
MRS SCOTT'S CATTLE STATION, JELLS PARK, WHEELERS HILL

Location

JELLS PARK, WHEELERS HILL

Municipality

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7922-0196

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 2, 2023

What is significant?

This site has the potential to contain archaeological remains associated with a settler's hut dated to 1839 on the western bank of Dandenong Creek.

How is it significant?

The site has archaeological significance as it is potentially associated with Joseph Jells, a prominent early landowner after whom Jells Park is named, but also the previous owners Thomas Napier and Mrs Madeleine Scott. Archaeological remains associated with the early to mid-nineteenth century in the eastern part of Melbourne are rare if they have survived subsequent land use activity.

Why is it significant?

This site is representative of the early settlers of Melbourne prior to land survey and subsequent subdivision of the larger leases. While it has a strong association to Joseph Jells, after whom the park is named it is also connected to the builder Thomas Napier as well as Mrs Madeleine Scott who farmed the property after the death of her husband and demonstrates the role that women and families had in shaping rural industry. Mrs Scott did not remain long on the property but archaeological remains associated with any of the owners would be significant in demonstrating how they sought to establish homes and farmed the land. Homesteads dating to the late 1830s and 1840s are relatively rare due to the sparsity of European settlers at this time in Victoria and subsequent preservation of these sites.

Interpretation of Site	Mrs Scott's cattle station site is potentially a very early homestead site in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. It is not known if there any physical remains associated with the site as the vegetation was too thick during a site inspection and it is unknown if there have ever been any archaeological remains identified at this location. There is some potential that the general area has been disturbed by works to the creek and from the construction of the lake, but the listing of this possible site serves to draw attention to the possibility of finding archaeological remains associated with the earliest phase of European settlement is what was to become Jells Park. The hut was occupied for several years by the builder Thomas Napier, then the Scott family who sold it to Joseph Jells and there is potential for structural remains as well as artefact deposits.
Hermes Number	209454
Property Number	

History

Jells Park was originally part of a large squatting run selected by Thomas Napier in 1839 who built a hut near Dandenong Creek (Priestley 1979:13). The run was a broad tract of land on the western side of the creek and in 1840 Napier sold it to a new arrival in the colony, Alexander Scott (Dimitrievski 1992:1, Priestley 1979:13). Priestley notes that along with the land Scott likely took over the hut that Napier had built in 1839 with the new arrivals moving into the existing dwelling (1979:14). Alexander died within a year of purchase, but his wife, Madeline, continued farming the land with the cattle station depicted on an 1840 survey plan by T.H. Nutt. In 1847/8 these larger properties were divided into smaller sections with Joseph Jell selecting a claim that in the 1970s became Jells Park. In 1853 the Parish boundaries were officially surveyed with many of the existing land holders taking up the leases, including Joseph Jell with his selection of Section 96. Jells lived on the property in either the old hut built by Napier and later used by the Scott family or at another site, possibly in what is now the Pines Picnic ground (Dimitrievski 1992:26). Jell retained the land until 1886 when it was offered for auction as two allotments, which were purchased by Thomas William Norris, a chemist from Melbourne (Priestley 1979:64). There is no reference to Norris living in the old hut site, so it was probably abandoned by this time. The hut site, as depicted in the 1840 plan, has been overlaid onto a contour map and it appears to be located on the lower slope to the creek. An aerial from 1951 shows a possible structure near where the PGC is from the original 1840s map although it cannot be confirmed if this structure is the cattle station hut. This landscape seems to be somewhat preserved within the current layout of the park, despite the modifications to the watercourse and other parts of the landscape. Pear trees and a windbreak have been linked to the hut site, but a publication by the MMBW suggests that they were planted in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, after the hut site was abandoned (MMBW 1983).

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/>