

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

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**name:** Mud brick farm complex  
**Address:** Wards Road HAVEN  
**Place Type:** Residence, Farm  
**Citation Date:** 2022



*Mud brick farm complex*

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**Recommended Heritage Protection**      **VHR -**

**HI -**

**PS**  
Yes

## Integrity

Moderate - all buildings extant, but some vandalism evident and white ant damage evident to timberwork.

## History and Historical Context

In late 1910, a large area to the south of Horsham, known as the Horsham Borough Common, was thrown open for Selection. It was reported that 'altogether there [were] 33 lots, 22 in the Parish of Horsham, and 11 in the Parish of Bungalally', ranging in size from five to 73 acres.[1]

According to local newspaper reports, the district lands officer, Mr R. McRae Stewart, received 126 applications from 87 individuals.[2] Amongst these applicants was Mr E. Hallam who was successful in obtaining 41 acres at allotment 3B.[3]

The Haven Historical Committee confirm that 'it is believed that most of the families successful in their

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application for land, paid the necessary fees and set up camp within three weeks'. [4] Mrs O'Brien is credited with naming the new settlement, after she opened the first post office, which she named "Haven Post Office". Following this, it was decided at a public meeting that the new settlement would be called Haven, 'as it was [considered to be] a restful place'. [5]

Eager to move their families onto their newly purchased land, many of the first selectors built basic bag or tin huts with lean-tos. Over the following years, selectors improved their housing situations, the styles of which reflected their financial positions. Selectors, who wanted or could afford timber homes, engaged the services of local builder, Mr Ballinger, who purportedly charged £40 per room. [6] However, the cost to build a timber home was more than some families could afford. Instead, they built slab and daub, or wattle and daub huts. Others, such as the Hallam family, utilised the plentiful supply of water and mud from nearby McKenzie Creek to make sun dried bricks.

Constructing a mud brick hut was a relatively inexpensive method of building a house, as the only outlay required was the window frames, door and corrugated iron sheeting for the roof. Mud brick houses were also relatively comfortable. They were warm in the winter and cool in the summer. However, the process of making the bricks was intensively laborious for everyone involved (usually the whole family). One Haven resident recalls making mud bricks with her family, which began with a special mixture of sand and clay only found in certain areas along McKenzie Creek:

*When building a sun dried brick home Dad found the pug (it had to be just right) along the creek. Then he waited for warm, windy weather to set the bricks. The announcement would be made "Today we make bricks". "We" meant Dad, Mum and the kids. Dad picked and shovelled up the ground. Mum and the kids carted water. Then Mum poured water, Dad shovelled and the kids had to paddle the pug [until it had mixed correctly]. [7]*

The Hallam family employed a similar method to make mud bricks for the construction of a farmhouse complex of buildings on their property. According to the current owner, Mr A. Hallam, the garage building was erected first, the two room cottage with verandah second, and the small building (which was used as a bedroom for three children) was erected last. The extant buildings are reported to be approximately 70 years old (c1945). [8] Other reports put their construction in the 1930s. The house (northern building) and garage (southern building) are visible in a 1947 aerial photo. [10]

Another Haven resident recalls that there were many mud brick homes near McKenzie Creek and the area to the south. They explain that 'the more affluent Haven residents who lived to the north called the creek dwellers "mudlarks" and the area "swallow land"'. [9] The Haven Historical Committee assert that some mud brick homes from the early settlement period are still standing today, though most of them have been abandoned and are in a poor state of disrepair. Mr A. Hallam explains that his family were experts at mud brick construction and asserts that they have been repairing some of Haven's iconic mud brick huts for many years.

[1] Horsham Times (1910) The Common Blocks. *Horsham Times*. 18 October, p. 5.

[2] Horsham Times (1910) News and Notes: The Common Blocks. *Horsham Times*. 8 November, p. 4.

[3] Haven Historical Committee (2011) *Haven's Heritage. Volume 1, From the Common*. Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority: Melbourne, p. 41.

[4] *Ibid*.

[5] Back to Haven Committee (1978) *Our Haven*. Back to Haven Committee: Haven, p. 26.

[6] *Our Haven*, p. 26.

[7] *Ibid*, p. 27.

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[8] Per. Comm. A. Hallam, 4 September 2013.

[9] *Haven's heritage*, p. 42.

[10] Aerial Survey of Australia, Photo-Map 888A2, 1947.

## Description

### Physical Description

3 x single storey buildings, all built of mud brick. Mud bricks approx. 180mm high x 400mm long by 350mm thick. Bricks were made on site with timber moulds. Mud was taken from the river bank and put in shallow settling ponds, then scooped into moulds and left to dry. No lime binder used. Some driftwood pieces evident in bricks, as well as barbed wire ties. Mortar used of same mix. Roofs and gable portions of walls of corrugated iron sheeting, with galvanised sheeting. All supported by timber posts/ framing (*Callitris* (Cypress) pine). The largest building, the house, was built in two stages, each with a separate gabled roof.

### Physical Condition

Average to poor condition but sound in structure. Mud brick facing washing away over time. Owner has already repaired one wall to traditional methods, another sprayed with a thin layer of cement (causing some deterioration). Termites have eaten away sections of timber framing. Roof sheeting has been patch replaced as needed in the past.

### Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

Relevant HERCON Criteria -

**Criterion A:** Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history. (demonstrates a specific local response to housing needs in the early twentieth century)

**Criterion F:** Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period. (indicative of a low-tech, but appropriate and innovative response to the need for low cost housing in the district in the early twentieth century - using local materials and improvised construction techniques)

### Comparative Analysis

*Oakville Park homestead, 522 Vectis Station Road, Vectis, Hermes no. 186224:* Notable, grander and larger scale residence also of mud brick with brick quoins.

*Various ruinous outbuildings at Haven near subject site:* C1900+ structures – in poor condition typically

## Statement of Significance

### What is significant?

The elements of heritage value of the c1930s mud brick buildings at Wards Road, Haven, include:

- . The external form and fabric of the three buildings, including mud brick walls, timber window and door frames,

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and simple corrugated sheet metal gable roof forms;

. The construction methodology employed in the building (and subsequent repair) of the three buildings.

## How is it significant?

The c1930s mud brick buildings at Wards Road, Haven, are of historic and technical significance to the Horsham Rural City.

## Why is it significant?

The c1930s mud brick buildings at Wards Road, Haven, are:

. Of local historical significance, illustrating an early 20th century, specific site-responsive method of construction to address the need for shelter and housing in a community without substantial financial input. (Criterion A)

. Of local technical significance, demonstrating a traditional construction technique employed using local and readily available materials to provide housing for local residents in the 1930s period. (Criterion F)

## Recommendations 2022

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>External Paint Controls</b>          | Yes |
| <b>Internal Alteration Controls</b>     | No  |
| <b>Tree Controls</b>                    | No  |
| <b>Fences &amp; Outbuildings</b>        | No  |
| <b>Prohibited uses may be permitted</b> | No  |
| <b>Incorporated Plan</b>                | -   |
| <b>Aboriginal Heritage Place</b>        | No  |

## References

**Literature title:** Our Haven

**Literature type:** General Reference

**Literature author:** Back to Haven Committee

**Literature publisher:** Back to Haven Committee, Haven

**Literature year:** 1978

**Literature title:** Haven's Heritage. Volume 1, From the Common

**Literature type:** General Reference

**Literature author:** Haven Historical Committee

**Literature publisher:** Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority: Melbourne

**Literature year:** 2011

**Literature title:** Per. Comm. A. Hallam, 4 September 2013

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**Literature type:** General Reference

**Literature author:**

**Literature publisher:**

**Literature year:** 2013

**Literature title:** Article: The Common Blocks, 18 October, p. 5. 1910

**Literature type:** General Reference

**Literature author:** Horsham Times

**Literature publisher:** Horsham Times

**Literature year:** 1910

**Literature title:** Article: News and Notes: The Common Blocks. 8 November, p. 4.

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**Literature author:** Horsham Times

**Literature publisher:** Horsham Times

**Literature year:** 1910

**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.**