

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** RUINED HOUSE AND OUTBUILDING

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Mirranatwa School Road MIRRANATWA

**STUDY NUMBER:** 317

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**PRECINCT:** outside

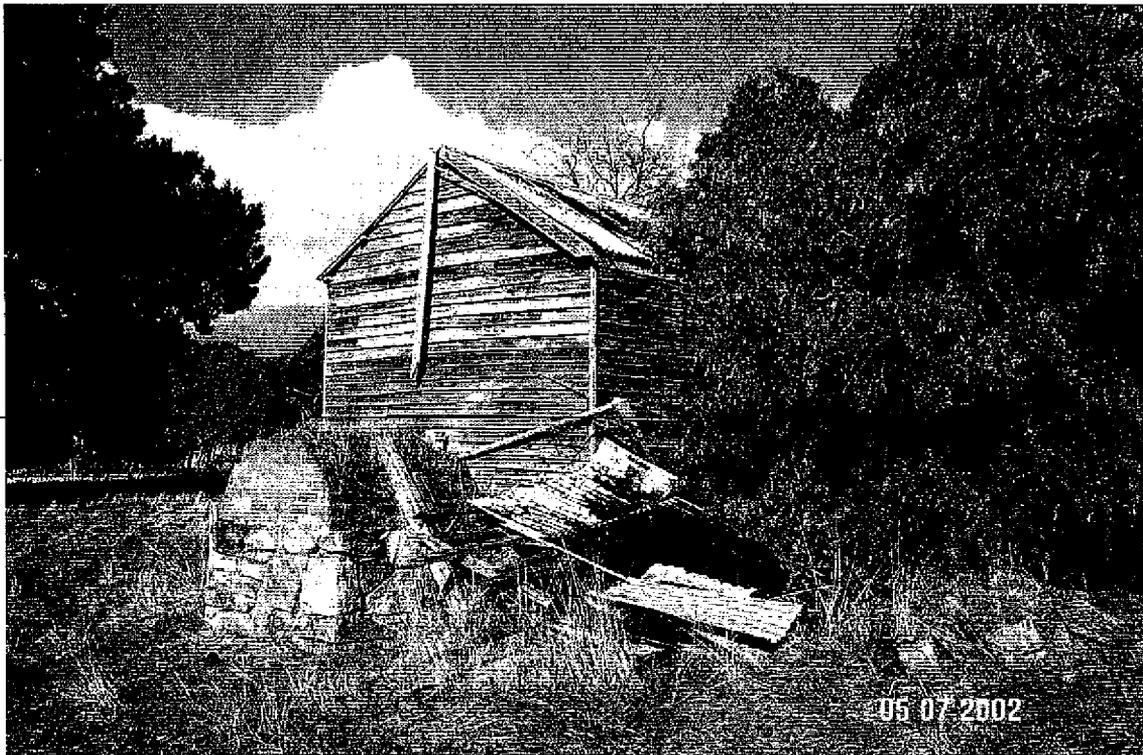
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ALLOTMENT:** 59      **SECTION:** 1 (only section in Parish)      **PARISH:** PARISH OF MIRRANATWA

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 390 F5; VicRoads 559 H8; located on the north side of the Mirranatwa School Road, beside the Mirranatwa hall and former school halfway between Addinsall's Road and Mirranatwa Road

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Heritage Inventory



Ruined House and Outbuilding, Mirranatwa School Road, Mirranatwa

**Image Date:** 5/07/02

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the structures, including the house, outbuilding, oven and 10 000 square metres around the house, to include all of the garden and archaeological site.

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## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

The ruined house and outbuildings located on the Mirranatwa School Road consist of a small ruined timber house, and a small timber outbuilding, thought to be a laundry. An oven is located next to the house, constructed of brick with a dome, possibly used for baking bread. The remains of an extensive vegetable and flower garden surround the site, evident in the disturbed earth and uneven ground which clearly show where garden beds, paths and furrows have been created. Adjacent to the ruined house is a large Peppercorn tree (*Schinus molle*). A mature Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*) is also on the site.

## **HISTORY:**

The land, comprising 320 acres, on which the former residence and outbuildings stand was purchased from the Crown by W[William] J. Dark, as a selection in the 1870s (Clabburn et. al, 33). Thomas Dark arrived in the Victoria Valley area in the early 1870s, with his two eldest sons, Arthur and William. Thomas Dark and his wife Martha Jane (nee Harman) were married in the Church of England, Belfast (Port Fairy) in 1851 (VPI, Reg. No. 30524), and soon after moved to Hamilton, where their first two children, Arthur (1854) and William (1856) were born (ibid., 7089 & 9445). It appears that the family may have been in the Victoria Valley as early as 1858, when their third child, Sarah Jane was born in 1858 (ibid., 18126). It appears that the Dark family returned to Hamilton shortly after this, and remained there until 1874, when their tenth child, Agnes Louise was born (ibid., 2810).

Although the Parish plans do not indicate the exact date when selections were taken up, it is likely that Thomas Dark and his two sons, Arthur and William took up land between 1874 and 1875. Thomas and William selected adjacent allotments of 320 acres, being allotments 57, 59 and Arthur took up another adjacent allotment, 28a, of 120 acres (Department of Lands and Survey).

The Darks operated as shingle cutters in the Victoria Forest, where shingles were split from wattle trees which had the bark removed and dried flat to use for local roofing. The shingles were split and sent away to be sold for use in other towns (Clabburn, et. al., 33).

William Dark married Phoebe Mulley in 1884 (VPI, Reg. No., 2274), and it appears that the couple moved to Brunswick, Melbourne from 1885, where at least 3 of their children were born (ibid.). Other members of the Dark family remained in the Valley, and have continued to be active members of the community, serving in the Church, Red Cross and other groups.

It appears that the ruined house and outbuildings may date from a later period than the occupation of William Dark, perhaps from the late nineteenth century or early twentieth century. The history of the ownership of the land after the Dark occupation is not known, although further research will assist in gaining a clearer understanding.

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.4 Making forests into a saleable resource

3.8 Moving goods and people

3.8.5 Moving goods and people on land

3.8.6 Building and maintaining railways

3.8.7 Building and maintaining roads

3.11 Clearing vegetation

3.16 Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure

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Theme 5: Working

5.8 Working on the land.

**CONDITION:**

The house is in ruinous condition, the timber laundry is in poor condition.

**INTEGRITY:**

high degree of integrity as an archaeological site

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

The ruined house and outbuilding are located on the north side of the Mirranatwa School Road, in the hamlet of Mirranatwa. The ruined house is of timber, and dates from the late nineteenth century or early twentieth century, as does the timber outbuilding, probably a laundry. Adjacent to the house is a domed brick baking oven which is in poor repair. The land around the house and outbuilding indicates the remains of a substantial vegetable and flower garden, with much disturbed and furrowed earth evident. The land was taken up by William J. Dark in 1874-75 under the Land Selection Acts. Dark worked with his brother Arthur and father Thomas as a shingle splitter in the Victoria Forest. It is believed that he left the area in about 1884, and the current house and outbuildings were built after this date. There has been no builder associated with the design. The house is in ruinous condition, the brick oven and laundry are in poor condition, although all structures retain a high degree of integrity.

How is it significant?

The ruined house and outbuilding are of historical significance as items for the Victorian Heritage Inventory

Why is it significant?

The ruined house and outbuilding are of historical significance for their association with the local family of the Darks, who have been in the Victoria Valley and Mirranatwa area since 1874. It is of further historical significance as it provides us with evidence and a physical reminder of a past way of life.

**COMPARISON:**

322 Rosebank, Neate's Road, Victoria Valley

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**ASSESSED BY:** TFH & MGT

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

5/07/2002

**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
Department of Justice Victoria	Pioneer Index Victoria 1836 - 1888	2001	
Department of Lands and Survey	Mirranatwa County of Dundas	1880	
Elsie Clabburn, Iris Field, Betty Gordon & Kath Dickie	Dunkeld & District: A Short History	1995	33-4