

Victorian Heritage Database Report
MONIVAE HOMESTEAD ORIGINAL SITE



Location:

Port Fairy-Hamilton Road HAMILTON, Southern Grampians Shire

Heritage Status / Level of Significance:

Stage 2 Heritage Study Complete

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

The original Monivae homestead site is located 2kms south of Hamilton, immediately adjacent to the Hamilton-Port Fairy Road and on the Muddy Creek. The squatting run was taken up by Acheson French (1812-70), the first Hamilton police magistrate, from 1841 although he probably resided there only after his resignation in 1847. Born in Ireland, well educated and an agnostic, French was one of the most colourful characters in the early Western District. In 1842, he married Anne Clark Watton, the daughter of Dr John Watton, the medical officer at the Mount Rouse Aboriginal Reserve. About 1847, he seems to have erected a prefabricated house, probably imported through Port Fairy. It survived at least until the end of the nineteenth century but is now gone. Parts may have been relocated to the new Monivae Homestead built in 1877 by James Thomson who bought the Monivae property from the distressed estate of Acheson French. A substantial garden and further

landscaping survives to clearly mark the original site. It remains one of the most important abandoned homestead sites in the Shire of Southern Grampians and has excellent potential as an archaeological site.

How is it significant?

The original Monivae Homestead site is of historical and archaeological significance to the Shire of Southern Grampians.

Why is it significant?

The original Monivae Homestead is of historical significance for its direct connection with Acheson French, the first Hamilton police magistrate, and subsequently with the Thomson family. It is of archaeological significance as a relatively undisturbed site from the earliest period of squatting in the Hamilton area. The surviving garden demonstrates a typical homestead garden layout from the mid-nineteenth century.

Description

Excellent archaeological potential. Plantings are in good condition.

The site of the original Monivae Homestead site retains some archaeological below ground evidence of the original homestead and outbuildings, and several trees, which may date from as early as 1851. Adjacent to the Port Fairy - Hamilton Road are fine mature specimens of Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) and Funeral Cypress (*Chamaecyparis funebris*), as well as several English Elms (*Ulmus procera*), some which may be original, although most appear to have suckered. A row of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) to the south of the site defines the original homestead garden boundary. Several mature specimen trees are located between the boundary planting of Hawthorn to the south, and the northern boundary of the site, Muddy Creek. A wide variety of fruit trees are also scattered throughout the site, including Apple (*Malus* sp.), Pear (*Pyrus communis*) and several different Plums (*Prunus* sp.). A number of English Elms (*Ulmus procera*) have suckered along the banks of the Muddy. Several old fashioned species of bulbs are also evident, including Daffodills (*Narcissus* sp.), Belladonna Lilly (*Amaryllis belladonna*).

The original homestead was described in the sale notice published in *The Argus* in 1970 as 'a large dwelling house of 16 rooms'. Although there is no above ground evidence of the homestead or outbuildings on the site, it is presumed that it would have rich archaeological potential.

Although disused, and now used for grazing purposes, the original Monivae Homestead site retains a fair degree of integrity, as do the majority of plantings which survive.

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.1 Grazing stock

Theme 5: Working

5.8 Working the land

Theme 7: Governing

7.6 Administering Australia

7.6.3 Policing Australia

Theme 9: Marking the phases of life

9.7 Dying

9.7.1 Dealing with human remains

9.7.2 Remembering the dead

grazing

archeological site

Acheson French, first run holder and pre-emptive right owner

James and Christian (Christina) Thomson, second owner

The Hon. John Thomson, MLA, second owner

Heritage Study / Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002
Construction Date Range	1841 -
Architect / Designer	
Municipality	SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE
Other names	
Hermes number	23071
Property number	

This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online