

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** WANDO DALE HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Wando Dale Road NAREEN

**STUDY NUMBER:** 369

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

**OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE:** THE THREE WANDOS, POWER'S CATTLE STATION

**PRECINCT:** outside

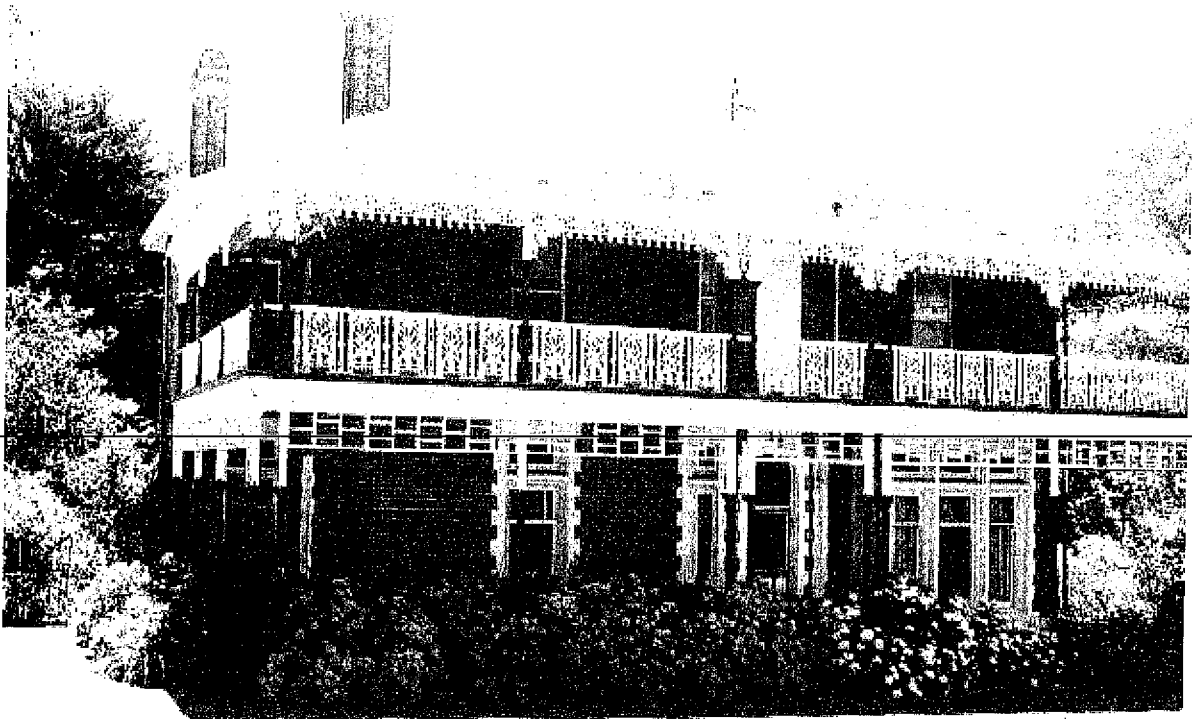
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**PARISH:** PARISH OF BRIM BRIM

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 387 E-6; VicRoads; located on the south bank of the Wando River immediately west of the Coleraine-Nareen Road and at the end of the former road.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Wando Dale, Nareen

**Image Date:** 09/01/02

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the house, the all of the trees and shrubs and all of garden.

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## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

The present house at Wando Dale is a two-storey brick residence in the Italianate style. It is rare in the study area for its scale and materials at such a late date, the only other contemporary example being Myrmiong at Konongwootong. Like the original house, it faces east and overlooks the Wando River on the north side. It is generally symmetrical about a semi-octagonal bay, which includes the front door on the ground floor, windows on the upper floor and a projecting hip in the roof surmounted by a cast iron finial. The windows to either side on the ground floor are different, one being a single light and the other, for the drawing room, being a triple light. These and the narrow windows of the entrance bay have coloured glass clerestories and they are detailed with cement rendered quoins. On the south side the dining room windows are treated similarly. The windows of the upper floor are large but simple double-hung sashes. The tall chimneys are detailed with ribs of brick and capped with cement rendered cornices. The roof is of slate. The most dominant feature of the house is the two-storey verandah on three sides and which returns partly across the rear elevation. It is framed in timber, roofed in corrugated iron and decorated with cast iron. The cast iron columns are paired at the entrance and at the corners. The cast iron frieze and brackets of the ground floor have been replaced with a simple timber fretwork. The two-storey service wing at the rear of the house projects forward of the main north elevation.

A very substantial garden surrounds the homestead, the design of which dates from the construction of the first single storey timber homestead. The garden has a short gravelled drive down to the house, which encloses a U shaped lawn, surrounded by a variety of exotic trees and shrubs. A substantial orchard is located between the main garden and the Wando River, some of the trees dating from as early as the 1860s.

## **HISTORY:**

The Wando Dale squatting lease of 19,806 acres, Number 221 in the Portland Bay District, was issued to David Power in December 1844 (B&K, 100-101). It was also called the Three Wandos because three branches of the Wando River meet at the homestead site. Power's other land interests in Victoria included Westernport Bay, Weandorn, Bass River, Limestone Ridge and several interests in South Australia around Mount Gambier (Chappell). The author and educationalist, James Bonwick wrote in 1857 that, although it was remote, at Mount Gambier "There is, however, a very Home of Hospitality Power in the delightful residence of the leading settler, David Power, Esq., brother of one of our Victorian Legislators. There is refinement, good taste, even luxury, at this distance from civilisation" (Bonwick, 138).

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According to the Government Gazette, Power claimed 15,806 acres at Wando Dale in 1847. But there were several boundary disputes with John Campbell of Spring Vale and with the Whyte Brothers, the original settlers of Coleraine, of Konong Wootong. A depasturing licence was granted but in June 1852 Power transferred his interest to Messrs John and William McConochie of Koonongwootong Creek. Seven months after purchasing the land, the McConochie brothers offered to sell John Moodie the leases of either Konong Wootong or Wando Dale and 4,000 sheep. Moddie accepted the latter (Palmer, 35).

John Moodie, a cabinetmaker, emigrated from Scotland to Australia with his wife Charlotte, nee Robertson, his daughter Martha, later Mrs Quarterman, and son William in 1840, supposedly for John Moodie's health. Charlotte Moodie's brother, John George Robertson already lived at Wando Vale (Palmer, 7). John Moodie claimed the Pre-emptive Right of 640 acres for the Wando Dale run in November 1853. He listed the improvements as sheepwash, woolshed, huts, bridges, and sheep dips. There was no homestead on any maps or mention of a homestead but in his memoirs, William Moodie recalls that when his parents took possession on 3rd January 1853, the house "was a three-roomed slab hut with an earth floor and shingle roof, while another hut of two rooms which had been Dr Power's hospital was situated three hundred yards away. This was later moved and converted into a men's hut. My father closed in the two ends and the port side of the verandah of the house which made two more rooms which had to do us for a while. We managed with the earth floors for some time" (Palmer, 35).

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The official return of stock in the Government Gazette in 1854, names the property Wando Dale rather than the Three Wandos. In 1860, William Moodie is listed as superintendent of the 17,126 acres at Wando Dale. Of the 640 acres purchased from the crown, 5 acres were cultivated. In 1862 the run was classified as 14,300 acres of Crown Land. Although John Moodie is named as the holder of the Pre-emptive Right on the Parish Plan, it was William who purchased much of the surrounding land under the Land Selection Acts. The anecdotes and reflections in his published diary on the implementation of the Land Selections Acts are an important primary source. According to the Parish Plan, between February 1868 and December 1874 he purchased 36 allotments in the Parish of Brim Brim which totalled some 6,444 acres (??ha). His mother purchased 3 allotments in 1872 totalling 836 acres and connections of his sister, Martha Quarterman, purchased 4 allotments in 1872 totalling 1,070 acres. William's mother may have been acting as his dummy. John Moodie purchased no land.

The artist, William Tibbits painted a watercolour of Wando Dale in the early 1860s, now held in the Hamilton Art Gallery. It shows within a great circular fence: a single storey, weatherboard house in three sections with a front verandah, a tank at the rear, and further outbuildings, probably the men's hut or former hospital. In front of the house there is a drive (apparently in the present position), a semi-circular front garden with a perimeter path down to the river and more formal gardens between the house and the river. The front and side gardens are planted in the gardenesque style. The complex of buildings divides the semi-circular back yard. Straight rows of plantings on the far side suggest a more systematic planting scheme. A detached square vegetable garden, planned functionally, is located on the bank up stream. The river has been dammed beside the side garden. The entire complex is located lower than the hill to the south, which is covered with light timber. As well as other conventional elements, the watercolour includes the typical picturesque device of new sapling growing up from the roots of an old, dead tree as a metaphor for change.

It is not known for certain who designed this rare and important circular garden, the basis for the existing garden. According to her son, Charlotte Moodie was a close friend of Dr Geoffrey Howitt, an amateur horticulturist who was directly connected to the very significant garden designer, Edward La Trobe Bateman who was active in the Western District until the mid 1860s (Palmer, 63 & 70). Her uncle, John George Robertson of nearby Wando Dale was an amateur botanist, corresponding with Kew Gardens in London and the herbariums in Sydney and Hobart (Palmer, 21; Forth, 133). In 1853 John Moodie wrote to J G Robertson that "Charlotte and all the youngsters have been busy planting, but I fear it will be a long time before they can enjoy such fruit as they have had at Wando Vale" (Edgar, 32). William Moodie helped him collect and send them. Rolf Boldrewood praised the orchard at Wando Vale and the preserves and conserves Miss Mary Robertson produced from it (Palmer, 32). William was a member of the local horticultural society (Palmer, 101). William's wife was described as a botanist and he gives her the credit of the garden's later fame, linking it tenderly with the births of their twelve children (Palmer, 93). The internationally famous botanist, Baron von Mueller lunched at Wando Dale as part of a Royal Commission investigating the local wattle bark industry and got on well with Mrs Moodie (Palmer, 100). Von Mueller was a close friend and associate of La Trobe Bateman. There are only three, possibly four comparable circular gardens known in Victoria. Darrawil, on the Moorabool River near Bannockburn, dates from the 1850s and was also painted by William Tibbits. Gringegalgona, another property associated with the Robertsons of Wando Vale, which dates from the later 1860s. Riverside, on the Wannon River, dates from the later 1880s with no apparent association with Wando Dale. The fourth garden, which might be compared with Wando Dale, is that at the former Konongwootong Creek Homestead. It was a McConochie property and J G Robertson married Mary McConochie. The garden is most sophisticated in its design and planting but its circular form is less distinct although likely.

John and Charlotte Moodie sold their interests in Wando Dale to William in 1863 and retired to live in Nicholson House, Moodie Place, St Kilda (Edgar, 33). John died in 1869 and Charlotte lived until 1904. Their second son, John was involved financially as well and in the 1870s Wando Dale (and its neighbour Koolomurt) were considered to produce the finest wool in the world (Neeson, 9). By the later 1870s, the Moodie brothers' partnership had prospered to the extent that they held land in Queensland and New South Wales (Palmer, 90; Edgar, 46). In 1877 they sent 16,000 sheep from the district. In 1885, they sent a "large

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exportation of sheep", more than 28,000 collected from Wando Dale and the best runs surrounding Coleraine to restock after a drought (Neeson, 9; Spectator, 7/3/1885). These NSW and Queensland ventures faltered and eventually failed however, due to "all the trouble the NSW squatter is heir to" (Palmer, 90).

Still, a new house was built in 1891 within the established garden at Wando Dale adjacent to the original house, which survived well into the twentieth century. The architect was Charles Douglas Figgis who worked in partnerships in Ballarat and Melbourne. Figgis was also working on the former St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Coleraine at the time he designed the new Wando Dale homestead. William Moodie was a member of the Presbyterian congregation in Coleraine. The house is two storeys, is in the Italianate style and has a cast iron verandah on three sides and a substantial service wing at the rear. The style, plan, form and detailing of the house are conservative for the time although front door, which is set in a bay, and the side entrance are unusual. The bricks were made on the property.

In 1902, stretched by low wool prices and continuing drought, William Moodie proposed to sell 10,000 acres of Wando Dale but the auction was postponed, probably due to a lack of interest (Edgar, 51). By 1903, William Moodie was in such serious financial difficulty that he was obliged to leave Wando Dale, which was repossessed by his bank. In 1907 it was sold to Mr Constable and in 1919 it passed to Mr Louis Koch whose family occupied the house until the late 1980s.

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies  
3.5 Developing primary production  
3.5.1 Grazing stock

Theme 5: Working  
5.8 Working on the land

## **CONDITION:**

The house is in excellent condition.

## **INTEGRITY:**

The house retains a high degree of integrity externally and internally.

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

Wando Dale Homestead Complex is located on the south bank of the Wando River immediately west of the Coleraine-Nareen Road and at the end of the former road. The homestead itself is a large red brick residence in the Italianate style, with a cast iron verandah. The current homestead was built in 1891, and superceded a much smaller timber homestead dating from the 1850s. The house is surrounded by a substantial established garden with many very important specimen trees, including some Araucaria specimens which appear in William Tibbits 1876 watercolour as small trees. A large orchard extends along the south bank of the Wando River, and contains several trees which may date from as early as 1854. Several outbuildings are located to the rear of the main homestead. Wando Dale was taken up by David Power in 1844, and sold to the McConochie Brothers in 1853, who quickly disposed of the property to John Moodie that same year. John Moodie arrived with his family in 1853, and developed a three room slab timber hut into a larger homestead. His son, William Moodie took over the running of the property, with his brother John also holding a financial interest. The partnership flourished, and despite financial setbacks due to drought, new homestead was built in 1891 within the established garden at Wando Dale adjacent to the original house, which survived well into the twentieth century. The architect was Charles Douglas Figgis who worked in partnerships in Ballarat and Melbourne. By 1903, William Moodie was in such serious financial difficulty that he was obliged to leave Wando Dale, which was repossessed by his bank. In 1907 it was sold to Mr. Constable and in 1919 it passed to Mr. Louis Theodore

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Koch whose family occupied the house until the late ninetieth century. The house is in very good condition and retains a high degree of integrity. The garden in good condition, although the removal of some important plantings has somewhat diminished its significance.

How is it significant?

Wando Dale Homestead Complex is of historical, architectural and botanical significance to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

Wando Dale Homestead complex is of historical significance for its direct associations with leading pastoralists over its first hundred and fifty years, including the David Power, William and John Moodie and Louis Theodore Koch. Through family, it was connected with the Robertson family of Wando Vale, John Robertson was one of the most important collectors of plants in the colony in the mid ninetieth century, and a keen horticulturist. His sister, Mrs. Charlotte Moodie was also considered to be an excellent gardener, and the work of both is evident in the garden which was developed at Wando Dale between 1853-1860, many of the plantings which still remain. Wando Vale is of architectural significance as an excellent example of the late Victorian Italianate Villa which expresses the rise of Pastoralism, although it was built at a time when many Pastoralists were financially struggling. The garden, individual trees, orchard and setting on the bank of the Wando River reinforces and enhances that significance.

## COMPARISON:

009 Monivae Homestead, Hamilton - Port Fairy Road, South Hamilton

115 Arrandoovong Homestead Complex, Chrome Road off Henty Highway, Bransholme

020 St Andrew's Uniting Church, Winter Street, Coleraine

169 Myrmiong Homestead and Barn, Coleraine-Balmoral Road, Konongwootong

**ASSESSED BY:** TFH

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

13-Jan-04

## 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
Gordon Forth, ed.	Biographical Dictionary of the Western District of Victoria	1998	133
Howard Tanner, ed.	Converting the Wilderness: The Art of Gardening in Colonial Australia	1979	68 & 74
James Bonwick, and C E Sayers, ed.	Western Victoria, Its Geography geology and Social Condition	1857 & 1970	138
James Smith, ed.	Cyclopaedia of Victoria, Vol 2	1903	548
Joan Palmer, ed.	William Moodie: A pioneer of Western Victoria	1973	various
K L Chappell	A Western District Pastoral Run Wando Dale, Three Wandos and some of the story of Wando Dale Station, etc	1977	
Nancie Edgar	Burnt Eucalyptus Bark: Early Settlers of the Far Western Districts of Victoria	1973 ?	various
Peter Leake	Homesteads of australia Felix	1973	34-37

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R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974 100- 1, 127, 296,
Shire of Wannon	History of the shire of Wannon, 1872-1972	1972 27