

## MELVILLE FOREST HOMESTEAD COMPLEX



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead homestead side  
2156



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead Chinese  
gardener's room 2161



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead forge bellows  
2163



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead Chinese  
gardener's room 2162



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead homestead  
kitchen 2157



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead homestead well  
2155



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead mens quarters  
2153



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead mens quarters  
2154



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead shed and forge  
2164



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead stables 2159



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead stables 2158



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead stables 2160



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead woolshed 2165



23456 Melville Forest  
Homestead woolshed 2166

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## Location

Cavendish-Coleraine Road MELVILLE FOREST MELVILLE FOREST, Southern Grampians Shire

## Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

## Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

## Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

Melville Forest Homestead complex is located north of the intersection of the Cavendish-Coleraine Road, overlooking Hawkins Creek. An early subdivision off the great Koonong Wootong run, its licence was first held by the members of the Whyte family, who were amongst the pioneers of the Coleraine area, and then by the partnership of Monro and Cruickshank. The first substantial permanent occupant was Samuel Proudfoot Hawkins from 1858 to 1877 who probably changed the homestead's position from the opposite cliff top to its present site across the creek near the woolshed and men's quarters. Melville Forest was one of several runs he held and probably the most important to him. The single storey timber homestead is unremarkable and has been altered and extended several times including in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The woolshed dates from the earliest period but has also been progressively extended and altered. The stables and blacksmith's shop probably date from the same period as the homestead. At the rear of the blacksmith's shop there is a room, which was occupied by a Chinese gardener, but little of the early, landscaping and garden survives. Some distance from the homestead complex, there are the remains of a hot-water sheep wash associated with the creek. Later owners, who appear to have held the property as an investment along with their other runs, include the famous partnership of Melbourne merchants, Buckley and Nunn from 1877 until 1882, and then the Laidlaw family until at least the First World War. The complex, which is in good condition, is now of relatively low integrity.

How is it significant?

Melville Forest Homestead complex is of historical and architectural significance to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

Melville Forest Homestead complex is of historical significance for its early associations, especially with Samuel Proudfoot Hawkins, one of the earliest surveyors of Melbourne and a colleague of Robert Russell. In this sense it can be compared with The Grange run, occupied by the Wedge brothers and subsequently Capt. William Lonsdale, and in that sense represents the investment and retirement of early public officials. It has further important associations with the famous partnership of Buckley and Nunn then the influential Laidlaw family. The Melville Forest homestead complex is of architectural significance as a collection of traditional buildings with certain aspects of particular interest, including parts of the woolshed and the Chinese gardener's room.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002;
Construction dates	1840,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	23456
Property Number	

## Physical Conditions

Limited archaeological potential at the site of the original homestead and more at the site of the sheepwash. The extant buildings are all in good condition.

## Physical Description 1

The homestead complex includes the usual range of domestic and working structures. The single-storey weatherboard homestead appears to date from after 1858. It has been altered and extended including a major brick service wing, which dates from the late nineteenth century. A separate timber wing, probably an extension and said to include accommodation for staff, was demolished. There is a simple timber verandah on three sides. A cement rendered brick well or rainwater tank survives immediately adjacent to the house. The interiors of the house mostly date from the Interwar period.

The single storey stables and the nearby blacksmith's "shop" are timber framed and clad with corrugated iron. They survive substantially intact with their original fittings including horse stalls, tack shelves and saddle racks in the stables and the forge and bellows in the shop. Of special interest is the room at the back of the shop, occupied by a Chinese gardener, which is confirmed by old graffiti on the back of the door. The small room has a brick chimney but little else to provide any comfort.

The woolshed is clearly built in stages. The oldest section is constructed from timber in the round and adzed posts. Other timber members are pit sawn. The walls and roof are clad with corrugated iron. Part of the original timber shingle roof is exposed under the later, higher roof.

The timber men's quarters appear to date from the early twentieth century and are in two sections. The larger section includes a range of small rooms, the dining area and the kitchen. Another section includes separate rooms. The men's quarters have been converted into holiday accommodation, although with little alteration required.

Some distance from the homestead, on the south bank of the creek there is a sheep wash. The ruins strongly suggest that it was a hot-water wash and it probably dates from the 1870s.

## Historical Australian Themes

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.1 Grazing stock

Theme 5: Working

5.8 Working on the land

## **Usage/Former Usage**

continuing as a mixed pastoral property.

## **Integrity**

Fair degree of integrity

## **Physical Description 2**

The Whyte Brothers, original licence holders

Monro and Cruickshank, later licence holders

Samuel Proudfoot Hawkins, former surveyor of Melbourne, most important licence holder

Buckley and Nunn, absentee licence holders

Laidlaw Brothers, licence holders and owners after 1882

*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/>*