

MERRANG HOMESTEAD



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Location

1830 WOOLSTHORPE-HEXHAM ROAD HEXHAM, MOYNE SHIRE

Municipality

MOYNE SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0322

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO4

VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 11, 2005

What is significant?

The encouraging reports of Major Mitchell of rich grazing land south of the Murray River and the push of Launceston pastoralists into inland areas beyond the coastal whaling and sealing stations on the Portland and Port Fairy Bays ensured the rapid development of the western areas of the Port Phillip District. The Watson brothers, who had been the first of the settlers to sight the Hopkins River in 1839, were sufficiently impressed to immediately take up a pastoral run on the west bank of the river which they named Merrang. In 1841 Claude Farie, in partnership with George Rodgers, took control of the Watson Brothers property and Farie probably built a timber cottage on the property which is mentioned in the diary of Mrs Perry, wife of the first Bishop of Melbourne when she stayed there on 13 April 1848.

In 1856, Scot settler Robert Hood, who owned the nearby Bolac Plains run, purchased Merrang from the Trustees of his father-in-law, Adolphus Sceales, who had bought the property from Farie. During Robert Hood's ownership, Merrang became famous for its Lincoln sheep stud which was established in 1872. Hood was active in a wide range of pastoral and municipal affairs. He was one of the originators and president of both the Long Woolled Association of Victoria and the Australian Sheepbreeders' Association of Australia. He also served for many years on the shire councils of Warrnambool and Mortlake. Merrang has stayed in Hood family ownership since the death of Robert Hood in 1891 and three succeeding generations of the Hood family have served as councillors on the Mortlake Shire. In the twentieth century, Merrang became renowned for its Polwarth stud started from the Merrang Lincolns in 1924. While reduced in acreage over the years, Merrang has remained a prominent Western District pastoral property. It retains a number of fine buildings and the picturesquely sited Hood family graveyard.

In 1859, Robert Hood erected a four room stone cottage which has become the basis of the present homestead. According to station accounts, the addition of the substantial single storey Italianate style extension to the cottage with its impressive Ionic entrance portico was begun in 1865. In 1875, the timber-posted verandah to the old cottage was removed and the new cast iron return verandah was erected, providing the means for the visual unification of the 1859 and 1865 sections of the house. The iron verandah, gatekeeper's lodge and station outbuildings were all erected in 1875 to a design by Warrnambool architect Andrew Kerr. A fire in 1917 reduced the large bluestone stables to a fraction of their former size.

How is it significant?

Merrang is of architectural, historical and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Merrang is of historical significance for the continuous association with the pioneering Hood family of which

succeeding generations have made substantial contributions to Western District pastoral and civic affairs. Merrang was famous as a Lincoln sheep stud in the 1870s and renowned for its Polwarth stud which was started from the Merrang Lincolns in 1924.

Merrang is of architectural significance for its Italianate styled homestead building which is considerably enhanced by its unusual and impressive Ionic portico. The 1875 verandah to the front and sides of the house designed by Warrnambool architect Andrew Kerr, successfully visually unites the appearance of the house which has evolved since 1856. The Merrang homestead, the Picturesque gatekeeper's lodge and outbuildings are notable elements of this early Western District property.

Merrang is of historical and aesthetic significance for the Hood family cemetery, which is a rare example of a private family cemetery in Victoria, established prior to government requirements for burial in public cemeteries.

[Online data upgrade project 2005]

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. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component.

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	1859, 1865, 1875,
Architect/Designer	Kerr, Andrew,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	594
Property Number	

History

The encouraging reports of Major Mitchell of rich grazing land south of the Murray River and the push of Launceston pastoralists into inland areas beyond the coastal whaling and sealing stations on the Portland and Port Fairy Bays ensured the rapid development of the western areas of the Port Phillip District. The Watson brothers, who had been the first of the settlers to sight the Hopkins River in 1839, were sufficiently impressed to immediately take up a pastoral run on the west bank of the river which they named Merrang. In 1841 Claude Farie, in partnership with George Rodgers, took control of the Watson Brothers property and Farie probably built a timber cottage on the property which is mentioned in the diary of Mrs Perry, wife of the first Bishop of Melbourne when she stayed there on 13 April 1848.

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Sources:

G R Tibbits.. 'Merrang, Victoria' in *Australian Council of National Trusts, Historic Homesteads of Australia*. 1976
History of the Shire of Mortlake. 1964
A Sutherland, *Victoria and its Metropolis*. 1888
National Trust of Victoria Register. File No B795

Extent of Registration

Shire of Mortlake. No.322. Merrang Homestead, "Merrang", Hexham.
[*Victoria Government Gazette* No 100 Wednesday, October 9 1974 p.3650]

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/>