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# HO99 - Former Exford Shearing Shed (AKA Warrawong Shearing Shed)



Shearing Shed



Shearing Shed



Shearing Shed



Silo



Warrawong Shearing Shed

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## Location

1182 - 1250 Exford Road EYNESBURY, Melton Shire

## Municipality

MELTON CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2276

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO99

## Heritage Listing

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

This place is included in the Victorian Heritage Register.

Refer to Heritage Victoria's record for this site.

Council's Statement of Significance for the site:

The Warrawong Shearing Shed at 1182 - 1250 Exford Road Exford is significant at the STATE level as a rare and unusual surviving Victorian styled bluestone shearing shed that once formed part of the major nineteenth century pastoral property of *Exford*. The woolshed most likely dates to the mid - late 1850s. The most comparable shearing shed in the Melton Shire is the bluestone building at *Deanside*, which forms part of a nineteenth century complex of pastoral buildings and is included on the Victorian Heritage Register. The building appears to be of moderate integrity. Nearby the woolshed are mid twentieth century mortared random rubble (fieldstone) gate piers, troughs and cattle ramps that contribute to the significance of the place. Adjacent to the shearing shed three large concrete silos are of LOCAL significance as a legacy of the changing farming practices in the twentieth century and are comparable to the silos at *Eynesbury Homestead*, Melton South, that is also included on the Victorian Heritage Register. They are significant as the most striking evidence of the historic change of use of the property from a major sheep-run, to small farming; and also for their relatively early date (pre-1935), their use of corrugated formwork, and their association with prominent Melbourne industrialist JW Derham. Alterations to the shearing shed also demonstrate this historic change.

The *Warrawong* Shearing shed is architecturally significant at a STATE level (AHC D.2, E.1). It demonstrates original and unusual design qualities of a Victorian style for a nineteenth century pastoral structure. These qualities include the symmetrical composition and particularly the narrow elevated gable roof form with lower flanking skillion wings, coursed random bluestone wall construction, galvanised corrugated steel roof cladding and the tapered bluestone pinnacles adorned with crosses on the main gable end. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the window opening with vertical iron bars, double door opening at the side, and the timber framed window in the upper gable end. The nearby bluestone gate piers, together with the adjacent concrete silos, although of a different period of construction and function, also contribute to the significance of the place as a legacy of the transition from pastoral to farming use in the twentieth century.

The *Warrawong* Shearing shed is historically significant at a STATE level (AHC B2, H1). It is an early example of a superior quality stone shearing shed in Victoria, most probably built in the mid to late 1850s, by Simon Staughton, one of Victoria's most successful and notable squatters. With other pastoral dynasties - principally the Chirnsides and Clarkes - Staughton and then his sons dominated the ownership of the plains and uplands north-west of Port Phillip. With WJT Clarke he was by far the largest landowner in the Shire of Melton. His family became noted contributors to numerous Melton public causes.

The property is also historically significant as an exemplar of the historic early twentieth century transition, throughout rural Australia but particularly in Melton Shire, from large pastoral estates to small farming holdings. This transition was begun by Harry Werribee Staughton, and culminated in the Closer Settlement Board's 'Exford Estate', a famous and early estate of the Board. This association is demonstrated on the property by the evidence of conversions of the woolshed, the 1930s concrete grain and ensilage silos, and later water troughs and random rubble fence and gatepost construction, all evidence of the progressive farming that occurred on the property. The property also gains significance through its associations with several of its owners in this period, notably the internationally prominent early Australian woman racing driver Joan Richardson, and prominent early twentieth century industrialist JW Derham.

The property may retain archaeological evidence of the original *Exford* sheep washing complex, and sheep drafting yards, which would constitute rare evidence of important early pastoral practices, but at this stage there is insufficient evidence to locate this with accuracy.

Overall, the *Warrawong* Shearing shed at 1182 - 1250 Exford Road, Exford is of STATE significance.

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| Heritage Study/Consultant | Melton - Shire of Melton Heritage Study phase 2, David Maloney, David Rowe, Pamela Jellie, Sera Jane Peters, 2007; |
| Construction dates        | 1850,  |
| Other Names               | 1182 - 1250 Exford Road, Eynesbury (Allot. 22 Sec.A, Parish of Mooradoranook), Exford Shearing Shed,               |
| Hermes Number             | 30223  |
| Property Number           |  |

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## Physical Description 1

### Physical Description -

The outstanding building on the *Warrawong* property is the former *Exford* shearing shed, built of bluestone, about 51m in length and 12m in width.

The shearing shed has a rural, farm setting off Exford Road, Exford. Nearby the shearing shed are a ruinous hipped dairy outbuilding, three concrete circular silos with gabled roof forms (pre 1935), random rubble bluestone stock ramp, troughs, and timber post and rail fences (with bluestone gate piers) dating from the mid-twentieth century. In the paddocks circular stone troughs provide water for stock, with smaller troughs once used for salt licks. The gate entranceways are a feature of the property being constructed in similar style to the troughs. There is also the remains of a cleared terrace area, garden sheds, pond and remnant trees of the former Richmond homestead (ca. 1900?) with views over the Werribee River, to the east of the weatherboard house.

The symmetrical, coursed random bluestone, Victorian styled shearing shed is characterised by a narrow elevated gable roof form with lower flanking skillion wings. These roof forms are clad in galvanised corrugated steel. To one side is a broad skillion addition constructed of vertical timber palings. Internally the woolshed is in three levels.

An early and unusual feature of the design (for a farm building) are the tapered bluestone pinnacles adorned with crosses (or *fleur-de-lys*) on the main gable end. These are very similar to the pinnacles (topped with orbs) on the some of the bluestone buildings, most notably the detached bluestone guesthouses, on *Exford*. Other early features include the narrow window opening with vertical iron bars, double door opening at the side, and timber-framed window in the upper gable end.

There is evidence of some alterations to the bluestone wall construction, particularly noticeable in the main gable end. The single door opening in the main gable end may have been introduced.

The interior of the woolshed has been adapted for dairying and general farming since the beginning of the nineteenth century. There is a concrete floor and cow bails at the north end for dairying and a raised besa block and concrete shearing stand in the centre of the shed.

There is evidence of the original floor level of the shed in the large posts, and a gate to access this underfloor level at the south end. These alterations constitute evidence of the historic changes in rural land use from this time. Three concrete silos constitute the most prominent evidence of these changes.

Early (1850s) survey maps also show several other Exford station sites on the property:- a 'sheep drafting yards' (probably to the north of the existing homestead); and 'sheep washing yards' on the river, probably just north of a

gully. None of these features are extant, archaeological evidence of them may survive. Any evidence of the sheep wash in particular has the potential to be significant, as there is very little surviving evidence in Victoria of this once important type of place.

There is archaeological evidence of the early homestead gardens, terracing and outbuildings to the east of the weatherboard home.

The property has panoramic views over the Werribee River, Exford Reservoir and Toolern Creek Valley, to the Exford property.

A large weatherboard homestead has been constructed on the top of the rise in recent years.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

*Melton Historical Themes: 'Pastoralism', 'Farming', 'Horses, Hounds and Hares'.*

## **Integrity**

Integrity - Moderately intact

## **Physical Conditions**

Physical Condition - Good

*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/>*