only known surviving residences to be associated with Chinese involvement in quartz mining in Ballarat. (Criterion A)

The place has strong associations with the Wong Chung family, who built the c.1906 residence and held the property within the family for over 100 years (until 2008). The Wong Chung family (James Wong Chung, his wife Margaret and their six children) moved to the subject site in 1903 after James Wong Chung was appointed Manager of the adjacent Woah Hawp Canton Mine, having been working at the mine for several years. The family initially moved into the small miner's cottage located on the site, building the Edwardian dwelling in 1906 with winnings from the 1902 Melbourne Cup, won by 'The Victory', which the house was named after, as evidenced in the lettering of the transom above the front door. The Wong Chung family made a strong contribution to the local Chinese and broader Ballarat community, particularly in the Twentieth Century. James Wong Chung, as well as being the manager of the nearby Woah Hawp Canton Mine from 1902-1914, also worked as an interpreter for government, assisting and advocating in legal and other matters relating to members of the Ballarat Chinese community. The Wong Chung family were actively involved in the trade's union movement in Ballarat, with family members serving as the Presidents of the Textiles Union and Railways Unions, lobbying and advocating for worker's rights through their involvement in the Ballarat Trades Council for several decades. The house served as a meeting place for the Ballarat Chinese community in the early to mid-twentieth century. It is of local historical significance as an example of a residence which has housed six generations of the same Chinese family who contributed substantially to the local cultural and political life of Ballarat. It is of interest as a local social and cultural hub for the Chinese people of Ballarat in the early to mid-twentieth century. (Criterion A)

'Victory' house has the potential to contain historical archaeological features, deposits (including sub-floor) and artefacts associated with the construction and occupation of the former miner's residence (occupied by Edward Hardy c.1882-1889), although the structure is no longer extant. This physical evidence is not currently visible or understood, is of historical interest and could yield information through detailed investigation. 'Victory' house itself (c.1906) has high potential to contain archaeological evidence relating to the occupation period by the Wong Chung family (c.1906-2008). This includes demolished outbuildings, wash closets, garden features and fence lines. This physical evidence is not currently visible, is of historic interest and could yield information through investigation. Documentary evidence and oral history indicate that there may be a nineteenth century miners hut concealed under the modern fibre cement sheeting to the north west of the main house. The visible evidence does not suggest that the outbuilding dates from the nineteenth century, however destructive actions such as removing internal and external cladding may have the potential to reveal information through investigation and this information would be of historical interest to the City of Ballarat. (Criterion C)

Victory House has strong associations with Ballarat's Chinese community, which is comprised of those who are descended from, or have associations with Chinese migrants who settled in Ballarat. The Canadian Gully was the principal area around which Chinese miners were working during the peak operations of the Ballarat Goldfields. The first Chinese miners established camps in the Canadian gully in 1852, and by 1855 there were an estimated 5,000 Chinese people working and living

in the area, increasing to 10,000 by 1858. There were at least six distinct Chinese camps within the area, first associated with alluvial gold mining, and later associated with the Chinese owned and operated You Hing/Woah Hawp Canton mine. The association goes back over several generations and relates to the influential Chung family who opened their home to their home as a regular informal and formal meeting place for local residents of Chinese and mixed cultural backgrounds at a time when racial prejudices in the broader community often led to suppression of language, culture and traditions. The association is demonstrated by the numerous oral histories, local stories and publications which recall the large and small gatherings of the Chinese community held at the place over time, and the continuing importance of the place to Ballarat's Chinese community, expressed by sections of the Chinese Community in Ballarat (Criterion G)

Primary Source

Victory House Heritage Citation (City of Ballarat, 2023)