HO46 – Rhoslyn, 818 Duncans Road, Werribee South

Heritage Place: Rhoslyn	**HO Reference:** HO46 **Date updated:** 15 October 2026

Address: 818 Duncans Road, Werribee South



Figure 1: Rhoslyn, 818 Duncans Road, Werribee South. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.

Item Group: Residential buildings (private) **Item Type:** House	**Key Theme:** Living off the Land and Sea **Key Sub-theme:** Market gardens and orchards
Designer: Unknown **Builder:** Unknown	**Construction:** c.1900s (dwelling), c.1920s (garage and water tower) **Style:** Edwardian dwelling, interwar outbuilding.

Significance Level: Local

Recommendation: Update place name. Amend curtilage. Retain solar energy system controls. Apply outbuilding and fence controls.

Controls:	○	External paint controls	○	Internal alteration controls	○	Tree controls

	○	Included on Victorian Heritage Register	○	Incorporated Plans	●	Outbuildings and fence not exempt (garage and water tower)
	○	Prohibited uses may be permitted	○	Aboriginal Heritage Place	●	Solar energy system controls

Curtilage



Figure 2: Rhoslyn, 818 Duncans Road, Werribee South. *Aerial Basemap source*: Nearmap. 2025. *Spatial data source*: VicMap & Department of Transport and Planning.

HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	*Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history*	Rhoslyn is of historical significance as one of the earliest dwellings within Werribee South, for its association with the irrigation scheme and establishment of market gardening, and its continued contribution to this industry. The weatherboard dwelling, constructed for the Thomas Family is historically significant as an early dwelling in the region established prior to the irrigation and Closer Settlement schemes that drove population growth in Werribee South. The simple design is expressive of early dwellings that were established at the turn of the century to provide accommodation for early settlers. The water tower is illustrative of the measures taken to address issues of water scarcity within the municipality that drove initiatives like the irrigation schemes. Typical of the early farms, water tanks were the only provision of a domestic supply of water, and the water tower demonstrates the interventions to establish a local water supply. Southern European migration increased in the 1930s and Interwar period, with the new residents' cultural backgrounds resulting in new influences on contemporary architecture, resulting in Mediterranean expressions as demonstrated by the garage which adopts features typical of this expression. The later occupation of the region by migrant communities saw the market garden industry prosper and drive the economic growth of the region.
B	*Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history*	The place does not meet this criterion.
C	*Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history*	The place does not meet this criterion.

D	*Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments*	The place does not meet this criterion.
E	*Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics*	The place does not meet this criterion.
F	*Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period*	The place does not meet this criterion.
G	*Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions*	The place does not meet this criterion.
H	*Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.*	The place does not meet this criterion.

Statement of Significance – Rhoslyn, 818 Duncans Road, Werribee South

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Figure 3: Rhoslyn, 818 Duncans Road, Werribee South. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.

What is significant?

Rhoslyn, including the garage, water tower and weatherboard dwelling to the extent of the first pitched roof, is significant. The rear additions of the weatherboard dwelling, and vegetation surrounding the buildings are not significant.

How is it significant?

Rhoslyn is of historical significance to the City of Wyndham.

Why is it significant?

Rhoslyn is of historical significance as one of the earliest dwellings within Werribee South, for its association with the irrigation scheme and establishment of market gardening, and its continued contribution to this industry. (Criterion A)

The weatherboard dwelling, constructed for the Thomas Family is significant as an early dwelling in the region established prior to the irrigation and Closer Settlement schemes that drove population growth in Werribee South. The simple design is expressive of the early dwellings that were established at the turn of the century to provide accommodation for settlers. (Criterion A)

The water tower is illustrative of the measures taken to address issues of water scarcity within the municipality that drove initiatives like the irrigation schemes. Typical of the early farms, water tanks were the only provision of a domestic supply of water, and the water tower demonstrates the interventions to establish a local water supply. (Criterion A)

Southern European migration increased in the 1930s and Interwar period, with the new residents' cultural backgrounds resulting in new influences on contemporary architecture, resulting in Mediterranean expressions as demonstrated by the garage which adopts features typical of this expression. The later occupation of the region by migrant communities saw the market garden industry prosper and drive the economic growth of the region. (Criterion A)

Primary Source

Rhoslyn citation, Extent Heritage, 2026.

Description

Bunurong Country

Rhoslyn is situated on the lands of the Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of Country. Despite the effects of colonisation, including dispossession of land, the Traditional Custodians have maintained a continuing connection to land, waters and culture within the City of Wyndham.

Physical Analysis

Rhoslyn is located on the east side of Duncans Road and set within a garden surrounded by cultivated land.

Thomas Family dwelling

The early dwelling is located to the north of the broader property and comprises a weatherboard dwelling with a pitched roof, clad in corrugated sheet metal (Figure 10). The dwelling has a face red brick chimney with stepped detailing in brick to the upper section, located towards the northern end of the pitched roof. The dwelling has a post supported verandah clad in corrugated sheet metal with a gable infill of timber panels with pointed ends. Along the front of the verandah is a timber barge board. The weatherboards of the dwelling have previously been painted in a light colour. No fenestration was visible due to the vegetation surrounding the dwelling.

Garage

The garage is constructed of rendered masonry with a flat roof enclosed by a parapet and adopts a Mediterranean architectural expression (Figure 11). The building has a light brown finish with a textured render and is straight with a moulded lip separating the building from the parapet. The parapet constructed of rendered masonry and capped with curved Cordova tiles with corner piers. The roof is not visible behind the parapet. The four corners of the garage have expressed piers, with an additional expressed pier to the immediate north of the opening on the west elevation. The front (west) elevation has a curved open with a roller garage door in a green finish. The rendered masonry includes sections of face clinker brick arranged in diamond patterns with linear sections on the corner piers. The building is partly concealed by cypress trees.

Water tower

To the east of the garage is a round water tower (Figure 11). The tower is constructed of metal and is significantly elevated above the other single storey structures on the property. The round tank is also constructed of metal. The metal is rusted and appears to be open at the top. Vines are growing up the structure of the tank.

Alterations and Additions

The former dwelling, garage and water tower have undergone limited alterations since their construction with no obvious alterations. All elements are in a state of decline as a result of overgrown vegetation*.

Rhoslyn is in fair condition and is of high integrity.

**** Denotes element that does not contribute to the cultural significance of the place.***

History

Rhoslyn, located at 818 Duncans Road, Werribee South, is situated on the lands of the Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of Country. Despite the effects of colonisation, including dispossession of land, the Traditional Custodians have maintained a continuing connection to land, waters and culture within the City of Wyndham.

Rhoslyn is located on Bunurong Country, which was once covered in vast grassy plains. These landscapes were devastated by the arrival of colonists, settlers, farmers and pastoralists, who brought with them grazing animals whose hard hooves compacted the soil and made it difficult for native grasses to survive. Today, these grasslands are greatly reduced and remain at risk from ongoing development. For Bunurong peoples, they represent Country as it was before colonisation: healthy and in balance, maintained through seasonal use and carefully curated fire regimes that enabled the sustainable care of Country over generations. (BLCAC, 2026, 12).

From the 1890s, the Victorian Government began implementing policies to reacquire and subdivide large pastoral estates, promoting closer settlement and more intensive forms of agriculture to support the colony's growing population. When George Chirnside inherited his portion of the family estate, he opened parts of Werribee South to tenant farmers, driven in part by the family's mounting financial difficulties (Weekly Times 1896, 30; Ronald 1978).

The area became known as the Werribee Park Estate, where hay production emerged as an initial agricultural focus, as poor irrigation and high soil salinity hindered crop diversification. To alleviate this barrier to intensified farming, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission undertook the construction of an extensive irrigation network, channelling water diverted from the Werribee River (HO3) across the plains of Werribee South. This infrastructure enabled more water-intensive industries to flourish, including orcharding, cropping and dairying (Southern Rural Water 2025).

Place History

Following the subdivision, sale and settlement of the Werribee Park Estate in the late 1890s and early 1900s, smaller-scale farming began to become established. The occupant of the subject site during this time is not yet known, however it is likely that it was the family of S.J. Thomas. As depicted in a survey of the Werribee Park Estate, a dwelling had been erected by 1908 (Figure 4). This dwelling is still extant.

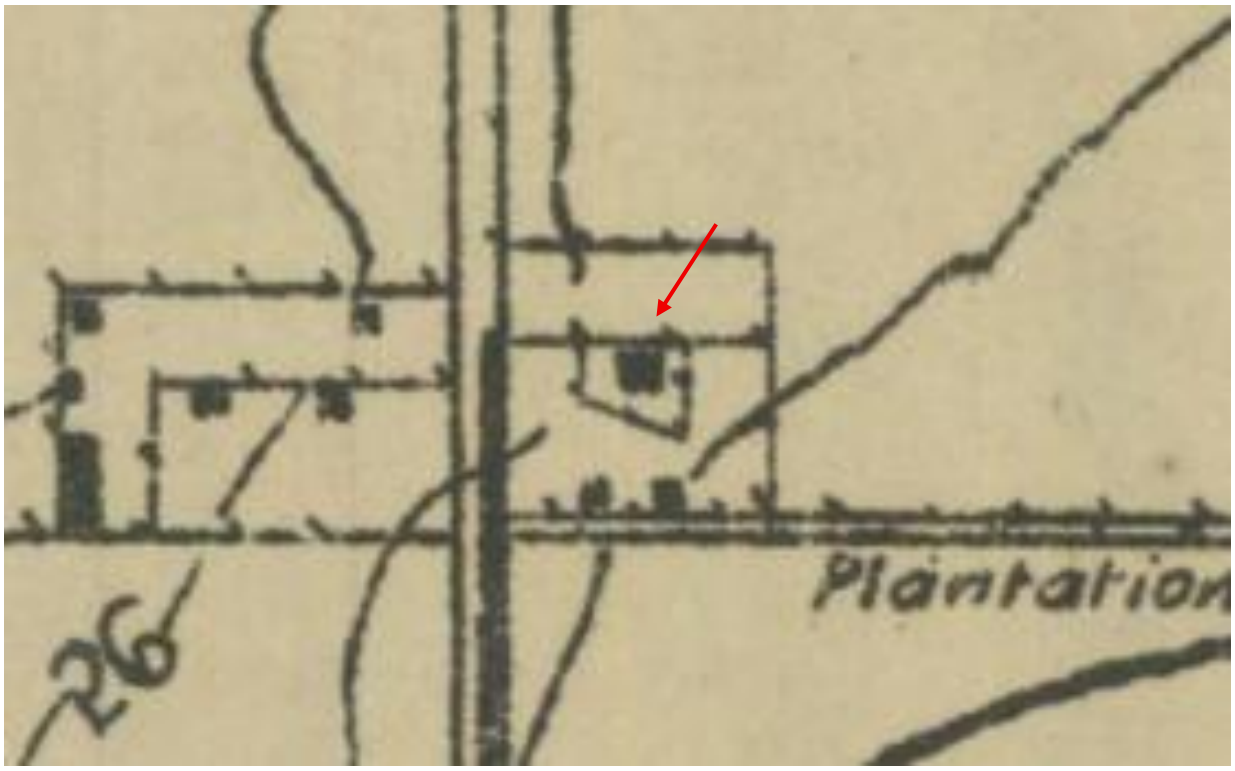


Figure 4. The dwelling (red arrow) represented in a 1908 survey. *Source:* T.F. McGauran. 1908. 'Werribee Park Estate.' Map. Public Records Office Victoria. https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/C1321B84-F841-11E9-AE98-C10245BAA560

Samuel J. Thomas

The earliest known occupant of the subject allotment was Samuel J. Thomas and his family (Figure 4 and Figure 5). Initially, Samuel Thomas used his land to graze cattle, alongside growing an orchard (The Argus 1921, 10; Werribee Shire Banner 1924, 6; Werribee Shire Banner 1923, 3).

In the early years, high soil salinity had made cropping and orcharding unfeasible. The implementation of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission's irrigation scheme soon changed the fate of Werribee South. Resulting from the excavation of a deep drain at the western extent of the property by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, the salinity was reduced, and the orchard was able to flourish (Weekly Times 1935, 48). It is likely that the water tower was erected early in the occupation of the site, given that it would have been rendered obsolete, or at least less important, by the delivery of the irrigation channel. It may have been used in an ongoing basis for household use. No primary historical record has yet been uncovered to substantiate the date of the water tower.



Figure 5. S.J. Thomas present on the Deutgam map in 1924. Source: W. J. Butson. 1924. 'Deutgam.' Map, 42x62cm. State Library Victoria. http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/156300

The Thomas Family primarily grew apples and pears within the orchard, reserving a portion at the eastern end for market gardening (Shire of Werribee 1927, no.2609; Shire of Werribee 1926, no.1581; Werribee Shire Banner 1924, 6; Werribee Shire Banner 1923, 3). During the ownership of the Thomas Family, the property was named 'Rhoslyn.' It is likely that the brick veneer building at the western end of the property was constructed during their occupation, likely functioning as a storeroom for produce (Shire of Werribee, various dates, 3-2610-08180).

In 1929, the Thomas Family sold their allotment, 14 acres of which was market garden and 33 acres were orchard (Werribee Shire Banner 1929, 5). At the time of the sale, Samuel Thomas' orchard was credited as the largest orchard in Werribee South (Werribee Shire Banner 1929, 1). The Thomas Family remained in Werribee South, running a general store on Duncans Road, which also functioned as a real estate agent and an insurance agent (Werribee Shire Banner 1928; 7; Werribee Shire Banner 1927, 5). In 1931, the Thomas Family concluded their business in Werribee South, transferring operation of the general store and attached post office to Melbourne-based Ellis and Son (Werribee Shire Banner 1931, 1).

Messrs F. A. Marginson and Son

In 1929, Messrs F. A. Marginson and Son purchased Rhoslyn (alternatively spelled Rhoslwyn at this time) from the Thomas Family. Marginson specialised in growing stone fruit, devoting approximately 30 of his 50 acres to orcharding, and the other 20 to market gardening (Weekly Times 1935, 48). Marginson also grew award winning pumpkins in the market garden, growing the seedlings under glass (Weekly Times 1935, 48).

In 1935, F. Marginson sold Rhoslyn, on account of him seeking to retire in Brisbane. The sale advertisement described the property as follows:

> "a rich irrigation property, comprising 50 acres, with homestead, outbuildings, all cons., sew., etc., 35 acr. planted in choicest canning fruits, apricots, plums, etc., of best varieties; 10 acr. market gardening land at present let at £10 per acr. per ann. Splendid working plant, worth £750." (The Courier Mail 1935, 24).

The Faranda Family

The Faranda Family had arrived in Werribee South in 1933, having migrated from the Italian province of Messina. Initially, the Faranda Family shared the lease of a plot with the Santalucia Family to conduct market gardening. Following a falling out between the two families in 1935, which involved legal proceedings, it is evident that the Faranda and Santalucia families lived separately from 1936 (Werribee Shire Banner 1936, 1; Il Giornale Italiano 1936, 3). Although this has not been confirmed, it is likely that the Faranda Family commenced the occupation of the Rhoslyn property at this time, with Vincenzo Faranda's occupation recorded as an orchardist by 1939 (Commonwealth Government 1939, no.904; Il Giornale Italiano 1936, 3; The Herald 1938, 20).

By 1952, Vincenzo Faranda had become the owner of the 49 acres on Duncan's Road (Figure 5). The Faranda Family have remained as the owner-occupants since this time. Throughout the twentieth century there were numerous new outbuildings constructed, as well as an extension added to the original homestead (Figure 7 & Figure 8) (Shire of Werribee, various dates, 3-2610-08180). The dwelling, garage and water tower have remained.

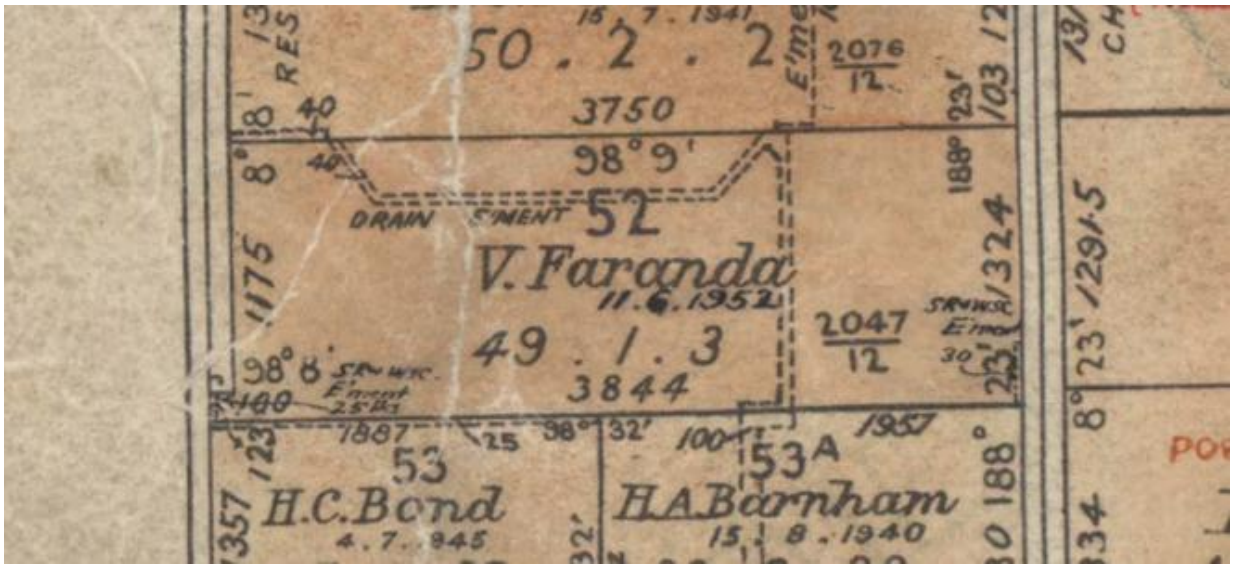


Figure 6. Extract from the Deutgam Parish Map. *Source:* J.J. Gourley. 1951. 'Deutgam.' Map. Public Records Office Victoria. https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/F2122959-F3E8-11EA-BE8C-C1ACD99AF86A

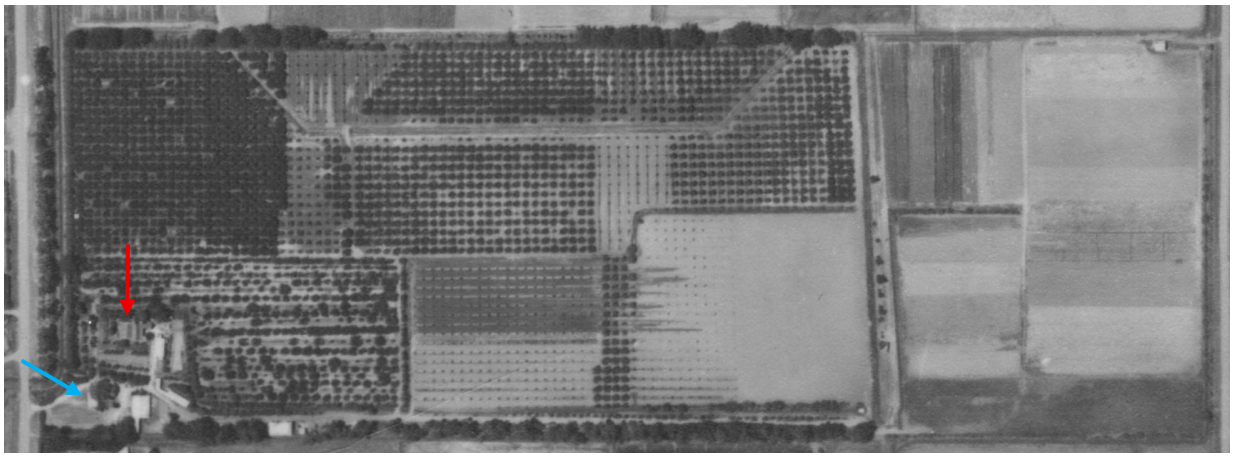


Figure 7. Rhoslyn in 1951, occupied by the Faranda Family. The market garden portion of the property is east of the orchard. The dwelling (red arrow) and storeroom (blue arrow) are in the southwest corner. *Source:* Unknown. 1951. '538 Run 25 Melbourne Metropolitan.' Landata.



Figure 8. Rhoslyn in 1963, depicting the dwelling (red arrow) and storeroom (blue arrow). *Source:* Unknown. 1963. 'Vic 1834.' Landata.



Figure 9. Rhoslyn in 1989, showing the removal of the orchard and conversion to market garden. *Source:* Unknown. 1989. 'Revision Mapping Photography.' AUS223-588. Geoscience Australia. https://aerialphotography.ga.gov.au/Scanned/AUS/AUS223/AUS223_frame588.tif

Comparative Analysis

Rhoslyn contains a number of elements from the various periods of development in Werribee South and particularly the early establishment for agriculture and later development following the implementation of the Irrigation Scheme. The following places are comparable:

Cunningham House (HO26)

Rhoslyn is comparable to Cunningham House as an example of an early dwelling established on a property in Werribee South that undertook farming of hay and lucerne prior to implementation of the Irrigation Scheme which saw the place switch to market gardening. While Cunningham House is of interest for its Interwar dwelling, Rhoslyn is of interest for its retention of the original dwelling and associated additions to the land including the garage.

The Rises (HO55)

While in a different region of the municipality, there are comparisons between Rhoslyn and The Rises. Both had early establishments as agricultural properties, with an early dwelling established, followed by new additions after this early establishment. While The Rises involved the establishment of new dwellings, Rhoslyn resulted in new fabric that reflected the contemporary trends including the garage.

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Images



Figure 10. Detail of the weatherboard dwelling Rhoslyn. Source: Extent Heritage 2025.



Figure 11. The garage and water tower. Source: Extent Heritage 2025.