
CLUNIE HOMESTEAD COMPLEX



23132 Clunie Homestead
front verandah 0270



23132 Clunie Homestead
front verandah 0271



23132 Clunie Homestead
front verandah 0272

Location

Glenferrie Road, HARROW VIC 3317 - Property No 017

Municipality

WEST WIMMERA SHIRE

Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

The Clunie Homestead complex, is located three kilometres south of the township of Harrow overlooking the Glenelg River. Its most important owner was James Blair, the Police Magistrate at Portland, a Commissioner for Crown Lands and the holder of many other public and private positions. The complex comprises: the site of the original homestead, now demolished, adjacent to the main gate and close to the river; the main house which is sited on a rise about 1.5km from the original and set in a landscaped front and rear garden within a park; the meat house; the stables; the cow shed and yards; the worker's cottage and bathroom; the garage; the modern shed; the top shed or barn; and, at a distance, the woolshed, men's quarters and cookhouse. The homestead complex and some outbuildings are built from local stone. Other outbuildings are timber and iron. The main house (except for a weatherboard sleepout dating from about 1900 [double check date] and some later cement sheet additions) and the stables use a grey granite. The other stone buildings, including the woolshed, the men's quarters and cookhouse use a different granitic stone deeply stained by iron oxide. The top shed combines in-

the-round timber posts, pit-sawn timber beams and joists, and machine dressed tongue and groove boards. Bricks for chimneys and other structures were made on the property. The forms and detailing of all of the buildings are simple and vernacular, suggesting that there was no professional contribution to their design. The dates of construction are not yet certain. The earliest homestead site may date from the early 1840s. Blair had erected a house and kitchen by 1853 or extended an existing building. From its detailing and materials, the main house appears to date from after 1864 but its bungalow form evokes an earlier period. The woolshed was built in the 1880s. The complex is substantially intact, most of the buildings are in good condition and all retain a very high degree of integrity.

How is it significant?

The Clunie Homestead Complex is of historical and architectural significance to the state of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Clunie Homestead complex is of historical significance as one of the earliest, most intact and extensive homestead complexes surviving in Western Victoria and in particular for its association with James Blair. It is of architectural significance for its early forms of construction, simple detailing and its setting. The woolshed is of particular interest for its size and quality of construction. The whole is representative of the north-western squatting runs which were distant from centres of population, located in a much drier climate and less subject to the closer settlement movement.

Extract of Statement of Significance taken from the Register of the National Estate:

Clunie Homestead, woolshed and stables at Harrow are typical homestead structures dating from the early years of pastoral development in western Victoria. James Blair was a distinguished district pioneer, being Commissioner for Crown Lands (1843-46) and a long serving Justice of the Peace. The house is most notable for the unusual plan and distinctive verandah valences. The use of different stone for the various homestead structures is also of interest.

(The Commission is in the process of developing and/or upgrading official statements for places listed prior to 1991. The above data was mainly provided by the nominator and has not yet been revised by the Commission.)

Description: Clunie Homestead pastoral run was established by Thomas Ricketts in August 1840. James Blair acquired the lease in October 1844 and had erected a house with kitchen, woolshed and outbuildings by 1853. The present single storey, coursed granite house with long north verandah and French door fenestration was apparently erected c 1864. The T-plan bluestone woolshed and sandstone stables are of unknown date.

Permit Exemptions

It may be possible to exempt works in service areas of the homestead if these have been substantially altered since the construction of the house.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002;
Construction dates	1864,
Hermes Number	23132
Property Number	

Physical Conditions

The main house, its extensions and sleepout, the stables, the worker's cottage and the woolshed are in good condition. The top shed is in fair condition. The more distant outbuildings, the mens' quarters and cookhouse are in ruins to varying degrees.

Physical Description 1

The main house is a long single storey stone building raised on a podium and aligned from northwest to southeast. It is sited on a rise some distance from the entrance and the original homestead site. On a perpendicular axis, it overlooks a tributary creek of the Glenelg River and on a diagonal axis towards Harrow and the north, it overlooks the river valley and the Old Adelaide Road beyond. Although larger and more refined, the form, siting and detailing of the main house are similar to Blair Mona, a farm near Portland, which was Blair's country residence and which is thought to date from the 1840s. The bungalow form with access to rooms off the verandah is particularly similar.

The house is built in large grey granite blocks, which were quarried on the property. The roof is a simple gable covered in short sheets of corrugated iron. (The existing iron is old but no brand names have yet been identified.) A door in the southeast gable provides access to the roof space, possibly intended for storage above the room at that end. The timber verandah runs along the facade and returns around both ends. It has a simple double ogee curved valence, paired chamfered posts and a single balustrade rail. Several doors and windows open onto the verandah. Two are framed with simple pilasters and shallow arches with projecting keystones. The front windows are four-paned double hung sashes. The rear windows are twelve-paned double hung sashes. The various chimneys are brick, those at the northern end being rendered. It may be that the house was extended at some time, probably towards the southeast.

The plan of the house is unusual in that it is comprised of three 'cells' each accessed separately from the verandah, two from the front and one from the northern end. The two main cells are two-rooms deep. The central cell includes a front room and two smaller rooms, probably bedrooms, at the rear. The southern cell includes across the front, a large front room, used as a dining room, a smaller front room possibly used as a breakfast room, and a servant's room. Across the rear there are smaller rooms used as bedrooms and the kitchen. The interiors are largely intact with some original built-in furniture but they show evidence of a modernisation after 1900 and again, in the service areas, after 1960. There is a later weatherboard building on the north-east side of the house and just beyond the verandah, which was apparently used as a sleep out. Its chimney is built from recycled hand-made bricks and it is raised on a high brick plinth. Another room, used as an office, has been constructed in masonry under the southern end of the verandah. The northern end of the verandah has been filled in with timber framing and cement sheeting to form a bathroom. A laundry wing extending from the kitchen and similar outbuildings in the rear garden date from the same period. The brick meat house, however, appears to be original.

The garden around the house is enclosed by a simple timber and wire fence, the most distinctive plantings being the Californian fan palm (*Washingtonia filifera*) and Canary Island palms (*Phoenix canariensis*). Beyond this there is a park with a range of exotic and native plantings. Some surviving plantings beyond the front garden indicate a large circle. Others might be aligned with the circle's diameter parallel to the facade. While a hedge of hawthorns, in a smaller circle possibly indicates an earlier drive. There is an orchard located within the park on the south side of the main house.

Stone stables are located on the north- side of the house. These are made from a different stone, large openings filled with timber trellis for ventilation and a loft under the corrugated iron roof for storing fodder.

The woolshed is located some distance from the house. It is T-shaped in plan, built from a granitic stone stained by iron oxide laid as coursed random rubble and with well-constructed stone arches. There are nine stands in each of the two wings of the board and the processing area in the centre wing retains original equipment including several wool presses.

There are other stone outbuildings, now in various stages of ruin, including men's quarters, a dining room and kitchen with a large stove and baker's oven and a workman's hut. Approximately 100 metres inside the front gate of Clunie, the scant remains of a flower garden mark the location of the original homestead, thought to have been built prior to 1853.

Historical Australian Themes

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

Usage/Former Usage

Continuing as a pastoral property

Integrity

The complex as a whole, the individual buildings and the garden and park retain a very high degree of integrity.

Physical Description 2

Thomas Ricketts, first lease holder

James Blair, Police Magistrate and Commissioner for Crown Lands, second lease holder.

The McGennissen family, current owners.

Physical Description 3

Clunie pre-emptive right

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.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>