

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: SHEPHERD'S HUT (DEVON PARK 2)

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Chatsworth-Hamilton Road PENSURST

STUDY NUMBER: 348

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE: NICHOL'S HUT; DEVON PARK OUTSTATION

PRECINCT: outside

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 1 **SECTION:** E **PARISH:** PARISH OF KAY

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 475 A; VicRoads 73F6; located in the north-east corner of the intersection of the Chatsworth-Hamilton Road and the Penshurst-Dunkeld Road 10kms north of Penshurst and 15kms south of Dunkeld.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Shepherd's Hut, Chatsworth Road, Penshurst

Image Date: 26/02/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All of the exterior of the building, the existing trees and all of the land within a 25 metre radius of any edge of the building.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The hut is a single storey stone building of one room facing east and overlooking a nearby creek. Its external dimensions are approximately 12' x 18' x 12' (3.6m x 5.4m x 3.6m). There is a central ledge and brace door on the eastern side and one window opening with the timber frame missing and the wall below collapsed and cracking above. It is not possible to determine what type of window it was. There was a window in the same position on the west wall which is also missing. This window opening is intact although the inner skin of the wall has collapsed. The chimney, now collapsed, was on the northern side. The walls are constructed of roughly squared bluestone in 12" (300mm) beds of random rubble with lintels over the door, windows and fireplace. The timber framed hip roof is clad with corrugated iron and has remnants of ogee guttering. (It was not possible to see a brand on the underside of the iron which may not be the original.) The walls are not lined or finished in any way internally. The ceiling is lined with pine boards and the floor appears to have been hardwood boards. The hut is situated on a slight rise with some mature pine trees surrounding it. There is one dead eucalypt in front of the hut. There is also very recent planting. The hut contains no furniture, is little altered and is in a near ruinous condition with serious failure imminent in the western wall.

HISTORY:

The Parish Plan indicates that the block of land on which this hut stands, along with all of the surrounding land, was sold to Silas Harding of Devon Park in May 1860. It comprised 163 acres 1 rood and 24 perches. The earlier plan of Country Lands Parish of Kay, dated 1864, indicates a "bush track from Mount Rouse to Dunkeld" passing immediately to the east of the hut. The ground is described as "high land poor light soil two to four inches in depth subsoil stiff cold clay with ironstone gravel lightly timbered with stunted Banksia". Silas Harding and his brother Elias arrived in the Port Phillip District in 1841 and, in 1853, the former took up the Linlithgow Plains squatting run, later renamed Devon Park which comprised more than 16,000 acres (B&K, 78; de Serville, 472).

It is not known for certain when this hut was built nor its purpose. On the one hand it may represent the period after 1844 when sheep were shepherded from outstations, before extensive fencing appeared in the later 1850s and well before the sale of land under the Land Selection Acts in the 1860s. On the other hand, from its materials and detailing, the hut appears to date from between 1853 and 1863, when Silas Harding, the owner of Devon Park, obtained the licence for Linlithgow Plains and when the allotment on which it stands was sold to him. In 1862, Harding began a protracted dispute with the Board of Land and Works over the assessment of his rent. He complains specifically that "about twenty-one thousand acres or thereabouts has been taken from me by "Selectors" without any reduction in the rental ... the land thus taken from me was declared open for selection in the month of August last, and contained expensive and most valuable Dams and Huts ... leaving me only from two to three thousand acres for the use of my stock." (Run Files 866-867)

With less need for shepherds, the hut may have been occupied by a rabbitier when rabbits became a pest from the later 1860s. It is known locally as "Nichol's Hut". The identity of Nichol is not known, but a Charlie Nicol, aged 10 and the eldest son of Archibald and Caroline Nicol, was buried in the New Dunkeld cemetery in 1898, one of the first people interred there. Jack Riddle was a rabbitier on Devon Park and his son, Sidney worked as a trapper on the neighbouring property of Sazli for twenty-six years (Clabburn, 54-5). The shepherd's hut formerly associated with Nareeb Nareeb was occupied by a rabbitier and is known as Sammy's Hut.

A different hut, formerly associated with Devon Park, is illustrated in 'Dunkeld & District, a Short History' for which the date 1844 is suggested (Clabburn, 17). It is slightly larger, probably of two or three rooms, with the same roof form, and still in relatively good condition. There were also other improvements. The

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complex was occupied by the Gordon family who were farmers from 1920. One of its more notable features is the well crafted cornice on its chimney. Because the chimney has collapsed in the smaller hut, it is not possible to compare the detailing of the two cornices. It is clear that, because this land was purchased by Silas Harding in his own right and remained a part of Devon Park for a long time, that Nicol's hut was not built for or by a selector.

Rabbit trapping continued well into the twentieth century. During the Great Depression, rabbits were an important source of food for needy families. Rabbit numbers increased during the Second World War because trapping declined. The plague was at its worst in the 1950s and 1960s before the introduction of myxamatoxis succeeded.

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 on the land

CONDITION:

The structure is in very poor condition.

INTEGRITY:

high

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The abandoned hut, one of at least two formerly associated with the Devon Park squatting run, is located in the north-east corner of the intersection of the Chatsworth-Hamilton Road and the Penshurst-Dunkeld Road, on a slight rise about 500m from the intersection. The date of its construction is not known nor is its purpose. The hut may have been built originally for a shepherd or a rabbitier or both. A survey preliminary to the Parish Plan suggests that the hut was positioned on an important track between the homestead and Penshurst and above a crossing of the nearby creek. It is about 6.0kms south-west of Devon Park homestead. No vestige of the track survives today. The bluestone construction of the hut is basic and its style is vernacular, having one room and a chimney. It is little altered but is in a near ruinous condition.

How is it significant?

The shepherd's hut, formerly associated with the Devon Park squatting run, is of historical and architectural significance to the communities of Dunkeld and Penshurst and to the Shire of Southern Grampians.

Why is it significant?

The shepherd's hut is of historical significance because it demonstrates a unique way of life which related to a particular stage of the development of the pastoral industry, when shepherds tended sheep in isolation at remote outstations on vast squatting runs.

The shepherd's hut is of architectural significance for its humble construction and vernacular style and as a comparison with the grander homestead.

COMPARISON:

376 Shepherd's Hut (Devon Park 1), off Old Cemetery Road, Dunkeld

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ASSESSED BY: TFH

ASSESSMENT DATE: 17/02/2002

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
Elise Claburn, et al	Dunkeld and District, a short history	1989	17, 53-5
Paul de Serville	Pounds and Pedigrees	1991	472
R. V. Billis and A. S. Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	236, 79