

# BENDIGO HOUSE HUNTING AT BRAC

## Guide & Worksheet



### INTRODUCTION TO HOUSE HUNTING FOR BENDIGO PROPERTIES

There is lots of information that you might be able to discover about properties in the BRAC collection, including:

- When the land was first occupied and when the first structure was built on it
- The people and businesses who have owned or occupied the address over time
- Any additions and alterations which have taken place over time including new builds
- The specific property that an ancestor or person of interest lived in and for what period

This Guide is designed for properties that are within the boundaries of the former City of Sandhurst-Bendigo – see the **map** in the Chart to make sure your address of interest is covered.

The **BRAC Sandhurst House Hunting Worksheet** is invaluable – you can download and print copies from the website or find them in the Reading Room

IF YOU WOULD LIKE ASSISTANCE AT ANY STAGE, PLEASE ASK ONE OF OUR READING ROOM STAFF

Regular, free workshops on researching house histories are offered at the Library – pick up a quarterly *What's On* booklet or refer to our website or Facebook Page for more information.

### Resources for Sandhurst Properties

- City of Sandhurst-Bendigo Rate Books 1856-1957 and 1972-1992
- Online index to City of Sandhurst-Bendigo Rate Books 1856-1903
- City of Bendigo Building Registers 1924-1969
- Sandhurst & Bendigo Directories (1859, 1881, 1907, 1930 & 1965)
- Victorian Electoral Rolls
- PROV Probate & Administration Files and Wills
- Parish Plans Collection
- TROVE
- City of Bendigo Maps & Plans Collection
- National Archives Australia Defence Force Service Records
- Heritage Studies of Bendigo, available in the Library's Local History collection
- Bendigo Street Directories
- Rita Hull's *Origins of Bendigo Street Names* (R-LH994.54BEN) in the Library's Local History collection

**TIP:** A laptop or tablet connected to the Library Wi-Fi will help streamline your research whilst in the Reading Room by giving you immediate access to some of these resources

### WHO, WHAT & WHERE – STARTING YOUR RESEARCH

Start by defining *specifically* what it is you are trying to discover – this can help narrow your research to relevant sources. Use the first Worksheet to record all you know, or suspect, about the property and people attached to it. The more information you have – **especially names** – before you visit BRAC, the better you'll be able to use our resources.

**TIP:** Street numbering in the City of Bendigo commenced in 1907 and was significantly altered for most areas in the 1950s and 1960s. This means if you're researching a current property at 11 Water Street, records before 1950 about 11 Water Street may not be relevant; likewise, if you have a document about 34 Valentine Street from 1930, it may not refer to the current day 34 Valentine Street!

Good resources for this preliminary research include:

- National Library of Australia's Trove website – use "quotation marks" to do specific searches in Bendigo & region newspapers (and *The Weekly Times* & *The Argus* for post-1918) for the address (i.e. "10 Hargreaves"), a house name (i.e. "Hillside"), or a name *and* street (i.e. "Smith" "Lyttleton").
- Google Search – use "quotation marks" to search for the property (i.e. "44 Langston" + Bendigo); real estate sites will sometimes give clues about age of a building through photos and estimated build dates
- Google Maps – look up the address and use street view and satellite view functions to better understand the layout and constitution of the property; the dark grey lines on the map view often match with the original parish plans and can help indicate where changes to blocks have been made over time
- Victorian Electoral Rolls (on Ancestry – via subscription or use the free library edition on Library computers and devices connected to the Library Wi-Fi)
- City of Greater Bendigo Heritage Design Guidelines, August 2015; this book will help you determine the era in which a house was built based on features in different periods over time; it's also available online
- Stories from family members or neighbours
- Aerial photographs (on TROVE and in the Library collection)

If you have the names of people connected to the address, also try:

- Public Records Office Victoria ([www.prov.vic.gov.au](http://www.prov.vic.gov.au) probate papers – search a first name, surname and/or year in the search bar and refine results in the left panel to 'Probate & Administration Files'. The inventory will list details (often including descriptions of houses and outbuildings) of properties owned by the deceased, and the general paperwork will often give specific addresses for that person but also family, friends or others connected with their estate. Wills can also give information about who a property was to pass to next.
- National Archives Australia WWI Records – addresses for servicemen and their next of kin (including when their family moved house if this happened while enlisted) can be found in digital WWI service records

Now you've got some background material that might help guide your search, follow the **Guide** and use the **Worksheet** to help record information as you go.

Records highlighted in **GREEN** can be ordered through the PROV catalogue so they are ready to collect when you visit the Reading Room – you can find a step-by-step guide to ordering on the Collections page of the website.

The **Guide – Rate Books at BRAC** in the **Collections** section of our website will also help familiarise you with what the Bendigo Rate Books look like, how they're laid out and what information they contain.

## TRACING YOUR HOUSE THROUGH TIME

There are quite a few steps in tracing a Sandhurst house and many of them are different depending on what you're looking for and what you find along the way. We've designed a flow chart, available online and in the Reading Room, to help you through the house hunting process no matter what!

There are a few factors that make tracing a Sandhurst-Bendigo house a little more complicated:

- We have a gap in our records for the City of Bendigo rate books – the series of rate cards covering 1959 to 1970 are still in custody of the City of Greater Bendigo
- Throughout the 1950s and 60s, Bendigo underwent large scale renumbering of streets – sometimes a house would go from a low number to a high number, an odd to an even number, both! or not change at all, and changes occurred at different times for different parts of the city
- House numbering didn't commence until 1907, and before streets were gazetted, the people living in them were often grouped together under locations such as 'Ironbark Gully' or "Golden Point"

This means whether you're tracing backward or forward, you'll generally need to confirm that you're looking at the correctly numbered house either side of the 1950-60s, and between 1906 & 1907.

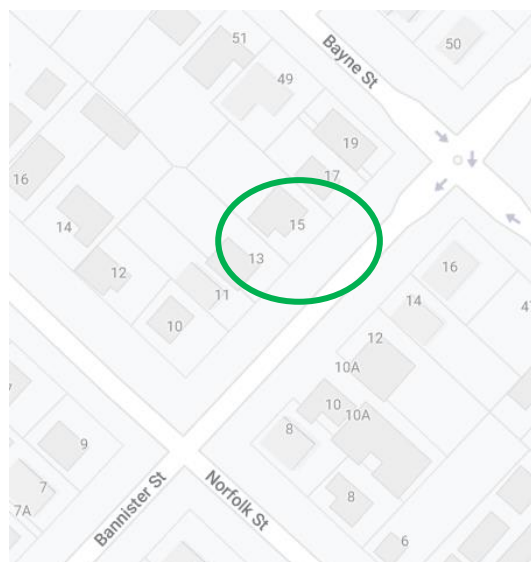
There is always a chance, despite all your good research, that there are certain anomalies or gaps in the records which make it impossible to be 100% certain about a property, its location, composition or occupants – but with this process you can get the best information available, and perhaps support for logical theories you may have.

### THE HOUSE HUNTING WORKSHEET

Being able to follow a 'street profile' through time is a critical skill to have when House Hunting in the archives but one that is easy to learn. It is important when working out changes to numbers, and becomes crucial before 1906 when houses did not have numbers at all!

The aim of the Worksheet is to make it easy to compare what is going on for your street profile (a snapshot of a section of street that includes your address of interest) from year to year. It will show very quickly if there have been changes to the number of residences in the street – which pre-1906 might mean your block changes where it sits in the profile – or if you are looking at the correct profile by comparing tenured neighbours. The table can be used to work either back or forward in time.

Let's say we are looking to trace back the current address of 15 Bannister Street. This is what it looks like on a map:



It is located between the intersections of Bayne and Norfolk Streets, so we would pick those two points to make our street profile. I would first find the address in the **1970 Rate Book Print Outs** and add the details to the table, noting which blocks were on a corner:

<b>Year</b> >	1971 RBPO					
<b>Street</b> >	Bayne Street					
<b>House #</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Value £</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Value £</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Value £</b>
19 Cnr	Osborne, May Victoria					
17	Harrower, Myrtle Olive					
15**	Veall, Christine H					
13	No 13					
11	Triplett, Nellie C					
<b>Street</b>	Norfolk Street					

Now I will use the **1965 Bendigo Directory** to see if the numbers and names are the same; sometimes the numbers will have changed if the street was late in the renumbering schedule:

<b>Year</b> >	1971 RBPO		1965 D			
<b>Street</b> >	Bayne Street		Bayne Street			
<b>House #</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Value £</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Value £</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Value £</b>
19 Cnr	Osborne, May Victoria		Osborne, Harry C			
17	Harrower, Myrtle Olive		Harrower, Edwin J			
15**	Veall, Christine H		Veall, CR			
13	No 13		No 13			
11	Triplett, Nellie C		Triplett, Mrs NG			
<b>Street</b>	Norfolk Street		Norfolk Street			

No changes occurred in this period, but it is possible that the numbers changed earlier than this.

Always take special note of the intersecting streets – sometimes the rate collectors or directory publishers would work in a different direction meaning names would be listed in reverse order from earlier or later records. Sometimes a directory will refer to a street as having North or South sides, when the street actually appears to run North to South (and the same for East-West)! In these instances, choose the side that looks to be *more* on the North (or whichever bearing is listed). Also the frontage of the property would occasionally change in some records as facing one street to the other.

Year >	1971 RBPO		1965 D		1958 RB	
Street >	Bayne Street		Bayne Street		Bayne Street	
House #	Surname	Value £	Surname	Value £	Surname	Value £
19 Cnr	Osborne, May Victoria		Osborne, Harry C		No # Osborne, Harry	56
17	Harrower, Myrtle Olive		Harrower, Edwin J		No #Harrower, EJ	48
15**	Veall, Christine H		Veall, CR		No # Veall, CR & CH	56
13	No #13		No #13		No #13	
11	Triplett, Nellie C		Triplett, Mrs NG		NOW #180 Triplett, NG	45
Street	Norfolk Street		Norfolk Street		Norfolk Street (Hinck is on corner block)	

We can see from this last record that the number has changed for this street. Number 11 Bannister street was previously 180 Bannister Street, and other blocks had not been numbered. We can jump back to the 1930 Directory to see why this might be so:

Year >	1958 RB		1930 D			
Street >	Bayne Street		Bayne Street			
House #	Surname	Value £	Surname	Value £	Surname	Value £
19 Cnr	No # Osborne, Harry	56	? #160 Vacant			
17	No #Harrower, EJ	48	? No # Midgley Chas			
15**	No # Veall, CR & CH	56	?			
13	No #13		?			
11	NOW #180 Triplett, NG	45	#180 Triplett, AJ			
Street	Norfolk Street		Norfolk Street			

Though Mrs Triplett and the Bayne Street corner block are the same, and we have an extra street number, we also have some big gaps – there are only three blocks listed in the Directory for the street profile. This suggests that our #15 may have been built sometime between 1930 and 1958 – the next step would be to use the rate books in between to find when it is first listed and more about the street. If we look at the following year’s Rate Book as an example:

Year >	1957 RB		1930 D		1931 RB	
Street >	Bayne Street		Bayne Street		Bayne Street	
House #	Surname		Surname	Value £	Surname	Value £
19 Cnr	No # Osborne, Harry	56	? #160 Vacant		? Corner block No # Harrower, E	26
17	No # Harrower, EJ	48	? No # Midgley Chas		? No # Midgley CH	28
15**	No # Veall, CR & CH	56	?		?	
13	No #13		?		?	
11	NOW #180 Triplett, NG	45	#180 Triplett, AJ		#180 Triplett, ME	24
Street	Norfolk Street		Norfolk Street			

We can see that the Triplett's are still at #180, but there is no further numbering. Harrower (who was one from the corner block in the 1957) is now listed on the corner block. Given we don't know where on the street Midgley is living (no numbers!), it might be that Harrower has a large block on the corner that at some point he subdivides into two, remaining in the second, new block and selling the one on the corner. That suggests that Midgley is on the block that becomes our #15 – it might also be a double block, as might the Triplett's at #180. More investigation using Rate Books and possibly the Parish Plan is required!

## OTHER DETAILS

It can also help to make notes on things like the value of the property and the owner of the block if it's different to the occupant. This extra information helps confirm you're following the right block, but also gives you an indication if a change has been to the property as the rateable value changes significantly one year to the next. If this occurs 1924-58, you can check the [Bendigo Property Registers](#) which might have details of the specific work done!

This is a simple example but the process is the same regardless of the record, length of profile or year. Often you will need to work back and forth across time. If you come across a significant change from one record to the next for example, you might have to get a record from the intervening period to try and see what is going on and get the information to match up. Just make sure you record the year each time and this won't become too confusing.

We recommend using the Directories (1907, 1930 and 1965) and Rate Books in increments of five years (so 1954, 1949, 1944 etc) to track changes. Use the volumes in between only if you need to investigate changes further.

The pre-1957 Rate Books are listed in the order that the Rate Collector walked (not alphabetically by street or surname). This can make it a bit tricky to locate the street you're looking for – these tips can help:

- If you're looking in the early part of the 1900s, search the street name in the online Rate Books Index and find someone living there in 1903 (the last year of the index) – write down their rate number and this should help you locate where that street is covered.

- Once you find your street profile once, often the rate number (in the first column) will be very similar across a number of years and this might make your search in subsequent records much quicker!
- Unfortunately, the order of the wards is changed a number of times so these two tips don't always help. In this case, try and locate where your Ward is in the particular rate book, and then scan the address column looking for your street – or the ones nearby.
- Remember that the whole street will never appear on one page – bits and pieces of the street (especially corner blocks) might appear on five different pages, with several pages in between.

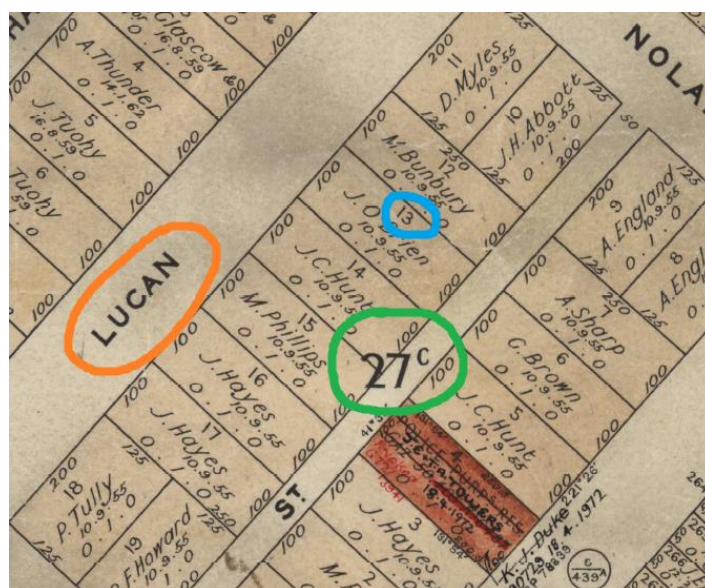
Occasionally it will be useful (or necessary) to access other sources like the Victorian Electoral Rolls to help confirm details. When tracking a number change becomes tricky – or worse, you strike a brick wall! – you may need to request access to the 1959-1970 Rate Cards from the City of Greater Bendigo Records Department.

Sometimes you will be comparing house numbers, sometimes occupants, sometimes owners but always you will need at least two points of comparison to confirm that you're looking at the right record.

### USING PARISH PLANS

On the PROV site search for 'Sandhurst Key Sheet Parish Plan', click the first map in the results and download the PDF (it's a large file!). There's also a hard copy in the Reading Room. Make a note of the grid number where your street is and search PROV for 'Bendigo Parish Sandhurst Township [grid #]'. Again, click on the corresponding result and download the PDF; these are also available on the BRAC site. The parish details from your title or Rate Print Outs will give you the Section (green, below) and Allotment (blue) to look for – make a copy or note of the purchaser and date of your property, and also the neighbours down to each corner, and if the block is on the north or south, east or west side of the road.

The Parish Plans record who bought the block from the Crown, the date the title was released, the size of the block in acres, roods & perches and the length of the frontage to the main street/s (yellow). The map only records the original purchase, not subsequent transactions between private individuals. Sometimes the Plan will record other information, such as the path of original waterways and if properties were on miner's right (RA - pink).



## MY RESEARCH RECORD

Known Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Starting Date for this Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Title Information or Parish Plan Details: \_\_\_\_\_

Names & information about people connected to the address at that time

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WHAT AM I TRYING TO FIND OUT?

CLUES TO FOLLOW UP:

QUESTIONS STILL UNANSWERED:

NOTES:



**WORKSHEET TABLE: Sandhurst House Hunting at BRAC**

<b>Year</b> >										
<b>Street</b> >										
<b>House #</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Value £</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Value £</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Value £</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Value £</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Value £</b>
<b>Street</b>										

Known Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_