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# ANDERSONS BARKSTEAD SAWMILL AND EASTERN TRAMWAY (STILL CREEK SECTION)

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## Location

MCCARTHY ROAD BARKSTEAD, MOORABOOL SHIRE

## Municipality

MOORABOOL SHIRE

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7723-1257

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 30, 2022

### What is significant?

The site was surveyed in October 2022. The site contains a large area covered with saw dust located to the southwest of the Barkstead township. There are many locations that indicate the presence of wooden stumps and bearers that relate to former structures. Artefacts include sawn timber boards, glass, ceramic, metal and leather. A channel extends east from the sawdust pile, possibly lined/crossed with timber boards. The site also contains the Still Creek section of tramway including three cuttings, formation with imprints and, iron straps used for transporting timber from the site.

The site has the potential to contain historical archaeological features, artefacts and deposits from 1856 until the late nineteenth century, it also has the potential to reveal information about the technologies used in the early logging industry and specified transportation technologies.

The four Anderson Brothers emigrated from Scotland in 1850 and had background as engineers and millwrights. They established a large sawpit and mill in Dean in 1856. A second mill was constructed in Dean in 1861 and a 13km tramway between Dean and the Moorabool River was constructed to increase production. In 1866, they purchased 260ha of land along the tramway that was excised from the State Forest for a new larger sawmill, later referred to as Barkstead. The mill was extensive and included a workshop and engine room constructed using

foundation logs c.3.5-4 feet in diameter and stacked using a dovetailed construction. Machinery included a 40-horsepower engine that drove a 72inch circular saw and vertical breaking down saw, cutting up to 20 cubic meters a day. In 1873 the Anderson Brothers developed and manufactured two steam powered locomotives for hauling timber along the tramway, the first of its kind in Victoria.

After a series of grievances with a neighbouring sawmill during the late 1870s, and a number of bushfires and accidents, the Anderson Brothers closed the Barkstead sawmill in 1885. Small scale timber splitting and mining continued to operate at Barkstead. The mill was most likely dismantled during this phase.

**How is it significant?**

The site is of regional historic, technological and archaeological significance.

**Why is it significant?**

The site is historically significant as the largest mill to operate in the Wombat Forest. It was also the first to utilise and develop locomotives for transporting materials.

Interpretation of Site	Large sawdust heap extending over 2ha. Possible evidence of structures but area now flooded and not possible to survey. The section of tramway found east of Brickhouse Road is part of the mill's eastern tramway.
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## History

The Anderson Brothers (James, John, Thomas, and Robert) emigrated from Scotland in 1850. Having a background as engineers and millwrights, they established a large sawpit and mill at Dean in 1856. They established a second mill at Dean in 1861 and constructed an extensive 13km tramway between Dean and the Moorabool River in an attempt to increase production. In 1866, they purchased 260ha of land along the tramway that was excised from the State Forest for a new larger sawmill, later referred to as Barkstead. The mill was extensive and included a workshop and engine room constructed using foundation logs c.3.5-4 feet in diameter and stacked using a dovetailed construction. Machinery included a 40-horsepower engine that drove a 72inch circular saw and vertical breaking down saw, cutting up to 20 cubic meters a day. An account of the mill from the Geelong Advertiser on the 15th of April 1880 describes the sawmill as containing "an engine house with a protruding shafting to which is attached a belt-wheel for driving the turning-lathe". The mill employed 60 men, most of which lived with their families in the surrounding township that had been established as a result of the mill's construction. In 1873 the Anderson Brothers developed and manufactured two steam powered locomotives for hauling timber along the tramway, the first of its kind in Victoria. These locomotives were used at the Barkstead Mill. After a series of grievances with a neighbouring sawmill during the late 1870s, and a number of bushfires and accidents, the Anderson Brothers closed the Barkstead sawmill in 1885. Small scale timber splitting and mining continued to operate at Barkstead. The mill was most likely dismantled during this phase.

*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/>*