

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: MAJOR MITCHELL PLAQUE

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Summit of Mt Napier BYADUK NORTH

STUDY NUMBER: 105

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: outside

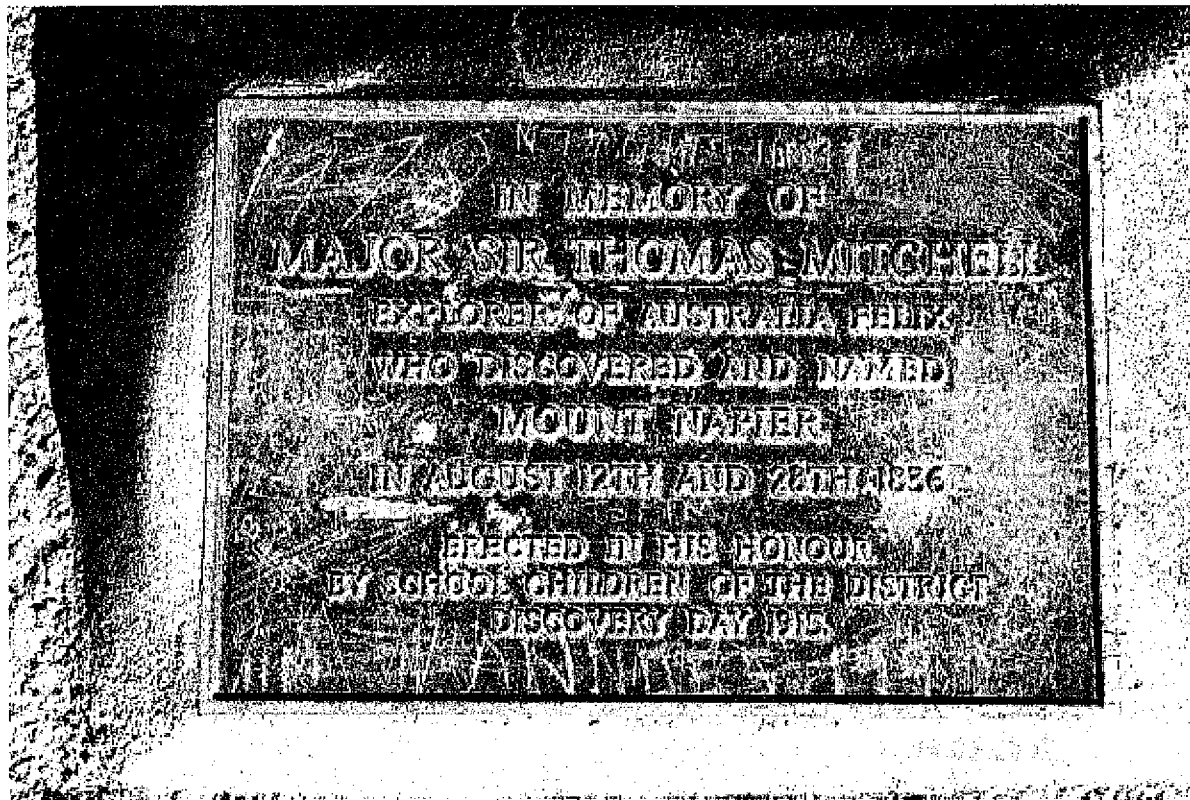
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

PARISH: PARISH OF NAPIER

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 474 C; VicRoads 73B8; Mount Napier Access Road, off the Mt Napier Road, then by track to summit.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Major Mitchell Plaque, summit of Mount Napier, Byaduk North.

Image Date: 04/05/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the plaque and its immediate surrounds including the drystone walls

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

A simple bronze plaque mounted on a low square concrete base on the summit of Mount Napier. The plaque commemorates Major Mitchell's ascent of the mountain in 1836, and reads "In Memory of/ Major Sir Thomas Mitchell/ Explorer of Australia Felix/ Who discovered and named/ Mount Napier/ in August 12th and 28th 1836/ Erected in his honour/ by school children of the district/ Discovery Day 1915".

The plaque was erected by local school children from Byaduk in 1915.

HISTORY:

Major Mitchell passed nearby this place at the beginning of September 1836, on his way back to Sydney. He was particularly keen to climb the mountain to obtain trigonometric references and to determine his best route homewards.

The plaque was erected in 1915 by the children of nearby schools at Byaduk. There was a strong local interest in Mitchell and his exploration. "In 1914 a movement was initiated by Charles McGenniskien, supported among others by R. Nagorka, D. Kinghorn, Tjhommas Robertson and T. H. Laidlaw, to erect a cairn on Mount Napier in memory of Major Sir Thomas Mitchell. The former New south Wales Surveyor-General was beginning to loom large in the eyes of Hamiltonians as the 'discoverer' of the district, and in June 1914 a tablet in his honour was unveiled at the Higher elementary School. Now, under McGenniskien's enthusiasm, working bees built a cairn on the Mount which had so interested Mitchell. The cairn was unveiled in June 1915, the first stage of a popular resort which was to be developed further in the 1920s" (Garden, 182).

In the 1840s and 1850s the mountain was an important landmark used to delineate the boundaries of various squatting runs [Mount Napier, Cape Wrath, Brisbane Hill, Lyne, and Old Stockyard (later Banemore)]. This is evidenced by the construction of drystone walls which meet close to the summit.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 2: Peopling Australia
2.5 Promoting settlement

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies
3.3 Surveying the continent
3.3.1 Looking for inland seas and waterways
3.3.4 Looking for land with agricultural potential

Theme 8: Developing Australia's cultural life
8.7 Honouring achievement
8.9 Commemorating significant events

CONDITION:

The plaque is in good condition and is intact.

INTEGRITY:

High degree of integrity

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

Major Mitchell's expedition passed nearby this place early in September 1836, when he made several side trips to the summit of Mt Napier in an effort to get bearings and to determine his way forward. Mt Napier was one of the most important places on the expedition. He climbed it on 4th September and his journal entry for that day is extensive.

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Monuments and memorials to commemorate Major Mitchell's epic 1836 journey can be found in many locations throughout south western Victoria. The Major crossed Victoria's northern and western plains, found a European settlement already established at Portland, and returned to New South Wales to give a glowing account of the rich land of 'Australia Felix'. One hundred years later, local communities at points along his former route engaged enthusiastically in a bout of centennial monument building. After war memorials, the Mitchell monuments are the most common form of public commemoration in the region. The form of memorial to Major Mitchell at the summit of Mount Napier takes the form of a simple bronze plaque, mounted on a large square concrete base. This is located at the summit of Mount Napier.

How is it significant?

The Major Mitchell Plaque at the summit of Mount Napier of historical significance to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Major Mitchell plaque at the summit of Mount Napier is of historical significance because it commemorates the very beginning of European interest in, occupation of and subsequent exploitation of the further Western District. It is example of the way in which Major Mitchell is revered as a person of extreme importance within the community.

COMPARISON:

298 Major Mitchell Monument, Lake Repose, Bundoran Lane, Glenthompson (Strathmore)
101 Major Mitchell memorial and water trough, Dunkeld

ASSESSED BY: TFH

ASSESSMENT DATE: 02-Nov-01

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
Don Garden	Hamilton A Western District History	1984	182
Major T. L Mitchell	Three Expeditions Into The Interior of Eastern Australia - Volume Two	1839	245-251