

# FORMER NICHOLS POINT PRIMARY SCHOOL SHELTER SHED



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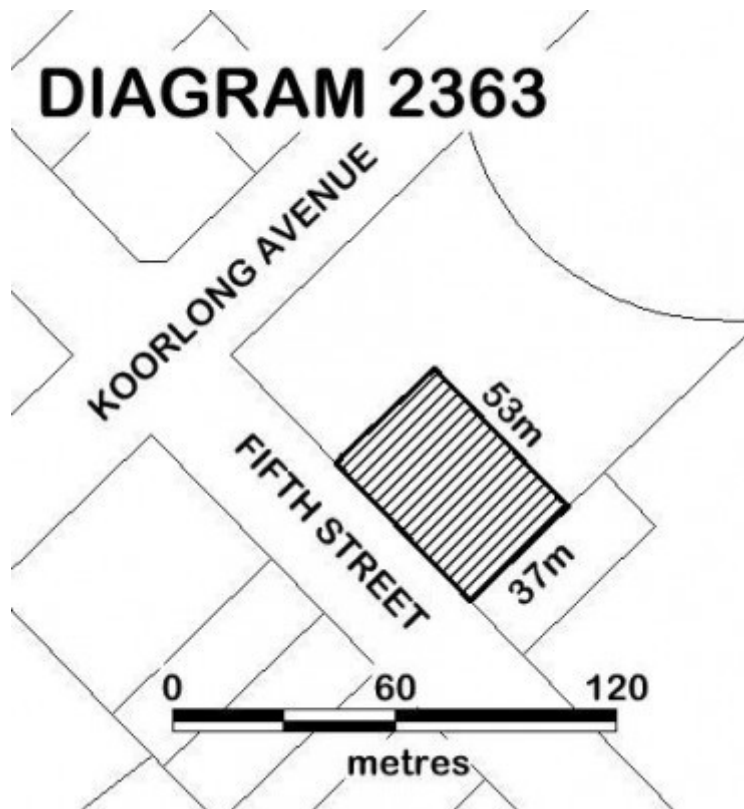


Diagram 2363.JPG

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**Location**

110 KOORLONG AVENUE NICHOLS POINT, MILDURA RURAL CITY

**Municipality**

MILDURA RURAL CITY

**Level of significance**

Registered

**Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H2363

**Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO156

**VHR Registration**

July 14, 2016

**Heritage Listing**

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

History Summary

Settlement of the Mildura region in northern Victoria occurred late in the context of the development of the state. In 1887 the Chaffey brothers, George and William Benjamin, signed an indenture with the Victorian Government which allowed them to establish the Mildura Irrigation Settlement on the banks of the Murray River. An extensive system of irrigation channels and pumping stations was established, migration to this new area of irrigated land was promoted and the population quickly grew to 3,500 people. The Shire of Mildura was established in 1890.

Following requests to the Mildura Board of Advice from local parents, a school for forty two students was established in 1892 in the Methodist Church at the irrigated farmland settlement of Nichols Point, east of Mildura. In 1906 the red brick Nichols Point State School was opened on the corner of Fifth and Koorlong Avenues, diagonally opposite the site of the first school at the church. Two acres of land surrounded the school building with an adjoining five acres acquired for use as a sports ground.

In the early twentieth century, a campaign led by the Victorian Education Department was underway to update school buildings and grounds, including through the provision of shelter sheds. From 1905 the Education Department gave pound-for-pound grants towards the cost of such improvements, with parents and local communities typically forming committees to raise their share of the funds. Shelter sheds were seen as an important part of school life, providing shelter from the elements and an additional, well ventilated, covered space to provide school children with fresh air. Tenders were called for a shelter shed at the Nichols Point school in *The Mildura Cultivator*, 15 October 1910, p10. In 1911 funds were sought for its completion and the verandah was added. Designed by Alexander Thomson, Shire Engineer from 1899-1919, the play pavilion, or shelter shed was described by Frank Tate, Director of Education 1902-1928, as 'the best I have seen in an Australian school', as recorded in the 1973 publication *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria*.

Following increased residential development at Nichols Point in the 1980s, increasing numbers of school children in the area needed to be accommodated and additional school buildings were constructed at the school site. A new school was built in 2006 on an adjacent site on Koorlong Avenue, and the original school building was vacated.

Description summary

The shelter shed located at the former Nichols Point Primary School Complex, designed by local architect and shire engineer A.D Thomson and constructed in 1910, is an undecorated timber-framed octagonal structure with a central post, faceted pyramidal corrugated iron roof and wide surrounding verandah. There are no evident rainwater collection or diversion elements. It is an open structure with vertical timber boards lining the exterior of the lower main shelter and seating around the perimeter of the large internal space. The northern wall is open to provide access to the structure. Horizontal timber boards set in louver fashion for ventilation line the upper external walls above the verandah roof.

How is it significant?

The Former Nichols Point Primary School Shelter Shed is of architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

It satisfies the following criteria for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion D - Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects.

Why is it significant?

The Former Nichols Point Primary School Shelter Shed is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The Former Nichols Point Primary School Shelter Shed is of architectural significance as a fine and highly intact example of a rotunda or shelter shed, which demonstrates the importance of providing school students with

shelter from the elements. It is a large and impressive structure in which can be read a particular architectural response to the needs of school students and to the harsh climate of north-western Victoria. It is notable for characteristics that include its louvre weatherboards in the upper external walls, the ample internal area for student use, and its extensive surrounding open verandah. The shelter shed is in addition an important element of the Nichols Point streetscape. [Criterion D]

## Permit Exemptions

<span class="c1">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.</span> <span class="c1">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.</span> <span class="c1">General Conditions: 3. All works should be informed by Conservation Management Plans prepared for the place.</span> <span class="c1">General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.</span> <span class="c1">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.</span> <p class="c1">Shelter shed structure:</p> <p class="c2">Minor repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.</p> <p class="c2">Installation or repair of damp-proofing in a manner which does not affect the cultural heritage significance of the place.</p> <p class="c1"><b>Hard landscape elements:</b> Repair and maintenance of roads, pathways and carparks which replace like with like.</p> <p class="c1">Trees and landscape:</p> <p class="c2">All maintenance of trees.</p> <p class="c2">Fire management works carried out to protect the shelter shed.</p>

## Theme

6. Building towns cities and the garden state 8. Building community life

Construction dates	1905,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	NICHOLS POINT PRIMARY SCHOOL, FORMER NICHOLS POINT PRIMARY SCHOOL ROTUNDA, ROTUNDA AT NICHOLS POINT,
Hermes Number	197636
Property Number	

## History

<span class="c2"><em class="c1">Development of the Nichols Point Primary School Complex</em></span> <p class="c3">Settlement of the Mildura region in northern Victoria occurred late in the context of the development of the state. In 1887 the Chaffey brothers, George and William Benjamin, signed an indenture with the Victorian Government which allowed them to establish the Mildura Irrigation Settlement on the banks of the Murray River. Despite problems, an extensive scheme of irrigation channels and pumping stations was established and migration to the area was promoted and encouraged. Within seven years the population quickly reached some 3,500 people, including numbers of construction workers, and some 8,225 acres of irrigated land were under cultivation. The Shire of Mildura was established in 1890.</p> <p class="c3">It was therefore early in the development of Mildura that the Mildura Board of Advice was approached in 1890 by a group of parents requesting the establishment of a school for forty two children at the irrigated farmland settlement of Nichols

Point, east of Mildura. A school was subsequently opened in 1892 in the Methodist Church on the corner of Fifth and Koorlong Avenues, Nichols Point, diagonally opposite the site of the present school. Two years earlier a school had been built in Mildura (1890) and a school commenced in 1893 at Irymple, south of Nichols Point.

By 1905 the numbers of children at Nichols Point exceeded one hundred and a brick school was built on the opposite corner to the church. Designed by the Victorian Public Works Department (PWD) architect S E Bindley in 1905, this school comprised two classrooms: a junior block 32 feet by 24 feet (9.8 metres x 7.3 metres) and a senior room 24 feet by 24 feet (7.3 metres x 7.3 metres), a passage, two cloak rooms and a toilet.

The opening of the Nichols Point State School was reported in *The Mildura Cultivator*, on 23 June 1906, p 8. At this time the school was described as a well lit and well ventilated, handsome brick building. The rooms were described as large with one accommodating 64 pupils and the other 48, and both rooms were orientated with large windows to the left of the pupils' desks. Floors were sloped to the front. Two acres of land surrounded the school building with an adjoining five acres acquired for use as a sports ground.

By 1909 a shelter shed was referred to in reports about the fine gardens at the school in *The Mildura Cultivator*, 26 May 1909, p 10. The head teacher, Robert Patterson, was a keen gardener and established a fine record in garden competitions. This shelter may have been a temporary structure as tenders were called for a shelter shed at Nichols Point State School in the *Mildura Cultivator*, 15 October 1910, p 10. In 1911 funds were being sought for its completion, with the addition of a verandah around the existing structure as reported in *The Mildura Cultivator*, 25 November 1911, p 7.

Designed by Alexander Thomson, Shire Engineer from 1899-1919, the play pavilion, or shelter shed, was described in *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria* in 1973, as octagonal in shape with louvre weatherboards. It was recorded in this publication that Frank Tate, Director of Education 1902-1928, described this shelter as 'the best I have seen in an Australian school'. This was presumably during a Department of Education visit to schools in the north of Victoria, possibly in 1913, when it was reported that:

'the Ministerial party was delighted at the external surroundings of the Nichols Point school. Lawns, a rotunda, gorgeous flowers of tropical hues, grape vines, heavy with the tempting fruit; all make this school a temple of aesthetic usefulness.' [*The Mildura Cultivator*, 23 April 1913, p 9].

The pavilion was described as 'spacious and ornamental' in *The Mildura Cultivator*, 31 October 1914 and in that year the school won third prize in the school ground competition for its garden laid out in what was described as the 'architectural' style.

In 1938 a temporary pavilion classroom, with sliding canvas sides, was relocated to the school grounds from Merbein South Primary School to accommodate an increase in the number of students at the Nichols Point school. This remained at the site until its removal to Mildura West in 1944 when a third brick classroom, 26 feet 6 inches by 24 feet (8 metres x 7.3 metres), was added to the south west of the original brick building.

Further accommodation was necessary in the early 1950s and the Methodist Church Sunday School Hall was used for this purpose until it was destroyed by fire in 1954. By November that year a timber pre-fabricated classroom had been added to the site to accommodate a further increase in pupil numbers. In that year there were 176 pupils in attendance at the school.

As residential development increased at Nichols Point in the 1980s, increasing numbers of school children required accommodation at Nichols Point Primary School. Additional school buildings were subsequently constructed on the school site. A new school was built on an adjacent site in 2006 and the original school building was vacated.

**School design in the early twentieth century**

The school building was designed by Samuel Edward Bindley (1842-1924) in 1905. Bindley worked almost exclusively as an architect within the Victorian PWD, commencing in 1873 and remaining there until his retirement in 1907. In 1883 he became assistant architect in the State Schools Division. When the Architects Division and the State Schools Division of the PWD merged in 1885 to form the Buildings Division, Bindley became architect in charge of the North-Western District. Bindley's school designs include Infant School buildings at Essendon (1901), Armadale (1901) and Glenferrie (1907) and public schools at Kenmare (1903), Myrniong (1905), Betley (1906), Laanecoorie (1906) and Nichols Point (1905).

**Development of school shelter sheds**

(This section includes information provided by Dr Peter Mills 'History of shelter shed at the former Arthurs Creek School', 2015)

Shelter sheds were an important part of school life, providing shelter from the elements and an additional covered space. They were well ventilated to provide school children with plentiful fresh air. Few schools had shelter sheds in the nineteenth century. School Boards of Advice or parents often requested them, and occasionally the Education Department provided small grants or they were erected by the PWD. Requests were more often made for the cheaper alternative of building verandahs on the existing school building for this purpose.

In the early twentieth century the Education Department started a major campaign of updating the school buildings of the nineteenth century. This was evident in such areas as Geelong where it was recorded in the *Geelong Advertiser* 4 October 1906, p 2 that:

The State school authorities are making inquiries into the cost of providing all the country State schools in the Geelong district with hexagonal shelter sheds, with trellis-work sides. The sheds would prove a boon to the children attending the distant schools, where little or no shelter is provided, and as the outlay would not be very considerable, it is

expected that orders will shortly be given for the erection of the buildings.

Describing rural schools in the first decades of the twentieth century, an Education Department history of Victorian schools, published in 1922, stated that 'shady trees are in growth, and the deeper interest in the children is seen in the play pavilions without and the libraries with books and magazines within'. Parents were still expected to organise and fund structures such as shelter sheds, fences, gates and woodsheds, however from c1905 the Education Department systematically gave pound-for-pound grants towards the cost of various improvements for school yards including shelter sheds, fences, asphaltting and shade trees. Parents typically formed themselves into local committees and arranged various means of raising their share of the funds.

A survey of advertisements for fundraising events and tender notices in Victorian newspapers indicates that from c1905 into the 1920s many school communities held concerts, balls, dances, fetes and bazaars, usually at local halls or mechanics institutes, to raise money for a shelter shed or sheds. For example in Frankston a fundraising concert at the Mechanics Hall in 1906 raised £8 for a shelter shed, which matched the money granted by the Education Department. This amount was thought to be 'sufficient to erect a neat and cosy shelter for the children' as stated in the *Mornington Standard*, 7 July 1906 p.2. A shelter shed at Redesdale School cost £20 in 1914. It was reported in the *Kyneton Guardian*, 23 May 1914 p.2 that 'this long-felt want will be greatly appreciated by children attending the school, as Redesdale is not one of the warmest places in Victoria during the winter months.' By contrast, it was reported in the *Fitzroy City Press*, 30 June 1911 p.4 that organisers of a fete to raise funds for a shelter shed at a school in Bell Street, Fitzroy, hoped to match the maximum £50 contribution from the Department, to build a shed costing £100.

The school committees or 'boards of advisors' were also often expected to arrange tendering for these buildings. This was the case at Nichols Point State School as advertised in the *Mildura Cultivator*, 15 October 1910 p.10. In a few instances architects were involved in the design and tender process, for example the architect John Beebe advertised for tenders for a shelter for the Golden Square State School in the *Bendigo Advertiser*, 20 August 1910 p.12.

**KEY REFERENCES**

L J Blake. *Vision and Realisation: a Centenary History of State Education in Victoria*. Melbourne 1973

Andrew Ward & Associates. 'City and Shire of Mildura Conservation Study'. 1988

H Doyle. 'Establishing Schools and Places of Higher Education. An Historical Survey of Education in Victoria'. 2000

Goad and Willis. *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*. Melbourne 2012

Mallee Catchment Management Authority. *King's Billabong. Nichols Point 'an oral history'*, 2014

P Mills. 'History of shelter shed at former Arthurs Creek School', May 2015

Newspapers including *The Mildura Cultivator*, various dates

PROV files: Building file: Primary School VPRS795/P0000/2704 (old papers 1913-1954); Photographs & negatives of public buildings VPRS 10516/P0003/19 & Photographs, Negatives & Slides VPRS 14514/P0001/32

## Plaque Citation

Designed by Shire Engineer Alexander Thomson in 1910, this is a fine and highly intact example of a rotunda which demonstrates the importance of providing students with shelter from the elements, particularly in the harsh climate of north-west Victoria.

## Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion D - Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects  
The Shelter Shed

1 The Committee notes that in the Recommendation, reference was made to a comment attributed to Frank Tate, the Victorian Director of Education 1902 - 1928, who was said to have described the shelter shed as 'the best I have seen in an Australian school'. The Committee further notes the information provided in the Recommendation about the early twentieth century trend towards the development of school shelter sheds as part of an approach to providing sheltered outdoor space for students and notes the association of the shelter shed with this process.

2 In relation to the shelter shed, the Committee is of the view that it is a large and impressive structure and a structure in which can be read a particular architectural response to the climate of Mildura and north-western Victoria. It is notable for distinctive features that include its octagonal form, louvre weatherboards for ventilation,

lack of rainwater collection or diversion elements and its extensive surrounding open verandah structure.

3 The Committee is of the view that the shelter shed is a notable example of a rotunda, shelter shed or open air shelter structure and a fine and highly intact example within its class. The Committee is of the view that the shelter shed is an impressive architectural expression which responds to the harsh climate of the Mildura and Riverina region.

4 The Committee therefore determines that the shelter shed within the Place satisfies

Criterion D at a State level and is of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria as a notable example of a rotunda or shelter shed.

5 The Committee determines that the shelter shed be included in the Register, with an appropriate curtilage as described in the attached diagram and description

## **Extent of Registration**

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the following place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H2363

Category: Heritage Place

Place: Former Nichols Point Primary School Shelter Shed

Location: 110 Koorlong Avenue, Nichols Point, Mildura Rural City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2363 encompassing part Lot 1 on Title Plan 601821.

Dated 14 July 2016

TIM SMITH

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 28 14 July 2016 p.1833]

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*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/>*