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# FORMER ROBERTSON'S RESIDENCE AND OFFICE SITE

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## Location

1A RAIL STREET WANDONG, MITCHELL SHIRE

## Municipality

MITCHELL SHIRE

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7923-0078

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 20, 2021

The site demonstrates there is the likelihood for historical archaeological features, deposits and/or artefacts that may inform on the Robertson residence and commercial activities of Robertson's Seasoned Timber operations, sawmilling activities at Mt. Disappointment, and the Victorian Terra Cotta Lumber Company. Robertson's Office and Store are of local historical significance as an integral part of the sawmilling operations of Wandong Timber Company 1884-1892 and then the Australian Seasoned Timber Company (1892) and their extended operations at Wandong 1892-1903. The Store provided the everyday essentials for workers of the sawmills, seasoning works, planing and moulding factories as well as the Terra Cotta Lumber works while the Office was the registered place of the company to transact its business affairs.

Interpretation of Site	The site functioned as a private residence for the Robertson family while the Office and Store formed part of the commercial activities of Robertson's Seasoned Timber operations, the sawmilling activities at Mt. Disappointment, the Victorian Terra Cotta Lumber Company as well as providing the day to day provisioning of workers and residents of Wandong with their clothing, groceries and general goods. Robertson's activities were central to the Victorian Railways with a portion of land allocated to the Railway Department. Robertson communicated extensively on the local rail traffic of the day; of making the road "leading past his house through the Railway Gastes and past the Post Office and Hotel"; corresponded on changing of the gated crossing and redirection of the downward line and associated roadworks (11 August 1892) . The Melbourne to Sydney line was an integral part of his distribution network and stressed to the Commissioner of Railways the necessity of bringing the Railway Line into the newly extended company facilitate the transport of timber from the mills direct to the Wandong depot (11 August 1892). The land was further subdivided by the Ryan family 1999 and now forms residential allotments.
Hermes Number	208199
Property Number	

## History

### BURNSIDE RESIDENCE AND WANDONG TIMBER COMPANY OFFICE AND STORE 1884-1892

In 1871 Patrick Morphett is shown on the Parish of Bylands plan and Land Title as obtaining 36 acres and 28 perches of Crown Land Allotment 1A of Section C in September of that year (Vol. 00549 Folio 603/ 549/109603).

With a downturn in fortunes Morphett mortgaged his property to Alfred Edward Moore and Richard Mackay in May 1873 and in 1875 he sought consideration for an extension to his lease, stating "with a large family of 8 children he had not made all the improvements required" and that a building 15' x 12' of two rooms (for two adults and eight children) was in course of erection on Lot 1 of C. On 3rd May 1875 Hugh Sinclair of Wallan Wallan, Storekeeper was appointed Trustee of the Morphett estate. Morphett stated he "had no land in fee simple, and what land he had he had to sell for the benefit of (his) creditors". He was subsequently granted an extension to his lease (Payne 1981:52; Pickett 2012:13; Lorraine Huddle 2006 Vol. 5 of 5). The property was sold by Hugh Sinclair to William Brooks Hoffman on 16th August 1875 according to the Land Title.

Certificate of Title shows that William Brooks Hoffman, timber merchant of Melbourne had become the owner of thirty six acres, twenty eight perches of Crown Allotment 1A of Section C of Parish of Bylands on 16th August 1875 (Certificate of Title Vol 783 Fol. 156538). In the meantime, Morphett purchased a further 89 acres of land (Lot 2 of C) further south of his original Lot 1A of C in 1878 (Figure 1). However within one month of purchasing this additional parcel Morphett wrote to the Lands Department stating – "*I am desirous of leaving the above land having sold to W.B Hoffman esquire, Timber Merchant Melbourne and going upon land which I have taken up in the Murchison district*" (Lands Department File No. 16936). Morphett's property of Allotment 1A of C was joined to the east by John McRae McKenzie's large holding of 316.3.4 acres of land.

Both McKenzie and Morphett shared an access road connecting to the Wandong Broadford Road. The access road bisected Morphett's property at the northern end while forming part of McKenzie's western boundary, with the Dry Creek separating the two properties. In 1879 McKenzie acquired an additional 6 acres and 12 perches giving him a total of 320 acres which he referred to as 'Burnside' (Figure 2). This acquisition extended McKenzie's property further west with a vinculum joining McKenzie's Lot 16 with a narrow strip of land (16 and 16A of Section D) running north/south along the Dry Creek thereby formalising McKenzie's creek access (Figure 2).

In 1883 John McKenzie signalled his intention to leave the (Wandong) district and his 'Burnside' property following the death of one of his children, however in an affidavit to D. Pickup's Last Will and Testament, McKenzie gave his address as "Burnside, Wandong (VPRS28 PO 301, item 25/735). McKenzie finally left the

district in late 1883 having acquired land in the Seven Creeks and Baillie's Hill area in the Strathbogie region (Australasian 6 October 1883:5). It was around this time Robertson arrived at Wandong although a definitive date remains elusive.

### **Wandong Timber Company/Robertson's Sawmills, Planing and Forming Factories, Wandong, Violet Town and Yarrawonga 1883-1895**

Around mid-1883 Robertson dissolved his sawmilling partnership with McGie in the Bullarook/Ballarat region to relocate his operations to Wandong. In partnership with his brother William and timber merchants Thomas Sim and Robert Hall he established the Wandong Timber Company (VPRS 440/PO). On arrival at Wandong he immediately bought up a number of small sawmills in the Strath Creek/Derril and Mt. Disappointment forests where he commenced his sawmilling operations ie The Comet Mill VHR H1816; Planets 1 and 2 and the Bump mills (Payne 1981). Newspaper advertisements from 1884 detail his preparatory activities in buying machinery, wire rope, advertising tenders for tramway formation works as well as providing physical descriptions of his mills, tramway operations and advertising for tradesmen (i.e. The Age 30 August 1884:7; The Age 1 September 1884:3; 12 November 1884:7; Bendigo Advertiser 5 May 1888:3).

As part of his relocation activities Robertson appears to have leased a substantial portion of Lot 1A of C where he occupied a residence named 'Burnside' complete with an office and store attached. It was from here that Robertson conducted the business activities of the Wandong Timber Company (1883-1892). On arrival at Wandong Robertson set about creating a tramway line to service his sawmills located on Mt. Disappointment 11 miles (17.7kms) from the railhead at Wandong. His presence at Wandong by May of 1884 is confirmed with a Public Notice in 1884 stating that his company "employees were on strike for an Eight Hour Day" (*Kilmore Free Press* 29 May 1884:3). A year later (1885) a further advertisement stated that the 'Registered Office of the Wandong Timber Company was situated in the Store occupied by Robert Affleck Robertson in the Township of Wandong' (*Kilmore Free Press* 22 October 1885:3). Coincidentally J.M. McKenzie advertised his Burnside property in January of the same year in which he described Robertson's tramway then under construction.

The ownership of the Burnside residence/store/office becomes confusing in terms of its actual location – whether it was on Lot 16 or 16A or on Lot 1A of C and whether it was the original residence of McKenzie and rented to Robertson, or whether it was an extension to Morphet's building (Table 1 and 2).

The 320 acre Burnside property was owned by McKenzie in 1884 however due to financial difficulties he gave instructions for the 'Burnside' property to be sold as detailed below:

For sale by Auction, Glascott, Matthews and Co,

*'Under instructions from owner J.M. McKenzie, (the) well-known Property called Burnside, situated close to Wandong Railway Station, **at terminus of Tramway now in course of construction** Wandong to Mt. Disappointment. 320 Acres of Land, comfortable nine-roomed residence and out offices, garden, paddocks, wood and water.*

*(Argus 13 January 1885:2).*

It is apparent from this advertisement the property being auctioned was McKenzie's 320 acres of land although Figure 1 suggests an error in lot numbering occurred with Lot 1A of C crossed out on the plan of McKenzie's lot and renamed as Lot 16. The ownership of Lot 1A of C adjoining McKenzie's Lot 16 changes hands with William Hoffman owning the property in 1877 and coincides with Morphet mortgaging the property in 1873.

By 1886 Robertson's sawmilling operations were well established and his tramway line to the Wandong Railway Station operational. Robertson and his family were in residence at the Burnside residence with his son Walter Whitburn Robertson being born there on 14 July 1886.

Perhaps McKenzie had hoped that Robertson would purchase the property given his investment in the forest and the creation of the tramway hub at Wandong, however it would appear the Burnside property remained in unsold and was mortgaged in December of 1886 (Herald 16 December 1886:4).

Under instructions from the **mortgagee** Gemmell Tuckett and Co. were engaged to sell McKenzie's/mortgagee's property:

“320 acres of enclosed land, with comfortable nine-roomed residence, out-offices, garden, paddocks etc. being altogether one of the most compact and desirable stations in the district” (*The Argus* 16, pg 3 and 22 December 1886:2).

Coincidentally in early December 1886 William Hoffman transfers **part** of Lots 1A and 2 of C under lease to the **Wandong Timber Company**. In 1887 Hoffman transfers a further **part** of Lots 1A and 2 of C to Robert Affleck Robertson on 16th July 1887 (Certificate of Title Vol 783 Fol 15653). The balance of the land and ownership is then transferred to Robert Affleck Robertson on 17th August 1889 (Certificate of Title Vol 2183 Fol. 436403).

### **Robertson Chronology (Table 2 and Attachment 2 Photographs)**

By September 1884 Robertson's tramway was under construction; by October sawmill erection was underway, in November a bridge close to his mill was completed and by January 1885 the tramway was nearly completed.

### **PLACE HISTORY – BURNSIDE RESIDENCE AND WANDONG TIMBER COMPANY OFFICE AND STORE 1884-1892**

In 1871 Patrick Morphett is shown on the Parish of Bylands plan and Land Title as obtaining 36 acres and 28 perches of Crown Land Allotment 1A of Section C in September of that year (Vol. 00549 Folio 603/ 549/109603).

With a downturn in fortunes Morphett mortgaged his property to Alfred Edward Moore and Richard Mackay in May 1873 and in 1875 he sought consideration for an extension to his lease, stating “with a large family of 8 children he had not made all the improvements required” and that a building 15' x 12' of two rooms (for two adults and eight children) was in course of erection on Lot 1 of C. On 3rd May 1875 Hugh Sinclair of Wallan Wallan, Storekeeper was appointed Trustee of the Morphett estate. Morphett stated he “had no land in fee simple, and what land he had he had to sell for the benefit of (his) creditors”. He was subsequently granted an extension to his lease (Payne 1981:52; Pickett 2012:13; Lorraine Huddle 2006 Vol. 5 of 5). The property was sold by Hugh Sinclair to William Brooks Hoffman on 16th August 1875 according to the Land Title. Figure 1 Map shows Patrick Morphett had by 1877 sold Lot 1A of C. Certificate of Title shows that William Brooks Hoffman, timber merchant of Melbourne had become the owner of thirty six acres, twenty eight perches of Crown Allotment 1A of Section C of Parish of Bylands on 16th August 1875 (Certificate of Title Vol 783 Fol. 156538). In the meantime, Morphett purchased a further 89 acres of land (Lot 2 of C) further south of his original Lot 1A of C in 1878 (Figure 1). However within one month of purchasing this additional parcel Morphett wrote to the Lands Department stating – “*I am desirous of leaving the above land having sold to W.B Hoffman esquire, Timber Merchant Melbourne and going upon land which I have taken up in the Murchison district*” (Lands Department File No. 16936). Morphett's property of Allotment 1A of C was joined to the east by John McRae McKenzie's large holding of 316.3.4 acres of land. Both McKenzie and Morphett shared an access road connecting to the Wandong Broadford Road. The access road bisected Morphett's property at the northern end while forming part of McKenzie's western boundary, with the Dry Creek separating the two properties. In 1879 McKenzie acquired an additional 6 acres and 12 perches giving him a total of 320 acres which he referred to as ‘Burnside’ (Figure 2). This acquisition extended McKenzie's property further west with a vinculum joining McKenzie's Lot 16 with a narrow strip of land (16 and 16A of Section D) running north/south along the Dry Creek thereby formalising McKenzie's creek access (Figure 2). In 1883 John McKenzie signalled his intention to leave the (Wandong) district and his ‘Burnside’ property following the death of one of his children, however in an affidavit to D. Pickup's Last Will and Testament, McKenzie gave his address as “Burnside, Wandong (VPRS28 PO 301, item 25/735). McKenzie finally left the district in late 1883 having acquired land in the Seven Creeks and Baillie's Hill area in the Strathbogie region (Australasian 6 October 1883:5). It was around this time Robertson arrived at Wandong although a definitive date remains elusive. Figure 1: Land owned by McKenzie east of Patrick Morphett – Lots 1A and 2 of C, Parish Bylands & Glenburnie G80C 1. Figure 2: Map of McKenzie Allotment vinculum encompassing portion of land along Dry Creek 1879.

### **Wandong Timber Company/Robertson's Sawmills, Planing and Forming Factories, Wandong, Violet Town and Yarrawonga 1883-1895**

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tramway operations and advertising for tradesmen (i.e. The Age 30 August 1884:7; The Age 1 September 1884:3; 12 November 1884:7; Bendigo Advertiser 5 May 1888:3). As part of his relocation activities Robertson appears to have leased a substantial portion of Lot 1A of C where he occupied a residence named 'Burnside' complete with an office and store attached. It was from here that Robertson conducted the business activities of the Wandong Timber Company (1883-1892). On arrival at Wandong Robertson set about creating a tramway line to service his sawmills located on Mt. Disappointment 11 miles (17.7kms) from the railhead at Wandong. His presence at Wandong by May of 1884 is confirmed with a Public Notice in 1884 stating that his company "employees were on strike for an Eight Hour Day" (*Kilmore Free Press* 29 May 1884:3). A year later (1885) a further advertisement stated that the 'Registered Office of the Wandong Timber Company was situated in the Store occupied by Robert Affleck Robertson in the Township of Wandong' (*Kilmore Free Press* 22 October 1885:3). Coincidentally J.M. McKenzie advertised his Burnside property in January of the same year in which he described Robertson's tramway then under construction. The ownership of the Burnside residence/store/office becomes confusing in terms of its actual location – whether it was on Lot 16 or 16A or on Lot 1A of C and whether it was the original residence of McKenzie and rented to Robertson, or whether it was an extension to Morphett's building (Table 1 and 2). The 320 acre Burnside property was owned by McKenzie in 1884 however due to financial difficulties he gave instructions for the 'Burnside' property to be sold as detailed below: For sale by Auction, Glascott, Matthews and Co, 'Under instructions from owner J.M. McKenzie, *(the) well-known Property called Burnside, situated close to Wandong Railway Station, at terminus of Tramway now in course of construction Wandong to Mt. Disappointment. 320 Acres of Land, comfortable nine-roomed residence and out offices, garden, paddocks, wood and water.* (*Argus* 13 January 1885:2). It is apparent from this advertisement the property being auctioned was McKenzie's 320 acres of land although Figure 1 suggests an error in lot numbering occurred with Lot 1A of C crossed out on the plan of McKenzie's lot and renamed as Lot 16. The ownership of Lot 1A of C adjoining McKenzie's Lot 16 changes hands with William Hoffman owning the property in 1877 and coincides with Morphett mortgaging the property in 1873. By 1886 Robertson's sawmilling operations were well established and his tramway line to the Wandong Railway Station operational. Robertson and his family were in residence at the Burnside residence with his son Walter Whitburn Robertson being born there on 14 July 1886. Perhaps McKenzie had hoped that Robertson would purchase the property given his investment in the forest and the creation of the tramway hub at Wandong, however it would appear the Burnside property remained in unsold and was mortgaged in December of 1886 (*Herald* 16 December 1886:4). Under instructions from the **mortgagee** Gemmell Tuckett and Co. were engaged to sell McKenzie's/mortgagee's property: "320 acres of enclosed land, with comfortable nine-roomed residence, out-offices, garden, paddocks etc. being altogether one of the most compact and desirable stations in the district" (*The Argus* 16, pg 3 and 22 December 1886:2). Coincidentally in early December 1886 William Hoffman transfers **part** of Lots 1A and 2 of C under lease to the **Wandong Timber Company**. In 1887 Hoffman transfers a further **part** of Lots 1A and 2 of C to Robert Affleck Robertson on 16th July 1887 (Certificate of Title Vol 783 Fol 15653). The balance of the land and ownership is then transferred to Robert Affleck Robertson on 17th August 1889 (Certificate of Title Vol 2183 Fol. 436403).

**Robertson Chronology (Table 2 and Attachment 2 Photographs)** By September 1884 Robertson's tramway was under construction; by October sawmill erection was underway, in November a bridge close to his mill was completed and by January 1885 the tramway was nearly completed (*Argus* 6 September 1884:3; Age 23 October 1884:8; *Kilmore free Press* 13 November:2; Age 12 January 1885:2). By 1889 Robertson owns all of Hoffman's Lots 1A and 2 of Section C and is residing at the Burnside property with his family while operating his sawmilling business from the Office attached to the residence. Figure 3: Parish of Bylands 560 A001 Map - Morphett Land Lot 2 of C. Robertson tramline marked in red – Travelling from Mt. Disappointment north/east through Morphett's land Lot 2 and Lot 1 of C to Seasoning Works and then the Wandong Railway Station at Rail Street. Robertson continues to occupy Burnside in 1887 with his wife Mary advertising for a general servant to assist her at the property. Burnside was the residence of Robert Affleck Robertson, his wife Mary (nee Rail) and four of their nine children from approximately 1884-1892. **Wanted** "General Servant, accustomed with children, apply Mrs Robertson, Burnside, Wandong" (*Kilmore Free Press* 6 January 1887:3) and "General Servant, small family; good place, wages 10s Apply in writing, Mrs. Robertson, Wandong" (*The Age*, 14 February 1887:8). It was in July 1887 that the ownership of **part** of Lot 1A and 2 of C are transferred from Hoffman to Robertson under his own name. Meanwhile McKenzie continued to offer his property for sale through Dougharty, Son and Parker under (*The Argus* 29 January 1887:12) and once again the property failed to sell with auctioneers stating "buyers were scarce and no sales were affected" (*The Age* 18 February 1887:4). The property was again advertised for sale in October 1888, conjointly by C.J. and T. Ham (The Mercantile finance, Trustees and Agency Co. of Australia Limited) and R.D. McKay (*The Argus* 20 October 1888:5). R.D. McKay was at one time Manager and Secretary for the Victorian Terra Cotta Lumber Company at Brunswick which in 1888/89 relocated its operations to Wandong under the management of Robert Robertson. Finally by August 1889 the balance of Lots 1A and 2 of C are transferred from Hoffman to Robertson again under his own name (17 August 1889 Vol. 2183 Fol. 436403).

## **Burnside Residence, Office, Store and Tramway loop near the Wandong Railway Station.**

Undated photographs provide evidence of the weatherboard residence known as 'Burnside' (circa 1885) and as noted in the 'For Sale advertisements', Robertson's Office and Store were located at the terminus of the tramway line leading to the Wandong Station as shown on the 1892 Auction Map and Plate 1. Plate 1 shows the buildings on the north side of the tramway loop, opposite Gate 21 of the railway line. Payne describes the tramway from the Comet mill as "passing close by the seasoning works, turning in front of Robertson's store to enter the eastern side of the railway reserve which it followed to the culvert under the railway line...giving access to the terra cotta lumber works" (Payne 1891:60). A Land title shows Robertson purchased part of the land in 1889 (Lots 1 and 2 of C) and in August of 1892 transferred a portion of the land to the Australian Seasoned Timber Company (ASTC) as part of the new company's transfer arrangements. Plate 1: Burnside Residence, Office and Store circa 1885 and Tramway loop to station.

The land and residence formed an integral part of Robert Affleck Robertson's sawmilling operations known as the Wandong Timber Company Limited (1884-1892) although liquidated in 1889 (Gov gazette 17 22 February 1889:735) when the Comet Mill burnt down, the company remained registered until 1898 (Gov Gaz 124 24 Dec 1897:4869) with Robertson continuing his operations under the banner of the Robertson Sawmilling, Planing and Seasoning works (as depicted on the Office/Store hoarding in Plate 2 ) before transforming into the Australian Seasoned Timber Company Limited (1892-1903), said to be 'probably the largest timber producer in Victoria in 1898' (McCarthy 2001:1 and PRO File No. 2750 Memorandum and Articles of Association of ASTC). Plate 2: Office and Store of R.A. Robertson on north side of Tramway Loop to Wandong Station. All three business entities (Wandong Timber Co; R.A. Robertson Sawmills etc: Australian Seasoned Timber Co) were situated on Allotment 1 of C, while the tramway servicing the company's sawmills at Mt. Disappointment crossed both Allotments 1A and 2A of Section C travelling 17kms from the mountain to the Wandong Railway Station past the Burnside residence, store and office via the tramway line loop as depicted above. The Office, Store and Stables as well as the tramway line that passed these buildings formed the administrative hub of Robertson's sawmilling operations and other associated activities. By August of 1889, Robert Affleck Robertson of Wandong, Timber Merchant, is described on the land title as "now the proprietor of Estate in Fee simple, subject to the Encumbrances notified hereunder in "All that piece of Land delineated and colored (sic) red on the Map in the margins, containing 116 acres and thirty perches or thereabouts **being part of Crown Allotments One and Two, Section C** Parish of Bylands County of Dalhousie". "Encumbrances referred to: A lease as to part from William B Hoffman to Wandong Timber Company Limited registered the 8th day of December 1889 and numbered 3566 in the Register". The lease is then surrendered 16th August 1892. (Volume 02183 Folio 403, Parent Titles Vol. 00783 Folio 538, Volume 01054 Folio 641, Certificate of Title Vol 2183 Folio 436403).

Figure 4: Certificate of Title Vol 2183 Folio 436403 – Part of Crown Allotments 1 and 2A Section C It appears that Robertson did purchase part of Lots 1 and 2 C in 1889 and continued to lease a portion of land from W.B. Hoffman until August 1892. Robertson surrendered the lease in August 1892 which then appears to have been either purchased or leased by the Australian Seasoned Timber Company Ltd (ASTC). Having subdivided a substantial portion of land within the Wandong township (as depicted in 1892 Auction Map), Robertson sold Lot 32615 to the Australian Seasoned Timber Company August 1892 – title – "Transfer as to part and Creation of Easement to the Australian Seasoned Timber Company 31 August 1892 No. 326151" (See Sheet No. 2 LP 3204). The land containing the Burnside residence, office and store continued to be utilised by Robertson in his capacity as General Manager for the Australian Seasoned Timber Company (ASTC) in early 1892 until it was destroyed in October 1892. The fire destroyed the residence, office and store with only the furniture and company records being saved by a Mr. Brown. Covered by insurance the estimated loss was £3,000 suggesting the property was of a substantial size (*The Argus* 8 October 1892:7). Prior to the fire in 1892, Robertson's Office and Store were an integral part of the sawmilling operations of Wandong Timber Company 1884-1892 and then the Australian Seasoned Timber Company (1892) and their extended operations at Wandong 1892-1903. The Store provided the everyday essentials for workers of the sawmills, seasoning works, planing and moulding factories as well as the Terra Cotta Lumber works while the Office was the registered place of the company to transact its business affairs. Following the fire, photographic evidence and the 1894 Map (Figure 4), show a new (Secretary's) residence, office and store were constructed by the Australian Seasoned Timber Company (ASTC) Plate 3 and 4).

These buildings were rebuilt further south of the original Burnside residence, store, office and tramway loop. The new office and store were located on Lots 2 and 3 of Robertson's subdivision on the eastern side of Rail St (Figure 4 and Plate 3), then owned by David Beath of the ASTC while the Stables of 1884-1903 remained located in their original position (Possibly rear No. 3 Rail Street).

In 1892 Robertson in conjunction with Reiser and other notable Melbourne businessmen formed a consortium establishing 'The Australian Seasoned Timber Company (1892-1903 PRO File No. 2750 Memorandum and Articles of Association of ASTC). The ASTC consortium bought all of Robertson's operations – The Comet, Planets 1 and 2, The Bump mills; the Victorian Terra Cotta Lumber Company Pty Ltd; Robertson's seasoning works plant, moulding and planing factories and equipment and then set about extending Robertson's Seasoning plant and establishing a new sawmill near the seasoning works site at Wandong (Figure 4A). Plate 5: Australian Seasoned Timber Company – extended plant 1892 Following the fire of October 1892 in which Robertson's residence, store and office were destroyed he began renting a 4 roomed weatherboard cottage (Lot 26) in Dry Creek Crescent opposite the Catholic Church. The Robertson family and five children appear to have remained at Wandong until around September 1892 when three of his children then left the Wandong Primary School. Mary is recorded as giving birth to four more children in her hometown area of Ballarat from 1893 onwards. In 1893 Robertson is listed as owning 3 parcels of land – 216 acres, 222 acres, 79 acres and 166 unsold building lots. In 1892 according to the Kilmore Shire Rate Books he also owned the Coffee Palace, several houses and cottages, including the terra cotta lumber cottages built for his sawmill manager and secretary. Robertson also owned the Blacksmith's cottage, Police Stables and the Police Station, House/land. A new lot numbering system came into place along with streets of the new subdivision being named after Robertson's family (Affleck, Whitburn, and Eads Street). Only the Affleck street name remains today (Figure 6 and 1892 Auction Map). By 1896/97 Robertson had either sold or transferred ownership of many of his properties to David Beath, Director of both the Australian Seasoned Timber Company and part owner of Beath Schiess & Co (Argus 5 April 1923:7).

### **Changes to Railway Line and Roads 1892**

Despite having divested himself of his sawmilling assets, Robertson stayed on as General Manager to the ASTC and continued to advocate on behalf of the company. In August 1892 Robertson wrote to the Commissioner of Railways Robertson recommending that the road past his house through the Railway Gates and past the Post Office and Hotel be made; that a bridge in lieu of the current railway gates be erected and the gradient changed. He stated such changes would "reduce the heavy down grade and curve from Heathcote Junction" and reduce "the danger it presented to women and school children crossing through wicket gates". He stated that the new company ASTC were now spending £8,000 in extending the works and emphasised the necessity of "bringing the railway line into the works soon" (Robertson correspondence dated 11 August 1892 – File 11031). The Railway Department – Office of Engineer of Existing Lines responded (20 September 1892) indicating he had met with Robertson and Shire Engineer for Kilmore and had discussed the potential location of a bridge; that the Shire intended installing roads on each side of Level Crossing and if a Bridge could not be granted then he would recommend the Level Crossing gates and Gatehouse be moved. Robertson also requested that the present siding be extended so that bricks could be run to his seasoning works. The total estimated cost for the Bridge was £795.00 (20 September 1892 – 92/11031, 122328 Memo). Robertson remained as General Manager for the Australian Seasoned Timber Company until 1895 after which time he had no association with the company (Broadford Courier and Reedy Creek Times 14 June 1895:3).

### **Changes in Ownership - Kilmore Shire Rate Book 1892/93**

Rates show Ross McKenzie as occupying a Store on Lots 2 and 3 in the new subdivision paying rates of 35s as well as paying 25s for the use of Stables although no owner is listed. It is presumed this is the New Store and Office on Lots 2 and 3 Rail Street built by the ASTC and that the Stables are those of Robertson 1884-1903. It is possible McKenzie managed the Store and Stables. 1893/94 Robert Robertson is listed as owner of the Police Stables with James Wilcox Police Constable paying rates of 30s. It is thought the stables were located on part of the original 28 acres of land of Lot 1A of C (Figure 4A). Constable Wilcox was also paying rates of 15s on the Police Station, House and Land (Lots 1,2,3,4 of 16D) also owned by Robert Robertson. 1896/97. Rates show that the Police Station, Weatherboard House and land owned by Robert Robertson was located on Lots 1,2,3,4 of Section D. James Wilcox continued to occupy the house until he was retrenched following the demise of the Australian Seasoning Works in 1903.

### **LIQUIDATION AND SALE OF ASTC ASSETS**

The ASTC operated from 1892 until it was finally liquidated in 1903 with all the assets, plant and equipment etc. progressively being sold off commencing in 1901. As the following advertisements show, the sale of the buildings, equipment etc. took place over the following four years: 1901

**Advertisement** – ‘Australian Seasoned Timber Co. Tenders received at the office of the above company up to the 31st inst. For Purchase and Removal of bricks contained in Seasoning Works at Wandong 200,000 bricks or lots per 1,000. These bricks are in good order and condition and are stamped Walkerden’ (Argus Monday 23 September 1901:2). These bricks were used as the outer skin of the kilns with the terra cotta lumber forming the interior of the kilns. A loose ‘Walkerden’ brick can be found at the foot of the remnant terra cotta lumber wall on the western side of the Dry Creek (L. Dore). This may represent the use of discarded bricks from the demolition of the seasoning works 1902-1904.

## **LIQUIDATION AND SALE OF ASTC ASSETS - continued 1902**

**Advertisement** – ‘Important Sale of Surplus Stock and Plant, Draught Horses, Buildings, Trucks and Stores. The Australian Seasoned Timber Company Ltd. will SELL on 6 November without reserve: Horses, mares, timber and log trucks, cart and trace harness, tip dray, complete set of blacksmith’s tools, scrap iron, iron piping, iron tanks, sawn timber, doors, locks and hinges, buildings for removal including old store, office and other buildings, quantity of drapery, boots and shoes, 4 telephone instruments and 11 miles of wire’ (Argus 25 October 1902:3).

**Advertisement** - To Storekeepers and Others – instructions from Australian Seasoned Timber Co. of Wandong to offer their storekeeping business for sale by tender. Tenders invited for the stock-in-trade: Lot 1 -Drapery, grocery, crockery and glassware, fancy goods and stationery; patent medicines; boots and shoes, ironmongery and tinware; produce and plant’. ‘Lot 2 – Cash Register. Business will be sold as a going concern. The stock is in good condition and well assorted. The premises are new and quite suitable for the business and a good and profitable turnover can be done by an energetic man’ (The Argus 17 December 1902:3).

1903 **Advertisement** - ‘The Sale of Seasoned Timber Co’s stock of drapery, boots and shoes, groceries, produce, ironmongery etc. etc. is now on at Wandong. The company haven given up business at Wandong the whole stock is being cleared out at wholesale cost prices. This presents a good opportunity to lay in supplies, as great bargains will be offered to clear the whole lot’ (KFP 15 January 1903:3).

**Advertisement** - ‘Clearing Auction of Victoria Terra Cotta Company Wandong buildings, sheds, kilns, machinery and plant including engine, boiler, steam pump,’ etc. (Age 8 August 1903:2).

1904 **Advertisement** - ‘building materials for removal – gal. iron buildings’ etc.( Benalla standard 6 May 1904:2) Wandong Brick Works (At Victorian Terra Cotta Lumber Company site) ‘Building materials for removal – Galvanised iron buildings, milking sheds, factories, stables, water pipe, doors, windows, room, 50,000 bricks’ (Benalla Standard 6 May 1904:2). 1903/04 Rates show that a Daniel Wilson was the storekeeper of a New Store owned by Beath of the ASTC located on Lot 2 and 3 Rail Street, Wandong. 1906/07 Rates show John Bowman, sawmill manager paying rates on a Weatherboard Store on Lots 2 and 3 Rail Street, Wandong.

**Burnside Residence** 1901 There appears a new residence ‘Burnside’ was built however it is unclear as to its location. The Kilmore rates show that Maddick a wood carter then owned 315 acres with a weatherboard house on the land, whether this was the Burnside residence is unknown however it is referred to as ‘Burnside’. 1902 Maddick of ‘Burnside’ advertises the sale of bullocks and equipment from his residence(Age 6 December 1900:2). Again Shire rates show that J. D. Maddick owned 315 acres with a weatherboard house on the land and in October of 1902 it was reported his son Thomas aged 19 of ‘Burnside’ was struck and killed by lightning whilst delivering goods for the local baker, Mr. J. Burke of Wandong (Kilmore Free Press 30 October 1902:2; The Age 25 October 1902:11and the Geelong Advertiser 25 October 1902:4). The next owner of ‘Burnside’ was Mr. D.J. Burgess and his wife Margaret (Kilmore Advertiser 22 January 1916:2). 1907-1917 Rates now show Mr. D.J. Burgess owning Burnside property (Kilmore Advertiser 22 January 1916:2) and in 1917 it was reported that D.J. Burgess beloved husband of Margaret Burgess of Burnside, died at sea during World War I. Margaret is listed as occupying a dwelling (weatherboard) on Lots 2 and 3 of Rail Street, Wandong and paying rates on the Old Stables and 28 acres at Wandong. 1920 The Ryan family were the next to occupy a ‘Burnside’ residence and Land 1943 R.F. Ryan 1952 E.J. Ryan and A. Ryan (Age 4 July 1952:7) property was described as: R.F. Ryan owned the Dene south of the quarry and Burnside in the Wandong township. His brother Bill had a large area on the north side of Stott’s Road (Wandong) which was the original Ryan selection of their father and also owned around 200 acres on the southern corner of Stott’s Road and the Wandong-Broadford Road. The 10 acre blocks on both sides of Scanlon’s Road were part of the Burnside property. 1980 Burnside Burnt down and rebuilt – No. 5 Rail Street, Wandong. Plate 7 : Burnside Residence – Located at No. 5 Rail Street, wandong The Burnside property located on No. 5 Rail Street, Wandong was destroyed by fire in 1980 and a new two storey house was built in its place.



*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/>*