

# FORMER EXFORD SHEARING SHED



Exford Shearing Shed



Former Exford Shearing Shed



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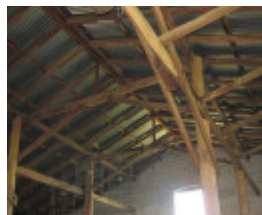
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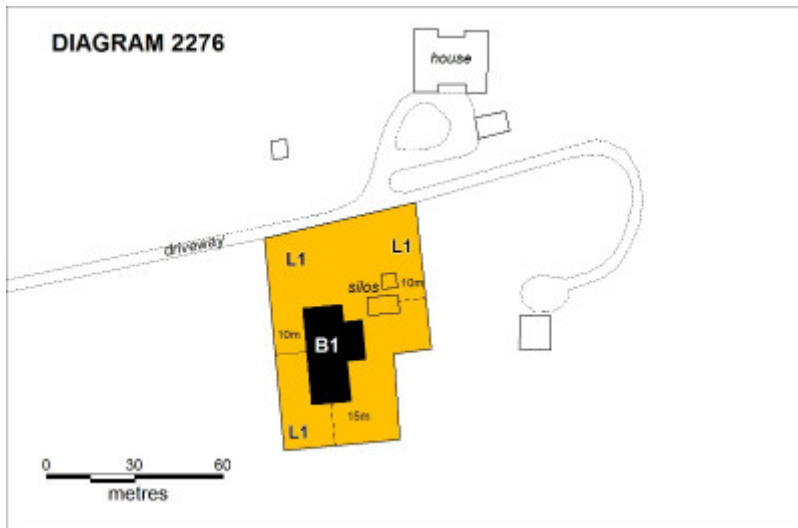
Former Exford Shearing Shed



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Shearing shed  
Warrawong\_27 Jan 2011  
(9).jpg



exford shearing shed plan.jpg

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## Location

1182-1250 EXFORD ROAD EYNESBURY, MELTON CITY

## Municipality

MELTON CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2276

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO99

## VHR Registration

May 12, 2011

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

The former Exford Shearing Shed is a large bluestone building located in a rural setting south of the Exford homestead complex (VHR H316) and on the opposite side of the Werribee River. The shed is thought to have been built in the late 1850s by the pastoralist Simon Staughton. Staughton had arrived in Port Phillip in 1842, leased a number of runs, including the Exford run, and by the 1850s had become one of Victoria's largest landowners. In c1843 he built the Exford homestead, now one of the oldest homes in Victoria. The shearing shed is thought to have been constructed at about the same time as some of the other outbuildings on the property which are known to have been built c1856. It shares with them a number of features, including the same unusual bluestone pinnacles on each end of the main elevation and the narrow barred windows. Staughton's son, Harry, who had inherited Exford, began the move in the 1890s into dairying rather than sheep raising, and the old shearing shed was converted into a dairy. Exford was subdivided for closer settlement in the early twentieth century, and the land on which the shearing shed was located, later called Warrawong, was separated from the Exford homestead block, a new homestead was built and it continued as a dairy farm under subsequent owners.

The former shearing shed is large rectangular-plan shed, about 51 metres long and 12 metres wide, built of coursed bluestone rubble and with a corrugated iron-clad gable roof, built on a gently sloping site. On the east side is a timber-clad skillion addition. The centre of the roof at the north end is raised in order to let in more light. Unusual features are the decorative tapered bluestone pinnacles surmounted by fleur-de-lys on each side of the front gable and the two narrow windows set with vertical iron bars on the east side. On the east side is a skillion addition with walls of vertical timber palings. The interior retains its original timber roof framing and the rough-cut supporting poles which have been mortised to support the original floor and sheep pens, now removed. The nearby random rubble gate piers, troughs and cattle ramps date from the mid-twentieth century.

This site is part of the traditional land of the Wathaurung people.

How is it significant?

The former Exford Shearing Shed is of architectural and historical significance to the state of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The former Exford Shearing Shed is of historical significance as a reflection of the importance of the wool industry in mid-nineteenth century Victoria. It is historically significant for its association with the important pastoral property Exford (VHR H316), which was developed by Simon Staughton, one of the major landowners in Victoria in the mid-nineteenth century. The property grew to about 100,000 acres (about 40,500 hectares) and sheared up to 18,000 sheep a year.

The former Exford Shearing Shed is architecturally significant as an unusually decorative example of a nineteenth century bluestone shearing shed, reflecting the importance of such buildings on pastoral properties at the time. The shearing shed was considered the next most important building after the homestead and was usually the largest building on a sheep run. The former Exford Shearing Shed is notable for the unusual tapered bluestone pinnacles adorned with fleur-de-lys on each side of the main gable, similar to the pinnacles on another of the Exford outbuildings known to have been built c1856.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: A Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works must submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates	1850,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	Warrawong Shearing Shed, Former Exford Woolshed,
Hermes Number	44581
Property Number	

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## History

### CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

#### Shearing sheds

[information from Harry Sowden, *Australian Woolsheds*, Stanmore [NSW] & North Melbourne 1972]

The sheep industry was the most important industry in Victoria from the first days of settlement. The first settler, Edward Henty, called his station Merino Downs, and stocked it with sheep shipped from Van Diemen's Land. Later settlers moved flocks down from New South Wales, and by 1840 sheep numbers in the colony had risen to 782,283, to 3,000,000 by 1847, and by 1851 this number had almost doubled.

It was during the squatting period that some of Australia's finest examples of vernacular woolsheds were built. The woolshed was often the first substantial structure built on a run, and apart from the homestead was considered the most important, and was generally the largest, building on the property. The earliest woolsheds were built of timber, often from slabs and logs. Where this was not readily available, or where other materials were readily available, stone, brick, and later galvanized iron were used. By the 1840s a distinct rural architectural form had developed, with high gable roofs and with high openings for better ventilation.

A strong tradition of building in bluestone developed in the Western District of Victoria, where 'basalt and granite are spread over thousands of square miles of the best Victorian sheep country' (p 25), an area which however lacked good building timbers. Early bluestone sheds display simplicity in form and construction and were generally whitewashed internally.

Exford station

[from HV statement of significance]

Exford Homestead (VHR H316) is located on the run acquired by the pastoralist Simon Staughton in 1842. The oldest, central portion of the homestead dates from circa 1843 and is constructed of pise, with extensive later additions. There are also a number of distinctively designed outbuildings in bluestone. It is one of the earliest surviving residences in Victoria. It is of immense architectural importance due to its age and its vernacular construction in pise, surviving examples of which are very rare. The later bluestone picturesque gothic outbuildings are notable examples of their kind.

## HISTORY OF PLACE

The Warrawong Shearing Shed is located on what was once part of the Exford pastoral estate, which was purchased in c1842-3, along with other leases to make a total of 70,400 acres, by Simon Staughton. His success meant that he was able to start purchasing the freehold when it came up for sale in the 1850s. Along with WJT Clarke and the Chirnside brothers he was soon one of the major landowners in Victoria. When Staughton died in 1863 the Exford run was said to be about 100,000 acres.

Upon Simon's death the station was worked by his four sons until 1870, when it was divided between them. The eldest, Harry Staughton, inherited the part of the property around the original Exford homestead, Samuel acquired Eynesbury, Simon inherited Staughton Vale, and Stephen the land called Brooklyn (later Nerowie). While the last three built grand houses on their properties, Harry did not significantly upgrade his house, and it has therefore been suggested that he lacked an interest in any building, and that the elaborate stone outbuildings at Exford, including the woolshed (now known as the Warrawong woolshed) were built before his time, by Simon Staughton senior.

The huge bluestone coachhouse/barn at Exford has a keystone with the date 1856, and it is likely that the other bluestone outbuildings were constructed at about the same time as this. They share similar features, such as round-arched windows as well as the bluestone pinnacles, seen on the Exford guest house as well as the former woolshed. The orbs seen on the pinnacles the Exford guest house are also seen on the timber gates and fence posts at Exford and Eynesbury. The woolshed also has the vertical iron window bars seen on the Exford coachhouse.

Early maps, some dated 1854, indicate that the Exford sheep yards and woolshed were all located on or near the present Warrawong property, but west of the present woolshed. This indicates that the present woolshed was not built by 1854, and with the evidence of the common features noted above, suggests an association between the woolshed and the building program of c1856, when the coachhouse was built.

The new woolshed may have been built in its present location to be closer to the both the east-west and north-south dray tracks, and is also in the centre of the complex of drafting yards, sheep dip and sheep wash shown near the river on the early maps.

In 1876 the *Australasian's* travelling reporter described the Exford outbuildings as being of a 'superior description. No expense appears to have been spared in their erection, and they are more substantial and commodious than are generally to be found on sheep or cattle stations'. The woolshed was described as 'a large substantial looking stone building, with an iron roof, in which provision is made for 14 shearers and 700 sheep at one time'.

The opening of the Melton railway in 1884 made farming in the Melton area more profitable by providing convenient transport of farm materials and produce. The move away from a sheep run to more intensive agricultural use at Exford began in the 1890s when Staughton established eleven dairy farms on the property: he provided the farms, houses and cows and the profits were divided. The Shire ratebooks show that the Warrawong property was let to Charles Field in 1900-1909.

In 1905 the *Bacchus Marsh Express* noted the changes at Exford, where the surveyors for the Closer Settlement Board were at work. It noted that the old shearing shed 'had been turned into a milking shed, and there are no sheep now running on the one time Exford station of old days, where they used to shear 17,000 and 18,000 sheep. The few they had of late years used to be taken to Eynesbury to have their wool taken off, but even that is all past and gone'. By 1909 8000 acres of Exford had been handed over to the Closer Settlement Board for subdivision, and the woolshed was now in separate ownership to the Exford homestead.

The property was acquired by Frances Richmond, the daughter of Harry Staughton, and her husband John Richmond, and the couple lived in Melbourne and at Warrawong until John died in 1917, when it was sold to the Robertson family. In 1932 it was sold to J W Derham, managing director of the Swallow and Ariel Biscuit Company. He introduced new farming methods, built three reinforced concrete grain silos for ensilage, and two large water tanks, and it became a successful dairy farm.

The random rubble, or mortared fieldstone, structures on the property - gateposts, stock watering troughs, cattle ramp and other improvements - which contribute to the appearance of the farm, date to the mid-twentieth century.

## **Assessment Against Criteria**

a. Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

The former Exford Shearing Shed is of historical significance as a reflection of the importance of the wool industry in mid-nineteenth century Victoria. It is historically significant for its association with the important pastoral property Exford (VHR H316), which was owned by Simon Staughton, one of the major landowners in Victoria in the mid-nineteenth century.

b. Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

c. Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

d. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or environments.

The former Exford Shearing Shed is an unusually decorative example of a nineteenth century bluestone shearing shed, reflecting the importance of such buildings on nineteenth century farms. The woolshed was considered the next most important building after the homestead and was usually the largest building on a sheep run. The former Exford Woolshed is notable for the unusual tapered bluestone pinnacles adorned with fleur-de-lys on each side of the main gable, similar to the pinnacles on another of the Exford outbuildings known to have been built c1856.

e. Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

f. Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

g. Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

h. Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

The former Exford Shearing Shed is historically significant for its association with Simon Staughton, one of the major landowners in Victoria in the mid-nineteenth century.

## **Plaque Citation**

This unusually decorative bluestone shearing shed was built in the 1850s as part of Simon Staughton's early pastoral run, Exford, and demonstrates the importance and wealth of Victoria's early wool industry.

### **Extent of Registration**

1. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 2276 held by the Executive Director, being part of the land described on Title Plan 442330
2. All the building B1 on Diagram 2276 held by the Executive Director

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*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/>*