

Victorian Heritage Database Report  
**DUNMOOCHIN**

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**Location:**

105 Barreenong Road COTTLES BRIDGE, NILLUMBIK SHIRE

**Heritage Status / Level of Significance:**

Included in Heritage Overlay

**Heritage Overlay Number:** HO8

**Listing Authority:** Nillumbik Shire

**Statement of Significance:**

What is significant?

Dunmoochin at 105 Barreenong Road, Cottles Bridge comprising the collection of studio, workshop and residential buildings, associated fences and gates and its natural bushland setting and the Black Dam located

in the Barreenong Road Reserve at 75 Barreenong Road and its natural bushland setting.

How is it significant?

Dunmoochin at 105 Barreenong Road and the Black Dam located in the Barreenong Road Reserve at 75 Barreenong Road, Cottles Bridge and their natural bushland settings are of local historic, aesthetic and social significance to the Shire of Nillumbik.

Why is it significant?

Dunmoochin is historically significant as the home and studio of the internationally famous artist, Clifton Pugh, three times Archibald Prize winner and founder of the Dunmoochin Artist's Community. The property exemplifies the values and robust way of life of the artistic community that settled in this area in the 1950s. Dunmoochin is of historical importance as it demonstrates a particular way of life, distinctive to the Nillumbik Shire, and closely associated with the Eltham art community and Montsalvat. The Black Dam is historically significant as the subject of artistic studies by generations of artists who have lived at and visited Dunmoochin over the past half century and epitomises the connection of the property and artists to the surrounding bushland environment. The dam demonstrates the strong tradition of en plein air artwork perpetuated by Clifton Pugh and later, the Friday Group in the 1990s and early 2000s. (Criteria A, B & H)

Dunmoochin is aesthetically significant for the collection of buildings and infrastructure set amongst a protected bushland setting, which illustrate several characteristics of 'Eltham-style' architecture - the use of mud brick and recycled materials, construction in stages and the close involvement of the owner in the process. The Black Dam is of aesthetic significance as a picturesque element in the landscape, typifying the Cottles Bridge bush landscape and capturing the interest of numerous artists associated with Dunmoochin from the 1970s until the present day. (Criterion F)

Dunmoochin is socially significant for its associations with the Dunmoochin artist's community whose members Alma Shanahan, Kevin Nolan, John Howley, John Olsen, Mirka Mora, Peter Laycock, Helen Laycock, Peter Wiseman and Chris Wiseman made an important contribution to Nillumbik's cultural history. The place also has important associations with a number of important Australian artists who have spent time at the property or visited the property on a regular basis including John Olsen, Fred Williams and Rick Amor. Established in 1990, the Dunmoochin Foundation, based at this property is of social and historical significance as an important example of a property dedicated to supporting artistic endeavours in Australia. (Criteria A, G & H)

## **Description**

Dunmoochin

The Dunmoochin property consists of a collection of dwellings, studios and landscape elements set amongst a bush setting. A gravel driveway leads up the centre of the site terminating at the original front fence to Clifton Pugh's 1950s residence (burnt down in 2001). The fence has a central gate formed by a residential front door with leadlight sidelights and highlight. The fence consists of a recycled bluestone base and recycled brick pillars with infill panels of Victorian cast iron, once again recycled from another location. Some of the brick pillars have cast iron capitals recycled from a Victorian fence.

In the location of Pugh's former residence are two two-storey studio dwellings (known as Phoenix 1 and Phoenix 2) constructed in 2005 of a combination of mudbrick and corrugated iron. The front court yard behind the fence contains a remnant section of wall and built in bench from Pugh's original residence as well as paving tiles, including some decorated by artists associated with Dunmoochin over the years. To the south of the dwellings is a slide, which formerly extended from an upstairs opening of Pugh's residence to a swimming pool. This slide also survived the 2001 fire.

A number of other studio and residential buildings were constructed on the site between the 1950s and the 1980s. Clifton Pugh's original brick studio, most likely constructed in the 1950s and attached to his residence, survived the 2001 fire and sits to the north of the 2005 studio dwellings. This building has been extended since its original construction and is now used as a studio and residence.

The building known as The Cottage is an early building on the site, constructed of mud brick, most likely constructed in the late 1950s. The mud brick walls to the main wing of the building have white washed walls and an all-encompassing gable roof, which forms part of the side-walls. There are dormer windows close to ground level and a loft storey to this wing. The building also includes a low turret wing and a gable roofed wing with a mudbrick base and upper timber section.

A long studio/workshop runs along the north side of the driveway, it is also constructed of mud brick and constructed in the 1960s. It now houses a number of studio and workshop spaces. The building has a long gable roof clad in corrugated iron and end wall of the building is constructed of bottles laid on their sides.

In the centre of the return driveway is a collection of historic farm machinery and implements as well as a corrugated iron clad carport containing old carriages.

Approximately half way up the central driveway are elaborately sculpted double wrought iron entry gates with plant motifs. These gates are permanently fixed open. Adjacent to the gates is a long corrugated iron clad studio with a semi-circular roof. This was Clifton Pugh's later studio.

A separate two-storey artist's studio and residence, constructed in the 1970s is approximately 100 metres away from the central cluster of buildings and accessed from a separate driveway to the north of the main Dunmoochin entry. This building is constructed of a combination of brick and timber and is known as Rick's House.

#### The Black Dam

The waterhole known as the black dam is located in a gully adjacent to Barreenong Road. The dam is located approximately 300 metres from the Dunmoochin driveway entry heading back towards Cottles Bridge - Strathewen Road. The waterhole was reportedly named the Black Dam by Rick Amor and related to its dark surface and reflective qualities. The dam is set amongst a scattering of tall, slender eucalypts.

Heritage Study / Consultant	Nillumbik - Shire of Eltham Heritage Study , David Bick, 1992
Construction Date Range	1951 -
Architect / Designer	Knox, Alistair
Municipality	NILLUMBIK SHIRE
Other names	
Hermes number	55217
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*