

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: MONIVAE HOMESTEAD ORIGINAL SITE

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Port Fairy-Hamilton Road HAMILTON

STUDY NUMBER: 019

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: outside

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

PARISH: PARISH OF HAMILTON SOUTH

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 473B 27A. Original homestead was located close to the road opposite the entrance to the later Monivae Homestead

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Monivae Homestead (Original Site)

Image Date: 09/02/2002

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the above and below ground structures, all of the mature plantings, but excluding their progeny. The land is defined as an area of 144m frontage along the Hamilton Port Fairy Road, 182m along the southern boundary, 40m along the eastern boundary and 200m along the western boundary.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The site of the original Monivae Homestead site retains some archaeological below ground evidence of the original homestead and outbuildings, and several trees, which may date from as early as 1851. Adjacent to the Port Fairy - Hamilton Road are fine mature specimens of Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) and Funeral Cypress (*Chamaecyparis funebris*), as well as several English Elms (*Ulmus procera*), some which may be original, although most appear to have suckered. A row of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) to the south of the site defines the original homestead garden boundary. Several mature specimen trees are located between the boundary planting of Hawthorn to the south, and the northern boundary of the site, Muddy Creek. A wide variety of fruit trees are also scattered throughout the site, including Apple (*Malus sp.*), Pear (*Pyrus communis*) and several different Plums (*Prunus sp.*). A number of English Elms (*Ulmus procera*) have suckered along the banks of the Muddy. Several old fashioned species of bulbs are also evident, including Daffodills (*Narcissus sp.*), Belladonna Lilly (*Amaryllis belladonna*).

The original homestead was described in the sale notice published in *The Argus* in 1970 as 'a large dwelling house of 16 rooms'. Although there is no above ground evidence of the homestead or outbuildings on the site, it is presumed that it would have rich archaeological potential.

Although disused, and now used for grazing purposes, the original Monivae Homestead site retains a fair degree of integrity, as do the majority of plantings which survive.

HISTORY:

Acheson French (or Ffrench) took up the Monivae squatting run in 1841 when it was described as No. 111 in the Portland Bay district, comprising 17,280 acres and holding 5,000 sheep (B&K, 69 & 245). Don Garden writes 'Between Mount Napier and Grange Burn in 1841, Acheson French, the most important individual in the early years of the district, took out a licence for Monivae. Acheson Jeremy Sidney French (1812-1870) was the second son of Robert French of Monivea Castle, Galway, Ireland and was educated at the Royal School Banagher and Trinity College, Dublin. Like many younger sons of aristocratic families, French was intended for the church, but he eventually rejected that career after a change in his religious views brought him close to atheism. In search of an alternative occupation, French decided to sail for the colonies and was in Melbourne by mid-1840. ... By the beginning of 1841, French had become engaged to Anna Watton, daughter of Dr John Watton who had a run in the Bacchus Marsh area. Later in 1841, French took up his run at the Grange where he was also appointed the first Police Magistrate for the district' (Garden, 14-15). Watton was the medical officer at the Mount Rouse Aboriginal Reserve. His son, Edmond Watton married Adelaide Susan the daughter of Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh, Hamilton police magistrate from 1854.

French appears to have taken up residence at Monivae 'late in the decade' or, more precisely, when he had to vacate his official residence in the Grange settlement for the new Clerk of Petty Sessions, Thomas Butterworth, in November 1847 (Garden, 34). French resigned as Police Magistrate and turned his attention to developing his run, Monivae. The homestead building is thought to have been prefabricated and brought to the site from Port Fairy (Hubbard & Olsen, Monivae CMP, 1996). No image of it has been discovered. The site includes a private burial ground, according to the HHC.

James Thomson purchased Monivae from the estate of Acheson Ffrench in October 1870 after he died in a swimming accident at St Kilda. Thomson, his wife Christian (known as Christina) and their six children moved into the original prefabricated homestead. At least three more children were born. Possibly because of the size of their increasing family, the Thomsons abandoned the original homestead and, in 1876, began a new house and garden across the road on a slight rise beside the Muddy Creek, which was completed in

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1877.

The original Monivae homestead survived until at least 1891 when John (Jack) Thomson, the future MP for Dundas wrote to his brother-in-law, Allan about James Thomson senior, 'The Governor' going down to the old house (Macdonald, 205). Some structures were relocated to the new homestead to be used as outbuildings.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.1 Grazing stock

Theme 5: Working

5.8 Working the land

Theme 7: Governing

7.6 Administering Australia

7.6.3 Policing Australia

Theme 9: Marking the phases of life

9.7 Dying

9.7.1 Dealing with human remains

9.7.2 Remembering the dead

CONDITION:

Excellent archaeological potential. Plantings are in good condition.

INTEGRITY:

archaeological site

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The original Monivae homestead site is located 2kms south of Hamilton, immediately adjacent to the Hamilton-Port Fairy Road and on the Muddy Creek. The squatting run was taken up by Acheson French (1812-70), the first Hamilton police magistrate, from 1841 although he probably resided there only after his resignation in 1847. Born in Ireland, well educated and an agnostic, French was one of the most colourful characters in the early Western District. In 1842, he married Anne Clark Watton, the daughter of Dr John Watton, the medical officer at the Mount Rouse Aboriginal Reserve. About 1847, he seems to have erected a prefabricated house, probably imported through Port Fairy. It survived at least until the end of the nineteenth century but is now gone. Parts may have been relocated to the new Monivae Homestead built in 1877 by James Thomson who bought the Monivae property from the distressed estate of Acheson French. A substantial garden and further landscaping survives to clearly mark the original site. It remains one of the most important abandoned homestead sites in the Shire of Southern Grampians and has excellent potential as an archaeological site.

How is it significant?

The original Monivae Homestead site is of historical and archaeological significance to the Shire of Southern Grampians.

Why is it significant?

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The original Monivae Homestead is of historical significance for its direct connection with Acheson French, the first Hamilton police magistrate, and subsequently with the Thomson family. It is of archaeological significance as a relatively undisturbed site from the earliest period of squatting in the Hamilton area. The surviving garden demonstrates a typical homestead garden layout from the mid-nineteenth century.

COMPARISON:

034 Wilderness (Original Site), Wilderness Road, Gritjurk

045 Park Hill (Original Site), Schuller's Road, Yulecart

332 Mount Koroit Homestead (Original Site), Heffernan's Lane, Coleraine

ASSESSED BY: tfh

ASSESSMENT DATE:

2/09/2001

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR Include in RNE Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Anita Macdonald	Mariposa	1981	117-8
Don Garden	Hamilton, A Western District History	1984	var.
Ian Black	Monivae	1996	1-32
Paul De Serville	Port Phillip Gentlemen	1980	48, 176
R.V. Billis and A.S. Kenyon	PastoralPioneers of the Port Phillip District	1974	69, 245
Timothy Hubbard and Karen Olsen	Monivae Homestead, Hamilton, Conservation Management Plan	1996	var.