

MAIDEN Gully is a monument to two human urges: the need to own and be owned by land, and the need for space.

In this unusual community on the western fringe of Bendigo, both urges find satisfaction.

You cannot own a piece of land less than one acre in this sprawled, self-contented community.

Indeed, the majority of homes are set on bigger bits of rolling land.

And in the main they are modern, comfortable, spacious homes on these modern, comfortable spacious blocks.

Maiden Gully is Bendigo's outer space.

The great majority of people who live here would call themselves Bendigonians.

They draw their incomes and careers from Bendigo.

But you dare not suggest that Maiden Gully is a suburb of Bendigo.

They will howl you down and vow and declare that Maiden Gully is a separate community, a town, a district which has the best bits of country life with many of the advantages of urban society.

The houses people have built in the numerous courts and terraces of Maiden Gully are unashamedly *neo*.

You will find neo-Colonial homes, neo-Victorian, neo-Federation, neo-Edwardian, neo-frontier ranch house, and what I like to call neo-Freo — that geometric sharply designed house with slabs of lattice work which reached its pinnacle in Fremantle during the America's Cup in 1987.

There is no past period of house design which does not find a safe and happy home in the iron-barked hills of Maiden Gully.

IT IS possible, in generations to come, Maiden Gully will be a sort of time capsule of how people of the late 20th Century viewed their one history.

This is not to forget, of course,



our town

with wayne gregson

that Maiden Gully has its own, genuine heritage.

Anyone who has eaten at the Pratty's Patch restaurant in Monsant's Rd will testify to that.

The fine, small stone cottage dates back 130 years, a sign post to how old the area really is.

Pratty's Patch owner Gerard Kelly said he believed the town's name also echoes an odd aspect of the past.

"I've been told that it goes back to the gold rush when they couldn't find any gold in the gully through which the creek runs — so it was a maiden gully."

Well, it's as good an explanation as any other.

MOST Bendigo people have little idea of what Maiden Gully is, how large it is, or how much of a separate identity it is.

Mostly, it is the place you go through on the Calder Hwy heading north-west out of town.

Motorists get an impression of a rolling hillside of bold new houses with pony-sized back yards.

But, like almost every place we have touched on in this series, there is much more to it than that.

It has a bright, snappy new school with more than 200 pupils, a town centre one-stop shop which includes a general store, post office, take-away, bottle shop and service station.

It has a conservation-minded new public hall, a leafy caravan park, some off-the-main-road

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