

History & Heritage

Circulating throughout Bendigo, Eaglehawk, Heathcote, Castlemaine,
Maldon, Kyneton, Elmore, Echuca, and Rochester areas
A publication of the National Trust Bendigo & District Branch
December 2025 - January 2026



18th April to 18th May 2026



Next meeting
Tuesday January 27th 5.30pm
Bendigo Library (enter via Hargreaves Street). All members and supporters
welcome.

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Cover images: nationaltrust.org.au

Cover Story:

Early notice about 2026 Australian Heritage Festival (Victoria)

The Australian Heritage Festival (Victoria) is an annual statewide event celebrating Victoria's diverse and vibrant heritage.

Held from the 18th April to 18th May each year, the Heritage Festival explores the state's places and spaces, stories, collections and ideas that make us who we are. One of Victoria's largest open-access community events, the Heritage Festival program features hundreds of events ranging from talks to tours, walks to workshops and exhibitions to special events.

Events happen anywhere: urban and rural, towns and suburbs; in museums and libraries; in boats, trains and mysterious buildings; on the street, by the water and in nature. Hear the stories of the unusual and unknown, from amazing experts to local guides. With hundreds of events to choose from, there's something for curious minds of all ages.

The 2026 Festival theme is **Change**, asking how history has changed us—and how are we changing history? History isn't static—it's a living force that continuously shapes our present and future.

The Australian Heritage Festival is organised and led by the [National Trust of Australia \(Victoria\)](http://nationaltrust.org.au), the state's premier community-based heritage advocacy organisation.

Join the Celebration – The Bendigo Branch is planning a program of events with more information and booking details in the February 2026 History & Heritage newsletter.

Popular Bendigo heritage sites such as the Former Court House and Gas Works (see below) are planned to be open for the festival.



What you can't see from the outside. Left: Court House interior. Right: Rotary gas compressors at the Gas Works. Photos: Bendigo Branch

In 2025, The Australian Heritage Festival (Victoria) was presented by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and supported by the Heritage Council Victoria and The Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid.

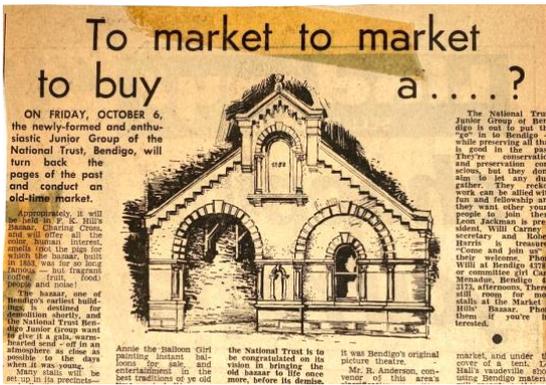
National Trust Bendigo Branch items at BHS

by Euan McGillivray, President, Bendigo Historical Society

We mentioned in the previous newsletter that the Branch had donated some key documents to the Bendigo Historical Society. BHS is cataloguing and digitising some of these records.

Here is another sample of the items, especially the minute books from 1964 to 1986. The 1964 minutes are particularly significant because they record the formation, in the Mayoral Chambers of Bendigo Council, of the Bendigo Branch of the National Trust.

Another document from 1972 records the formation of "The Junior Group" of the National Trust, Central Victorian Branch. The Junior Group held an "old time market" in the Bazaar at Charing Cross. The event took place just prior to the bazaar being demolished.



More press clippings show how a campaign was established to warn against adding a veranda to a significant Vahland building on corner of Forest and High Streets. Emotions ran high regarding the potential of demolition of the Capital Theatre, and the potential levelling of Chinese grave mounds at White Hills Cemetery. And hundreds more invaluable documents relating to proposals for development or demolition of significant buildings, from the grand Bendigo Boom period to humble miners' cottages. The Branch had a "Survey and Identification Committee". The example shown related to the Eaglehawk east Methodist Church in High Street Eaglehawk.

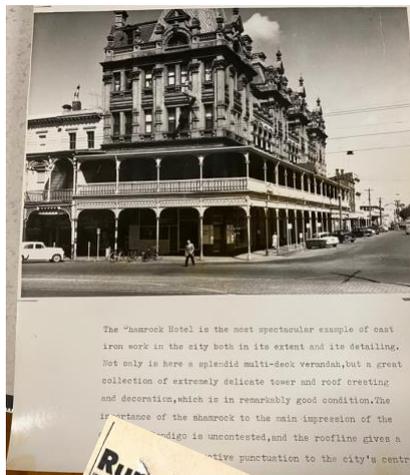
NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (VIC) BRANCH
SURVEY AND IDENTIFICATION COMMITTEE

NOTE: If empty papers, diaries, etc., are not available, trace books and maps; directories at the La Trobe library; the historical data.

The Trust has limited facilities for research and would appreciate your using the above sources as thoroughly as possible before returning this form.

DATA FORM

name of building..... Eaglehawk East Methodist Church
 street (precisely, please; if out-of-town describe the location sufficiently to enable a visit)..... High Street Eaglehawk
 other name..... near the Academy Church



There is also a large amount of material relating to the cast iron veranda controversy. The Shamrock Hotel was one of the buildings in question. The photo in the report, one of 14 key buildings with remarkable verandas, is by Allan Doney. His photographs are credited with helping to persuade Councillors not to proceed with wholesale destruction of verandas in the city.

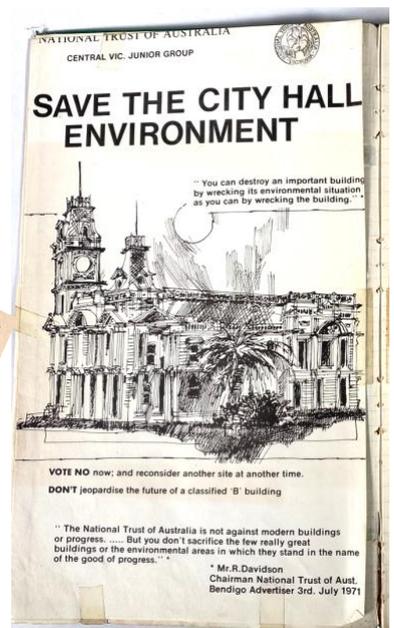
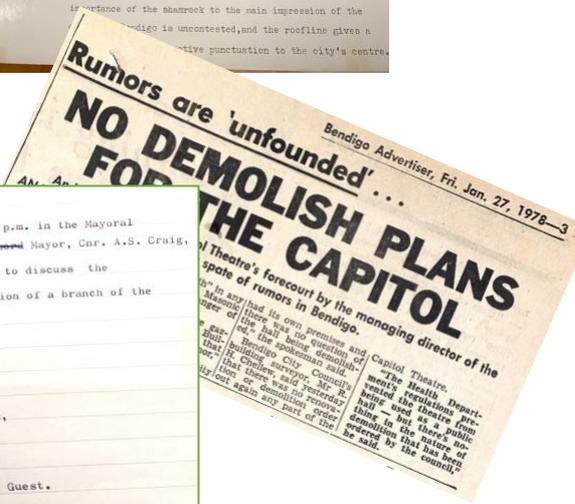


MINUTES.

The meeting was held on Friday, 26th Jan at 8 p.m. in the Mayoral Rooms, City Hall, Bendigo. It was convened by the Mayor, Mr. A.S. Craig, at the request of Mrs. N. Murray and Mrs. R. Adams, to discuss the preservation of buildings in Bendigo and the formation of a branch of the National Trust in Bendigo.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Canon Halls,
 Miss D. Crawford,
 Miss F. Mackay,
 Miss R. Mackay,
 Mr. & Mrs. N.E. Guest.



City of Greater Bendigo latest Heritage Design Guidelines from Michael Lake

Next year we will have a review of the latest heritage guidelines from the City of Greater Bendigo. Some examples are given here but you can preview them [online here](#).

Guidelines at a glance

Residential Heritage Design Guidelines and Commercial Heritage Design Guidelines

What are these guidelines?

- They explain how heritage buildings and places in Greater Bendigo can be cared for, adapted, or developed
- They help protect our city's heritage character while still allowing change
- They give clear, consistent advice for property owners, builders, and designers

Why do they matter?

- They support good quality renovations, extensions and new development
- They make it easier to understand what changes are likely to be supported
- They help property owners, the community and the City of Greater Bendigo work towards the same goal: keeping Greater Bendigo's heritage strong while meeting today's needs

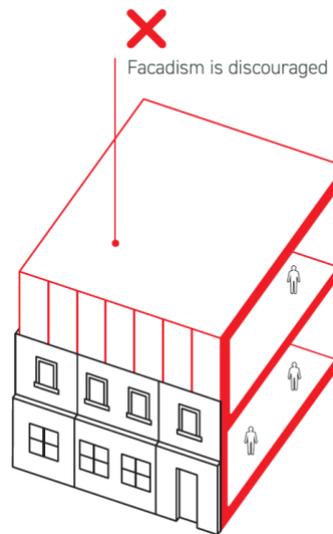
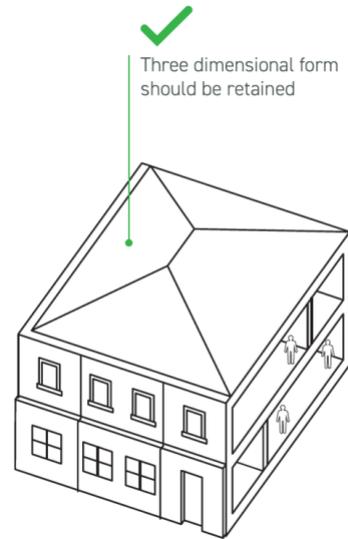
Who do they apply to?

- Any property covered by a Heritage Overlay in the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme
- This includes both residential and commercial properties
- Not sure if this applies to you? Check your property on Bendigo Pozi or VicPlan or contact the City's Statutory Planning team

What is in the guidelines?

- Residential Guidelines: Advice for heritage homes. This includes miners' cottages, Victorian, Federation, interwar and post-war houses
- Commercial Guidelines: Advice for heritage shops, offices and other commercial buildings on verandas, shopfronts, signage etc
- Both guidelines include diagrams, photos and examples of what is supported

These draft guidelines don't stop change. They guide it, so heritage places can be adapted, maintained and lived in while keeping the character that makes Greater Bendigo unique.



The City offers interpreter services in various languages



1.2.1 Demolition by neglect

Demolition by neglect is the process of allowing a building to deteriorate over time, either deliberately or due to prolonged lack of maintenance.

Under the Planning and Environment Amendment Act 2021, the City may apply permit conditions or planning scheme provisions that limit future development opportunities where neglect of a heritage place has occurred.

Specifically, if a heritage building is unlawfully demolished or allowed to fall into disrepair, the City may issue an order to restrict development on the affected land. This measure aims to prevent property owners from financially benefiting from the neglect or illegal demolition of heritage places.

Structural integrity and the safety of a heritage place are not the only factors when considering the possibility of demolition. A building may retain significant heritage value

even if its condition is poor, and there are many approaches to making heritage buildings structurally sound.

In assessing potential demolition by neglect, the City will consider the following (including, but not limited to):

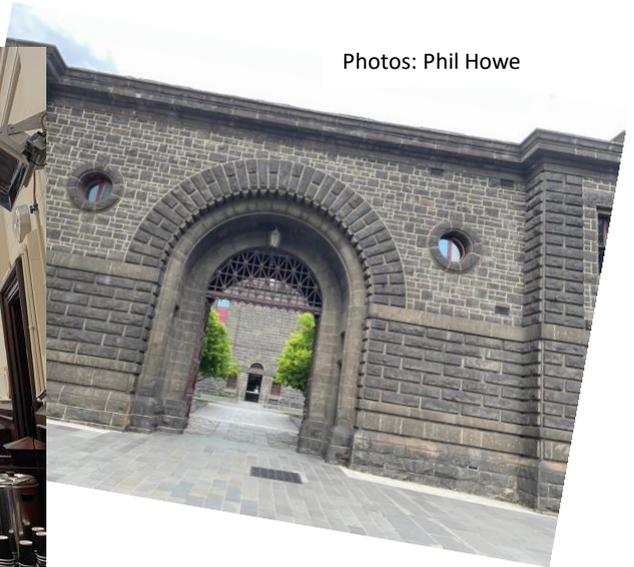
- Whether the deterioration was avoidable or the result of deliberate neglect
- The building's structural integrity and safety
- The heritage significance of the place, including its design, materials, and architectural context
- The owner's efforts (or lack thereof) to maintain the property

The City encourages proactive maintenance and early intervention to prevent deterioration. Owners of heritage places are required to maintain a reasonable standard of care to preserve the heritage significance.

Above: Example showing contributory and non-contributory elements. Images: City of Greater Bendigo

Volunteers' Day by Phil Howe, President, National Trust Bendigo & District Branch

I attended the National Trust Volunteers' Celebration on Friday November 28th which took place in the old Law Court in Russell Street, Melbourne (below centre) where lunch was provided and all the attendees had a chance to catch up with each other and to make new connections. A rousing speech was given by the Trust's CEO Collette Brennan (below left) thanking all volunteers for their support and highlighting their value to the organisation. Following the formalities, we were treated to a guided tour of the Old Melbourne Gaol, which is managed by the National Trust (below right). Both buildings are now part of RMIT.



Photos: Phil Howe

National Trust Bendigo & District Branch – November 2025 AGM President's report for the Annual General Meeting by Phil Howe

This has been a tumultuous year for our Branch dominated by the death of our President Peter Cox, which left a huge hole in our organisation, one too big to be filled. For me, as the interim president, this has led to a very steep learning curve full of errors and constantly seeking advice from head office and the many wonderful and patient staff there. I am slowly getting the hang of the role and what it entails. Mostly I'm learning about all the things I should have been doing earlier than I have. I have been very ably supported by many people in our Branch and am grateful for their experience and advice - most notably Gary Hill who has been a phone call away whenever I have needed him. My thanks also to Euan McGillivray and Ann Hurley for their support and their work on our newsletter, it is the envy of all the other branches.

The big event for the National Trust was, as always, the Heritage Festival in April and May and this year's was the biggest and best ever held. Thanks go to the tireless work of Peter Cox for implementing the innovation of attracting a broad range of organisations to take part in the festival under the umbrella of the Trust. Two that stand out were the operation of the locomotive turntable at the railways and the many events held at Langley Estate by Simone and Thomas Heywood, who have been enthusiastic supporters of the Trust. The grandest events were the many tours conducted through the old Bendigo Law Courts which required a lot of effort from many volunteers. I also want to acknowledge the incredible work of Peter Legg, the coordinator of the festival, without whom I'm not sure the rest of us would have been able to operate. Peter made charts and plans and more charts and took an enormous number of photos throughout the festival, many of them in the Law Courts, and some of which were used in the National Trust magazine. Peter has been a great supporter for me especially letting me know when he thinks I'm out of line or just plain silly.

We are now in the planning phase for next year's Heritage Festival and look forward to hearing any ideas about what should be included. It seems like a stuck record to say that we are still trying to get a firm commitment about the Former Law Courts to confirm who will end up owning the building and what plans there are for the

site. We will continue to pursue the best outcome for this iconic building. Many people are supporting our efforts in this endeavour, and I would like to point out the considerable input of Gaelle Broad for her commitment to achieve our aim.

We also give thanks to the Bendigo Library for their support in providing facilities for us to use for our meetings this year.

New Branch Committee for 2026 as elected at the AGM

- President: Philip Howe.
- Treasurer: Gary Hill.
- Secretary: Audrey Brown.
- Vice President: No nominations, position vacant
- 2025 Heritage Festival Coordinator: No nominations, position vacant
- Committee members: Jan Sonogan, Elaine Doling, Euan McGillivray

The meeting was followed by the guest speaker, Thomas Heywood, world-renowned organist and passionate heritage ambassador, owner of Langley Estate with his wife Simone.

Thomas provided an informative and entertaining presentation on the history of Langley Estate. Many thanks to Thomas

History & Heritage Branch newsletter - receive, contribute, read past issues

Everyone has a story that, when combined with others, provides a record of the social history of our region and draws attention to the significance of local built heritage. The Branch welcomes your ideas, contributions and photographs for the newsletter which is published monthly. The contribution deadline for *History & Heritage* is the first day of each month. Send to the [Bendigo Branch here](#)
For previous issues of *History & Heritage* [click here](#)

To help increase circulation send it to your friends and family or sign up your organisation to receive it.

Next Branch meeting, Tuesday January 27th at Bendigo Library 5.30pm

Email: National Trust of Australia (Vic) Bendigo & District Branch [click here](#)

You can see the current Victorian advocacy issues at the Trust Advocate blog: [Click here](#)

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You are receiving this email because you are a member of the National Trust of Australia (Vic) or have asked us to send you the newsletter. If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please [email](#) the Bendigo Branch. Add 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and recognize the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.

