Woodlands, 233 Woodlands Road, CROWLANDS

CR 01 - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, 2004

CR 01 1 - Stone buildings to the rear of the 1868 addition - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, 2004

CR 01 2 - Stawell Historical Society Collection - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, 2004

CR 01 3 - Stawell Historical Society Collection - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, 2004

Location

233 Woodlands Road CROWLANDS, NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Municipality

NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Level of significance

Recommended for VHR

Heritage Listing

Northern Grampians Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 16, 2004

Woodlands Homestead, 233 Woodlands Road, Crowlands, has significance as an outstanding example of a substantial and elaborate 19th century homestead complex. Originally selected by W.J.T. "Big" Clarke in late 1841, it was largely during the ownership of John Wilson from 1863 until 1888 when the property was transformed into one of the most notable rural estates in the Wimmera. Although the overseer's house and stables, shearer's quarters, woolshed, blacksmith's shop and associated outbuildings may have been built in the mid 19th century, the cultivated landscape setting, mansion house and brick and stone service buildings (men's quarters, stores, dairy, gardener's cottage, hot house, pump house, house stables and other buildings) were developed and constructed from the 1860s. Adjoining the original 1850s Picturesque Gothic granite cottage was an early 1860s brick house. This was greatly extended and altered in 1868 into an elaborate two storey Victorian Italianate styled mansion to a design by the architects, Crouch and Wilson. The 20-roomed house features ornate stained glass windows, being the work of Ferguson, Urie and Lyon of Melbourne, library bookcases by Thwaites of Melbourne, elaborately and delicately modelled ceilings by Scurry and Mackennal, imitation embossed and gilt leather dado papers, and grotesque stencilled friezes in a post-Christopher Dresser manner.

Woodlands homestead is **architecturally** significant at a **STATE** level. It demonstrates original design qualities for a 19th century farm complex. These qualities include the substantial Victorian Italianate styled mansion house, with its complex hipped and gabled roof forms clad in slate, rear hipped roof tower surmounted by the turned timber finial and the major rendered brick tower adorned with its balustraded parapet, arched window openings and square stained glass windows. Other intact or appropriate features of the mansion house include the rendered brick quoining about the building corners and arched tower entrance, decorative brackets and oculus ventilators in the gable ends, projecting faceted rendered brick bay with balustraded parapet above, timber framed double hung windows, rendered window sills and elaborately bracketed label moulds about the first floor windows, timber panelling in the ground floor windows under the verandah, rendered brick chimneys, narrow eaves, tripartite window in the upper floor above the faceted bay, main entrance with highly ornamental stained glass sidelights and fanlight above, timber and stained glass front door, highly elaborate stained glass stair window, and the recessed first floor balcony.

The adjoining original Victorian Picturesque Gothic styled cottage also has **architectural** significance at a **STATE** level. It has intact design qualities that include the steeply pitched galvanised corrugated iron roof forms adorned with decorative *cottage orne* timber bargeboards and turned timber finials, gabled dormers, granite wall construction with brick and stone quoinwork, pointed arched timber framed window and door openings, timber door with pointed arched panelling, rendered hexagonal chimneys and the rectangular brick chimneys. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the narrow eaves and the flat headed timber framed four paned double hung windows.

The rear nearby outbuildings (laundry, men's quarters, stores, diary, house stables, hot house) and other associated buildings also contribute to the architectural significance of the place. They demonstrate original design qualities of Victorian vernacular styles, with their simple gabled roof forms, brick or stone wall construction, and rudimentary window and door openings and chimneys. The hot house also has intact elaborate timber collar beams, and glazing panels.

The northern outbuildings over the Wimmera River are also **architecturally** significant at a **STATE** level. They demonstrate original design qualities of a Victorian vernacular style that include the modest single storey scale, rudimentary gable roof forms, random igneous granite construction, projecting verandahs, timber framed double hung windows, timber framed doorways, galvanised corrugated iron roof cladding, stone chimneys and narrow eaves.

The surviving formal landscaped setting at Woodlands is **aesthetically** significant at a **STATE** level. It demonstrates important visual qualities associated with the 19th century development of the property. These qualities include the surviving mature exotic and native trees, shrubs and ornamental fountain comprising the remains of the northern garden, terracing of lawns, orchards and tennis court between the mansion house and the Wimmera River, mansion house service yard, and the mature avenues and groves of trees flanking the radiating vehicular drives from the mansion house. The distant remnants of the golf course to the west of the mansion house and the headstone marking the grave of J.F. Francis, original overseer, also contribute to the aesthetic amenity of the place.

Woodlands homestead is **historically** significant at a **STATE** level. It is associated with the development of one of the largest and most substantial pastoral properties in the Wimmera in the 19th century. Originally selected in late 1841 as a sheep station by W.J.T. "Big" Clarke, one of the colony's wealthiest landowners, the original 184,000 acres was overseen by J.C. Francis until his servant murdered him in 1842. In 1855, Clarke sold Woodlands to William Hargraves and Robert Blackwood. Blackwood later co-owned the property with John Wilson until 1863, when Wilson took on the property in his own right. During the next twenty years, he transformed the property (which had a stone overseer's cottage and detached kitchen, stables, shearer's quarters, and other associated buildings, and a Victorian Picturesque styled residence) into one of the most substantial rural estates in the Wimmera. In 1868, the four-roomed brick house that had been built by the early 1860s was greatly altered and extended into an imposing two storey Victorian Italianate styled mansion house to a design by the architects, Crouch and Wilson. Upon Wilson's death in 1888, Woodlands (which by then was reduced to 53,000 acres) was purchased by William McCulloch in 1889. McCulloch was the founder of the well-known firm of McCulloch Carrying Company, but his years in public office as Minister of Defence and later Minister of Public Works and Minister of Health gave him is renowned reputation. During his ownership of Woodlands, he leased it in 1891 and 1892 to Lord Hopetoun, Governor of Victoria (and later the first Governor-General of Australia) as his summer residence. After McCulloch's death in 1909, the property was take over by his sons, Colin (who had North Woodlands) and Sam (who had South Woodlands that included the homestead). In 1937, H.L.M. Beggs took occupation of the property and his daughter, Mrs. Innes, became owner upon his death. Woodlands was later sold to Mr. and Mrs. W.G. Spittle, and subsequently to R.W. Shaw.

Overall, Woodlands Homestead is of **STATE** significance.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Northern Grampians - Shire of Northern Grampians - Stage 2 Heritage Study, Wendy Jacobs, Vicki Johnson, David Rowe, Phil Taylor, 2004;
Hermes Number	104817
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Woodlands, 233 Woodlands Road, Crowlands, has a substantial, picturesque landscaped setting beside the Wimmera River, comprising the substantial two storey mansion, rear outbuildings around a service yard, nearby hot house, house stables, gardener's quarters, poultry shed, water fountains, pump house and tennis court. Other significant outbuildings are located to the north over the Wimmera River and include the early overseer's house, buggy shed, timber meat house (with shingled roof cladding), remains of the blacksmith's shop, stone stables, remains of the shearer's quarters and stone and timber slab woolshed. The distant stock yards and associated buildings and the remnants of the golf course to the west of the mansion house, also contribute to the aesthetic amenity and historical understanding of the place. Details of some of the significant buildings is given as follows:

Physical Description 2

Mansion House Precinct - Mansion House - Exterior

The asymmetrical, two storey, face red brick, Victorian Italianate styled mansion house is characterised by complex hipped and gabled roof forms that project at the front and side, together with the rear hipped roof tower surmounted by a turned timber finial and the major rendered brick tower adorned with a balustraded parapet, arched window openings and square stained glass windows. The roof forms are clad in early slate tiles.

Other early features of the mansion house include the rendered brick quoining about the building corners and arched tower entrance, together with the decorative brackets and oculus ventilators in the gable ends. The

picturesque composition of the building is further accentuated by the projecting faceted bay, having rendered brick construction, timber framed double hung windows and a balustraded parapet above.

The timber framed double hung windows, rendered window sills and elaborately bracketed label moulds about the first floor windows, together with the timber panelling in the ground floor windows under the verandah, represent other early features. Early rendered brick chimneys adorn the roofline, and there are narrow eaves. An early tripartite window is situated in the upper floor above the faceted bay.

Another principal feature of the design is the main entrance with its highly ornamental stained glass sidelights and fanlight above, and timber and stained glass front door. Further early and highly elaborate stained glass is featured in the main stair window.

The return skillion verandah, supported by rudimentary square timber posts, has been introduced. This has replaced the original balustraded verandah supported by paired square Tuscan columns that had suffered considerable deterioration in the 20th century. A recessed first floor balcony is situated towards the rear of the house, supported by timber posts.

Also towards the rear of the main house is the original, modestly scaled, silver-grey igneous granite, Victorian Picturesque Gothic styled cottage. It has an L shaped layout with steeply pitched galvanised corrugated iron roof forms adorned with decorative cottage orne timber bargeboards and turned timber finials. Two gabled dormers project from one of the gables and also feature decorative bargeboards and finials. A return convex verandah having a galvanised corrugated roof and supported by introduced square timber posts is a feature of the building.

Other early features include the brick and stone quoinwork, pointed arched timber framed window and door openings, timber door with pointed arched panelling, rendered hexagonal chimneys, rectangular brick chimneys, narrow eaves and the flat headed timber framed four paned double hung windows.

Physical Description 3

Interior

Internally the mansion house features tessellated Minton tile floors in the stair hall, library bookcases by Thwaites of Melbourne, elaborately and delicately modelled ceilings by Scurry and Mackennal, imitation embossed and gilt leather dado papers, and grotesque stencilled friezes in a post-Christopher Dresser manner.

Physical Description 4

Rear Associated Mansion House Outbuildings

The rear mansion house outbuildings (equipment store, store rooms, dairy, laundry and men's quarters) are Victorian vernacular in style. The single storey, red brick, gable roofed buildings have galvanised corrugated iron roof cladding, shallow arched timber framed multi paned windows, narrow eaves, brick chimneys with corbelled tops and vertically boarded doors. An early brick garden wall with arched gate entrance links the early Victorian Picturesque Gothic styled cottage with the outbuildings. Adjacent to the mansion house are also early gates with elaborate rendered posts.

Physical Description 5

G**ardener's Quarters**

The modestly scaled, single storey, red brick, Victorian vernacular styled gardener's quarters features a simple gable roof form clad in galvanised corrugated iron, and a verandah that projects at one side. It is supported by simple timber posts. Other early features of the design include the shallow arched timber framed double hung windows and the brick chimney.

Hot House

The modestly scaled, single storey, timber and glazed hot house has early decorative collar tie construction, and timber latticework partitions.

House Stables

The simple Victorian vernacular styled stables have a gable roof form.

Physical Description 6

Early Outbuilding Precinct (north of Mansion House across Wimmera River): Some

Early Buildings

Overseer's Cottage & Detached Kitchen

The single storey igneous granite, Victorian styled cottage is characterised by a gable roof form, and has a detached gabled kitchen with introduced skillion and other wings at the rear. These roof forms are clad in galvanised corrugated iron. Early timber framed multi-paned double hung windows and timber and glazed French doors are features of the design. The verandah is supported by introduced but appropriate timber posts. There are narrow eaves and early stone chimneys.

Stables

The random igneous granite, elevated, Victorian vernacular stables have a long gable roof form clad in galvanised corrugated iron. There are early rudimentary window and door openings, and a loft space internally.

Shearer's Quarters

The single storey, random igneous granite Shearer's Quarters building has suffered considerable deterioration. The timber roof structure to the skillion roof form appears to have fallen in and the galvanised corrugated iron cladding is no longer securely fixed. There is a substantial granite chimney at one end, and rudimentary window and door openings.

Woolshed

The elevated woolshed features an early and elongated steeply pitched roof form. The structure is set on high timber stumps and has random stone and timber slab wall construction. The roof is clad in galvanised corrugated iron.

Landscaping

Generally, Woodlands is set on a picturesque landscape of trees and remnant plantings of the 19th century, beside the Wimmera River. The early layout of the formal garden to the north of the mansion house has largely disappeared, although there are surviving mature exotic and native trees and shrubs, and an ornamental fountain that are a legacy of the 19th century. The terracing of lawns, orchards and tennis court between the mansion house and the Wimmera River also survives in altered form. The various vehicular drives that radiate from the mansion house in different directions also feature mature avenues and groves of trees. At a distance from the mansion house under t a tree is a headstone that marks the grave of J.F. Francis, original overseer.

COMPARATIVE

Other 19th century farming complexes in Victoria comparable to Woodlands include (but are not limited to):

Warrock Homestead, near Casterton;

Belmont, near Beaufort;

Ercildoune, near Ballarat;

Gulf Station, Yarra Glen

Purrumbete, Weerite, near Camperdown

Dhurringile, Murchison.

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

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