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# HENSLEY PARK HOMESTEAD SCHOOL HOUSE



23453 Hensley Park School  
1919



23453 Hensley Park School  
1918

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## Location

Hensley Park Road HENSLEY PARK HENSLEY PARK, Southern Grampians Shire

## 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 - January 12, 2004

What is significant?

The remains of the once substantial Hensley Park Homestead Complex are located in a paddock, on a rise about 1.2km east of Hensley Park Road between Noske's Subdivision Road and Wensley's Road 15kms north of Hamilton. The only surviving structure above ground is a two storey bluestone school room. The walls are rock-faced bluestone with simple dressings for minor details. The building's form is unusual. It is two stories with a semi-submerged cellar below and a single chamber above. Posts, one of which is missing, and a central beam support the timber floor. Large hooks hang from the beam. Access to the cellar is by a flight of steps on the south side, partly outside and partly inside and off a courtyard. The kitchen was located on the opposite side of the courtyard. An arched bellcote surmounts the gable above. Internally the schoolroom is lined with a dado framed in timber with diagonal boards in panels. A stone pine (*Pinus pinea*) and a Bunya Bunya pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) are located near the school house, as are other mature trees. Thomas Bromell, MLC, established Hensley Park, originally called Hensleigh Park between 1862 and 1872, amassing some 14 000 acres. Brommell was a very

well respected man, who rose from humble beginnings as a carrier who carted goods to the goldfields. Hensleigh Park homestead was described as "comfortable dwelling-house of seventeen rooms, numerous out-buildings, large stable, woolshed, &c." at the time of his death in 1887. It is likely that the Brommell family built the school to serve their own seven children, as well as those of the many workman's families which would have worked on Hensley Park. The Brommell family remained at Hensley Park until 1910 when they moved to Ilira. The housing materials from the buildings at Hensley Park were plundered for construction and repairs for other buildings after they fell into disrepair. Many footings still survive. There has been no architect or builder associated with any of the buildings constructed at Hensley Park. The school building is in good condition, although the cellar has been partially flooded for over fifty years. The building retains an excellent degree of integrity.

How is it significant?

The Hensley Park Homestead School House is of historical and architectural significance to the Southern Grampians Shire. The Hensley Park Homestead Complex is of archeological and historical significance to the Southern Grampians Shire as a Heritage Inventory Site.

Why is it significant?

What remains of Hensley Park Homestead Complex is of archaeological significance for the high potential for physical fabric which may exist below surface. This fabric has the potential to allow us to understand the day to day lives of pastoral families who lived and worked on the land. The former Hensley Park Homestead complex is of historical significance for its association with Thomas Brommell, MLA, and his family who have been important members of the Hamilton community for over 140 years. It is of further historical significance for the long history of ownership in the same family, from 1862 to current day. The schoolroom provides us with further historical evidence of the way in which people lived, and the development of local schools around major pastoral enterprise. The trees which are planted near the school house are typical of the use of sombre evergreen trees with dark foliage used for both shade and identification of places of learning. They represent a traditional planting practice around schools in the nineteenth century.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002;
Construction dates	1860,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	HENSLEIGH PARK,
Hermes Number	23453
Property Number	

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## Physical Conditions

Very Good

## Physical Description 1

Hensley Park Homestead Complex stands on a rise about 1.2km east of Hensley Park Road between Noske's Subdivision Road and Wensley's Road 15kms north of Hamilton. It comprises the extensive footings of the homestead, with its extensions and alterations, the former schoolhouse, a well, a grove of exotic trees to the east of the homestead and isolated trees some distance from the homestead. The exact location of the men's quarters and woolshed has not been discovered.

The schoolhouse is approximately 4.0m high to the eaves line and 6.0m to the ridgeline and, in plan, 5.0m by 10.0m. The walls are rock-faced bluestone with simple dressings for minor details. The building's form is unusual. It is two stories with a semi-submerged cellar below and a single chamber above. Posts, one of which is missing,

and a central beam support the timber floor. Large hooks hang from the beam. Access to the cellar is by a flight of steps on the south side, partly outside and partly inside and off a courtyard. The kitchen was located on the opposite side of the courtyard. Small window openings provide light, although these may have been louvered rather than glazed. Access to the schoolroom by children was through a large timber ledge and brace door on the west elevation, probably reached by timber steps since removed. An arched bellcote surmounts the gable above. At the eastern end there is a standard four-paneled door, reached by stone steps, and a central chimneybreast. There is a pair of windows on the north elevation and a single window on the south elevation, which were probably twelve-paned double hung sashes since removed. Internally the schoolroom is lined with a dado framed in timber with diagonal boards in panels. The upper wall is plastered and lime washed in bright blue. Some graffiti has been scratched into the plaster. The ceiling is coved and treated in a similar way to the dado. Junctions in the framing are highlighted by small turned timber pendentives.

## **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

5.3 Caring for workers' dependent children

5.8 Working on the land

Theme 6 Educating

6.2 Establishing Schools

6.5 Educating people in remote places

## **Usage/Former Usage**

abandoned

## **Integrity**

The school building retains a very high degree of integrity, especially for its elaborate interior detailing.

*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/>*