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# KANAWALLA HOMESTEAD COMPLEX



23211 Copy of 3935  
Kanawalla Hamilton

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## Location

Henty Highway, CAVENDISH VIC 3314 - Property No 062

## Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

## Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

## Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 12, 2003

What is significant?

The Kanawalla squatting run, located on the Wannon River about 12 kms north of Hamilton, was taken up by George Duncan Lockhart in 1843 and was one of the largest in the Hamilton area. He formed a partnership with Major William Drummond Mercer and, in 1851, they subdivided it into the three great runs: Kanawalla, Mooralla and Plains (later known as Skene). The original stone hut which survives, appears to pre-date the subdivision. Mercer, an Overstraiter, kept the Kanawalla homestead section but sold immediately to William Skene, the first of a series of major pastoralists to own the property. In turn, he sold to Thomas McKellar who appears to have built the bluestone woolshed. It is large, T-shaped in plan and typical of the post-Selection period. Then Kanawalla was taken up by Austins connected with Thomas Austin of Barwon Park. The property was leased to the Crossley family for ten years until 1883. William Cockburn Messer (later Mercer), one of the largest landholders in the district, was the next owner. Messer lived at nearby Springwood, a more substantial house than at Kanawalla. At first managed for him by an employee, "Mr. Barber of Golf Hill", it seems that his son Alexander Mercer later

lived at and managed Kanawalla. Early in the twentieth century, portable timber railway huts were relocated to Kanawalla to be used as men's quarters and a cookhouse. These were supplemented by new facilities after the Second World War. The homestead was demolished in 2001 but the original stone hut remains intact and in poor condition. It is a rare pre-1851 survivor and can be compared with the stone hut at Mount Napier homestead, the timber slab cottage at Kongbool homestead and the pise section of Spring Vale homestead. The woolshed retains a good degree of integrity and is in excellent condition. The timber huts are substantially intact, with their adaptive alterations, and are in fair condition. No substantial plantings or gardens survive.

How is it significant?

Kanawalla Homestead Complex is of historical and architectural significance to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

Kanawalla Homestead Complex is of historical significance for its very early date, its associations with several important pastoral families and especially for its association with William Cockburn Messer and his family. It is representative of pastoral properties managed for absentee landowners. It is of architectural significance for the surviving stone hut, a rare pre-1851 homestead building, its woolshed which is typical of the 1860s, and for the two types of men's quarters both representing expediency at times of pastoral prosperity.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002;
Construction dates	1843,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	KANOWALLA, KANOALLA, KANONALLA,
Hermes Number	23211
Property Number	

## Physical Conditions

The original stone building is in poor condition. The woolshed is in good to excellent condition. The wooden huts are in good to fair condition. The asbestos cement buildings are in fair condition.

## Physical Description 1

What appears to be the first building on Kanawalla on the pre-emptive right and certainly the oldest surviving is a single storey random rubble stone structure. It has a steeply pitched hipped roof, ledge and brace doors and multi-paned casement windows. There are two spaces, one used as a kitchen and the other, possibly converted, used as a coach house. Internally a shingle roof can be seen and there are vestiges of a whitewash finish throughout. The remains of a timber floor survive in the kitchen. There is a large chimney and open hearth. The stone beam of the hearth is broken. The building is now covered in ivy. It is in poor condition. There are more modern meat houses near the stone structure.

The woolshed is conventionally T-shaped in plan built with a further addition in one corner. It is built in coursed rock-faced bluestone and corrugated iron gable roofs and with a smaller building, possibly earlier, to one side. The addition, which was used as an office, is of interest. It has a 12-pane double hung sash window but, internally, it is lined with timber slabs and there are two other, smaller 12-paned double hung sashes on either side of the central window. This space is decorated with a whitewash tinted pale blue possibly by the addition of copper sulphate. The woolshed has been extensively modernised in its working areas, including major changes to the floor.

Some distance from the woolshed there is a row of timber huts. These appear to be pre-fabricated railway huts, possibly recycled after the construction of the Hamilton to Natimuk railway line. There are three identical horizontal drop slab huts with bluestone chimneys, probably used as men's quarters, and kitchen, with gable roofs of corrugated iron and weatherboard infill. These huts are in good to fair condition and retain a high degree of integrity. There is also a mid-twentieth century men's quarters which is timber framed and clad in asbestos cement sheeting with a corrugated iron gable roof. Nearby there are similar outbuildings. These buildings are in fair condition and retain a high degree of integrity.

## **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

3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries

Theme 5: Working

5.8 working on the land

## **Usage/Former Usage**

Continuing as a pastoral property

## **Integrity**

various

## **Physical Description 2**

George Duncan Lockhart, first lease holder

William Drummond Mercer, second leaseholder in partnership with G. D Lockhart.

William Skene, third lease holder

Thomas McKellar, fourth lease holder

Austin family, next owners

William C. Messer

Donald McKellar [brother of John McKellar and son of Thomas McKellar] leased Kanawalla from 1887

Andrew Alexander Mercer, son of William C. Mercer

*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/>*