
OTTERBURN FARM COMPLEX

Location

545 TRAMWAY ROAD HAZELWOOD NORTH, LATROBE CITY

Municipality

LATROBE CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8121-0061

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 27, 2024

What is significant?

The Otterburn Farm Complex comprises the remains of three historically significant buildings associated with late 19th and early to mid-20th century residential, farming and dairying activity. The site comprises the location of two residences and a farm building which are first depicted in a 1935 aerial photograph, with the residences likely corresponding with two houses built by Donald Shaw in the 1870s and 1880s. A domed cistern remains at the location of the former residential buildings, while concrete building foundations exist at and immediately to the south of the 1935 farm building.

How is it significant?

The Otterburn Farm Complex is of local historical and archaeological significance.

Why is it significant?

The Otterburn Farm Complex is of historical significance for its association with Donald Shaw, the first President of the Morwell Shire Council and a notable public figure associated with the development of Morwell. Otterburn represents one of the earliest farming estates in Hazelwood, having been purchased by Donald Shaw in 1872 and continuing to be operated by his wife Lily Shaw after his death in 1911. This site is further notable for its continuous use as a dairy farm for over 150 years, having served this function from 1872 through to the present day.

The site is of archaeological significance due to the moderate likelihood of archaeological deposits remaining at the site. Archaeological deposits and features are moderately likely to exist in a subsurface context at the location

of the two homestead buildings, as well as around the edges of the concrete foundations of the 1935 farm building. There is also a high potential for archaeological deposits to exist at the base of the cistern, beneath more recent accumulations of refuse. Any archaeological deposits or features are anticipated to shed light on farming activities undertaken by the Shaw family in the late 19th to early 20th century, as well as assist in more conclusively determining the age of the residences and farm building. Additionally, archaeological deposits associated with the residence are likely to shed light on everyday farming life in late 19th to mid-20th century Hazelwood North.

Interpretation of Site

Mid-19th century land-use of the area was primarily pastoral. Between 1844 and 1870, the site was located on land within the Hazelwood pastoral run. As such, the site was likely specifically used as grazing land for cattle or sheep between 1844 and 1870. Late 19th to early 20th century land use of the site was residential, pastoral and agricultural, with the Shaw Family occupying the site between 1872 and 1937. The Shaw's Otterburn farm is known to have functioned primarily as a commercial, family-operated dairy farm, producing cream for manufacture into butter at Morwell. The Shaw's are also known to have occasionally held cattle auctions at Otterburn. They also farmed large quantities of oat at the site. The Shaw family are known to have resided onsite for the duration of their ownership of the farm, demonstrating a consistent residential function throughout this period. Otterburn also served a social function to a minor extent, with Donald Shaw hosting functions for the Morwell football club on occasion. Mid-20th century land use continued to be residential and pastoral, with the layout of the site remaining largely consistent between the 1945 and 1964 aerial photographs. It is unclear, however, who owned the property between 1937 and the 1960s. Late 20th to early 21st century land use continues to be residential and pastoral, with the Darling family having resided at the site since the 1970s. The Darling family have continued to operate the site as a dairy farm throughout this time.

Hermes Number 212095

Property Number

History

The earliest European occupation of the site is represented by its settlement by pastoral squatters, with the Hazelwood pastoral run being established by Albert Brodribb in 1844 (Legg 1992: 15). The Hazelwood pastoral run is depicted in Figure 11, revealing that the later location of the Otterburn Farm Complex was located near the centre of the eastern end of this pastoral run. The Hazelwood pastoral run was subsequently opened for selectors in the 1870s (Legg 1992: 35). The Otterburn farm is first depicted in an 1883 Hazelwood Parish Plan, in which it is situated within a large (320 acre/129.5 ha) rectangular lot owned by Donald Shaw (Figure 12). In his 1911 obituary (Morwell Advertiser 1911: 2) Donald Shaw was remembered as being one of the earliest European settlers in the Shire of Morwell, having migrated to Australia from Scotland in 1850 at the age of 18 (Morwell Advertiser 1911:2). The Shaw family travelled to Australia onboard the Ascendant, departing from Plymouth, England on 3 October 1850 and arriving in Adelaide on 15 January 1851 (Immigration Place Australia 2024; Legg 1992: 45-46). Originally settling near Adelaide with his parents, Donald Shaw (Figure 13) eventually moved to Hazelwood in 1872 to capitalise on the selection of former pastoral runs (Morwell Advertiser 1911: 2). Here, he and his brother Colin purchased a 640-acre block of land, which the brothers named 'Otterburn' (Legg 1992: 106; Shaw and Place 2005: 12). The 1883 parish plan depicts two rectangular 320-acre properties located immediately adjacent to one another, with Colin Shaw owning the northern lot and Donald Shaw the southern one. Colin Shaw shortly afterwards departed to Western Australia, leasing the northern lot to an aspiring farmer by the name of Mr Watson (The Australasian 1888: 18). Donald Shaw had constructed a second homestead at Otterburn by 1888, although the original residence was still "held in honour" (The Australasian 1888: 18). Donald Shaw's parents Archibald and Ann moved to Otterburn in 1875, with Ann dying there in 1882 and Archibald in 1890 (Morwell Advertiser 1890: 3). The Shaw family was also related to New South Wales governor Lachlan Macquarie, with his nephew Murdoch Macquarie living with the Shaws at Otterburn for "many years" (Maddern

1964: 12-13). Murdoch Macquarie is recorded as having died at Otterburn in 1904, at the age of 84 (The Argus 1904: 1). In addition to establishing and running the Otterburn farm, Donald Shaw's accomplishments included being the first President of the Morwell Shire Council, founding the North Hazelwood Presbyterian Church and serving as its treasurer, as well being one of the founders of the Morwell Agricultural Society (Morwell Advertiser 1911: 2). He was also described as a man of "superior intelligence" (The Australasian 1888: 18). Donald Shaw and his wife Lily had eight children, who were expected to assist in everyday dairying activities at Otterburn (Shaw & Place 2005: 12). A 1905 newspaper essay by 11-year old Alec Shaw described the daily process of milking the cows, straining the milk, separating the cream and sending it to be processed into butter at Morwell (The Leader 1905: 42). Donald Shaw also held cattle sales at Otterburn, with the price per head reaching £6 10s (Morwell Advertiser 1894: 3). Otterburn was described as "one of the best managed dairies in the district", with its success partially attributed to Donald Shaw crossbreeding local dairy cattle with Scottish Ayrshire cattle (The Australasian 1888: 18). Oat was also farmed at Otterburn, with over 30 bushels produced per acre using rotational cropping (Traralgon Record and Morwell, Mirboo, Toongabbie, Heyfield, Tyers and Callignee Advertiser 1884a: 2). On the morning of 12 March 1883, two oat stacks at Otterburn, with an estimated value of £80, were destroyed by fire (Gippsland Mercury 1884: 3; Traralgon Record and Morwell, Mirboo, Toongabbie, Heyfield, Tyers and Callignee Advertiser 1884b: 2). A neighbouring farmer, William Northway, was accused of arson based on boot tracks leading from the scene of the crime to his house and an ongoing land-use dispute with Donald Shaw, although a jury ultimately decided that there was insufficient evidence for a conviction (Gippsland Mercury 1884: 3). The animosity between Donald Shaw and William Northway continued for years afterwards, with Shaw in 1892 refusing to hear a deputation of ratepayers to the Morewell Shire Council that was headed by Northway, leading to "great uproar" within the Morwell council chambers (The Age 1892: 8). In addition to farming cattle and oat, Donald Shaw is also mentioned as having established an orchard at Otterburn (Traralgon Record and Morwell, Mirboo, Toongabbie, Heyfield, Tyers and Callignee Advertiser 1884a: 2). Otterburn is also recorded as serving a community function to an extent, with Donald Shaw hosting a meeting of the local football team at his residence with a "large attendance", wherein a new team captain was elected (Morwell Advertiser 1910: 2). Four of Donald Shaw's children (Archibald, Don, Charles and Alec) served in World War 1, while his fifth son William stayed behind in Hazelwood to assist Lily Shaw with running Otterburn (Immigration Place Australia 2024). William is recorded as later leading a proficient life, serving as a councillor between 1921-1924, establishing the Morwell Iceworks and assisting in the development of steam-powered 'Ridd' milking machines (Shaw & Place 2005: 12). The historically significant buildings within the Otterburn Farm Complex are first depicted in a 1935 aerial photograph (Figure 14). In this capture, the farm complex comprises five main structures, with several smaller buildings also visible across the site. Two of the main structures are situated immediately adjacent to one another in the north-western corner of the complex and appear to be residential in nature. These buildings are likely to be the two homestead buildings mentioned in a 1888 newspaper article (The Australasian 1888: 18), the first dating to the establishment of the farm in 1872 and the second having been built shortly before 1888. The other three structures are positioned at intervals of 30 – 50 m along the eastern edge of the complex and likely represent sheds, barns or other farm buildings. Lily Shaw survived her husband Donald by several decades, eventually dying in June 1937 (Morwell Advertiser 1937a: 3). The Otterburn farm was subsequently put up for sale in September that same year, in which it is said to have remained within the Shaw family for over half a century, being noted as "one of the few original selections that have not changed hands" (Morwell Advertiser 1937b: 9). The site is next depicted in a 1945 aerial photograph (Figure 15). In this capture, the middle structure on the eastern side of the complex has been demolished, while the other four structures appear unchanged from the 1935 image. A smaller structure located to the east of the homestead complex also appears to have been razed in this capture. The Otterburn Farm Complex is known to have been partially impacted by the 14 February 1944 Yallourn Bushfire (Steven Darling, personal communication 2024), suggesting that these structures were destroyed during this event. The site is subsequently depicted in a 1955 aerial photograph (Figure 16). In this capture, the northeastern-most structure has either been demolished or relocated, with the outline of the former 1935 structure visible on the ground. It is possible that this structure was simply relocated slightly to the west, as a structure of similar size is visible here in this image. The site appears largely unchanged in a 1964 aerial photograph (Figure 17), aside from a new, slightly smaller structure that has been constructed near the location of the shed structure demolished in 1945, partially overlapping with its footprint. The route of the driveway has also been realigned in this photograph, now covering the footprint of two of the 1935 farm buildings. Several changes to the farm layout are notable in the 1974 aerial capture (Figure 18). Most notably, the two 1935 homestead buildings have been demolished in this capture, having been replaced by a new residence located approximately 20 m to the west. The southeastern-most 1935 building has also been demolished and replaced by a new corrugated iron shed located immediately to its east. The current landowner, Steven Darling, indicated that his family purchased Otterburn in the 1970s (Steven Darling, personal communication 2024), suggesting that these modifications corresponded with the acquisition of the property by the Darling family. The site is next depicted in a 1984 aerial photograph (Figure 19), wherein the site layout appears unchanged aside from the construction of a shed towards the north-eastern corner of the former 1935 homestead site. The site continues to

serve a dairying function into the twenty first century, with a 2005 newspaper article mentioning the former Otterburn farm as being owned by dairy farmer Steven Darling and his family (Shaw & Place 2005: 12). Steven Darling continues to own the property as of 2024, while the ongoing use of the property for a dairying function is further supported by cattle being visible in a September 2023 satellite image of the site (Figure 21).

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>