

# Historic Homes

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Researching your historic home with  
Public Record Office Victoria and other sources



# **Handy information list**

My home was built around the year:

My house title number is:

I live in the municipality of:

Who has lived in my house? (ask the eldest neighbours)

Year:

Name:

Occupation:

Other information:

Year:

Name:

Occupation:

Other information:

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What maps have I found my house on?

Map:

Source:

What historic photographs have I found of my house?

Image:

Source:

What stories have I heard about my house?

Details:

# Introduction to researching your home

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It's difficult to own an old house and not know the past of your 'palace' – if only the walls could talk!

Researching your property will uncover hidden stories which could assist with planning renovations (or impressing friends over dinner).

There are many facets to property research; the trick is patience as it can take some time to locate the kind of information you're looking for. This guide will introduce owners of Victorian homes in urban locations to government archives that are publicly available to help with property research. For owners of homes on rural properties we suggest asking for advice from staff at a Public Record Office Victoria reading room.

Public Record Office Victoria is the archives of the state government of Victoria. It holds almost 100kms of records dating from the mid-1830s to today including a wide range of records for researching buildings and properties in Victoria.



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Public Transport Photographic Collection.  
PROV, VPRS, 12800/P1, item H 5081.

# What are you looking for?



Researching your home takes time and effort. Be prepared to do some digging among the archives to find out what you're interested in. Start by writing a list of what you want to find out about your house. Are you renovating? Do you want to know who lived in your house 100 years ago? Or the date when your house was originally built?

There are many avenues to travel when researching your property. This guide will help you locate information within government archives, but there are also suggestions on other resources worthy of exploring. The trick is to start with the basics. This guide will assist you with finding information on your house to get you started. Some information is online, but the majority of government archives are accessible to view in a reading room. In either case, most government records will offer you a piece of information so you can move onto the next step.

Enjoy uncovering the story of your home.

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## Getting started

Records relating to historic property research can be found on Public Record Office Victoria's (PROV) website by searching their online catalogue.

While some records have been digitised and can be downloaded, many records will need to be ordered and viewed in one of their public reading rooms in North Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo or Geelong. This guide will help you locate the most helpful record collections. Due to the age of archival records they will not always follow the same consistent pattern.

### How to access historic records through the PROV website?

#### First step

Register as a researcher through the PROV online catalogue so you can search, see records online and order records to view in PROV reading rooms.

#### Visit: [www.prov.vic.gov.au](http://www.prov.vic.gov.au)

Use the various Search options on the PROV online catalogue. You'll need this a lot.

These days you may be lucky enough to find information about your home online, such as in a government heritage database, the State Library image library, the Ballarat Heritage Database, or the Victorian Heritage Database. If you don't find the information you're after online you may also need to contact other government departments or local libraries.



# Taking visual clues

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Does your home have any features that stand out or look a little different to your neighbour's house? In Victoria, historic housing styles varied from the 1840s through to the earliest signs of modernism in the 1940s.

Your house can provide clues to its history. Looking inside the roof, for example, can lead to discoveries of earlier rooflines, evidence of original walls and locations of chimneys. You may even be lucky enough to find an old shoe or two!

## **Victorian housing styles**

1840 – 1860	Early Victorian
1860 – 1875	Mid Victorian
1875 – 1901	Late Victorian
1895 – 1910	Queen Anne
1901 – 1914	Edwardian
1910 – 1930	Bungalow
1918 – 1939	Inter-war and Art Deco
1945 – 1965	Post War
1940 – 1970	Modern

## **Visual guides to help narrow down the style of your historic home**

### **Melbourne and beyond**

Heritage Council Victoria have produced an online guide for identifying architectural design elements. It is unique to the styles mentioned above for urban areas in Melbourne and other major Victorian towns including Ballarat and Bendigo. Search their website for the brochure 'What house is that?' It is a downloadable PDF brochure and viewable online.

<http://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/your-home/what-house-is-that/>



**1840 – 1860**  
**Early Victorian**



**1860 – 1875**  
**Mid Victorian**



**1875 – 1901**  
**Late Victorian**



**1895 – 1910**  
**Queen Anne**



**1901 – 1914**  
**Edwardian**



**1910 – 1930**  
**Bungalow**



**1918 – 1939**  
**Inter-War & Art Deco**



**1945 – 1965**  
**Post War**



**1940 – 1970**  
**Modern**

# How old is my house and who owned it?

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Many people are interested in finding out how old their house is and who may have lived in it. If you haven't been lucky enough to find that information in an online database or heritage study, rate records can help you do that. Rates were paid by the owner to their municipality every year. Be warned it's not an easy or quick process because you need to be prepared to spend time reading through old rate record books.

Rate record books were created for each financial year and can help you form a timeline of who lived in or owned your house, potentially leading you to other historic records. The rate books recorded interesting details, and were organised mostly by street names and grouped within council wards.

## Rate records

Rate records often include important details about your house

- Address
- Brief description of the dwelling (for example, the number of rooms)
- Rates paid
- Who lived in your house and their occupation
- The owner if they were not living at the property

Rate records are also an excellent source for gleaning clues such as

- Estimated date of construction
- Significant changes to a property
- Some occupancy details
- Materials used in the construction of the home

See pages 9 and 10 for sample rate record.



Image courtesy, City of Ballarat.

# TOWN OF BALLAAR

Christian Name of Person Rated.	Trade or Occupation.	Name of Owner of Rateable Property.	De
Surname of Person Rated.		Description and Situation	
Trade or Occupation.		Property.	
William	Guard	Mr. & Mrs. J. G. Clark	Victoria Street
Charles	Char	C. Dyer	C. Dyer
Walter	Walter	J. Curthoys	J. Curthoys
Joseph	Joseph	J. Curthoys	J. Curthoys
Walter	Walter	Hall	Hall
John	Doctor	John	John
Dean			
Charles	Engine Driver	James Edwards	James Edwards
John	Brewer	John Murphy	John Murphy
Henry			
Quock Ping	Henry		
Charles	Engine Driver	James Edwards	James Edwards
John	Brewer	John Murphy	John Murphy
Henry			
Quock Ping	Henry		
Charles	Engine Driver	James Edwards	James Edwards
John	Brewer	John Murphy	John Murphy
Henry			

## Case Study: Henry Quock Ping

Duock Ping Henry

Sample rate record 1875, PROV, VPRS 7258/P0 General Rate Books, unit 4, folio 28, entry number 1258 for the year 1875-76, property of Henry Quock Ping in Victoria Street, Ballarat East.

## AT EAST.

*numbered* in the year of our Lord 1875, after the Rate  
 also an Assessment to the Special Rate made by special order, dated  
 he "Boroughs Statute."

scription and Situation of Rateable Property.	Electoral District and Division.	Net Annual Value.	Num last
on of Rateable	Street Gate	Net Annual Value.	13
	Do		13
	Do		13
St Gallatin East Properties	Do	40.	13
do	Do	11.	13
do	Do	16.	13
Widrell's	Do	24.	13
welling	Do	30.	13
do	Do		13
hotel	Do		13
land	Do		13
welling	Do		13
do	Do		13
do	Do		13
land	Do		13
welling	Do		13
do	Do		13
		Total Paid for the Year.	10
		44.	

# What do I need to know to find rate records?

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You need to know what ward and municipality your house was in for the period of time you're researching (it's unlikely to be the same as today). Rate records list house details by street names within council wards, and the records each covered a single year. Some local governments have made available handy online maps that show old wards and municipal boundaries, for example The City of Ballarat has included a history of road names on their online maps. It also helps to know the style of your historic home to isolate which years to look in.

Rate records can be viewed at Public Record Office Victoria reading rooms located in North Melbourne, Ballarat, Bendigo or Geelong.

Note: If you're not sure of the ward your house is in see page 13 for '*Locating my property on old plans*'.

## How do I order the right rate records?

The Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) website lists a wide selection of rate record books on its online catalogue.

- 1) Search for the name of your municipality in the PROV online catalogue by ticking 'Agency' on the Advanced Search screen
- 2) Select the Agency number next to your municipality from the listings
- 3) Look through all the Series Titles (list of records held for that municipality)
- 4) Look for series called rate or valuation books, rate records, rate cards or registers of rateable properties and click on the series (VPRS) number link to the right
- 5) Scroll through these records for the year(s) you are looking for
- 6) Order these rate books to view in a PROV reading room
- 7) Look through the rate book for your street and house number in the section for the relevant council ward

**Tip!** When identifying which year to start researching rate records we suggest starting 20 years ago\* and moving backwards at 5 year intervals, that way you can identify changes in ownership.

**Tip!** Once you have identified your property within the rate book you may find your property details are located in roughly the same position each year. This makes it easier to identify details about your house for other years.

**Tip!** Make a note of the neighbours on either side, so you can use them as a marker to trace your property even when the address number changes.

**Tip!** If there is a jump in rates between one year and the next this is often a sign that a house may have been built on the property and it may be the year your house was built. It may also indicate major renovations.

\* Important Note: The most recent archived rate records in Public Record Office Victoria's collection were transferred about 20 years ago. More recent rate records can be found at your local council.

# Case study: Jack Robinson

From the rate records for Jack Robinson's property at 9 Dana Street, in the Eureka Ward of the City of Ballarat, we can see that in 1940 he actually lived at 17 Porter Street, Ballarat. This detail, along with the word 'land' in the description column, and the blank space in the occupier column of the rate book, tells us that there may not have been a house yet built on the property at that time. The rate record for the next year shows us that Jack was no longer living at Porter Street and is instead living as the O.O. (Owner Occupier) of the Dana Street property, in a W.5 (weatherboard 5 room) dwelling and that the value of the property and his rates have increased substantially. You can also see on the rate records that Jack's profession at the time was 'fibrous plasterer'.

1940			Mr. Waring	Alexander	( Mr. J. & T. )	9	Land 35.5	3	
1940			Mr. Spayne	Alexander L.	Bill Repaint Street	7	Land 30.4	3	
1941	Blairs	John	House Painter			5	W. 9 20.4	18 28	
1941	Bullock	Alf M.	St. S.	G.T. Murphy	Willie	1. FIBROUS & PLASTER 2	2	W. 4 20.9	12 18
1941	Burnett	Ernest	Painter	G.T. Green	Harris L.	1. BROWNS GARDEN & CO	1	DATA ENTRY	
1941	Darren	Charles J.	--	G.T. Darren	Daren A.		9	W. 9 18.1	18 28
1941				G. Collins	Daren L.	Renovated	5	Land 24.1	5
1942			Mr. Waring	Walter Gaskin	( Mr. J. & T. ) / 19.00	7	Land 26.1	8	
1943			Mr. Waring	John	17 Dana Street	8	Land 58.5	10	
Robinson		Jack		17 Porter Street			10		
1944	Blair	John	W. 10.00				W. 4 20.4	18 28	
1944							W. 4 20.4	18 28	
1944							W. 4 20.4	18 28	

Year 1940

1940			Mr. Waring	Alexander		9	Land 35.5	3	
1940			Mr. Spayne	Alexander L.	Bill Repaint Street	7	Land 30.4	3	
1941	Blair	John	House Painter	G.T. Murphy	Willie	1. FIBROUS & PLASTER 2	2	W. 4 20.9	12 18
1941	Bullock	Alf M.	St. S.	G.T. Green	Ervie J.	Seal & Paint - Renovated - 19.00	1	DATA ENTRY	
1941	Burnett	Ernest	Painter	G.T. Darren	Daren A.		9	W. 9 18.1	18 28
1941	Darren	Charles J.	--	G.T. Darren	Daren L.	Renovated	5	Land 24.1	5
1941				G. Collins	Daren L.	Renovated (19.00)	9	Land 24.1	5
1942	Robinson	Jack	Fibrous Plasterer	John	18-Dana-Street	9	W. 4 20.4	18 28	
1943	Reddington	George	Dom. Assistant	G.O.			W. 4 20.4	18 28	
Robinson		Jack		Fibrous Plasterer 18-Porter-Street			10		
1944	Blair	John	W. 10.00				W. 4 20.4	18 28	
1944							W. 4 20.4	18 28	
1944							W. 4 20.4	18 28	

Year 1941

PROV, VPRS 7243/P1 General Rate Books, unit 170, folio 4 (top) and unit 174, folio 4 (bottom) showing rate entries for Jack Robinson's property in Dana Street, Ballarat.

# Locating your property on old plans

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## Inner city sewerage plans and surveyor books

If you live in Melbourne you may find your street and property on the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) base plans. These plans date back to the 1890s and show the development of Melbourne's metropolitan area and the sewerage and drainage systems. Attached to each plan for your area are field books written by the surveyors who often took sketches and made notes on the individual properties.

Once each plan was drafted it became a document that was kept up to date through the addition of new information as new homes were built and old ones demolished. These surveyor notes were sketched in their field books.

There are a few steps to getting both the plans and the surveyor field books. You have to view a larger MMBW map of Melbourne online first to identify the plan number for your area.

The plans may show

- A map of your area highlighting public buildings, churches, natural features, businesses, cemeteries and so on
- Property boundaries
- Outline of property and details like a garden or verandah
- Sewerage and water pipes
- Materials used for construction
- Field book numbers
- Footprint of the building

- 3) Click on Index Map Book for a list of all the MMBW base plans by municipality
- 4) Find your municipality and download the related PDF
- 5) Look at this map and note down the map plan number for your property area (it's written in red)
- 6) Using the search screen Find by Number type in the series (VPRS) number 8601\* and the map plan number you have found
- 7) You can then order this MMBW base plan map for your area and view it in the North Melbourne reading room

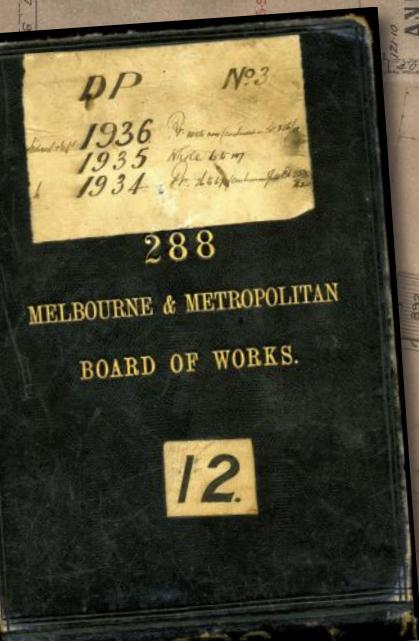
\*After 1960 a different system was used. Contact a PROV staff member for help.

## How do I find my property on the MMBW base plan?

- 1) Search on the PROV online catalogue using Find by Number for the series (VPRS) number 12758
- 2) Listed under Accessing The Records and List of Records is the consignment number P0005 Index Map Book

Sample MMBW base plan for Brunswick and Fitzroy. PROV, VPRS 8601/P1 Detailed base plan, [DP] 40' = 1" Numeric, unit 39, plan no. 1936.

# MUNICIPALITY BRUNSWICK AND FITZROY



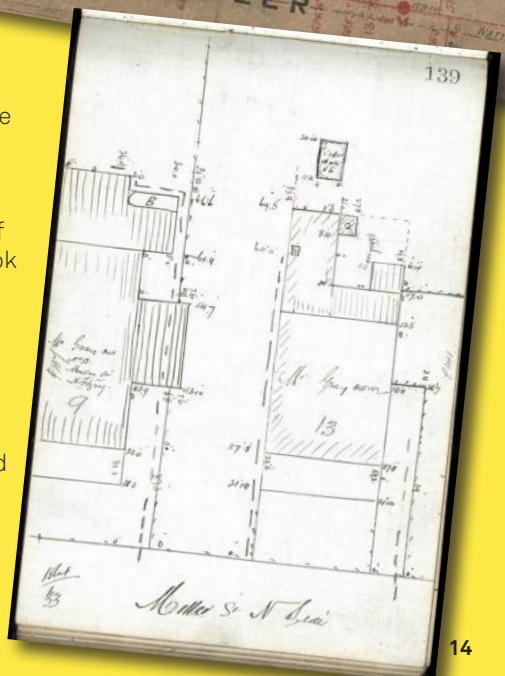
## Surveyor's Field Books

On the top right hand corner of the plan are the original surveyor's field book numbers for the houses on that plan. We recommend ordering all of them in order to find details about your property. You will need the plan number (top of the plan) and on the front cover of the notebook you will see page references for those streets.

Once you have found your property you may discover interesting details about your home, and the possible date of construction.

How to order: Search within the series (VPRS) 8600 and (VPRS) 8599 and add the survey field book number to order and view the surveyor's field books.

**Above and right:** Sample of surveyor's field book.  
PROV, VPRS 8600/P1 Survey field books, unit 15, book no. 288.



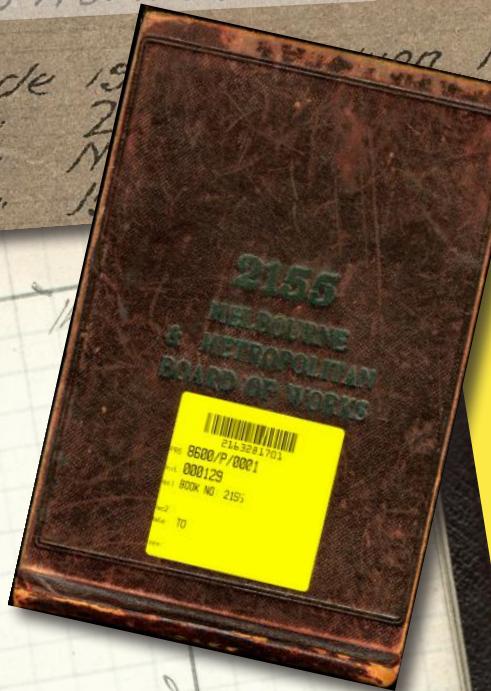
2082 " 151 Dudley St No 10 add<sup>13</sup>  
 2113 p.9 White St W side 262' N. of Miller St.  
 " 10 King St. E. side 100' N. of May St (2T)  
 0792 " 82 Nicholson St 180' S. Miller St.  
 2104 " 12 Glenlyon Rd 4 1/4' add<sup>s</sup>  
 2115 " 156 Willowbank Rd S. side 165' E. Kings  
 2136 " 5 Taylor St N. of & adj 21  
 2155 " 90 Nicholson St 218' N. of Miller St.  
 2189 " 41 N. 20 Taylor St.  
 2184 " 96 White St W side 13'  
 2221 " 31 " " E. " 21'  
 2202 " 92 " " " M  
 2207 " 124 " " W " 13'

### Surveyor's field books - updating properties

Along the right or left sides of the MMBW base plans are another list of field book numbers.

These are the books which documented the surveyor's notes when changes were made to the properties on the plan. The first number (for example 2155) is the field book number while the second number (for example 90) is the page where the property updates have been sketched.

Search within the series (VPRS) 8600 and (VPRS) 8599 in the PROV catalogue and add the field book number to order the field book and see if any updates were made to your property.



Above: Page 90 from surveyor field book 2155.  
PROV, VPRS 8600/P1 Survey field books, unit 129, book no. 2155.

# How do I find building plans and files?

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These records are helpful if you're interested in original building plans for house research in the Melbourne City Council area, and to find out the builder or architect for houses in that region. PROV does not hold building plans or files for homes in other regions of Victoria, unless the home had been identified by a government body as culturally significant. Plans for homes outside of the Melbourne City Council area will be preserved in some form within your local council archives. It's also important to note that building plans were only required to be submitted after 1916.

## **1916–1961 Building Application plans and files (Melbourne City Council)**

These records contain a range of details about private residences, factories, public buildings, offices and shops.

- Building Application plans and files
- Architectural plans
- Correspondence between council and owner

## **What do I need to know to access these records?**

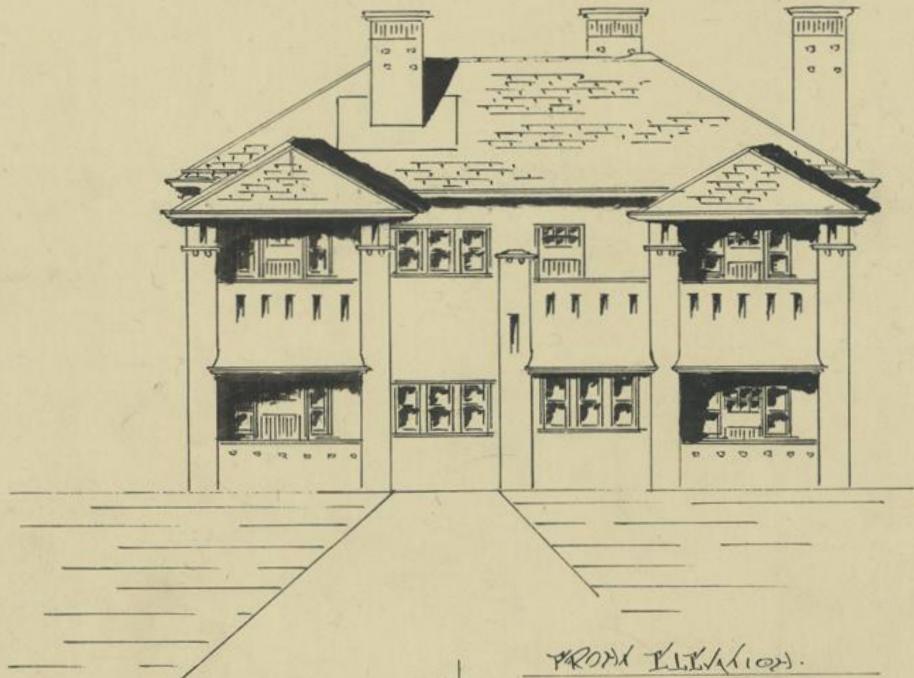
You will need to know the building application number attached to your property. Public Record Office Victoria have an index to building application numbers for the *City of Melbourne* and a few other municipalities. The easiest thing to do is contact your local council.

## **How do I find my building application number? (Melbourne City Council)**

- 1) Within the Building Application Plans Index on microfiche at the PROV reading room in North Melbourne find your address. Note down the building application number.

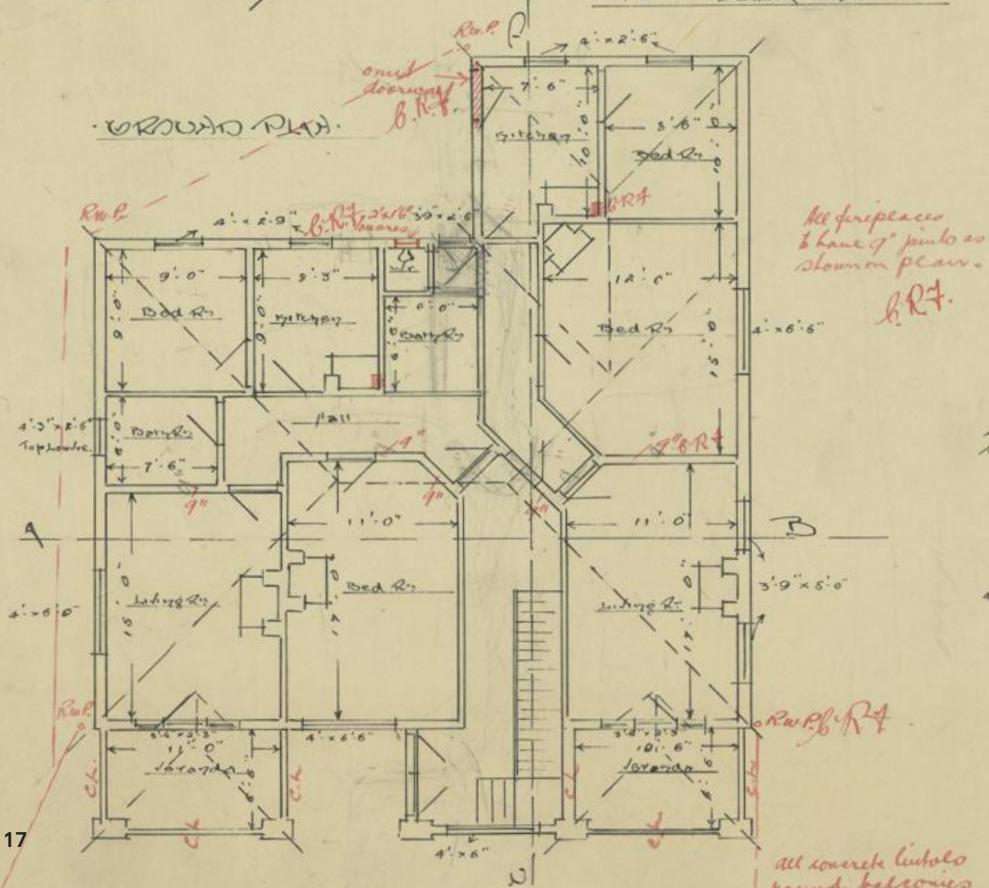
## **How do I find the building plans? (Melbourne City Council)**

- 2) On the PROV online catalogue search Within a Series using series (VPRS) number 11200 (plans) and series (VPRS) number 11201 (files) and include your application number in the field below.
- 3) Order to view those files in the reading room at North Melbourne.



PROX TELL (02)

## GROUND PLN.



All figures  
I have of " jointed  
shown on plan.  
J. R.

W.B.R. 4

all concrete structures  
against felonies

# My house was built in Melbourne before 1916

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## Pre-1916 Notices of Intention to Build

Within the inner-city suburbs of Melbourne it was sufficient for an owner to notify the Council Building Surveyor of their intention to build. It was a one page document which didn't include a building plan.

Details included:

- Address
- Location of the building
- The nature of the building and commencement date
- Name of owner
- Builder and architect (if one was used)

## How do I find a Notice of Intention to Build?

- 1) You will need to know which year
- 2) An index for these notices (listed by year) is available on microfiche at the North Melbourne reading room. This is called the Burchett Index.

The image shows a microfiche copy of a historical document titled "NOTICE OF INTENT TO BUILD". The document is organized into numbered sections:

- 1. DATE:** Year 1890, Month July, Day 14, REG. NO. 4550, FEE £3.10..
- 2. ADDRESS:** (a) Locality: South Yarra, Name: No., Description: (b) Street: Leopold
- 3. BUILDER:** Name: Onslow, George + 369 Wellington St Clifton Hill
- 4. ARCHITECT:** Name: Dodder, James
- 5. OWNER:** Name: Dodder, James
- 6. DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING OR WORK:** two 2-storey houses

**Above:** Sample of a microfiche copy of a Notice of Intent to Build card, 1890.

**Left:** Sample building plan for a property on Alexandra Avenue, Sth Yarra.  
PROV, VPRS 11200/P1 Building application files, unit 158, application no. 1503.

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## Pre-1916 architects of inner-city Melbourne

If you're interested in houses built by a specific architect there is a microfiche copy of **Notices of Intention to Build** organised alphabetically by architect's names in PROV's North Melbourne reading room. This is only helpful if you know the name of the architect already and are interested in other homes they may have built.

# I think my house used to be a school or public building

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If you suspect your home was once a public building then you may find records about that building in the Public Building files or the Public Works Department Plans at Public Record Office Victoria.

**The Public Building Files** include files relating to buildings for the purpose of private education, entertainment, amusement and recreation (theatres, opera houses, concert rooms, assemblies, dance or cinema halls, skating rinks, tents or structures, galleries and platforms, churches, chapels or meeting houses). These files were created from 1924 onwards.

**The Public Works Department Plans** (1853-1998) include building plans and files on government department offices, schools, hospitals and police stations.

The PROV website have produced two searchable online indexes for these records, and from there you can order the files to view in their North Melbourne reading room.

## What will a postal directory tell me?

### Postal directories and electoral rolls

Postal directories are non-government publications which contain listings of businesses and individuals in Victoria organised by streets or localities.

**Tip!** The best places to find these are the State Library of Victoria or your local library. The PROV reading room in Ballarat holds other nineteenth-century postal directories for Ballarat and surrounding districts.

The electoral rolls, or voter rolls as they were previously known, were created by municipalities and list people by name who were eligible to vote in council elections. The rolls can assist if you are trying to find out the occupation of an owner of a property, and to cross-check with rates records to determine whether that individual owned your address.

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# Clues in a deceased will, probate or administration file

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## Probate and administration records

Public Record Office Victoria holds wills and probate records from 1841 (and administration files if a person died without a will). These records often contain information about property owned by a deceased person and their beneficiaries and may include an inventory of the deceased's estate.

By using a probate record you might find information such as

- Allotment, and parish or township details of land owned by the deceased
- Description of the property (rooms and outbuildings)
- The value of the property
- Important numbers or dates relating to your land title

## How do I order wills, probate and administration files?

- 1) Search by name or by residence through the Wills and Probate 'Topic' page and searchable index on the Public Record Office Victoria website
- 2) Wills and probate records are digitised and viewable online up until 1925
- 3) If the probate you're looking for dates from 1926 you can still search by name, but you will find a file number, and you will need to order that record to view in a reading room.

See over page for sample.

**Tip!** This is Henry Quock Ping's assets and liabilities statement from his probate file. The assets list may include handy information about your home.

# Supreme Court

## COLONY OF VICTORIA.

A

In the Supreme Court  
OF THE COLONY OF VICTORIA.

IN THE Will of Henry Quock Ping, late  
of Ballarat in the Colony of Victoria, whose habitation  
is now

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES.

ASSETS: Real Estate	LIABILITIES
All that piece of land being allotments six and seven of Section O. Ballarat East upon which is erected a brick and wooden house containing eleven rooms.	<u>General Expenses</u> £ Mr. Shawman for money lent 20. Hann barges for money lent 17. Taylor drayage 26. Felix drayage 8. Messrs. Smith & Wang drayage 3. Mr. Reid brick 4. Carter drayage 2. Young drayage 2. Walker drayage 1. Messrs. Purdie and Oglehouse wedding 1. Mr. Watson 1. Mr. Kelly 1. Messrs. Cornell & King 1. Mr. D. Dugay drayage 2.  Balance for Dray 274. £ 300.00
Household furniture consisting of parlor and sitting room furniture. Two bedchambers and kitchen furniture and sundries one single buggy	£ 300.00
	£ 300.00

This is the paper writing marked "A" referred to in the several affidavits of Anne Jane Quock Ping sworn this sixth day of December 1887 before me Wm. Laddie  
A Commissioner of the Supreme Court of the Colony of Victoria for taking Affidavits.

Wm. Laddie  
13/12/1887

All that piece of land being allotments six and seven of Section O. Ballarat East upon which is erected a brick and wooden house containing eleven rooms.

Household furniture consisting of parlor and sitting room furniture. Two bedchambers and kitchen furniture and sundries, one single buggy.

**Above:** Statement of Assets and Liabilities for Henry Quock Ping, including his Ballarat East home, section and allotment for his land and items of furnishings found in the house. The document is part of his probate and administration files, PROV, VPRS 28/P2 Probate and Administration Files, unit 72, file 16/945.

# My home predates the certificate of title! What's going on?

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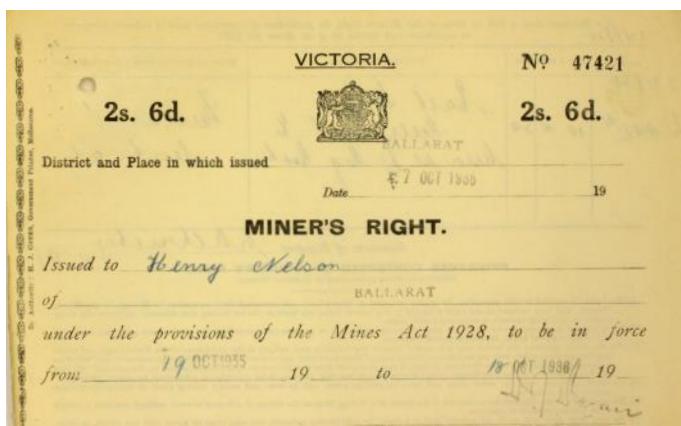
There are a number of reasons for this but one reason may be due to the land having miner's rights.

In old goldfield towns like Ballarat many people leased land for decades, built houses on them but never in fact purchased the land from the Crown. In fact, in some cases they had a 'miner's right' to build on the land but they did not own the block.

You may find on the Ballarat township plans relatively recent dates for the creation of freehold title for very old houses. If the house you are researching fits into this category consult staff at a PROV reading room and find out more on how to search township plans.

## Case study: Henry Nelson

While rate books record a property located at 15 East Street in East Ballarat being occupied from the 1860s, the certificate of title for the property was only granted in 1939. Using the township plan for Ballarat, we were able to identify that the first person to own the certificate of title for the land was Henry Nelson. This gave us the number for a Department of Crown Lands and Survey correspondence file which documented the transfer of the property to private ownership. In the file there is a document that shows that Nelson originally held the property under a miner's right, a form of licence to occupy land in a goldfields area which permitted the holder to also build a house on the property.



**Above:** Henry Nelson's Miner's Right Certificate.  
PROV, VPRS 441/P0, Crown Land Occupation Files, Correspondence Series, unit 760, file no. J23955.

# STREET

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4. 10/23	0. 0. 0 10/10	J. 18/5/23	B	12/29	12/29	36A	21. 11. 1938	J23955	360. 0. 72/10	35 M.C. Flint	24. 12. 66	THUMPHREYS	34. 30. 9. 64	30. 11. 8	W. Scott	225	10. 3. 63	0. 1. 19 4/10	PS436	26					
4. 10/23	0. 0. 0 10/10	J. 18/5/23	B	12/29	12/29	36A	21. 11. 1938	J23955	360. 0. 72/10	35 M.C. Flint	24. 12. 66	THUMPHREYS	34. 30. 9. 64	30. 11. 8	W. Scott	225	10. 3. 63	0. 1. 19 4/10	PS436	26					
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B  
273

**Opposite:** Detail of Township Plan for Ballarat showing Henry Nelson's property and the file numbers for locating Department of Crown Lands and Survey correspondence records. PROV, VPRS 16171/P1 Regional Land Office Parish and Township Plans Digitised Reference Set, Ballarat East 06 Township Plan, Imperial measure 5031.



AT BALLARAT EAST  
CITY OF BALLARAT  
PARISH OF BALLARAT  
COUNTY OF GRANT

Scale 1 Chains to Inch

Closure and area correct

Agrees with adjoining work

F.S.E. 21.10.38

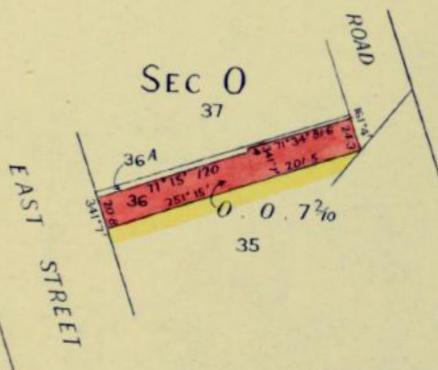
Corr. No J.23955

Prepared from field notes and  
OPs B273, 129E & LP4A

On a township plan your property will have a few numbers and a name next to it. The name is the person who bought the land from the Crown, in this example Henry Nelson. The J23955 number is the property's file number, Ask PROV staff which series relates to that file as there are many series which relate to land files.



PLAN DETACHED No 9873



**Above:** Plan of land and Miner's Right documents from correspondence relating to Henry Nelson's application for certificate of title, PROV, VPRS 441/P0, unit 760, file J23955.

**ORIGINAL**  
NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM  
THE OFFICE OF TITLES



VICTORIA

Vol. 7984 Rel. 685

# Certificate of Title

UNDER THE "TRANSFER OF LAND ACT 1928"

William Glass Elliot, Gentleman and Ethelredom Grace Elliot, Married Woman both of  
52 Athol Street Moonee Ponds are - - - - -

now the joint proprietors - - - - - of an Estate in Fee-simple subject to the Encumbrances notified hereunder in -

All that piece of Land, delineated and coloured red, blue and green on the map in the margin being part of Crown Allotment 14 Section 4 Parish of Doutta Galla County of Bourke - As to the land coloured blue and green respectively on the said map. Together with a right to use the land coloured yellow and yellow-hatched - - - respectively on the said map for party wall purposes - - - - -

Dated the Twelfth day of February

thousand nine hundred and fifty-one.

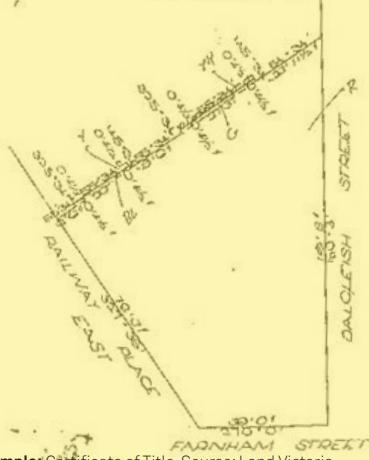


Assistant Registrar of Titles

## ENCUMBRANCES REFERRED TO

As to the land coloured blue and green respectively - -

THE RESPECTIVE PARTY WALL EASEMENTS created by Instrument of Transfer No. 2381003 in the Register Book - - - - -



Sample: Certificate of Title, Source: Land Victoria.

The measurements are in feet and inches.

# What can a title tell me?

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Before 1862 ownership of property was transferred by the creation of deeds or memorials. After 1862 owners were required to apply for a Certificate of Title, as proof of ownership, with the original certificate held at the Office of Titles now known as Land Victoria. This is known as the Torrens Title System.

Digitised copies of Torren's titles can be viewed in the North Melbourne reading room through a link to Land Victoria. The files linked to these applications for title are held at Public Record Office Victoria.

The files attached to applications for title may provide information on

- Record of home ownership of a property
- Supporting documentation like deeds and mortgages
- Surveyor's report
- Plan of survey
- Legal examiner's requisition and report

## Pre-Torrens Title System

The files that contained the chain of title deeds for property purchased before the Torrens Title System are included in the application files held at PROV.

## What do I need to know to access these files?

You will need to know the application file number for the title. This can be sourced online from Land Victoria by identifying the application on the relevant parcel of land.

## To locate the files attached to that application number

### After 1866 - 1996

- 1) Go onto Public Record Office Victoria digital catalogue
- 2) Under the *Searching* tab select Search Within a Series
- 3) Next to VPRS type 460 and your application number in the other field.
- 4) Order the file to view in the North Melbourne reading room.

### Between 1862 - 1866

For this period there is an alphabetical listing of family names in the first unit attached to a series of records called VPRS 405, Register of Applications for Certificate of Title. If you search 'by number' for the series 405 and go to 'accessing the records' then 'list of record' you will see the unit index as the first item. Search the index for a name.



Image: Courtesy, City of Ballarat

# I'm ready to dig deeper: land files – parish and township plans

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A great place to discover who was the original owner of the land on which your house sits is by viewing your property on a parish or township plan. These plans document the local area of land administration, known as parishes in rural areas and townships in urban areas.

These plans detail the names of people who purchased or leased Crown land from the government. Once you know who owned the land you can consult your library, historical or genealogical society, or PROV to find out more about them.

They may contain information about:

- Particular allotments
- Leases and licenses to occupy
- Crown reservations
- Changes to road alignments and allotment boundaries
- Geographic features of the land
- Sale prices of the land
- Files created for that allotment

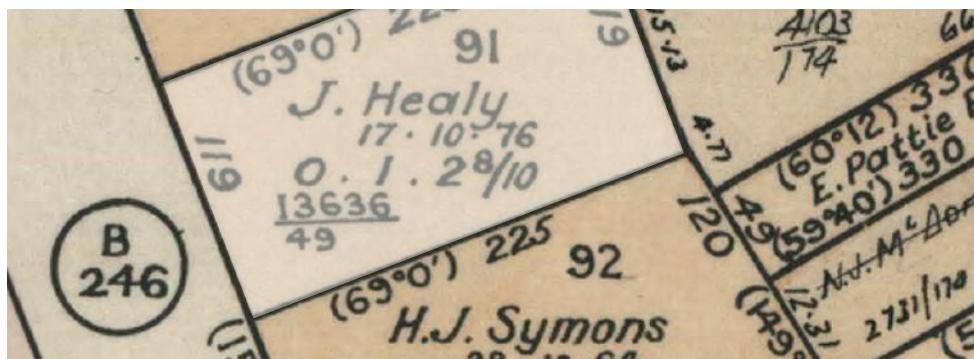
There are quite a few steps to access files linked to land and property, particularly as the public servants identified allotments based on the section of the Land Act under which it was selected and/or leased.

Speak with a research officer at a PROV reading room in North Melbourne, Ballarat, Geelong or Bendigo and ask the following questions.

Q: How do I find my property on an old parish or township map?

Q: Where will I find the file number on that map for my property?

Q: Which series do I look under to find that file and how do I order it?



**Above:** PROV, VPRS 16171/P1, Ballarat 02 Township Plan, Imperial measure 5030.

# How do I know if my home is heritage listed?

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Many heritage homes have been researched and included in local heritage overlays. These overlays protect important heritage homes through planning controls. Your local governments' planning unit can help you identify if your home is in the heritage overlay. Some local governments have this information available online in easily searchable databases. Additionally you can download your home's planning property report on Planning Maps Online at <http://services.land.vic.gov.au/maps/pmo.jsp>

## Melbourne

Search the Victorian Heritage online database from the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure.  
<http://www.dtpli.vic.gov.au/heritage>

## Ballarat

Search the Ballarat Heritage online database on the City of Ballarat website.  
<http://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/sh/heritage>

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## Further resources

- Ballarat Historic Urban Landscape community hub website at [www.hulballarat.vic.gov.au](http://www.hulballarat.vic.gov.au)
- The Australiana Research Room within the Ballarat library holds local and family history resources for the Central Highlands area of Ballarat
- Visualising Ballarat online mapping tool [www.visualisingballarat.org.au](http://www.visualisingballarat.org.au)

Other important resources can be found on the websites of:

Local historical societies  
Local genealogical societies  
Gold Museum (Ballarat)  
Geoffrey Blainey Research Room at Federation University Australia (Ballarat)  
Ballarat Mechanics Institute (Ballarat)  
Heritage Victoria  
Ballarat Heritage Unit  
Geelong Heritage Centre  
Local Councils  
National Trust (Victoria)  
State Library of Victoria  
Land Victoria



Public Transport Photographic Collection.  
PROV.VPRS 12903/P1, item Box 266/02.

## **Victorian Archives Centre**

99 Shiel Street  
North Melbourne  
10am–4.30pm  
Monday to Friday  
(and 2nd and last Saturday  
of the month)

## **Ballarat Archives Centre**

Cnr Mair and Doveton Streets  
Ballarat  
9.30am–4.30pm  
Monday and Tuesday

## **Bendigo Regional Archives Centre**

1st Floor Bendigo Library  
251–259 Hargreaves Street  
Bendigo  
10am–4.30pm  
Wednesday and Thursday

## **Geelong Heritage Centre**

### **CONTACT US**

[prov.vic.gov.au](http://prov.vic.gov.au)  
[enquiries@prov.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@prov.vic.gov.au)  
03 9348 5600

## **City of Ballarat**

The Phoenix  
25 Armstrong Street  
Ballarat

### **Acknowledgments**

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**Front cover:** Public Transport Photographic Collection.  
VPRS 12903/P1, item Box 267/02.



**Public Record  
Office Victoria**

