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## HO98 - House 'Nerowie'



Nerowie



Nerowie



Interior of Nerowie

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### Location

155 Nerowie Rd PARWAN, Melton Shire

### Municipality

MELTON CITY

### Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO98

### Heritage Listing

Melton City

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The house known as *Nerowie* at 155 Nerowie Road, Parwan, has significance as an unusual example of a Victorian Picturesque style and as an historical legacy of residential and pastoral development in the Melton Shire in the late nineteenth century. Built c. mid 1890s for Stephen John Staughton, grandson of Simon Staughton of Exford, the significance of the dwelling is enhanced by its impressive elevated pastoral setting and pine shelter and ornamental plantings. The nearby weatherboard dairy and stone pine shelter plantation also contribute to the significance of the place.

The house known as *Nerowie* at 155 Nerowie Road, Parwan is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level (AHC D.2, E.1). It demonstrates original design qualities of a Late Victorian Picturesque style. These qualities include the steeply pitched gable roof form that traverses the site, together with another steeply pitched gable that projects at one end. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the single storey height, asymmetrical composition, galvanised corrugated steel roof cladding, face brick wall construction, dichromatic brick chimney, narrow eaves, return verandah with a galvanised corrugated steel roof, timber framed window and door openings with timber framed double hung windows and timber and glazed doors with highlights, and the timber finials/pendants and trusses in the gable ends. The nearby weatherboard dairy and stone pine shelter plantation also contribute to the significance of the place. (These are located within the Shire of Moorabool.)

*Nerowie* is historically significant at the LOCAL level (AHC B2, H1). It was built for Stephen John Staughton, a President of the Shire of Bacchus Marsh, and third generation of the Staughton pastoral family, which, with the Clarkes and the Chirnsides, were the dominant landholders in north-western Port Phillip region in the nineteenth century. It was built in the final era of pastoral dominance, when political sentiment and economic forces combined to 'break up' huge pastoral estates in favour of 'closer settlement', or farming of the former grazing lands. Together with the other major Staughton properties (*Exford*, *Eynesbury* and *Staughton Vale*), it was sold by the family in the early twentieth century. With the nearby house at No. 285 Nerowie Road, it is the only surviving link with Stephen George Staughton and his demolished mansion, *Brooklyn*. The design of the homestead is also historically significant for its inclusion of a large room, with a number of internal architectural influences, including features of a church, including an apse plan, pointed arch stained glass windows, and statue niches. It would appear to have been a multi-purpose room, which could be used as a chapel by the Staughton family or, perhaps, visiting clergy of different denominations, a recreation room for the family, or a lodge for visiting hunt parties. Such use would accord with Australian pastoral homestead tradition; *Nerowie* might prove to be an outstanding expression of such practices within the actual homestead design.

Overall, *Nerowie* at 155 Nerowie Road, Parwan is of LOCAL significance.

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|---------------------------|--|
| Heritage Study/Consultant | Melton - Shire of Melton Heritage Study phase 2, David Maloney, David Rowe, Pamela Jellie, Sera Jane Peters, 2007; |
| Construction dates        | 1890,  |
| Other Names               | 155 Nerowie Rd, Parwan,  |
| Hermes Number             | 30220  |
| Property Number           |  |

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## Physical Description 1

### Physical Description -

The brick homestead is situated on the high point of an extensive grazing property. It is on a volcanic plain, and near two low volcanic craters.

The site includes mature shelter and ornamental trees, particularly to its immediate east and north. To the east is an impressive plantation of pines, mainly Aleppo Pines (*Pinus halepensis*), among which are some very fine specimens, and a few Canary Island Pines (*Pinus canariensis*). Aleppo Pines also dominate the remnant of a twister-battered plantation of pines to the south of the house. On the east side of the house are some old fruit trees, including two orange trees and a mulberry.

A second large weatherboard house that appears in an early photograph situated adjacent to the existing homestead is no longer *in situ*. It is believed to have been shifted onto what is now an adjacent property, at 285

*Nerowie Road, Parwan. (HO107)*

The front garden, mainly lawn, with remnant mature conifer and eucalyptus trees to the south, is enclosed within a tubular steel and wire fence. A corrugated iron water tank set high on a metal frame is also included within this area, together with a small timber outbuilding (probably a dairy) of early twentieth century date. A chimney of a former house is situated a few hundred metres north of the house. Closer to the north is a domed rendered brick former underground water tank, likely a legacy of the original weatherboard homestead. The nearby machinery sheds are not included in the citation.

The asymmetrical, single storey, face brick, Late Victorian Picturesque styled house is characterised by a steeply pitched gable roof form that traverses the site, together with another steeply pitched gable that projects at one end. These roof forms are clad in galvanised corrugated steel. Two dichromatic brick chimneys adorn the roofline. Narrow overhangs are features of the eaves. A feature of one gable end appears to be a projecting faceted bay crowned by a chimney.

An early feature of the design is the return verandah with a galvanised corrugated steel roof. It is supported by introduced posts on introduced brick piers. The verandah has been infilled at the northern end with a three roomed brick addition.

Other early features of the design include the timber framed window and door openings, timber framed double hung windows and timber and glazed doors with highlights, and the timber finials/pendants and trusses in the gable ends.

The building has tuck pointing on the east side facade only. This eastern view is also that featured in a 1910 photograph, indicating that the main frontage of the building was originally its eastern facade.

The interior plan of the house is somewhat of a mystery. There is no sign of either kitchen or bathroom services in the original structure (although both have been added by later users). This is probably indicative of its originally having been adjacent to the large double gabled weatherboard homestead (now relocated), which no doubt included such services.

The building includes a large room, approximately 7 by 12 metres, on its south side, with access obtained by stepping over the doorway of its west end doors. The room cannot be accessed except via external doors to the east and west verandahs. It is an amalgam of styles, with gothic pointed arch windows and classical pilasters, a rounded arch, and arts-and-crafts style herring-bone timber ceiling and wainscotting. Unlike the rest of the building, the ceiling of this room is of timber beam / truss construction, with a herring-bone pattern panelled ceiling. The similar pattern wainscotting is also confined to this room. The main design feature of the room is a bay (in the form of an 'apse') at its east end, which includes both gothic (pointed arch) leadlight and stained glass windows, and a large fireplace. The two leadlight and stained glass windows would appear to be of a typical turn of the century style. They have no apparent religious symbolism, but include what may be stylised anthemion branches at the top. The west double door also incorporates similar stained glass, with highlights and sidelights, in diaper and rectangular patterns. A door onto the main east verandah, facing north, provides another entrance to this room. By contrast it is a comparatively narrow unelaborated and functional opening. At the front of the 'apse' is an enclosing arch, in the manner of a proscenium (without the stage), or church sanctuary. The walls feature classical pillasters. On the south wall are three large rectangular windows, high and approximately 1.25 metres wide.

The other main room is a very grand lounge room (or parlour, or drawing room) with a fireplace and fine timber mantelpiece, and intact ceiling rose and cornices. The room has high windows onto the verandah to its east, but its north and west sides are surrounded by a large passage or hall, which essentially form perimeters of the building on these sides. An arch towards the west end suggests there was a curtain dividing the formal and service parts of this passage. The room on the south side of the lounge, also accessed by a grand arched door, with bichrome brick voussoirs, may have been a cloak room. A small services room, recently used for laundry / bathroom purposes is on the other side of this room. Further physical examination would reveal whether it had originally been another passage that was divided by a wall (although ventilators on this internal wall are identical to the others in this house). The narrow room / passage on the west of the house was recently converted to a kitchen.

The northern addition consists of a modern bathroom and two bedrooms, which the previous owner had built. There is evidence of alterations to original doors (one which may originally have been a window) on the west

side.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

*Shire of Melton Historical Themes: 'Pastoralism'*

## **Integrity**

Integrity - Substantially Intact

## **Physical Conditions**

Physical Condition - Good.

*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/>*