
Mooramong Homestead



B4471 Mooramong
Homestead

Location

Gleneleg Highway, SKIPTON VIC 3361 - Property No B4471

Municipality

PYRENEES SHIRE

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 21, 2007

What is significant?

Mooramong is part of the 15,000 hectare squatting run originally taken up in 1838 by the Scottish immigrant Alexander Anderson and his two partners. By 1871 Anderson had sold off all but about a third of the run, which he called Mooramong, and had made sufficient money to commission the Geelong architects Davidson & Henderson to design a new house, which was built in 1873. Anderson sold the property in 1889, and by the 1920s it had been bought by the lawyer and racing identity L K S Mackinnon for his son D J S (Scobie) Mackinnon as a 21st birthday present. Scobie became a successful sheep farmer, and visited England for the Coronation in 1937. There he met and married the Canadian born Claire Adams, who had been a successful Hollywood silent screen actress in the 1920s. The couple returned to Victoria in 1938 and soon after her arrival Claire commissioned the Melbourne architect Marcus Martin to modernise the old homestead. The alterations did not change the external footprint of the homestead, but the weatherboards were rendered and most of the nineteenth century details were removed. Martin redecorated the interior of the house in the Moderne style and

designed a new swimming pool and outdoor entertainment area. Edna Walling drew up a design for the garden, but this appears not to have been carried out. A bush fire in 1944 spared the house, but destroyed most of the farm buildings and outbuildings, which were rebuilt soon after. Scobie died in 1974 and Claire in 1978. The house and the bulk of their estate were bequeathed to the National Trust. The Donald and Claire Mackinnon Trust was created to ensure the preservation of the house and gardens and to create the Donald and Claire Mackinnon Nature Reserve, with the adjoining farm to provide financial support for the fauna park and to demonstrate good farming and conservation practices. The house now remains largely as its owners left it, with many of the personal effects of the Mackinnons. In the Reserve a sample of the natural vegetation and habitat of the basalt plains of western Victoria as it would have existed before white settlement and grazing is gradually being reinstated. Mooramong is unique in Victoria for its combination of historical, aesthetic, architectural and natural values.

Mooramong is a farming property of 1560 hectares, which includes an historic homestead, the surrounding garden and park and a nature reserve. The house is a spreading, single storey, rendered timber house, and contains many of the personal effects of the Mackinnons, as well as household objects. Adjacent to the house is the pool complex and the walled gardens. The house and gardens are surrounded by a park with mature trees. A number of outbuildings are located to the west and south of the house, including: a laundry, boiler room, former fowl feed store, dairy, a toilet, a milkman's house (also described as the chauffer's hut), a tool shed, two meat houses and a coal bunker. Slightly further from the house towards the west there are also residences for the manager, the overseer and a stockman, as well as a house built for the Youngmans (friends of the Mackinnons) in 1978. Farm buildings include a shearing shed and shearers' quarters (outside the park in a paddock to the west), single men's quarters, stables and machinery and storage sheds, as well as a garage, vehicle shed, killing shed, dog kennels and water tanks. The farm buildings contain a wealth of historical items and implements.

How is it significant?

Mooramong is significant for architectural, aesthetic, historical, and scientific/natural reasons at a State level.

Why is it significant?

Mooramong is historically significant for associations with pioneer pastoralist Alexander Anderson jnr, one of the earliest settlers in the Western District, and with the grazier D J S Mackinnon and his wife, the former Hollywood silent film actress Claire Adams. The house is significant for its contents, and provides a record of the privileged lifestyle of the privileged Western District elite during the mid twentieth century.

The homestead at Mooramong is aesthetically significant as a fine example of fashionable 1930s tastes in Victoria.

The homestead at Mooramong is architecturally significant as a grand nineteenth century Western District house built entirely of timber. It is also significant as a demonstration of the evolving nature of many grand nineteenth century houses, and for its association at different periods with two prominent Victorian architects: the Geelong architects Davidson & Henderson in the nineteenth century and the respected and fashionable Melbourne architect Marcus Martin in the twentieth century.

Mooramong is scientifically significant for its flora and fauna reserve, and as containing possibly the largest reserve in Victoria actively devoted to the protection of native grasslands.

Classified: 23/10/2007

Hermes Number 67811

Property Number

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/>