

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** SOUTH MOKANGER WOOLSHED

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Mokanger Road CAVENDISH

**STUDY NUMBER:** 420

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**OTHER NAME/S  
OF PLACE:** MOKANGER

**PRECINCT:** OUTSIDE

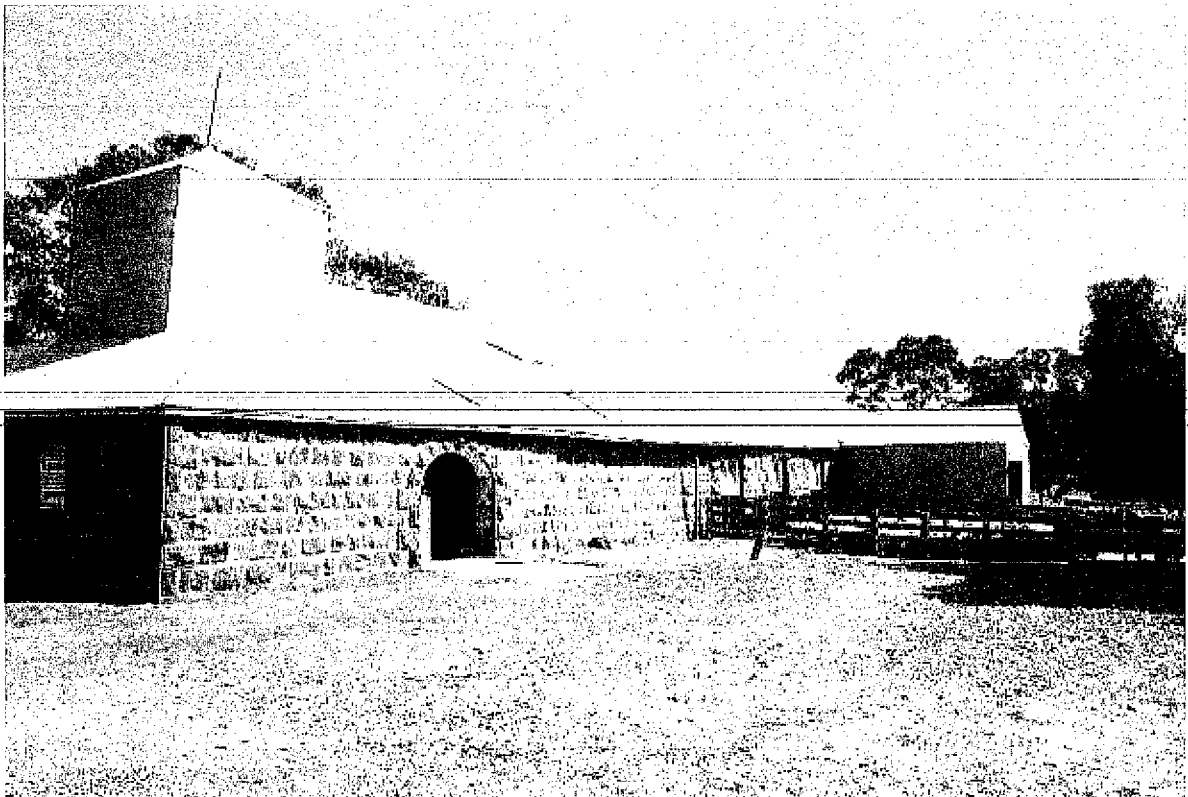
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**PARISH:** PARISH OF MOKANGER

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 432 A17; VicRoads 73 D2; located on the south side of Mokanger Road about 8.0kms east of the township of Cavendish and opposite the continuing Mokanger property.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



South Mokanger, Woolshed

**Image Date:** 11/03/03

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the woolshed and the yards and the bluestone men's quarters but excluding the interior of the men's quarters, the adjacent *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and 10,000sq m of land around the buildings and trees.

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## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

The bluestone woolshed is rectangular in plan with a low pitched hipped roof now covered with corrugated iron but previously slate. It has new external holding pens at the north-east end and the original timber internal pens down the centre for two thirds of the length of the building. Originally there were shearing boards on both sides but now the west side has been converted for holding sheep by replacing the floorboards with slats. The table and press (originally a Ferrier press) are located at the southern end. Of interest is the timber walkway above and around the holding pens, said to have been installed to help manage the sheep and to watch the shearers. Also of interest are the paired exits for the sheep. These have swivelled timber windows with four panes of glass. There are four 'windows' in the northern elevation with timber louvres. Below these, but not aligned, are four openings to give access to the sub-floor space. Parts of this elevation have been carefully reconstructed. The three main entrances have large elliptical arches. All openings are detailed with quoins and either bluestone lintels or voussoirs. These and the walls are conventional rockface bluestone. A large corrugated iron engine shed has been added on the east elevation. The woolpress tower has been clad in corrugated iron.

The original men's quarters are also bluestone and are some distance from the woolshed. They were abandoned and in very poor condition. After recent conversion to a holiday rental cottage they now comprise a large living room, two bedrooms and a kitchen. There is a simple timber verandah on the east elevation. The original fireplace, oven and chimney have been demolished. A new bathroom has been added on the western elevation. The nearby mid-twentieth century quarters and bathing facilities built in timber and fibro-cement are not considered to be significant.

## **HISTORY:**

Edward Barnett took up the Mokanger run (then called Markanger), as Portland Bay No. 69 in 1841 when it comprised 44,000 acres, 500 cattle and 12,000 sheep (B&K, 244). "It has been said that Barnett came up the Wannon River by boat, exploring the river and swamps on the way, and finally decided to settle at 'Mokanger'—the name being taken from an aboriginal word meaning 'where the river runs into the swamp'" (MR&DHS, notes). Although the Port Phillip Directory of 1847 lists Barnett as a settler at "Grampians", Thomas and Andrew Chirnside, who were not listed anywhere, had purchased the lease from him in October 1846. They held it until 1876 when it was forfeited, an unusually long time for a lease to be in one ownership.

Thomas and Andrew Chirnside were two of the earliest, most important and most successful squatters in Victoria. "The name of Chirnside is one well-known throughout Australia as having been intimately connected with the pastoral interests of Victoria since the earliest days of settlement at Port Phillip, and that of Mr. Andrew Chirnside, of Werribee Park, Wyndham, stands in the foremost rank among the landed proprietors of the colony" (Sutherland, Vol 2, 171). Before purchasing the Mokanger run they acquired Mount William and then Mount William Plains. These three became the core of many known as "the Wannon runs" (B&K, 45). "Just before the gold rushes the brothers began acquiring land at Wyndham (Werribee). There Thomas settled, building a bluestone mansion and gaining freehold of 80,000 acres in the 1850s. Andrew made his base on 50,000 acres at Carranballac, near Skipton" (Hone, ADB, 3, 391). The second mansion built at Wyndham between 1873 to 1878 became known as Werribee Park, perhaps the grandest squatter's mansion in the colony. Although Mokanger was often visited, both brothers and Andrew's family lived permanently at Werribee Park from the early 1870s. A resident manager supervised Mokanger, which was a common practice.

The Chirnsides were notable for their employment of Aborigines. Thomas is said to be the first to employ Aborigines in the Wannon district (Hone, ADB, 3, 391). When few were seen at Mokanger, a special effort was made through intermediaries brought from Mount William. "They contacted about one dozen, whom Thomas treated as he had those at Mount William, and within a month there were twenty or so assisting at sheep washing" (MR&DHS, notes).

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The first house to be built at Mokanger was a typical two-roomed cottage built by immigrant Scottish stonemasons. "In the 1840s Thomas Chirnside was a member of the Geelong and Portland Bay Immigration Society Committee" and, presumably, he could choose the best workers who arrived (Hone, ADB, 3, 392). Behind the cottage was a large detached bluestone kitchen with a scullery and storeroom, a cook's room and an outside dairy (MR&DHS, notes). The stone for the buildings was quarried on the site. Presumably the first woolshed was built at this early time. It has been suggested that the stables also date from the 1840s. The Chirnsides were known to be excellent horsemen, importers and judges of stud stock (Kiddle, 87, 320). "In the latter 1840s they had a stallion 'Sir Peter', at stud at 'Mokanger', and it seems reasonable to suppose that the bluestone stables were built at the same time as the first house" (MR&DHS, notes). Thomas Chirnside won the Melbourne Cup with Haricot in 1870 (Sutherland, 171). As members of the Acclimatization Society they were also responsible for the introduction of exotic animals but there is no evidence that any were released at Mokanger (Kiddle, 87, 320).

A second house was built at Mokanger even before the purchase of the pre-emptive right of 640 acres. This may have been because the brothers stayed often and for long periods at Mokanger as their 'home station'. Then "Thomas arranged for weatherboard extensions to the house adding three large rooms and verandahs for Andrew and his wife and baby daughter to return to" (MR&DHS, notes). Andrew had gone back to Scotland in 1850, married and returned to Victoria by 1853. From 1855 the resident manager occupied the main house and the Chirnsides made Carranballac their home station.

The original woolshed burnt down in the early 1860s and a new woolshed, now on the subdivided property South Mokanger, was built in 1864. It is similar to those on other Chirnside properties. During the 1860s the brothers purchased the pre-emptive rights to Mokanger and Kenilworth South along with much of the surrounding land opened up for selection. Eventually they held over 31,000 acres of freehold in the district. In 1885, Alexander McEdward, an absentee landlord, purchased Mokanger and Kenilworth South. Thomas's health was failing and he died at Werribee in 1887. Andrew died there in 1890. McEdward himself died at Kew in 1894 but his wife, Alexandrina owned the Mokanger property until 1900 when she died. "The AML&F Company took over the freehold land and continued to pay the rates. During that time parts of Mokanger and all of Kenilworth South were sold" (MR&DHS, notes).

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John William and Alice Gardner purchased Mokanger in 1910 along with 6,200 acres, including the pre-emptive right, as land on both sides of the Mokanger Road. They extended the house again adding a bathroom, pantry, entrance hall, dining room and bay window (MR&DHS, notes). John Gardner died in 1941 and his three sons, Andrew, Hartley and Douglas formed a partnership until 1947 when Douglas sold his interest to his brothers. Hartley married in 1948 and built a new brick house across the road south of the homestead and, after subdivision, this became known as South Mokanger. This remains in the Gardner family. In 1976, Andrew sold the remaining portion of Mokanger to Anthony Baillieu, who further renovated and extended the house. He also rented the South Mokanger woolshed, the second woolshed on the property, which had been built in 1864. In 1983 Baillieu sold to Robert Webb who built a new woolshed on the Mokanger property, which was sold again in 1992 to the present owners.

## **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

Theme 5: Working

5.8 Working on the land

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## CONDITION:

The woolshed is in excellent condition. The men's quarters are now in excellent condition.

## INTEGRITY:

High degree of integrity

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The South Mokanger Woolshed complex is located on the south side of Mokanger Road about 8.0kms east of the township of Cavendish and opposite the continuing Mokanger property. The bluestone woolshed was built in 1864 after the original timber woolshed burnt down. No architect or builder has been associated with the construction, although architects and engineers did design substantial woolsheds in the district at that time. It is said that the stonemasons were Scottish. There is nothing particularly unusual in its design, as at Kolor and Banemore. Rather, the woolshed is typically conservative and well built. The nearby stone cookhouse, which probably dates from before 1864, and the later men's quarters, are standard. Thomas and Andrew Chirnsides, two of the earliest, most important and most successful squatters in Victoria, owned Mokanger at the time. Edward Barnett had taken up the Mokanger run in the early 1840s. The Chirnsides obtained the squatting licence in 1846 and held it until 1876. The Chirnsides family was based at Werribee Park, Wyndham but visited Mokanger and used it to raise thoroughbreds as well as to grow wool. Mokanger, Mount William and Mount William Plains were known as their Wannon runs. In 1885, Alexander McEdward, another absentee landlord, purchased Mokanger. When his widow Alexandrina died in 1900, the AML&F Company took over the freehold land. In 1910, John William and Alice Gardner purchased Mokanger. The homestead block was sold in 1876 but the Gardner family retains the 1864 woolshed and continues to use it. The three buildings retain a high degree of integrity and are in good condition.

How is it significant?

The South Mokanger Woolshed complex is of historical and architectural significance to the southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The South Mokanger Woolshed complex is of historical significance for its direct associations with Thomas and Andrew Chirnsides, two of the most important pastoralists in Victoria. The South Mokanger Woolshed complex is of architectural significance as one of the finest and best surviving woolsheds in the Western District, reflecting the values, interests and capacity of the Chirnsides, notwithstanding their absentee landlord status.

## COMPARISON:

338 Woodhouse, Woodhouse Lane, Woodhouse  
134 Mount Sturgeon Homestead Complex, Off Cavendish-Dunkeld Road, Dunkeld  
132 Kanawalla, Henty Highway, Cavendish  
053 Kolor Woolshed (Terringa), Penshurst-Warranambool Road, Penshurst

**ASSESSED BY:** tfh & mgt

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

03-Nov-03

## EXISTING LISTINGS:

## HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR  Include in RNE  Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

## REFERENCES:

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<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Page</b>
	'Mokanger' and 'South Mokanger' Woolshed	1997	1 & 2
	'Mokanger' and 'South Mokanger' Woolshed	1997	1 & 2
Alexander Sutherland, ed.	Victoria and Its Metropolis, Past and Present, Vol 2	1888	171
J Ann Hone, in Douglas Pike, ed.	'Chirnside, Thomas and Andrew Spencer', ADB, Vol. 3	1978	391-2
Paul de Serville	Pounds and Pedigrees	1991	165, 170, 234, 285, 381, 464
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	22, 45, 244