
MCKAY FAMILY HOMESTEAD

Location

136 ALLANVALE ROAD GREAT WESTERN, NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Municipality

NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7423-0082

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Historical Significance	The McKay Family Homestead is of local historical significance as a direct link to a prominent agricultural family from the district. The homestead was continuously inhabited by the same family for multiple generations until at least the 1940's and the site is still known as the McKay Family Homestead (D Bannear pers com 24/04/2012)
Interpretation of Site	The McKay Family homestead was initially identified during a field survey (Feb 2012) with subsequent background research establishing the familial history of the site. Archaeological features and materials identified at the site are likely late 19th to mid 20th century in date; background research indicates that the fruit trees may be older (see place history). The site was both domestic and agricultural in function and this is reflected in both the extant remains (outbuildings and farm machinery) and by archaeological features including the concrete pits (likely water troughs), water tanks and the remains of the dwelling itself.

Archaeological Significance The McKay family homestead is of low archaeological significance based on the relatively common occurrence of this type of site in the broader area. Other sites of this type in the area include H7423-0060 to H7423-0064. The site has low to moderate archaeological potential to contain further, in situ features relating to the structure itself, particularly in the large square mound associated with the visible in situ footings.

Hermes Number 191886

Property Number

History

European settlement began in the region soon after in the 1840s, with vast expanses of pastoral land taken up by squatters who used the land for agricultural purposes, bringing with them thousands of livestock. The site of the MacKay family homestead is in the Allanvale, later known as Sinclair's run which was occupied by John Allan and then John Sinclair from 1841 (see Figure 1 Below). Most of these land owners constructed houses and used their land primarily for grazing purposes. Allanvale or Sinclair's consisted of 80,000 acres with the capacity for 15,000 sheep. The main road linking the towns of Ballarat and Stawell was first constructed during the gold rushes of the 1850s, which attracted a huge influx of miners into western Victoria. This Main Road eventually became known as the Western Highway. A comparison of present day maps and parish maps dating from the 19th century demonstrates that the road followed much the same route as it does today. On the Western Highway, near the intersection with Allanvale Road, Allotment, 69 or 135J was applied for by William A. Wright in 1884, having previously been reserved for mining. It was then leased to Susan Fox nee Wright in 1891. When she inspected it a year later, she found that it had not been cultivated apart from a fruit garden, and building works were constrained to a 2-room dwelling house made of slab and bark, and a dam. The allotment was subsequently transferred to Donald McKay, a station manager from Great Western, in 1893. The MacKays stayed on this land for several generations, adding to their local holdings considerably over the years and naming their homestead Glenallan, reflecting the family's Scots origins. Donald Mackay may have started off as a station manager further south in Buninyong, as several mentions are made in the Ballarat press of a Donald Mackay active in impounding stray livestock on behalf of his employer George Innes (*The Star* 23 February, 19 March, 23 March 1864). From a notice placed by his daughter, M. Mackay of Glenallan, it would appear he passed away in 1907, and his wife in 1913 (*The Ararat Advertiser* 14 July 1914). Mackay's purchase of land and construction of a homestead in 1893 would appear then as the life-end achievement of stability following many years of hard employment. Certainly it seems his family benefitted from his endeavours and achieved respectability and prominence in the local area. A brief obituary in *The Argus* of 22 December 1924 described Mr Donald Mackay of Glenallan (likely a son of the original owner) as "a very old and highly esteemed resident of the district" who had been a councillor of the Stawell Shire for 20 years. It appears the Scots custom of naming children after fathers was adhered to by the Mackays, as in *The Horsham Times* of 14 March 1933 a sad obituary lists the passing of the wife of (the third) Mr Donald Mackay resident at Great Western, leaving him a widower with three young children. The years of accumulated work on their property seem to have borne fruit for the Mackay; in the mid-late 1940's their wool was cited as achieving highest or high regional price at auction (*The Argus*, 12 January 1945, 4 March 1948).

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/>