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# THE BRIARS



THE BRIARS SOHE 2008



the briars nepean hwy  
mornington site view  
mar1993



the briars nepean hwy  
mornington courtyard jan1985



the briars nepean hwy  
mornington outhouse jan1985



the briars nepean hwy  
mornington rear entrance  
jan1985

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## Location

450 NEPEAN HIGHWAY MOUNT MARTHA, MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

## Municipality

MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0320

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO147

## VHR Registration

October 9, 1974

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 2, 2004

What is significant?

This pastoral run was taken up in 1840 by the prominent gentleman colonist Captain James Reid, who called it Checkingurk (or Tichingorook). Georgiana McCrae sketched the property in 1844. In 1846 it was transferred to Alexander Balcombe, who renamed it The Briars after his family home on St Helena, where Napoleon had been a guest during his exile. Most of the present homestead and outbuildings were built by Balcombe in several stages over the next twenty years. The present timber west wing possibly incorporates a cottage built soon after his arrival as Balcombe's first hut (as well as an early twentieth century extension). The narrow south brick wing was probably built next, either before 1857 or in 1861-2, and a weatherboard bedroom wing was added c1860. Other buildings on the property by 1862 were the stables, possibly the barn, and a detached kitchen wing (now demolished). The north wing, with its surrounding verandah and cellar was added c1866. Balcombe developed an extensive garden, as well as an orchard, vineyard and a productive kitchen garden. The Briars passed to the Emmerton family after Balcombe's death in 1877, and they added a brick east wing c1907, replacing the 1860 bedroom wing, and c1947 a new kitchen was built onto this to replace Balcombe's old kitchen wing. The Emmerton family also added a tennis court and croquet lawn and developed the decorative garden. After 1924 the property was occupied by Mrs M Moore and the A'Beckett family, who built the lower tennis court, a swimming pool, the current driveway and the garage. The property was run as a farm until 1976 and is now a museum, with a number of items relating to Napoleon which were inherited by the late Dame Mabel Brookes on display.

The Briars once had at least forty buildings on the property, of which about seventeen remain. The single storey homestead is a cluster of interconnected buildings of different periods and styles. The timber west wing is a vernacular weatherboard cottage, with a skillion on the north side and a verandah along the south, originally with a hipped shingle roof, now covered with corrugated iron and extended. The south wing is a narrow brick building with a symmetrical plan form and a central recessed verandah along the west side flanked by small rooms at each end. The almost square north wing is of brick with a hipped roof and an encircling verandah, altered in the late nineteenth century, on to which the rooms open through French windows. The Edwardian red brick east wing originally contained one very large room, used as a dining room. It has none of the flamboyance usually associated with the Edwardian period, but reflects the simpler architecture of the older north wing. The kitchen addition to the east wing is of asbestos cement. Nearby surviving outbuildings include a small brick building, probably built between 1857 and 1862, clad with corrugated iron at one end, and with a hipped metal roof, which once contained a laundry and dairy; a concrete block apple store, built in the early twentieth century; and further away from the house the early brick stables and barn. Remnants of Balcombe's garden, including some mature trees, survive, and the homestead stands amid an unspoilt picturesque rural landscape.

How is it significant?

The Briars at Mornington is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Briars is historically significant as one of the earliest pastoral properties on the Mornington Peninsula and for its association with prominent early gentleman settlers Captain James Reid and Alexander Balcombe. It is also historically significant for the collection of Napoleonic memorabilia housed there, and the relationship of this to the Balcombe family.

The Briars is architecturally significant as an example of the additive nature of many country homesteads in Victoria, and for the retention of its rural setting.

[Online Data Upgrade Project 2004]

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component.

General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: A Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan.

General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works must submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates 1846, 1857, 1860, 1907, 1947,  
Heritage Act Categories Registered place,  
Hermes Number 852  
Property Number

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## History

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## Extent of Registration

*Shire of Mornington*. No.320. The Briars, Nepean Highway, Mornington.  
[*Victoria Government Gazette* No 100 Wednesday, October 9 1974 p.3650]

*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/>*