

**Heritage Overlay No.:** 016  
**Citation No.:** 007  
**Place:** House, 2-200 Porteous Road

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**Other Names of Place:** Formerly 'Braemar' (Melton Park manager's residence).  
**Location:** 2-200 Porteous Road, Toolern Vale  
**Critical Dates:** Construction, c.1900-1910.  
**Existing Heritage Listings:** None.  
**Recommended Level of Significance:** LOCAL



**Statement of Significance:**

The house at 2-200 Porteous Road, Toolern Vale, formerly 'Braemar', is significant as a predominantly intact example of an Edwardian style built c.1900-1910, and for its association with the *Melton Park* estate.

The house at 2-200 Porteous Road, Toolern Vale is architecturally significant at a LOCAL level (AHC D.2, E.1). It demonstrates original design qualities of an Edwardian style. These qualities include the steeply pitched hipped roof form, together with the minor gable and broken back verandah that project towards the front. Other intact or appropriate qualities include the single storey height, asymmetrical composition, horizontal timber weatherboard

wall cladding, deep red painted and lapped galvanised corrugated steel roof cladding, broad eaves, face brick chimney with a multi-corbelled top, square timber verandah posts with incised bandings, timber verandah brackets and fretwork valance, timber framed double hung windows and timber window architraves, timber framed front doorway with sidelight and highlight and the decorative gable infill (stucco panelling and wide vertical timber battening).

The house at 2-200 Porteous Road, Toolern Vale is historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A4, B2, H1). The house was built by Harvey Patterson for the manager of his *Melton Park* estate before 1916. The building is significant for its associations with the *Melton Park* homestead and its thoroughbred horse industry, with the movement to ‘break-up’ the large pastoral estates at the turn of the century, and with the Closer and Soldier Settlement Acts of the early twentieth century. It is also of significance for its association Harvey Patterson, pastoralist and chairman of directors of BHP during his ownership of *Melton Park*. Through introducing mining bores into the district, Patterson was also indirectly responsible for the discovery of bore water, developed by the Melton community into a vital resource in the very dry district. *Melton Park* was the first major racehorse stud and training estate established in the district, an activity which afterwards became prominent, to the extent that in the late nineteenth century the Melton Shire has adopted ‘thoroughbred country’ as the motif of the municipality.

Overall, the house at 2-200 Porteous Road, Toolern Vale is of LOCAL significance.

### **Description:**

The house at 2-200 Porteous Road, Toolern Vale, has an open grassed setting, with a low timber picket fence to one side. There is also an exotic tree at the front.

The asymmetrical, single storey, horizontal timber weatherboard, Edwardian styled house is characterised by a steeply pitched hipped roof form, together with a minor gable and broken back verandah that project towards the front. These roof forms are clad in deep red painted and lapped galvanised corrugated steel. Broad overhangs are features of the eaves. An early face brick chimney with a multi-corbelled top adorns the roofline.

An early feature of the design is the front broken back/skillion verandah. It is supported by square timber posts with incised bandings. There are also early timber brackets and timber fretwork valance, typical for Edwardian design.

Other early features of the design include the timber framed double hung windows and timber window architraves, timber framed front doorway with sidelight and highlight and the decorative gable infill (stucco panelling and wide vertical timber battening).

Horizontal timber base boards have recently been replaced around the perimeter of the house. The air conditioning unit in the front window and the satellite dish on the roof at the front are intrusive, introduced elements.

### **History:**

#### *History of the Place*

The dwelling formerly known as ‘Braemar’ was built as the house of the manager of Melton Park homestead before 1916. Situated south west of the *Melton Park* homestead, it appears

on both a 1916 map,<sup>1</sup> and also on a map of the ‘Melton Park Estate’ at the time of the 1920 sale of the estate.<sup>2</sup> In the latter map it is marked ‘W.B. House’ (weatherboard house).

Daniel Whittle Harvey Patterson, born Tooborac Station, Victoria in 1848, was variously a NSW pastoralist, resident of St Kilda, Kew, and New Zealand before retiring to England 1926 where he died in 1931. About the time of his establishment of *Melton Park* he was a director of BHP (1885-1888; 1893-1926). In 1900-1907 he was the chairman of directors of BHP.<sup>3</sup>

Contemporary Alexander Cameron reports that:

‘Mr Patterson then erected a dwelling house and large stables, also houses for his manager and trainer.’<sup>4</sup>

He also built servants quarters to the west of the house (removed from the property by a Mr Molyneux), and the double bunkhouse (also demolished).<sup>5</sup>

Patterson sold the property to John Farrell in 1912, and in 1920 it was purchased by the Closer Settlement Board, which subdivided and sold it in the same year.

The successful applicant in the ballot for the allotment 60, of 630 acres, on which the former *Braemar* is located, was Mr Robert McPherson. His neighbour Edgar J Greig, who occupied the adjacent homestead lot from 1920 to 1936, in a letter to the Land Board dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 1970 wrote that:-

‘There were also a number of small lucerne paddocks with 6’ high picket fences, complete with loose boxes between the homestead and the manager’s residence.’<sup>6</sup>

The 1920 plan shows four ‘stock yards’ – small paddocks – between the homestead and the weatherboard house to its south west (the present house). The smaller distance between the homestead and the house to the north has no paddocks shown, but is instead occupied with ‘tanks’.<sup>7</sup> This would lend support to the belief of the Murdoch family who resided in the property for 50 years, and the Greig family, that the present house was the *Melton Park* manager’s (rather than trainer’s) house.<sup>8</sup> The other house to the north of the homestead, closer to the stables, which does not survive, would then have been the horse trainer’s. However, a c.1910 photograph of the ‘trainer’s cottage’, with the stable in the background, is identical to the house formerly known as *Braemar*.<sup>9</sup>

In 1946 it was reported that ‘RJ McPherson has sold his property of 623 acres to WF Murdoch, one of first sections of the Melton Park Closer Settlement scheme.’<sup>10</sup> His son Geoff advises

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<sup>1</sup> Army Ordnance Map, 1916: Sunbury.

<sup>2</sup> Lands Victoria Put Away Plans: 34 A (1920), 34 A1 (1920)

<sup>3</sup> *The Argus*, obituary, 15/5/1931

<sup>4</sup> Alexander Cameron, ‘Melton Memoirs’ (M&DHS), p.24

<sup>5</sup> Mr Frank Greig, interview 2/5/2005

<sup>6</sup> Copy held M&DHS.

<sup>7</sup> Lands Victoria Put Away Plans: 34 A (1920), 34 A1 (1920)

<sup>8</sup> Mr Geoff Murdoch, personal conversations, May and December 2005

<sup>9</sup> *Pastoral Homes of Australia*, Victoria (The Pastoralists Review, Melb, Sydney, London), 1910, p.8 (section 17)

<sup>10</sup> *Melton Express*, 24/8/1946

that the property was known as 'Braemar' at the time of this purchase. The outbuildings at the time consisted of the original original *Melton Park* shearing shed and yards, and machinery sheds. All of the fencing was post and wire. While McPherson had used the property for grazing, Murdoch introduced cropping to 'sweeten the land'. Murdoch demolished all sheds and outbuildings that were in derelict condition and rebuilt the shearing shed and the yards on a smaller scale. The garden included an orchard.

In 1958 the local paper carried notice of the death of William Frederick Murdoch (8<sup>th</sup> Light Horse 1st AIF) 'at *Braemar*'. He was husband of Ettie, and father of Joan (Mrs Robson, South Africa), Geoffrey, Sheila (Mrs Yoeman), and Douglas.<sup>11</sup>

Around the early 1980s upkeep of the house presented some problems and the decision was made to use apply imitation brick cladding to it. In 1995 the property was sold to the Welsh family, the present owners.<sup>12</sup>

The imitation brick cladding has since been removed, exposing the original weatherboards. The verandah posts, brackets and valance are all original.

Edgar also related that a drain was cut across what became *Gnotuk Park* to carry storm water from the Toolern Vale-Coimadai road to the swamp behind the homestead to make it a lake, and another drain had been excavated across what later became McPherson's 'either to drain the swamp or more likely to control the water height'. This was later blocked by a bank across it. His son Frank Greig later reports that his father drained the swamp/lake to provide more land.<sup>13</sup>

### *Contextual History*

#### *The Green Hills Estate*

In the pastoral period, prior to Crown Land sales, the land upon which the former *Braemar* is situated was part of the well-known *Green Hills* pastoral lease. Later, Crown Allotment 61, Parish of Yangardook, of 381 acres, 1 rood and 4 perches, upon which the former *Braemar* is situated, became one of many contiguous allotments purchased from the Crown in 1855-59 by John Robertson Nowlan.<sup>14</sup>

Nowlan was associated with western district *Lyne* station, about 18 miles east of Branhholme. This run had been purchased from AD Lang in 1850 by Captain Stanley Carr. When Carr left the Colony in 1851 he took John R Nowlan into partnership as resident manager of the run. Nowlan did an excellent job and made enough profit from the escalating beef prices to purchase land near Melton for the further fattening of beasts before sale.<sup>15</sup>

A little further to the north at Toolern Vale, George Urquhart, another western district pastoralist, had acquired the *Green Hills* pastoral estate. This station had been founded by John Hunter Patterson, and acquired by another western district pastoralist George Hyde until c.1843, and afterwards his creditors John and Alexander Dennistoun, Glasgow pastoral

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<sup>11</sup> Melton Express, 13/9/1958

<sup>12</sup> Murdoch, *op cit*

<sup>13</sup> Greig, *op cit*

<sup>14</sup> Parish Plans, Parishes of Yangardook and Djerriwarrah.

<sup>15</sup> Garden, Don, *Hamilton: A Western District History* (Hargreen Publishing Company, 1984), notations.

financiers (who were also associated with the Clyde Company). Urquhart acquired the property c.1856 and began purchasing up surrounding allotments that had previously been alienated by the Crown. Nowlan also had started to do the same thing, but in August 1856 (by which time he was living on the *Murndal* station near Hamilton) he sold all his property, some thousands of acres, to Urquhart.

In 1861 the *Green Hills* station passed to Alexander Macintosh, and in 1869 to Matthew Ingle Browne. In May 1888 (soon before his death) MI Browne disposed of the *Greenhills* estate, of 7020 acres, to Melbourne solicitor William Henry Croker. (Local information, that the property was purchased by Sir Samuel Gillott at £10 per acre, and disposed of to Harvey Patterson in 1889, may also be correct. At the time Gillott and Croker were partners in the legal firm Gillott, Croker and Snowden.<sup>16</sup>) Ingles son Walter retained the *Green Hills* homestead block of some 500 acres until 1927.<sup>17</sup> In 1889-90 Croker sold the 6514 acres of the former *Green Hills* estate to DWH Patterson, described variously in ratebooks as ‘grazier’, ‘gentleman’ and ‘sharebroker’.<sup>18</sup>

### *Melton Park*

Patterson’s brothers sent horses to Melton Park on agistment from NSW properties. The family history notes that:-

‘Harvey Patterson bought Melton Park Estate at Melton said by Harvey to have been part of their old Greenhills Station, in 1889. The estate then comprised some 7500 acres of freehold land. He sold 2000 acres of this and bred merino sheep, ran a horse stud and cropped the place. He said he had spent a great deal of money in improvements and clearing the land which gave it a park like effect. There were two training tracks on the estate. The flock was based on Tasmanian bloodlines, Gibson and Taylor’s studs having provided rams from time to time. He also developed a prize winning stud of Red Poll cattle there.’<sup>19</sup>

A later article on *Melton Park* in *The Pastoralists Review* describes the homestead, established by Patterson in 1889, as being built on the rim of an extinct volcano, now a small lake ‘containing in wet seasons some 10 ft of water and ... almost surrounded with a circular bank’, and with rich soil. The country was:

‘mostly open plains and box timber country. A considerable proportion of the latter have been cleared, but belts of trees have been left for ornamental purposes and shelter for stock. Apart from the green trees purposely left standing, the land is being completely cleared of dead wood and stumps, so as to be fit for agriculture. ... a traction engine is

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<sup>16</sup> Notes, Judith Bilszta, M&DHS. Gillott became Lord Mayor, and Victoria’s Attorney General before his ultimate disgrace and fall upon allegations of his associations with vice and corruption. (Dunstan, D, ‘Gillott, Sir Samuel’, in Nairn, B, Serle, G, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol.9, MUP, 1983, pp.12-13)

<sup>17</sup> Starr, J *Melton: Plains of Promise* (Shire of Melton, nd, c.1985), p.76

<sup>18</sup> Shire of Melton, *Ratebooks*, 1895-1897. Unless otherwise cited, information for this paragraph is from documentation of Torrens Application, 26315s, PROV VPRS 460/P000 (2652).

<sup>19</sup> Randell, JO, *Pastoral Pattersons: The history of Myles Patterson and his descendants 1822-1976* (Queensberry Hill Press, 1977). If not in error, the reference to ‘their old Greenhills station’ might be taken to mean that Harvey Patterson was related to the original Greenhills developer, John Hunter Patterson.

being employed in pulling up old stumps. ... The thorough elimination of the dead timber from among the green trees has given a park-line appearance to the estate.’<sup>20</sup>

‘The rugged range of timbered hills’ stretching across the northern horizon, which formed ‘so charming and picturesque a background to Melton Park’ unfortunately also harboured rabbits and foxes.

The property ran Merino sheep been bred from pure Tasmanian blood. Stud rams and ewes had been purchased at various times, with some achievements:- ‘Out of a shipment of Melton Park Merinos sent some little time ago to South Africa, one took first prize at a leading show there.’<sup>21</sup>

The Melton Park cattle comprised ‘one of the prettiest herds in Victoria’. They were Red Polled Norfolk, famed for their beef and milking properties, being practically Shorthorns without having horns. ‘Mr Patterson has gained most of the prizes offered for this class of cattle at the Royal Agricultural Society’s Melbourne Show.’<sup>22</sup>

The local paper carried reports of Patterson’s engagement in breeding bloodline stock, for example:- ‘Mr Gregory, manager of Melton Park sold to Mr Randall, of Rolland and Lewis, Melbourne, one Ayrshire bull and three heifers at 10 guineas upwards.’<sup>23</sup>

Mr Gregory, Patterson’s first manager, left to take the management of a station in NSW, and was later killed in a shooting accident.<sup>24</sup> The next manager was a Mr Irving.<sup>25</sup>

### *Thoroughbred Horses*

The Pattersons’ hobby – thoroughbred stud and training – were a major part of *Melton Park*:-

‘The Melton Park horse stud contains some of the best blood in Australia. Both Mr and Mrs Patterson take a keen interest in the thoroughbreds, and there are on the property some of the most promising young stock one could wish to see. In addition to 25 brood mares, the stallion Menschikoff, and the foals, about a dozen horses are in training. Most of these are stylish-looking yearlings, and in the string is Delaware, who ran so great a race in the last Melbourne Cup. After making the most of the pace in the two-mile event, Delaware finished third, without being properly ridden out.’<sup>26</sup>

There were ‘two excellent training tracks on Melton Park’ one of two miles and the other a mile and three-quarters in length.<sup>27</sup> The horse stud was well known in the district – the local paper noting the movement of stock both locally and beyond. Horses were frequently seen exercising:- ‘A string of eight racehorse, the property of Mr Harvey Patterson, came through the township one day last week for exercise.’<sup>28</sup> The *Express* kept the locals up to date with progress at the local horseracing industry, eg:- ‘the celebrated stallion Statesman died at Melton

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<sup>20</sup> *The Pastoralists Review*, 16/10/1909, pp.594-5

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*

<sup>23</sup> *Melton Express*, 19/9/1891

<sup>24</sup> Cameron, *loc cit*

<sup>25</sup> J Bilszta, M&DHS

<sup>26</sup> *Pastoralists Review*, *op cit*

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*

<sup>28</sup> *The Melton Express*, 10/8/1907

Park last Sunday. He was bred in NSW, then sent to India where he distinguished himself on the turf. He was ailing for about a week'.<sup>29</sup>

Despite his keen interest and long period as a horse owner and breeder Patterson enjoyed limited success on the turf. After a few years Patterson disposed of his breeding interests at Melton and returned to New Zealand before retiring to England.

His *Melton Park* horse trainers Carey, Fountain and Taylor (of England) later purchased land in the district.

### *Gold and Water*

Patterson, 'connected with the discovery of silver at Broken Hill,'<sup>30</sup> was very interested in exploring for gold nearby his property, in the upper reaches of the Djerriwarrh Creek. He obtained a diamond drill from the Mines Department to search for gold under the volcanic flow, but nothing came of the several bores that were put down on the *Melton Park* property. However, there is said to be an unfilled shaft in the 'Quartz Paddock'<sup>31</sup>; this may now be on this property.

The presence of the bore gave the local community the idea of using it to search for water. The Melton and Braybrook Councils, with the assistance of a local fundraising committee and ST Staughton MLA, hired the drill and put four bores down, the one on Toolern Creek 'Flat' (now incorporated into the Melton golf course) proving to be the most successful. 'The discovery of underground water was of the greatest benefit' to the dry Melton community.<sup>32</sup>

### *The Farming Era*

By the turn of the century farming was resurgent and historical changes were at hand. A new generation of farmers restlessly surveyed the vast pastoral estates surrounding them. In Melton there had long been a belief that the large pastoral estates surrounding the town on three sides 'acted as a check' on both the progress of the village, and employment of landless working men.<sup>33</sup> In 1897 Sir Rupert Clarke mused in Parliament about cutting up 40,000 acres of his estate to lease to dairy farmers. He was under local pressure to make land available for farming, and declared he was keen not to 'disappoint public expectations.'<sup>34</sup> In 1898 the Victorian Municipal Directory entry for Melton Shire made the first of a series of unprecedented reports on movements by the district's big landholders:-<sup>35</sup>

'Farming and grazing - Harvey Patterson dividing his estate into farms, by sale and also under the share system. Sir Rupert Turner Havelock Clarke, Bart., has leased a large portion of his estate near Melton for grazing and farming; Mr Harry Werribee Staughton also dividing his estate under the share system ...'<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The Melton Express, 19/9/1891

<sup>30</sup> George Minns, 'Looking Back' (M&DHS Newsletter, January 2001).

<sup>31</sup> Greig, *op cit*.

<sup>32</sup> Cameron, *op cit*, pp.24-25; George Minns, 'Looking Back' (M&DHS Newsletter, January 2001).

<sup>33</sup> Hjorth, Anders, 'Recollections of Melton 1861-67', in M&DHS Newsletter, Feb 2001

<sup>34</sup> *Sunbury News*: 31/7/1897, 7/8/1897, 4/9/1897.

<sup>35</sup> *Victorian Municipal Directory*, 1898, and following years.

<sup>36</sup> *Victorian Municipal Directory*, 1898, and following years.

Melton Shire ratebooks show that by 1896 Patterson had disposed of approximately 2000 acres in the Parish of Djerriwarrh, the southern part of the estate. Houses began to appear along Bulmans Road.<sup>37</sup> From the beginning *Melton Park* had leased out ‘good grass paddocks ... and water for cattle and horses’.<sup>38</sup> Title deeds note that Patterson subdivided and sold some thirteen parcels of land, or 3,200 acres in the period 1895 to 1897.<sup>39</sup> (The 1909 report in the *Pastoralists Review* says that only about 2000 acres of the property’s original 7500 acres had been sold.<sup>40</sup>) Some of these properties were purchased by families who farmed them until very recently. In 1900 the manager advertised that 1000 acres ‘of virgin land, five miles from Melton railway station’, was to let.<sup>41</sup>

Patterson sold up completely in 1912. Apparently contrary to the popular tide of opinion, contemporary Alex Cameron’s view was that, having employed about 30 men and boys, ‘it was a great loss to Melton when he sold.’<sup>42</sup> His stable of horses was disposed of, most to the Manning family of Melton, and the the property, by this time of more than 4000 acres, was sold to John Farrell, of Hamilton. The Farrell family played a prominent roll in the World War 1 Red Cross and soldier comforts activity in the district.

In 1920 the 4,000 acre *Melton Park* estate was sold again. Sale notices described it as being:-

‘... mostly agricultural and grazing land of high quality especially adapted for the growing of oats, barley, wheat and is good sheep and lamb fattening country. The improvements consist of a homestead, managers cottages, stabling and numerous outbuildings.’<sup>43</sup>

On 21 May a clearing sale was held on the property. Special trains were run from Ballarat and Melbourne and more than 1000 persons attended. The Listing of items sold included the whole of the stock – 29 horses, particularly fine specimens and 58 cattle. Sundries included a large supply of fencing material – posts, rails, etc, office and surplus furniture.

The estate had been purchased by the Land & Management Board for subdivision and sale under the Closer/Soldier Settlement Acts.<sup>44</sup> In July it was reported that:

‘Melton Park Estate is expected to be open for application by returned soldiers early next month. The subdivision plan providing for 12 large farms, at reasonable valuation, is now before the Board for adoption. The roads provided will not only benefit the settlers of the estate but others also by the linking up of established roads. A school site has been reserved on the south side of the homestead.’<sup>45</sup>

In August the Land Board met at the Shire Hall to consider applications for the ‘13 blocks’. Most successful former soldiers were locals, with others from Ballarat and Sunshine.

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<sup>37</sup> Shire of Melton, *Ratebooks*, 1890s; SLV Map 820A, Army Ordnance Map Sunbury, 1916, 1936.

<sup>38</sup> *The Express*, 21/10/1889

<sup>39</sup> Judith Bilszta, M&DHS.

<sup>40</sup> *Pastoralists Review*, *op cit*.

<sup>41</sup> *The Express*, 17/11/1900

<sup>42</sup> Cameron, *op cit*, p.24

<sup>43</sup> *Melton Express*, 20/3/1920

<sup>44</sup> Cameron, *op cit*, p.24; also Parish Plan, Djerriwarrh.

<sup>45</sup> *Melton Express*, 17/7/1920



Of the properties sold from the various subdivisions of the Melton Park estate, dwellings (and some outbuildings) on *Melton Park*, *Gnotuk Park*, *Kuloomba*, *Kippenross*, and 488 Bulmans Road, form the basis of separate reports in the heritage study.

**Thematic Context / Comparative Analysis:**

*Shire of Melton Historical Themes:* ‘Horses, Hounds & Hares’ (Stud); ‘Farming’.

*Comparable Places in Shire of Melton:*

Architecturally, the house at 2-200 Porteous Road as is a representative intact example of an Edwardian style in the Melton Shire. Other examples include:

- House, 786 Blackhill Road (Place No.064). This dwelling has a similar composition of roof forms as the house off the Western Highway, with a hipped roof form and a projecting minor gable and skillion verandah at the front. The dwelling may have been relocated to this and overall, it shares a similar rudimentary character and appearance.
- House, 1957-1963 Western Hwy (Place No.460). This dwelling has a shallow hipped roof and projecting front gable and return verandah. This house appears to have lower integrity than the dwelling at 685 Bulmans Road.
- House, 895 Exford Road (Place No.276). This house also appears to have been altered, including the front skillion verandah and the front windows. The composition of roof forms is similar to the house at 685 Bulmans Road. The dwelling has a similar rudimentary Edwardian character and appearance.

Historically, the place was built by the owner of *Melton Park* homestead, and this is the place to which it is most comparable.

**Condition:**

Good

**Integrity:**

Substantially intact

**Recommendations:**

Recommended for inclusion in the Melton Planning Scheme Heritage Overlay.

Recommended Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls:

External Paint Controls:	<i>No</i>
Internal Alteration Controls:	<i>No</i>
Tree Controls:	<i>No</i>
Outbuildings and/or Fences:	<i>No</i>