

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** FITZPATRICK'S SAWMILL

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Macarthur Street DUNKELD

**STUDY NUMBER:** 0466

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**PRECINCT:** outside

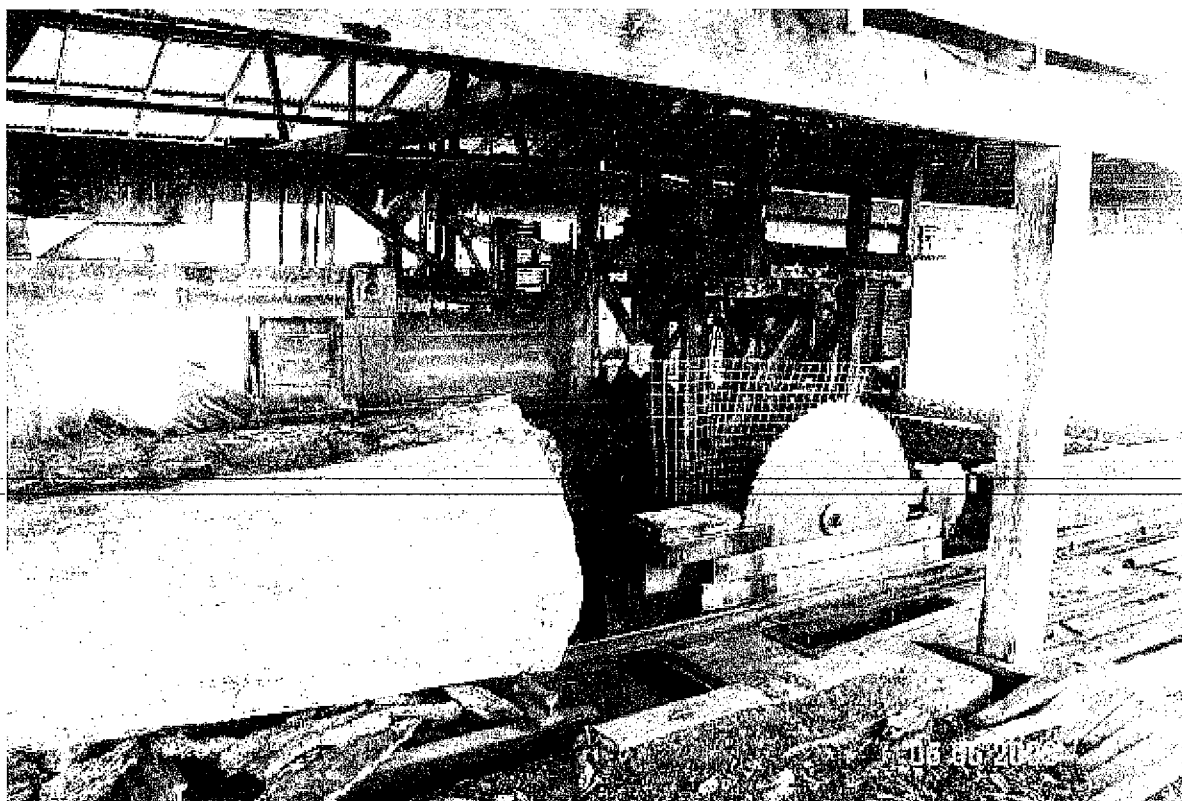
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ALLOTMENT:** none **SECTION:** none

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 433J 3; VicRoads 229; located on a Water Reserve (formerly the town common) on the north side of Macarthur Street, immediately adjacent to the Dunkeld Reservoir and about .75km from the centre of the town

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Fitzpatrick's Sawmill, off Macarthur St, Dunkeld

**Image Date:** 05/05/2003

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the sawmill, the plant and equipment and the logs waiting to be milled.

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## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The saw mill building is a simple corrugated iron shed with a trussed and gabled roof. It is open on most sides with rudimentary offices built at the southern or township end. The structure is a combination of post and beam for the milling area and timber framing clad with corrugated iron for the enclosed area. A skillion has been extended on the east side. The saw is located in the north-west corner of the shed with most of the western side kept clear for working. The logs were moved on rails and were sawn moving from south to north. Sawn timber was then transferred to benches in the north west corner. Trolleys on rails moved the sawn timber for storage loading on the western side of the building.

## HISTORY:

Timber getting was an important industry in the Victoria Valley at least from the period of the Land Selection Acts in the early 1870s when selectors sought to supplement their incomes from shingle splitting, timber harvesting and milling (Clabburn, 33). Mirranatwa became a centre for selectors and timber getters with its post office opening about 1881 and there was the beginning of a tourist industry with tearooms operating by the 1920s (Clabburn, 34). "Saw mills were situated throughout the area—the best known being Fitzpatrick's. Walter's had a mill near the Chimney Pot, and in 1886, Charles field had a Steam Saw Mill near "Wattle Brae" (Clabburn, 35). Boilers drove the steam engines and operators had to pass a test and hold a ticket to work them. "Les Clarke and Tiger Collins had these and worked the boilers for the Fitzpatricks" (Clabburn, 44). The sites, often small and ephemeral, continued well into the mid-twentieth century despite the threat of bush fire and the difficulty of transport. The smaller sawmills were rationalised after the Second World into larger mills, often on the edge of towns such as Strahan's in Hamilton and Fitzpatrick's mill relocated to Dunkeld in 1943 (Mt Rouse Centenary). The new mills were powered by electricity when that became available on the state wide grid.

The new sawmills located in towns, such as Fitzpatrick's, enjoyed booming conditions after the Second World War with a general increase in prosperity and a specific demand for building materials as returned servicemen built houses, farm buildings and fences on their Soldier Settlement blocks. "Rowes, Strahans and Fitzpatricks took huge quantities of logs to their mills in Hamilton and Dunkeld. Four million superfeet a year left the Victoria Range each year from 1954-1964" (Clabburn, 44). Lance Golding carted logs for Fitzpatricks, after he worked for Strahans, using "a Bedford truck and later a KSS International and a Diamond T with a Hercules motor" (Clabburn, 44). 'Archie' Fitzpatrick hauled logs on a trailer behind a Chevrolet 'Maple Leaf' truck.

Fitzpatricks' was not the first or only saw mill in Dunkeld. As early as the 1860s there is evidence, in the form of newspaper advertisements, that McCann and Samuel Woodhead operated a mill which supplied "superior timber for all purposes" (Clabburn, 42). Clabburn states that it converted to steam in 1865 and was situated on the south side of the Salt Creek about 1km west of the Valley Road (ibid.). In the 1870s, Samuel Woodhead is rated as a "farmer" for "farm, sundry allot's, cottage, late French's" (SMRRB, 1872, No. 272). One indication of the ephemeral nature of timber cutting and milling is that, unlike tanneries and flourmills, nobody was rated for such operations in the Shire of Mount Rouse ratebooks in the 1870s.

Patrick Fitzpatrick, who was born in Tipperary, married Alice Maude Donlevy, who was born in Cheshire, in 1872 (VPI, Reg. No. 3999). "The Fitzpatrick family came to the Grampians after experience in Gippsland, Heywood and Casterton, where they ran a mill from 1921-30, supplying blocks of redgum for St Kilda Road and tramways in Melbourne" (Clabburn, 44). The births of their four children reflect their earlier nomadic life as timber millers. They had three daughters, Johanna, Matilda and Catherine who were born in Bungaree and Warrenheip, both near Ballarat, and Barker's Creek, near Castlemaine, in 1873, 1875 and 1878 (VPI, Reg. Nos. 14856, 6122 & 6738). Their son, Arthur Thomas was born in 1886 at Korweinguboora, a saw-milling hamlet to the north-east of Ballarat (VPI, Reg. No. 27303).

Arthur Thomas Fitzpatrick, who had overseen the shift to the present site, died in April 1969. His wife,

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Elizabeth Mary, had died in 1951. Both are buried in the new Dunkeld cemetery. The family, including Archibald Patrick Fitzgerald who died in 1992 and his son Steven, took over the management of the mill. The mill stopped working about 2001 but logs remain ready at the saw for milling.

**THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

Theme 5: Working

5.2.1 Timber getting (sawmills, tramway camps etc)

**CONDITION:**

The building, plant and equipment are in very good condition.

**INTEGRITY:**

Excellent degree of integrity

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

Fitzpatricks' Saw Mill, located in the water reserve on the north side of Dunkeld off Macarthur Road, was established in this location in 1943. Previously, the family had operated saw mills in remote locations in the Grampians and elsewhere. Patrick Fitzpatrick, an Irishman who had migrated to Victoria in the early 1870s founded the business. With his wife, Alice Maude, nee Donlevy and their children, he led a typically itinerant existence in remote places getting and sawing hardwood for the construction of buildings and redgum for paving. This was possible and appropriate during the period when mills were powered by steam engines. The move to a more permanent site, closer to rail transport and major highways and where electricity could be used, represented a major change in the production of sawn timber. Arthur Fitzpatrick, the only son of Patrick and Alice Fitzpatrick oversaw the move, which proved to be very successful because of the post World War Two building boom. He died in 1969 and his sons carried on the business. The family's involvement was typical of the industry. Fitzpatricks' mill, which has only recently stopped operating, is perhaps the last surviving in the Southern Grampians area and one of the last in the state. The mill, its plant and equipment survive in excellent working condition and in very good condition.

How is it significant?

Fitzpatricks' Saw Mill is of historical and architectural significance to the township of Dunkeld and to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

Fitzpatricks' Saw Mill is of historical significance as a typical example of the traditional saw mills, now powered by electricity but formerly by steam, which operated throughout the remote heavily timber country of Victoria. Furthermore, it demonstrates the major change in location and management brought about by the changes to infrastructure during the mid-twentieth century. It is of architectural significance for its vernacular form, traditional use of materials and industrial planning for the process of saw milling. It is of further architectural significance as the source of an essential material used in construction.

**COMPARISON:**

0226 Englefield Sawmill Hut (and School Site (Former)), Coleraine-Balmoral Road, Balmoral  
0323 Green Creek Road, Sawmill, Green Creek Road and Glenelg River Road, Victoria Valley  
0314 Hynes Woolshed and Outbuildings, Hynes Road, Glenisla  
0172 Timber Kiln and Sawmill Site, Station Street, Balmoral  
0454 Rowe's Sawmill site, off Mill Lane, Whoolpoor

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**EXISTING LISTINGS:**

**HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Include in VHR**  **Include in RNE**  **Include in Local Planning Scheme**

**No Recommendations for Inclusions**

**REFERENCES:**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Page</b>
Clabburn, Elise, et al.	Dunkeld and District: A Short History	1989	42-4
Macbeth Genealogical Services	Pioneer Index Victoria 1836 - 1888	1998	
Shire of Mount Rouse	Shire of Mount Rouse Rate Book	1872	