

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: DEVON PARK HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Blackwood-Dunkeld Road

STUDY NUMBER: 097

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE: LINLITHGOW PLAINS

PRECINCT: outside

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

PARISH: PARISH OF BOONAHWAH

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 433 E-27; VicRoads 73 G5; located 11kms south of Dunkeld on the Blackwood-Dunkeld Rd.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: State



Devon Park, Blackwood-Dunkeld Road, Dunkeld, façade

Image Date: 26/02/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the Homestead and surrounding outbuildings and land, including the garden, lake, and the surrounding park and an area of 10,000 sqm.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Victorian Italianate style homestead Devon Park was erected in two stages - firstly as a simple, single-storey bluestone residence, possibly incorporating earlier structures, and secondly in 1882-83 as a substantial two-storey addition of rock faced squared coursed basalt. All the roofs are slate. Details of the early construction which survive include carved barge boards, 12 paned double-hung sash windows, simple mantle pieces and the small scale of the rooms and the vernacular forms of construction. The 1882-3 wing is generally symmetrical about the front door although interest is provided by the introduction of bay window and a tripartite window above. The wing has distinctive detailing with a very elaborate front door and glazed surround, elaborate internal doorways with fanlights, and an unusual arrangement for the dining room chimneybreast. The 1930s alterations and extensions appear to have linked certain buildings at the rear and converted the original house. The detailing is typical of Hamilton's refined picturesque style with large timber doors and metal fixings. The new side entrance is neo-Georgian. The present kitchen is said to have been a schoolroom. The outbuildings are conventional. The men's quarters, known as "the Hut", is a plain two storey building of coursed bluestone with two entrances and a gabled iron roof. It has been substantially modernised internally for conversion to a residence. The stables are of similar stone construction, of one storey with a substantial loft under a hipped iron roof, and a skillion extension at one end and across the rear. The stall doors are traditionally halved and the windows have timber louvres. The stalls and internal fittings survive. The whole complex is set within a landscaped garden and further parkland. Not many mature trees seem to survive from the nineteenth century and the garden appears to date from the 1930s both for the choice and condition of the plantings. The lake is an important component of the landscaping.

HISTORY:

The property now known as Devon Park was originally part of the Linlithgow Plains squatting run, P.B. No. 156, taken up by Donald Kennedy and Duncan Cameron Kennedy in October 1845. In 1848 the estimated number of acres was 44,256, with an estimated carrying capacity of 2,200 cattle and 16,000 sheep. In 1853 D and D C Kennedy sold the licence to Silas Harding, who leased the property until the licence was cancelled in June 1871 (B&K, 236). Harding changed the name of the property to Devon Park, and retained ownership until his death.

Donald and Duncan Cameron Kennedy also leased the nearby squatting run, Hyde Park from 1845 to May 1849 (ibid, 92). Silas Harding arrived in the Port Phillip district in 1841, and with his brother Elias took up the South Beach run at Saltwater Creek from 1840 to 1860 (ibid, 79). Silas Harding was born at Ashburton, Devonshire, in 1821, and arrived in the colony in 1841 on the 'Sir Charles Forbes'. He established a successful ironmongery business in Geelong, and acquired properties in Victoria and in other colonies. He was a director of the Geelong and Western District Fire Insurance Company, founded in 1850 and based in Geelong (Garryowen, 450). He was also a local director of the Bank of Victoria. His private residence in Geelong was called Edgecumbe, a two-storey Palladian villa on one of the highest points in Newtown, which was designed for him in 1859 by the leading Geelong architects, Backhouse and Reynolds (Saunders, 47, 174).

Harding married twice. His first wife Mary Louise Howell, whom he married in the Wesleyan Methodist chapel at Geelong in 1845, died in Geelong, aged 57, in 1882 (PIV, Reg. No. 32861 & 3481; 1739). Harding remarried in 1890 to Elizabeth Oldham, the daughter of Marcus William Oldham and Jane Oldham, nee Smith. She was the sister of Marcus Oldham, the pastoralist and philanthropist who died in 1939 and who, through his will, founded the Marcus Oldham College near Geelong established in 1961. Following Harding's death in 1894, the property passed into his wife's family until it was sold in 1928, when it was acquired by the Clarke family. Devon Park remains in the ownership of the Clarkes to the present day (Devon Park information sheet, 1989).

On 9th February 1862 Silas Harding wrote from Geelong to the President of the Board of Land and Works seeking a reduction in the assessed rent payable for Linlithgow Plains because "about twenty one thousand acres

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or thereabouts has been taken from me by 'Selectors' ... [the land] contained expensive and most valuable dams and huts ... leaving me only from two to three thousand acres for the use of my stock." (Run Files 866/867). However, the records reveal that by 1865 Harding had increased his holding again to 30,767 acres. According to 'Victoria and Its Metropolis' (Sutherland, 57), Harding held 32,421 acres in 1888. The Western District Sheepfarmers Association gave notice that there were 41,000 sheep to be shorn at Devon Park in the 1888 season and gave the names of the occupants as Howell & Tangye, possibly managers. The former was probably a relation of Harding's first wife and the latter was Silas Tangye, Harding's nephew (de Serville, 472). In 1912 the occupants were noted as White & Oldham and the land comprising 41,400 acres (Fawcett, 2003). Land was sold off in the 1920s, with the balance of 18,454 acres being subdivided for sale in 1928. The homestead, outbuildings, woolshed and the remaining 5,132 acres were bought by Trevor Clarke and his mother Gertrude Clarke. (Devon Park information sheet, 1989).

The original 6 roomed stone house may have been built during the Kennedy tenure in the mid to late 1840s. Further additions, including the western wing of the main house, the single men's quarters and the stables appear to date from the 1850s in which case they would have been built in Harding's occupation and may have been designed by his Geelong architects, Backhouse and Reynolds. The bluestone single men's quarters, known as the Hut, was originally designed as a single storey building, but had an upper storey added, with strengthening of the footings. The woolshed was originally of 32 stands and was constructed of timber with a shingle roof. It has since burned down. Harding commissioned the two-storey bluestone addition in 1882-83, employing William McRorie (or McRorey) and Sons, of Geelong as builders and masons (Devon Park information sheet, 1989). The major additions were conservative in their grand but sober scale and Italianate style, compared with The Gums and Kolor Homestead nearby. It is not known who the architect was for this wing although it seems likely that it was a Geelong practice. Nor is it known who may have landscaped the garden in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The house underwent further alterations and extensions in the 1930s under the Clarke family. The architect then was Robert Hamilton, a leading 'society' architect with a conservative practice specialising in mansions and large flats in traditional styles, especially the picturesque "Olde English" style.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.1 Grazing stock

3.5.2 Breeding animals

3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries

Theme 5: Working

5.8 working on the land

CONDITION:

The whole homestead complex is in excellent condition.

INTEGRITY:

Homestead and single men's quarters retain a high degree of integrity.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

Devon Park, formerly known as Linlithgow Plains, was taken up by Donald and Duncan Cameron Kennedy in October 1845. Some parts of the surviving bluestone structures may date from this time. In 1853, the Kennedy brothers sold to Silas Harding, a successful Geelong businessman who renamed the property and who held it until his death in 1894, when it passed to his second wife's family, the Oldhams. Harding seems to have built substantial bluestone structures early in his occupation and these may have been designed by Backhouse and

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Reynolds, the important architects who worked for him in Geelong. In 1882, Harding undertook a major extension engaging stonemasons from Geelong. No architect has been discovered for the design which is distinctive in its sense of scale and detailing. Further substantial extensions were made in the 1930s for the Clarke family, which were designed by the Melbourne architect, Robert Hamilton. The whole complex is in excellent condition and retains a high degree of integrity to the Interwar period.

How is it significant?

Devon Park Homestead Complex is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria and to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

Devon Park Homestead Complex is of historical significance as one of the earliest of the major squatting runs and for its associations with the Kennedy brothers, with the leading Geelong businessman, Silas Harding, and from 1928, with the Clarke family, descendants of W J T 'Big' Clarke. It is of architectural significance as a relatively intact homestead complex, parts of which were possibly designed by the Geelong architects Backhouse and Reynolds, and especially for the style and detailing of the 1882-3 extension to the homestead. The architectural significance of the homestead was enhanced by the sympathetic alterations designed by Robert Hamilton in the 1930s. The setting of the homestead within a landscaped garden and park further enhances the significance of the complex.

COMPARISON:

111 Gringegalgona, Gring Dip Road, Gringegalgona

151 Glenisla Homestead, Henty Highway, Glenisla

091 Mt Sturgeon Homestead, Cavendish-Dunkeld Road, Dunkeld

087 Kolor Homestead Complex, Penshurst-Warrnambool Rd, Penshurst

ASSESSED BY: TFH

ASSESSMENT DATE:

30-Oct-01

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR Include in RNE Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
David Saunders	Historic Buildings of Victoria	1966	47, 174
Elise Clabburn, et al	Dunkeld and District, a short history	1989	17
Hugh Anderson, in Douglas Pike, ed., in	'Clarke, William John Turner (1801?-1874)', Australian Dictionary of Biography	1966	228-9
Michael Clarke	'Big' Clarke	1980	
Paul de Serville	Pounds and Pedigrees	1991	472
R. V. Billis and A. S. Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	236, 79