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Miner's Right/John Pearce House Heritage Citation

29 November 2021

Place: Miner's Right/John Pearce House

Address: 89 Magpie Street, Golden Point

Recommendation: Included in the Heritage Overlay to the proposed boundaries.



History

Contextual history

Magpie Street forms the boundary between the localities of Golden Point and Mount Pleasant in East Ballarat. Over the years, properties located in Magpie Street have been variously addressed as both Golden Point and Mount Pleasant.

Golden Point and Mount Pleasant, located on Wadawurrung country, are suburbs of Ballarat, south of the central business area. From 1857 until 1921 the localities formed part of the Township of Ballarat East, which had its own town council.

Gold was discovered at Poverty Point, off today's Clayton Street, in August 1851. This brought gold diggers to the area, but its surface metal was nearly worked out by November, and it took a second find to change the name from 'Poverty' to 'Golden'. The Golden Point State School, just north of today's Sovereign Hill, was opened in 1878 (*Victorian Places* 2015). A commercial centre at Golden Point developed at the corner of Humffray and Grant streets.

Despite the promise of gold, initially no mining occurred at nearby Mount Pleasant. Because Mount Pleasant was a 'dry area' without hotels, Cornish Methodist families moved there in 1853 and 1854 to escape the hard drinking and generally boisterous behaviour of Main Road (Cuffley 2021; *Historic Urban Landscape Ballarat* 2021). A Wesleyan school and a church were subsequently opened at Mount Pleasant by 1855.

The first wave of Cornish emigrants, many of whom had worked as miners in Cornwall, brought their mining expertise and skills to the copper mines of Burra Burra in South Australia in the 1840s before travelling to the goldmining areas of Victoria in the 1850s. The Cornish were a significant ethnic group on the Ballarat goldfields, bringing with them expert mining knowledge and practices and a deep commitment to Methodism. Because of their mining knowledge, they were often employed as managers of mines in Victoria as the alluvial rushes ended and mining technology developed throughout the 1850s.

In 1856, the discovery of alluvial gold at the southern end of Mount Pleasant caused a rush to the area quickly named Miner's Right, shifting the commercial centre from around the church in Morton Street to the Prest Street bridge precinct where several hotels and other businesses were established (*Historic Urban Landscape Ballarat* 2021).

As the alluvial rush subsided at the end of the 1860s deeper quartz mines opened along the top of the range and some leads were chased down the western slope until they disappeared under the basalt escarpment. While other gold communities declined, the big Redan mines offered regular employment to local residents (*Historic Urban Landscape Ballarat* 2021).

Mount Pleasant was the terminus when the tram was introduced in 1906. Expansion to the south was blocked by the construction of a sewerage treatment works in the early 1920s (*Historic Urban Landscape Ballarat* 2021).

With larger blocks than many suburbs and a considerable amount of open land, Mount Pleasant retained a rural aspect with farms, livestock, orchards and market gardens. It was also a centre of the tanning and woollen industries. From the mid-nineteenth century the physical separation from the city and the continuing Wesleyan dominance combined to create a strong sense of community (*Historic Urban Landscape Ballarat* 2021).

Sovereign Hill, Ballarat's most visited tourist destination, was established in Golden Point in 1970.



Figure 1. Aerial view of 89 Magpie Street (outlined) and surrounds in 1958. Note the surviving alluvial gold mines to its east. Most of this area, bounded by Magpie Street, Main Road and Ellsworth Street now forms the Sovereign Hill Living Museum. (Source: Landata, Ballarat-Creswick Plantations Project, Jan. 1958)

Site development and use

The residence at 89 Magpie Street, Golden Point, the subject site, is situated on Crown Allotment 2, Section 119A, Township of Ballarat East (see Figure 2) (*Township of Ballarat East Plan 1957*).

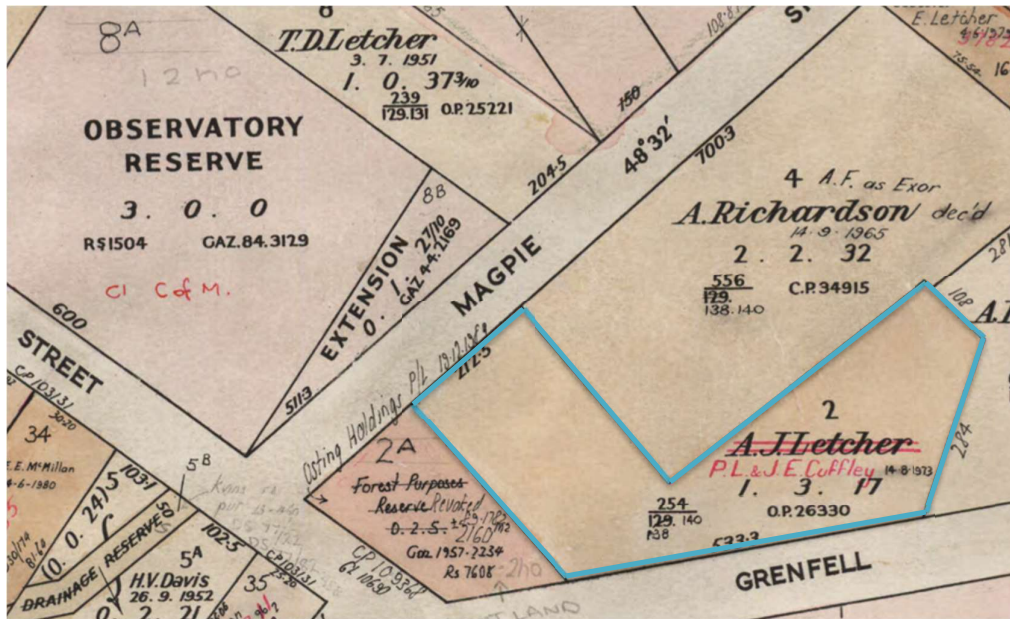


Figure 2. Extract from the Township of Ballarat East plan showing the subject property outlined in blue. (Source: Township of Ballarat East Plan 1957).

The subject residence was first listed in the Town of Ballarat East rate books of the year 1891-92, suggesting it was constructed c1890-91. Owned and occupied by miner William Stephens in that year, it was described as a dwelling with a net annual value (NAV) of £13 (RB 1891-92).

In 1893-94, the house passed into the ownership of mining manager John Pearce, who retained ownership until his death in 1924 (RB 1890-1925). Pearce married Susan Mary Phillips in 1884 ('Snow Family Tree', *Ancestry* 2021). The couple brought up their eight children in the subject residence. The subject property, a Miner's Right, was purchased by John Pearce in 1893-94 and gifted to his wife in 1897 (PROV 1921; B&DGS 2021).

Because the subject allotment comprised a miner's right registered in John Pearce's name, it would have been occupied in 1891-92 by William Stephens in the same manner. Residence areas were first provided for under the 1855 *Mines Act*, which, under a miner's right, allowed mining and the construction of a residence on the same piece of land. With the transition to quartz mining in the 1860s the *Mines Act* 1865 was introduced, which allowed the holder of a miner's right to reside on up to one acre on a goldfields area. The *Mines Act* 1890 provided for the maximum residence area and business license of one acre. Stephens would have registered a miner's right on the subject land after the introduction of this latter Act.

The subject property was consistently rated at £15 NAV until 1905-06 (RB 1905-06). In 1914-15, it was addressed in the rate book of that year at 89 Magpie Street for the first time and was described as land with a wood dwelling, in which seven people lived, with a NAV of £20 (RB 1914-15).

On Susan Pearce's death in 1921, her probate listed her assets as including land held under Miners Right Number 22589 registered at Ballarat, having a frontage of 70 feet to Magpie Street by 209 feet depth by a further depth of 110 feet, on which was erected a six roomed weatherboard house, with a small canvas and paper lined kitchen with iron roof, an outside bedroom and "usual outbuildings" (not

described), with a total value of £275. The valuation noted that the land was situated on the outskirts of Ballarat and was practically valueless and surrounded by abandoned miner's right blocks (PROV 1921).

After John Pearce died in 1924, his daughter Sarah Wakefield (nee Pearce) became the owner of the property, which she rented out in that year (RB 1924-25).

In 1925-26, Alex J Letcher was listed as the occupier of 89 Magpie Street, which in that year housed seven people. The property had a NAV of £20 and a capital improved value of £400 (RB 1925-26). A saddler by trade, Alex Letcher served with the AIF 21st Battalion in World War I, enlisting in 1915 and returning to Australia in 1919 (*The AIF Project* 2016).

By 1927-28, Letcher was both owner and occupier of the subject property (RB 1927-28). Alex Letcher's mother, Elizabeth Letcher (nee Gordon), lived on a Residence Area nearby at 73 Magpie Street in a similar Victorian-era house built in 1892-93 (RB 1892-93). Note that this house is now gone.

Alex Letcher took over the one-acre allotment under the *Land Act 1915* (see Figure 2). Section 129 of this Act allowed for licenses and leases of land for purposes other than agricultural and grazing. It is believed that Letcher took up the land under this Act through the transfer of the miner's right to a garden license, which allowed the establishment of market gardens on land less than three acres in size (Cuffley 2021).



Figure 3. Aerial photo of 89 Magpie Street in 1958, during Letcher's ownership. The house has a wide rear lean-to, and a hedge of Monterey Cypress trees is visible to the north-east of the house. There is an internal fence running to the south-west of the house, defining the residential garden area. The irregular rear part of the allotment is virtually clear of trees. (Source: Landata, Ballarat-Creswick Plantations Project, Jan. 1958)

Alexander Letcher died in 1972 and Peter and Janet Cuffley moved to the property in the same year.

Peter Cuffley was appointed the first Curator of History at Sovereign Hill in 1972. He is a well-known social historian and author with an interest in domestic architecture, art, antiques, traditional gardens and Australiana, and has authored a number of books on Australian cultural and social history.

The Cuffleys purchased the property freehold in 1973 and undertook renovations of the house, including re-blocking and the installation of the original Victorian windows held by a neighbour (Cuffley 2021). Internal alterations were also made to the laundry at the southern corner of the house to enable the installation of an indoor toilet (BR 1973).

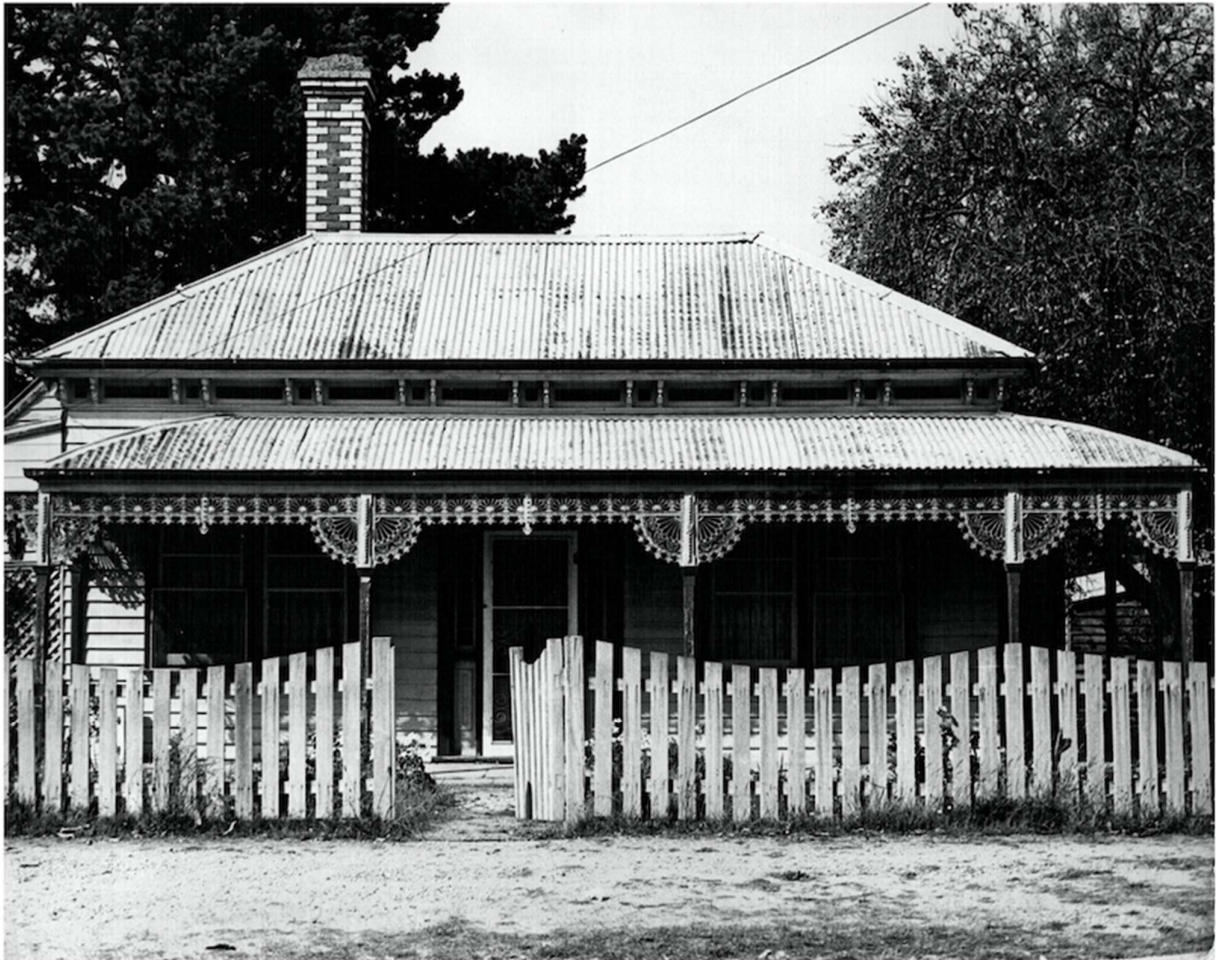


Figure 4. Front façade of the subject property in 1972-73 before renovation. Note the cast-iron verandah ornament in the 'Chantilly Lace' pattern and the broad picket front fence. The house had paired windows at this time, and the north-east side verandah is visible. (Photos by Peter Cuffley 1972-73)



Figure 5. The south-west side elevation of subject property in 1972-73 before renovation. Note the return verandah, bay window and rear lean-to. (Photos by Peter Cuffley 1972-73)



Figure 6. Views of the north-east side subject property in 1972-73 before renovation. Note the picket fence and hedging to the right, and gabled outbuilding to the left (since demolished). (Photos by Peter Cuffley 1972-73)

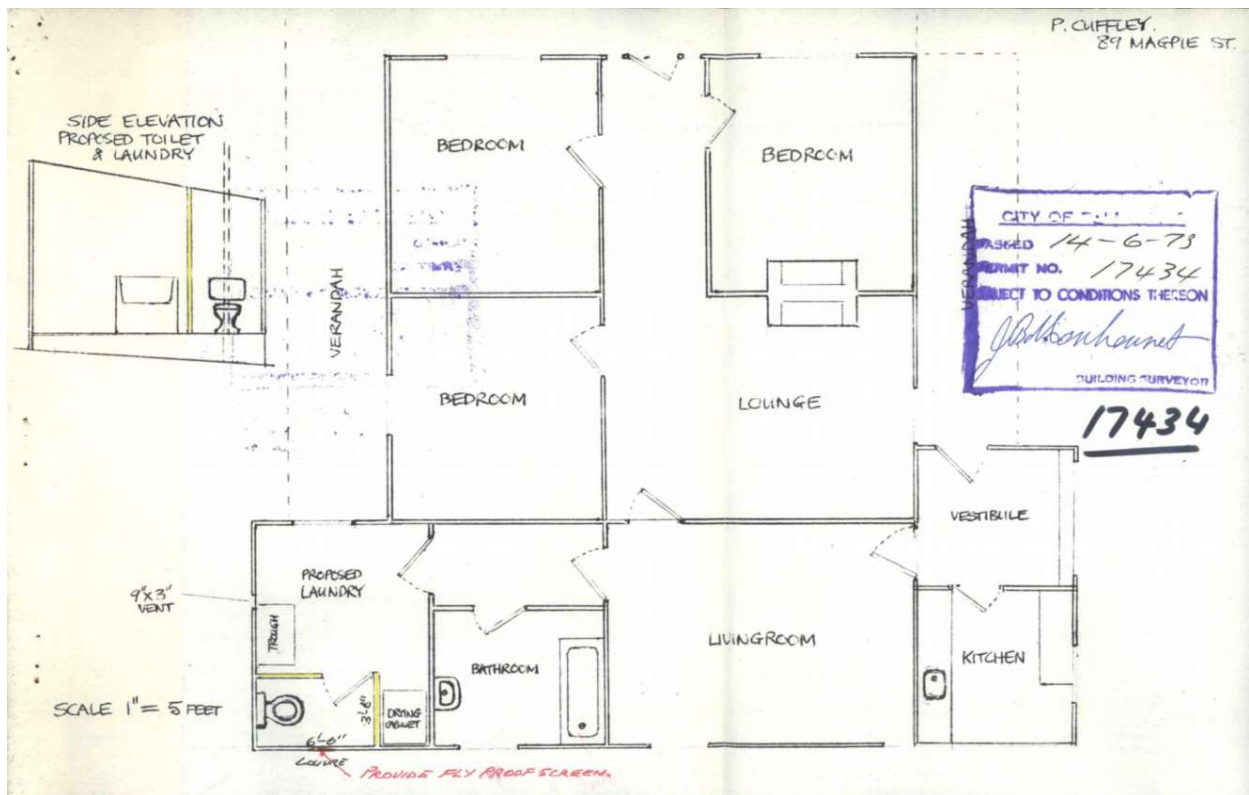
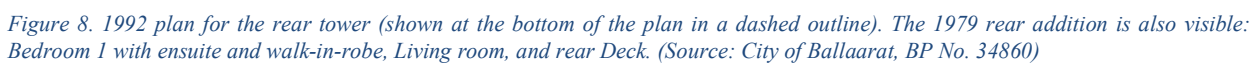


Figure 7. Floor plan of the house in 1973, showing internal alterations to create a WC. Note that while this plan omits the bay window on the south-west elevation, but it was already in existence as shown by the c1972 photo above. (Source: City of Ballarat, BP No. 17434)

In 1976, Alan and Marie West became the owners of the subject property (CT:V9011 F150). Under their ownership, weatherboard alterations and additions to the dwelling were made in 1979. This comprises the rear double gabled extension that currently houses the living room, and a bedroom with ensuite. Outbuildings were also demolished at this time (BR 1979).

A metal-clad garage was constructed in 1981 (BR 1981), which stands to the south-west side of the house.

In 1985, William and Barbara Howard became the owners of the property (CT:V9011 F150). In 1992, the Howards applied for a building permit to construct a three-storey timber tower (BR 1992). It is located at the rear of the house connected by a narrow link.



John Pearce, owner 1893-1924

John Pearce (junior), the owner of the subject building, was the mining manager of the North Woah Hawp Canton, established in 1882, and the New Normanby quartz mining companies, both located in East Ballarat (see Figure 9 and Figure 10). Pearce was manager of the North Woah Hawp from 1909, and of the New Normanby, established in 1885, from 1891. His uncle, Isaiah Pearce, was a director of both mines (*Ballarat Star* 18 December 1909:9, 25 December 1891:4 and 8 July 1919:1). John Pearce

continued as mining manager of the New Normanby in 1915 and the North Woah Hawp in 1916 and held the leases to both mines in the latter year (*Ballarat Star* 1 July 1915:3 and 30 June 1916:3).

The North Woah Hawp mine was originally financed by Chinese merchants in Melbourne and employed both Chinese and Australian miners (NF&SA 2008). The Cantonese shareholders said 'Woah Hawp' meant 'prosperity' or 'good luck' (McCarthy 2021).

According to his obituary, Pearce knew the geology of East Ballarat well and was very successful in his mine operations (*Age* 26 November 1924:18).

The North Woah Hawp and the New Normanby were some of the last mines to cease operation in Ballarat, with the New Normanby closing in 1917 and the North Woah Hawp closing in 1918 (McCarthy 2021; *Ballarat Star* 5 May 1917:5). With a 1375-foot shaft, the mine extracted 127,563 ounces of gold during its operation (Federation University 2018).

The defunct North Woah Hawp mine continued to be worked by prospectors, with an excerpt from a silent newsreel filmed in 1926 held by the National Film and Sound Archive showing a nugget found by a man working over tailings from the disused mine, as well as the extant poppet head, boiler house and engine room, by then no longer in operation (NF&SA 2008).

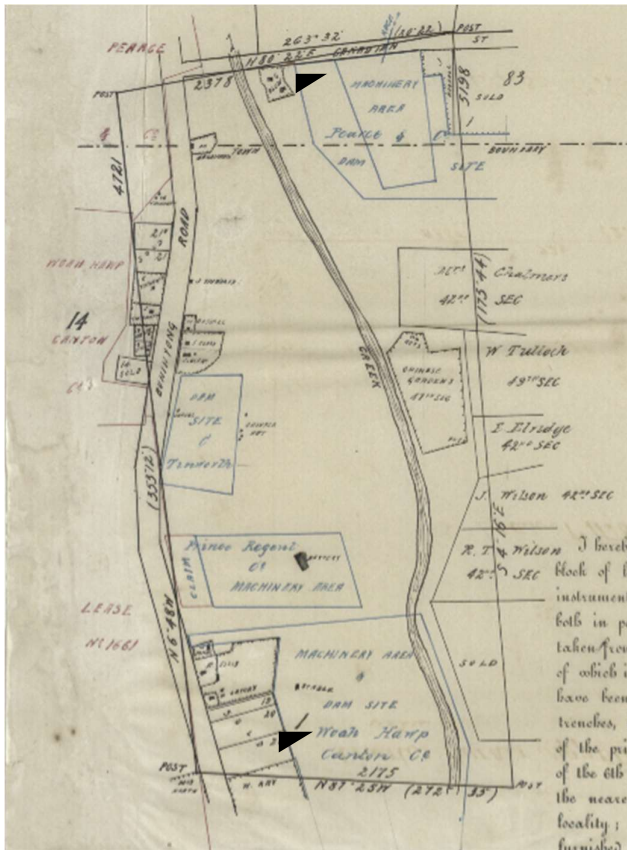


Figure 9. Extract from an 1889 Mines Department map showing the leases of the mining companies managed by John Pearce: the New Normanby and the Woah Hawp Canton Co (see black triangles), located off Buninyong Road. (Source: Mines Department 1889, SLV)



Figure 10. A view from Sovereign Hill looking south with the New Normanby mine in the foreground, 1907. (Source: Gregory 1907).

Description

The subject property, 89 Magpie Street, Golden Point, is an irregular L-shaped allotment fronting on Magpie Street. The rear part of the property was surveyed to front on Grenfell Street, but this street was either never laid out or was removed (compare the aerial below with Figure 2)



Figure 11. Recent aerial photograph of 89 Magpie Street (outlined in blue dotted line) and surroundings. Cobden Street is visible at far left. (Vicplan, accessed 26 Oct. 2021)

All built form is located on the rectangular part of the block, fronting on Magpie Street. This includes the c1890-91 timber dwelling, with a series of later additions to the rear, and a modern, metal-clad shed

just south of the house (beside the rear additions). Until recently, there was a small timber garage near the street front (visible on the aerial above and Google Maps view below).



Figure 12. 89 Magpie Street in December 2014. Note the verandah cast-iron ornament, the timber picket fence and small garage at right. (Google Maps)

The house is timber-framed with weatherboard cladding. It has a hipped roof with rear valley, typical of the Victorian Italianate style, clad in corrugated galvanised steel sheets with rolled sheet-metal cappings. It has a single chimney, on the north-east side of the roof, which is constructed of bichrome brickwork (cream and orange-red) with simple corbels at the top.

The eaves to the front façade are supported on paired timber brackets with turned drops, and between brackets are square and rectangular raised panels. The house has a verandah set below the brackets, to the front with a return to the south-west side. Its roof has a very shallow convex profile and terminates in a hip at the north-east end. The verandah has a stop-chamfered bressummer and is supported on stop-chamfered timber posts with built-up timber capitals (NB: these capitals are so simple they appear to be replacements). Until at least December 2014 it retained the original ‘Chantilly Lace’ pattern cast-iron brackets and frieze as well as cast ornaments attached to the heads of the capitals.

The front façade is arranged symmetrically, typical of block-fronted Italianate houses. It has a central front door flanked by a simple double-hung sash window on either side. The front entrance is the most elaborate element of the front façade, retaining a colonial-style door with six panels framed in bolection mouldings. A central doorknob and knocker have recently been removed. The door is framed by a broad moulded architrave in which there are sidelights (above bolection-moulding panels) and highlights. The sidelights retain cobalt and ruby flashed glass lights engraved with snowflakes (cobalt) and vases of flowers (ruby). The highlight glass has been replaced with c1920s textured “Arctic” glass.

The south-west side of the house, beneath the return of the verandah, features a canted bay window to the rear room. It features very long, slender double-hung windows above rectangular panels featuring bolection mouldings.

There is a second, small verandah on the north-east side of the house, which shares similar details to the return verandah – convex roof, stop-chamfered verandah beams and posts – but it is deeper and does not have a hipped end. It does, however, retain built-up timber capitals to the posts that have the correct moulded form, as compared to the simple replacements to the front verandah. The sides of this little verandah are enclosed with timber lattice, and the wall of the house beneath it appears to have lost its weatherboard cladding. Considering its details, this side verandah appears to be an early addition to the house. As it shelters a secondary entrance, of the sort often associated with a doctor's surgery or other home office, it may have been added by John Pearce to serve as his mine manager's office for the New Normanby mine which was located just to the rear of this property.

There are many small accretions, and one very large one, to the rear of the house. Just behind the small verandah on the north-east side is a small gable-fronted addition, containing a secondary entrance vestibule. Behind it is another small room with a lower-pitched gabled roof which contains the kitchen. It is possible that this was the original detached kitchen, since linked to the rest of the house. On the south-west side of the house, there is a small skillion-roofed lean-to just behind the main roof. It extends across the entire rear of the house, extending out further to the side, so the return verandah terminates against it. These additions were built prior to the Cuffley family ownership in the 1970s and are visible in the 1958 aerial photo. While rear lean-tos were common at the rear of Victorian houses, where the contained utilitarian spaces, it would not have extended out so far to the side originally.

Behind this are two more recent additions. The most prominent is a two or three-storey tower of 1992, clad in unpainted timber weatherboards, with a pyramidal roof finished with a pointed finial. In contrast to this theatrical element, there is a simple double-gabled volume at the back of the north-east elevation built in 1979.

Alterations to the house include the recent stripping of verandah cast-iron ornament, replacement of the original timber verandah floor with a concrete slab, and replacement of verandah post capitals with simpler ones. The picket fence seen in the 1970s photos is gone. As noted in the history, the reportedly original single front windows were reinstated in the 1970s, replacing later paired windows.

Comparative analysis

The subject property is appropriately compared against two classes of place: 1) timber Victorian Italianate houses in Golden Point and other parts of the City of Ballarat, and 2) houses historically linked to mining, such as miner's right houses and houses occupied by mine managers and owners.

Italianate houses

The house at 89 Magpie Street is a medium-sized timber dwelling which exhibits many traits characteristic of Victorian Italianate houses, a type that was very common in the last 25 years of the nineteenth century. This includes the roof form, with its strong horizontal front ridge, bracketed eaves, block-fronted façade, and symmetrical arrangement of front door and windows. The bichrome brick chimney, convex verandah roof, stop-chamfered timber posts, (now-removed) cast-iron verandah ornament, and six-panelled front door embellished with side panels and flashed glass, are all characteristic of the mid to late Victorian houses in the municipality more generally, regardless of style.

There are many houses in the City of Ballarat's Heritage Overlay precincts of a similar style, size, level of embellishment, and intactness (similar or greater). Similar examples include:

- 77 Albert Street, Sebastopol (HO221 serial listing) – similar front façade, but only has a front verandah; windows have sidelights and eaves panelling is unusual; retains verandah cast iron though bases of timber columns replaced.
- 155 Albert Street, Sebastopol (HO221 serial listing) – similar front façade, but only a front verandah; verandah retains cast iron and Corinthian columns, bichrome brick chimney has lost its top.
- 230 Albert Street, Sebastopol (HO221 serial listing) - similar front façade, but only a front verandah; windows have sidelights; retains verandah cast iron and timber posts.
- 19 Blair Street, Golden Point (Contributory in HO173) - similar sized house with return verandah; paired windows on façade and front door in panelled recess; retains verandah cast iron but posts appear replaced.
- 211 Cobden Street, Mount Pleasant (Contributory in HO173) - similar front façade, but only a front verandah; verandah retains cast iron and Corinthian columns.
- 100 Grant Street, Sebastopol (HO221 serial listing) - similar front façade, but only a front verandah; verandah retains cast iron, but posts are replacements.
- 114 Grant Street, Sebastopol (HO221 serial listing) – very similar front façade, but only a front verandah. Has lost verandah ornament and possibly posts as well.
- 7 Kent Street, Sebastopol (HO221 serial listing) – very similar front façade, verandah returns on both sides, similar cast-iron pattern as was on subject house but some changes to the timber posts, new concrete verandah floor, walls covered in vinyl siding (so any eaves brackets are gone)
- 32 Peake Street, Golden Point (Contributory in HO173) - very similar front façade except door sidelight only on one side, only a front verandah. Has lost verandah cast iron.
- 101 Vickers Street, Sebastopol (HO221 serial listing) – similar front façade, but more modest with no front door sidelights; retains original timber posts but has lost ornament, no eaves brackets.

There are also examples of timber Victorian Italianate houses in the Heritage Overlay that are similar in overall form and size, but exhibit a greater level of ornament. This is seen particularly in front windows, which may have sidelights, brackets beneath the sills, and applied colonettes between windows. In addition, these more ornate houses often have more elaborate verandah posts with cast-iron capitals, as well as retaining their cast-iron friezes and brackets. Such examples include:

- 168 Albert Street, Sebastopol (HO221 serial listing) – similar sized house with return verandah; two canted bay windows to front façade, verandah retains cast iron and fluted Corinthian columns.
- 1 Kent Street, Sebastopol (HO221 serial listing) – ashlar boards to walls, side sidelights to windows, front door in panelled recess, unusual eaves panel and bracket details, fluted Corinthian columns with the same (very popular) cast-iron ornament as was on the subject house.

Many of the above comparative examples are part of the Late Victorian Timber Residences, Sebastopol, serial listing. The houses in this serial listing are considered to be of historical significance (in relation to the development of the township of Sebastopol) and of architectural significance. The serial listing statement of significance begins: ‘While they are typically modest in design and architectural expression, and constructed of timber, they are nevertheless comparatively intact

examples of common nineteenth century housing types'. There is also a note in the serial listing history that: 'Unlike nearby Ballarat, there are no surviving examples of grand mansions or villas which were built on the profits of gold in Sebastopol. ... Sebastopol has always been a working people's township' (Context, Vol. 2, 2012). This signals that the Victorian houses in this serial listing may not compare in architectural design to examples in the more central suburbs of Ballarat. Indeed, the subject house is very typical for its era, as indicated by the many similar houses in the nearby HO173 Mount Pleasant/Golden Point Precinct. Its level of ornamental detail falls short of the finest examples in the HO221 Sebastopol serial listing (168 Albert Street and 1 Kent Street). Its intactness also falls short of these examples, particularly due to the removal of the verandah ornament, but as the pattern of this cast iron (Chantilly Lace) is still manufactured, it would be easy to accurately reinstate it.

For these reasons, the house at 89 Magpie Street, Golden Point, is not considered to meet the threshold of local significance as a representative example of a Victorian Italianate dwelling (Hercon Criterion D), for its aesthetics (Criterion E) or design excellence (Criterion F).

Miner's Right & mine manager residences

Mining is a key theme in the City of Ballarat's history and there were many houses built on miner's rights (as dwellings for the miner working that land) as well as often more substantial residences for mine managers and owners. As illustrated by the timber mining cottage serial listing in the nearby suburb of Sebastopol (HO220), miner's cottages were often very small in size and modest in detail. Mine managers' dwellings tended to be larger and were often more ornate than the typical houses of that time.

A select number of mining-related dwellings have been identified in the City of Ballarat, though there are undoubtedly more to be uncovered. As part of this comparative analysis, all residence areas under a miner's right properties were identified* on the Township of Ballarat East Parish Plan, which covers the subject site. There were 34 such parcels of land, not counting the area that now constitutes the Sovereign Hill tourist site (where there were undoubtedly many miner's rights in the past). Then each was checked for the survival of a nineteenth-century house. Apart from the subject house, only three other largely intact miner's right Victorian houses survive in the former Ballarat East township area, which encompasses today's Golden Point and Mount Pleasant. They are 424 Cobden Street, 305 Bradshaw Street, and 36 Peake Street (as well as a very altered house at 444 Cobden Street). So, five houses out of 34+ original miner's rights remain. As noted in the history, there were several on Magpie Street near the subject site that have been demolished.

- Timber Mining Cottages, Sebastopol (HO220 serial listing) – While some of these dwellings share typical Italianate details with the subject house, as indicated by the name, they are small cottages that are far more modest. They were generally built for miners as their homes.
- 122 Albert Street, Sebastopol (HO221 serial listing) – 'Clontarn', former Southern Star Mine manager's residence. An asymmetrically massed timber dwelling with a high level of detail including fretwork in the front gable, entablature over the front windows, ashlar-look cladding, and Corinthian columns. It has lost its cast-iron ornament.

* Allotments taken up as Residence Areas under a Miner's Right are shown on parish plans with a fraction whose denominator indicates the pertinent legislative Act. These include: x/12, x/129.131, and x/138.140.

- 362 Albert Street, Sebastopol (Significant, HO194) – Former Bonshaw Mine manager’s residence. Similar front façade, but no sidelights to front door and only a front verandah; verandah retains cast iron and Corinthian columns, floor replaced with concrete; retains four bichrome brick chimneys. Apparently built in two stages (1860s and 1870-80s). Among this list, the most similar dwelling to the subject house, though slightly simpler in design though more intact.
- 518 Barkley Street, Golden Point (State Significant, HO12 & VHR) – ‘Clowance’, built 1892-93 for mine owner Isaiah Pearce. This is a substantial brick house with a fine design and high level of ornament, which exhibits a transition from Victorian to Federation styles. Apart from its architectural and aesthetic significance, it is of historical significance for its association with Isaiah Pearce and his role in the local mining industry.
- 305 Bradshaw Street, Golden Point (Contributory in HO173) – Victorian Italianate timber house located on a large miner’s right allotment. It has a symmetrical façade, with no sidelights to front door; the return verandah has timber posts, the cast iron may be a replacement.
- 424 Cobden Street, Mount Pleasant (not in HO) - Victorian Italianate timber house located on a large miner’s right allotment. It has a symmetrical façade, with no sidelights to front door, bracketed eaves, and front verandah. The turned timber posts and red brick chimney suggest a c1900 date.
- 407 Grant Street, Golden Point (Contributory in HO173) – A former mine manager’s residence of timber with wide sidelights and twisted colonettes to windows, Corinthian columns and lace-like cast-iron frieze and brackets to verandah.
- 36 Peake Street, Golden Point (Contributory in HO173) – Italianate timber house located on a miner’s right. It has a symmetrical front façade similar to the subject property but appears to have been a smaller house originally (one room deep). The timber fretwork of the front verandah and the red brick chimney suggest a c1900 date (or enlargement at this time).

As set out above, the subject house sits in the middle of a continuum from tiny miner’s cottages, through mid-sized Italianate houses, to highly detailed dwellings and grand mine owner’s residences. It is most similar to the medium-sized mine managers’ residence at 362 Albert Street, Sebastopol, and at 407 Grant Street, Golden Point. It also bears similarities to other miner’s right houses in the area, such as 305 Bradshaw Street and 36 Peake Street.

Based on this comparative analysis, it is apparent that the subject house is one of a very small number of surviving miner’s right dwellings in a part of Ballarat once dominated by mining.

Assessment of significance

The following statement of significance has been expressed in regard to the ‘Model’ or HERCON heritage criteria.

What is significant?

The Miner’s Right/John Pearce House at 89 Magpie Street, Golden Point is significant. The house, built c1890-91, as well as the north-east side verandah and the (formerly) detached kitchen, is significant.

Additions and alterations made after John Pearce’s occupation, which ended in 1924, are not significant. The metal-clad garage is not significant.

How is it significant?

The house is of historical, including associational, and representative significance to the City of Ballarat.

Why is it significant?

Historically, it illustrates the importance of mining in this area. Built in 1891-92 on a miner's right for miner William Stephens, the weatherboard Victorian Italianate house is located in the areas of Golden Point and Mount Pleasant, areas that were the sites of successive waves of intense alluvial mining from the 1850s followed by quartz reef mining from the 1860s. At the time of its construction, the residence was located within a productive goldmining landscape and surrounded by other miners' residences built on miner's rights. (Criterion A)

The house is representative of houses built on miner's rights and for mine managers during the late nineteenth century. While such houses were once common in mining areas such as the Golden Point/Mount Pleasant area, only a handful survive today. Such houses ranged from tiny miner's cottages, through mid-sized Italianate houses, to highly detailed dwellings and grand mine owner's residences. The house at 89 Magpie Street illustrates the medium-sized type. (Criterion D)

It has significant associations with John Pearce, the son of John Pearce and Jane Bartle of Crowan, Cornwall, who immigrated to Victoria in the early 1850s. The extended Pearce family were active in mining, with John Pearce's (the elder) brothers, Isaiah and James Pearce, also both from Cornwall, establishing a 24-head quartz crushing battery on Sinclair's Hill in Ballarat. John Pearce (junior), the owner of the subject building, was the mining manager of the North Woah Hawp Canton and the New Normanby quartz mining companies, both located in East Ballarat. Pearce knew the geology of East Ballarat well and was very successful in his mine operations. The North Woah Hawp mine, established in 1882, was originally financed by Chinese merchants in Melbourne and employed both Chinese and Australian miners. Pearce was manager of the North Woah Hawp from 1909, and of the New Normanby, established in 1885, from 1891. His uncle, Isaiah Pearce, was a director of both mines. John Pearce continued as mining manager of the New Normanby in 1915 and the North Woah Hawp in 1916 and held the leases to both mines in the latter year, shortly before they finally closed. (Criterion H)

The Pearce family were representative of the significant Cornish migration in the nineteenth century to places such as Australia. Because of their mining knowledge, Cornish immigrants were often employed as managers of mines in Victoria as the alluvial rushes ended and mining technology developed. The Ballarat area received many immigrants from Cornwall, who tended to congregate in particular areas, including at Mount Pleasant/Golden Point, as well as in Sebastopol. (Criterion H)

The house also has significant associations with Peter and Janet Cuffley in 1972, who owned from 1972 to 1976. Peter Cuffley was appointed the first Curator of History at Sovereign Hill in 1972, and is now a well-known social historian and author with an interest in domestic architecture, art, antiques, traditional gardens and Australiana, and has authored a number of books on Australian cultural and social history. (Criterion H)

Statutory recommendations

In recognition of the local heritage significance of the former John Pearce House at 89 Magpie Street, it warrants protection in the Ballarat Heritage Overlay.

As the cadastral block at 89 Magpie Street is quite large, a reduced HO polygon is recommended, as shown below. It contains the house and land to the street frontage, and the side and rear residential

garden in keeping with the fence lines in existence in 1958. This polygon is a rectangle following the south-east property boundary running for 66.5 metres, and 24 metres of the Magpie Street frontage.



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