

Heritage Overlay No.: HO61
Citation No.: 144
Place: **Bluestone Cottage & Ruinous
Timber Dwelling**

Other Names of Place: Mungovan’s Selection.
Location: 2-88 Mt Cottrell Road, Melton (Lot 1 TP131609; Crown Allotment 2A, Section 17, Parish of Kororoit.). The property is situated south-west of Mount Kororoit Farm, and across Kororoit Creek.
Critical Dates: Bluestone house and dry stone walls: late 1860s; weatherboard house unknown (c.late nineteenth early twentieth century).
Existing Heritage Listings: None.
Recommended Level of Significance: LOCAL



Statement of Significance:

The bluestone cottage, ruinous timber cottage, and the associated dry stone walls at 2-88 Mt Cottrell Road, Melton, are significant as a rare surviving example of late nineteenth century farm life. The bluestone building, and dry stone walls were constructed in the late 1860s; the ruinous timber dwelling appears to have been built in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

The bluestone cottage, ruinous timber cottage, and the associated dry stone walls at 2-88 Mt Cottrell Road, Melton, are architecturally significant at a LOCAL level (AHC D2, E1). Although the windows are missing, the building still demonstrates original design qualities of a Victorian vernacular style. These qualities include the simple steeply pitched hipped roof form clad in unpainted galvanised corrugated steel, bluestone wall construction, very narrow eaves, timber framed doorway with timber boarded door, timber framed window openings and the brick chimney. The internal white washed wall finish and rendered brick fireplace also contribute to the significance of the place. The timber cottage further contributes to the significance of the place but given its ruinous condition, it is not expected to be retained. The highly intact dry stone walls demonstrate the skilled craftsmanship of the stone-wallers trade. Adjacent peppercorn and red gum trees, and the view over the nearby Kororoit Creek also contribute significant aesthetic value to the setting of the place.

The bluestone cottage, ruinous timber cottage, and the associated dry stone walls at 2-88 Mt Cottrell Road, Melton, are historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A4). The bluestone building is a scarce surviving example of a substantially intact nineteenth century stone cottage in the Shire of Melton. It is also a rare and, historically, highly intact, expression of a ‘Selection Act’ property in the Shire. In addition, it was probably an example of ‘dummying’, a widespread abuse of the selection process in Australia by pre-existing landholders. Its ability to be interpreted is greatly enhanced by the existence of a map of the property showing the bluestone cottage and dry stone walls at the time that they were erected. It is also significant for its association with the Moylan family, and its eventual incorporation in the adjacent Mount Kororoit Farm estate. The Moylan family were noteworthy participants in local sporting, social, religious, and political life. They were known widely for their hospitality, and active in the local Catholic Church; John senior and Michael junior were Councillors of the Shire of Melton. The property’s paddocks were said to have been a favourite hunting ground in Victoria, and also hosted events by the Melton Coursing Club as well as early aviation enthusiasts. The dry stone walls on the property are highly intact and rare examples of high and long all-stone walls in the Shire of Melton. They are significant parts of a broader Mount Kororoit Farm dry stone wall precinct that is of State significance.

The bluestone cottage, ruinous timber cottage, and the associated dry stone walls at 2-88 Mt Cottrell Road, Melton, are socially significant at a LOCAL level (AHC G1). It was identified as a place of heritage significance to the local community in a community forum held as part of this heritage study.

Overall, the bluestone cottage, ruinous timber cottage, and the associated dry stone walls at 2-88 Mt Cottrell Road, Melton, are of LOCAL heritage significance.

Description:

The bluestone and ruinous timber cottages, and the associated dry stone walls, at 2-88 Mt Cottrell Road, Melton, have a rural setting and are surrounded by extensive and highly intact dry stone walls. Nearby the dwellings are a mature peppercorn and red gum trees. The buildings overlook the intact and large all-stone dry stone wall, and mature redgum trees on the Kororoit Creek. In the background, beyond more dry stone walls, is Mount Kororoit, the source of the volcanic stone.

The single storey, modestly scaled, bluestone Victorian vernacular styled dwelling is characterised by a simple steeply pitched hipped roof form clad in unpainted galvanised corrugated steel. There are very narrow eaves. Other early features include the timber framed

doorway with timber boarded door and the timber framed window openings (both average sized and narrow on one side). The framing is intact for one of the windows, but both openings are missing glazing. Remnant hinges, perhaps from a shutter, are evident on the narrow window. There is also a brick chimney that appears to have been rendered and/or altered. Internally is an early rendered brick wood stove and white washed walls.

Nearby the bluestone dwelling is a ruinous timber Victorian styled cottage. It has an elongated hipped roof form clad in galvanised steel. The horizontal timber weatherboard wall cladding is rotted and several boards are missing (as is the entire wall on one end), exposing vast parts of the timber stud frame. There are very narrow eaves. The timber framed door opening with highlight opening above is early. None of the windows are intact and are missing glazing. The door is also missing. Another early feature of the design is the polychrome brick chimney and the fireplace internally.

There is cobbled paving between the buildings. There is a scatter of Darley (Bacchus Marsh) firebricks suggests that the chimneys were either built (the timber house) or repaired sometime after the very early twentieth century.

The 1860s all-stone walls, especially that in front of the buildings, overlooking Kororoit Creek, are substantial, particularly in relation to the vast majority of composite stone-post & wire fences in the rest of the Shire. However this wall is being severely undermined by rabbits, which will soon destroy it if not attended to promptly.

History:

The buildings and dry stone walls on this property are situated on Crown Allotment 2A, Section 17, Parish of Kororoit, a site of 80 acres.¹ On 31st May 1866 a Selection licence for the property was issued to John Mangovan (possibly Mugavin), who described himself as a ‘farm servant’ who owned no land. He duly obtained freehold possession of it on 3rd April 1871.² By 1892 this property, together with all the other Selections Act properties between Ryans Road and Kororoit Creek, were in the possession of the Moylan family.³

John, Thomas, and Michael Moylan were brothers from County Waterford Ireland.⁴ John and Thomas purchased land on Mount Kororoit Road on the east side of Kororoit Creek in 1854.⁵ John and Michael farmed the land from c.1855, and over the next few decades increased the size of their holding by purchasing the adjacent land – mostly good quality and watered by Kororoit Creek – both from the Crown and neighbours. The family eventually owned virtually all of the land north of Finches Road to Holden Road, and west of Leakes Road to Ryans Road. John established the *Mount Kororoit Farm* homestead (Place No.146), while Michael raised a family on the adjacent property to the south: *View Monte* (Place No.115). The *Australasian’s* ‘Travelling Reporter’ left extensive descriptions of these properties in 1876, including the fact that at that stage there were 23 miles (37 kilometres) of ‘fencing’ on the property (no doubt including the extensive scores of dry stone walls, many of which remain on the property today).⁶

¹ Parish Plan, Parish of Kororoit.

² *ibid*; PROV VPRS 627/P0/61, Application No.5861, Section 31 Land Act 1869.

³ Shire Map Series 1892: Parish of Kororoit.

⁴ Alex Cameron, ‘Melton Memoirs’ (M&DHS), p.4

⁵ Parish Plan, Parish of Kororoit.

⁶ The *Australasian*, 28th October 1876

Thomas, despite his share in the Mount Kororoit Farm land, always gave his address as 115 Little Lonsdale Street West (Moylan Lane was named after him). He also figured in what appears to have been a rift with his brother John over several allotments they had originally purchased as tenants in common.⁷ Although he died in 1871, Alec Cameron relates that it was Thomas Moylan's family farm that was on the western bank of Kororoit Creek.⁸ It was this farm that subsumed Mangovan's original selection.

During the mid 1860s the Moylan family had been busy staking out c.80 acre allotments on the opposite (west) bank of the Kororoit Creek that had been opened up for selection. The several Moylan families were large (John Moylan had five sons and two daughters⁹) and many of their Christian names were repeated, especially between generations, so it is very difficult to know exactly which Moylan family was actually purchasing these allotments. (And some allotments appear to have been later transferred between families.) However, five of the eight allotments with frontage to the west bank of Kororoit Creek were selected by Moylans.¹⁰ These included MP (Michael Patrick) and T (Thomas) Moylan, who may have been the elder brothers themselves (who had somehow contrived not to have owned other land). Others were second generation family members:- MH (Michael Henry), M (Mary), and Margaret who was the sister of Michael (although it is not known which Michael).¹¹

How the Moylans came by Mangovan's property, and perhaps some others, might have been by a widely practised abuse of the Selection Acts. Of the eight adjacent allotments with Kororoit Creek frontage that had been put up for selection, two pairs had virtually consecutive application numbers, suggesting that they were applied for at the same time. These were application number 6242 by MP Moylan, which allotment to was adjacent that obtained by application number 6244 of an S Parry. Application number 5860 by T Moylan was adjacent to application number 5861 by John Mangovan. In 1871, the conditions for improvement having been complied with, Crown Bailiff H McCann approved Mangovan's claim to freehold for the allotment, but not without reservation. While reporting that he was 'not aware of any objection to sale', he reported on 7th July 1871 that:

'I think there is hardly a doubt but this allotment was selected in Mungovan's name as a dummy of John Moylan as he was not in the district at the time it was pegged out and applied for; but a dispute having arisen between the parties Mungovan has continued to hold the land and reside on it.

In my previous report respecting improvements etc I have made a slight mistake owing to the fencing on the south side of the block not being on the boundary line of the block held by Thomas Moylan. I have sketched of the plan the situation of the house and fencing; the house being on the boundary line of the adjoining block. I now value the fencing and half house and gardens at £225.

As the statements about the fencing on the north side of the block are so conflicting I have given Mangovan one half and Mary Moylan [on the north side] the other, as I do not see any other way of settling the matter.

⁷ VPRS 460/P0/33210. Torrens Application (John Moylan): 5/1/1902

⁸ Cameron, *loc cit*. (It should be noted however that Cameron appears to be basing some of his information on the Moylans on other sources, and this may be incorrect.)

⁹ Cameron, *loc cit*

¹⁰ Allotments 1B, 2, 3, 3A, and 4B.

¹¹ PROV VPRS 627/P/42 (File 4136/31)

I may also state that I believe Mangovan is only holding this land for Thomas Moylan but the whole affair is so mixed up that it is impossible to arrive at any definite conclusions.¹²

The map that McCann appended to his report shows the existing bluestone cottage. However the cottage straddled the boundary of Thomas Moylan's lease on Crown Allotment No.3 to the south. Although the bailiff suspected that Mangovan was a dummy for John Moylan, the evidence of their consecutive application numbers, and the house being built across their boundary, suggests that it might have been Thomas Moylan (who was in disputed with John at the time) who Mangovan had been working with from the beginning. Also, it would appear that no other members of the John Moylan senior family appear to have selected these allotments. Further, when John Moylan senior transferred and bequeathed his estate to his family in 1879 and again in 1888, none of this land was situated on the west side of Kororoit Creek.¹³

By 1892 the Mangovan selection was in the ownership of 'Moylan', although which particular family this was is uncertain. While Alec Cameron attributes the farm west of Kororoit Creek to Thomas Moylan, in 1873 the executors of the late Thomas Moylan advertised the sale of 461 acres of 'superior agricultural and grazing land situated on the Kororoit Creek', and 'comprising cottage, dairy etc'.¹⁴ This was likely the Mangovan cottage. The property appears to have been purchased either by John or Michael Moylan.

Ratebooks indicate that by 1899 an Arthur Moylan was resident in the former Mangovan cottage.¹⁵ Michael Moylan had a son Arthur;¹⁶ it is possible but unlikely that John or Thomas also had a son by that name. In 1905, when Frederick Finch purchased the late Michael Moylan's *View Monte*, Irishman Steve O'Callaghan, who was building stone walls for the Moylans, was reported to be living in the bluestone cottage that had previously been occupied by Arthur Moylan.¹⁷ It is likely that Arthur Moylan constructed the weatherboard cottage either during the late nineteenth century or very early twentieth century. Today the property is once again part of the larger Mount Kororoit Farm.

Crown bailiff McCann's 1871 drawing of the Mangovan selection also showed about nearly 2 kilometres of 'stone wall' on the property, a portion of which remains today.¹⁸ The walls are well built, but of a different style than other walls on the now consolidated Moylan property, which feature heavy stones above smaller ones, or which are composite stone and post & rail/wire. The walls may have been built by Mangovan.

John Moylan's Mount Kororoit Farm property was sold after bachelor John junior's death in 1924. The sale notice described its land as comprising:

'... the richest volcanic and red chocolate soils, the greater portion being level to slightly undulating, with nicely sheltered creek gullies. Portions of the land have at

¹² PROV VPRS 627/P0/61 (File 5861/31)

¹³ VPRS 460/P0/33210. Torrens Application (John Moylan): 5/1/1902

¹⁴ *The Express*, 22/11/1873

¹⁵ Shire of Melton, *Ratebook*, 1899

¹⁶ *The Melton Express*, 21/12/1918

¹⁷ Mr Charles Finch, personal conversation, 24/1/2002.

¹⁸ Some 90 chains of these walls were credited to Mangovan, as some were shared with the Mary Moylan selection to his north. They were valued at 30 shillings per chain, the standard rate of building stone walls at the time.

times been cultivated and the whole estate is in great heart, thoroughly cleaned up for grazing and carrying luxuriant pasturage.¹⁹

This sale seems to have marked the end of the Moylan family in Melton. Nineteenth century ratebooks indicate that there had at times been approximately five separate dwellings on the property. By 1916, as now, there were three: *Mount Kororoit Farm*, *View Monte*, and the adjacent bluestone and weatherboard cottages (Place No.144).²⁰

During their time they had been noteworthy participants in Melton sporting, social, religious, and political life. The Mount Kororoit Farm Moylans were always known for their hospitality.²¹ The Moylans had long been associated with the development of the Catholic Church in the locality, and the men were noted sportsmen participating in the early Queen's Birthday sports held in Melton. (Michael Moylan was one of three foot runners in a hurdle race to break a leg.)²² John senior and Michael junior (son of John) had both been Shire of Melton Councillors. John was described as 'highly respected',²³ and Michael had been noted locally for his inventiveness.

The family had been associated with the Hunt Club meets on the Keilor Plain, including entertaining the Vice Regal party at the Mount Kororoit Farm homestead.²⁴ John junior was also interested in racing and owned several jumpers.²⁵

The Moylans (along with a great number of the male population of the Melton district) had also been interested in greyhound coursing. The Plumpton Paddock had been developed with their assistance, coursing dogs having been bred on the property.²⁶ Later, John junior was President of the Melton Coursing Club; he allowed the Club to have meetings on his property, and also donated several cups as prizes.²⁷

In 1913-14 John Moylan junior also hosted a significant early aviation event on Mount Kororoit Farm. Photographs dated 1913-14 record the 'Austin Equatorial Balance Aeroplane camp' on 'John Moylan's Mt Kororoit estate.'²⁸ This event was probably associated with a local historical record that a plane flew off the top of Mt Kororoit in 1913.

Thematic Context / Comparative Analysis:

The abandoned bluestone cottage on the west side of Kororoit Creek, west of Mount Kororoit Road, represents one of very few surviving nineteenth century bluestone Victorian vernacular buildings in the Melton Shire. These comparable examples include:

- *Evansdale*, 678 Boundary Road, Truganina (Place No.327): a now uninhabitable early stone cottage and earlier stone outbuildings. The stable at Evansdale farm complex has a gable roof form clad in galvanised corrugated steel and bluestone wall construction.

¹⁹ The Melton *Express*, 29/11/1924

²⁰ Army Ordnance Map 1916: Sunbury

²¹ Cameron, *loc cit*

²² Bilszta, *op cit*.

²³ The *Express*, 29/7/1893

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ Cameron, *loc cit*

²⁶ Bilszta, *op cit*

²⁷ Cameron, *loc cit*

²⁸ Australian National Library 'Picture Australia', State Library of Victoria photograph 1093259.

- Sedimentary Stone Cottage, 189-193 Blackhill Road, Gisborne South (Place No.061). This hut is an altered example of the Victorian vernacular style with random rubble wall construction, although there is considered to be sufficient surviving fabric to justify its architectural significance.
- Payne House, 638-688 Greigs Road, Rockbank (Place No.373). This random rubble Victorian vernacular styled building has a long simple gable roof form clad in galvanised corrugated steel. Half of the roof to the early northern end is missing and the rear projecting wall of this section is ruinous. The bluestone dwelling off Mt Kororoit Road appears to be more intact.
- Outbuilding, 1397-1457 Diggers Rest-Coimadai Road (Place No.019). Although the southern wall has been repaired, this random rubble Victorian vernacular outbuilding, with its gabled roof form and surviving walling, is a representative example of a surviving nineteenth century farm building in the Shire.
- The restored bluestone cottage (Yangardook Cottage) on Melton-Gisborne Road (Place No.037);
- The small cottages on *Glen Elgin* (Place No.039) opposite *The Elms*, also of sedimentary stone, were apparently built in the mid twentieth century;
- The stone cottages and outbuildings that are part of the large pastoral stations of *Rockbank* (Place No.428), *Exford* (Place No.269), and *Eynesbury* (Place No.281);
- The Honey Shack, 7-9 High Street Melton (Place No.221). Restored and altered town cottage;
- *Dunvegan* (Place No.228): a relocated and altered township dwelling.
- The considerably altered former *Fulham Park*, on Beatty's Road, Rockbank (Place No.316);

At least 113 'Selection Act' allotments were allocated in the Shire, in the Parishes of Kororoit (65) and Yangardook (48). This cottage is one of only nine known surviving places in the Shire associated with the Land (Selection) Acts.

Selection Act places for which heritage overlay controls are proposed in this study:

Place No.061	189-193 Blackhill Road Toolern Vale (c.1860s)
Place No.460	No.? Western Highway (c.1895).
Place No.462	2341 Western Highway (1898).
Place No.009	Chapmans Road, Paines (c.late 1860s-1892, c.1890?)
Place No.144	'Mt Kororoit Farm', stone cottage; important dry stone wall context (built late 1860s)
Place No.457	Water Reserve Road, Rockbank (c.1900, c.1913)
Place No.041	Hjorth dam etc (dams only, no dwelling)

Selection Act places for which heritage overlay controls are not proposed in this study:

Place No.316 Fulham Park (much altered but locally prominent bluestone)

Place No.315 House, 1232 Beattys Road (much altered)

Condition:

Bluestone Dwelling: Fair
Timber Dwelling: Ruinous

Integrity:

Bluestone Dwelling: Predominantly intact
Timber Dwelling: Moderately intact & partly altered as a consequence of ruinous condition

Recommendations:

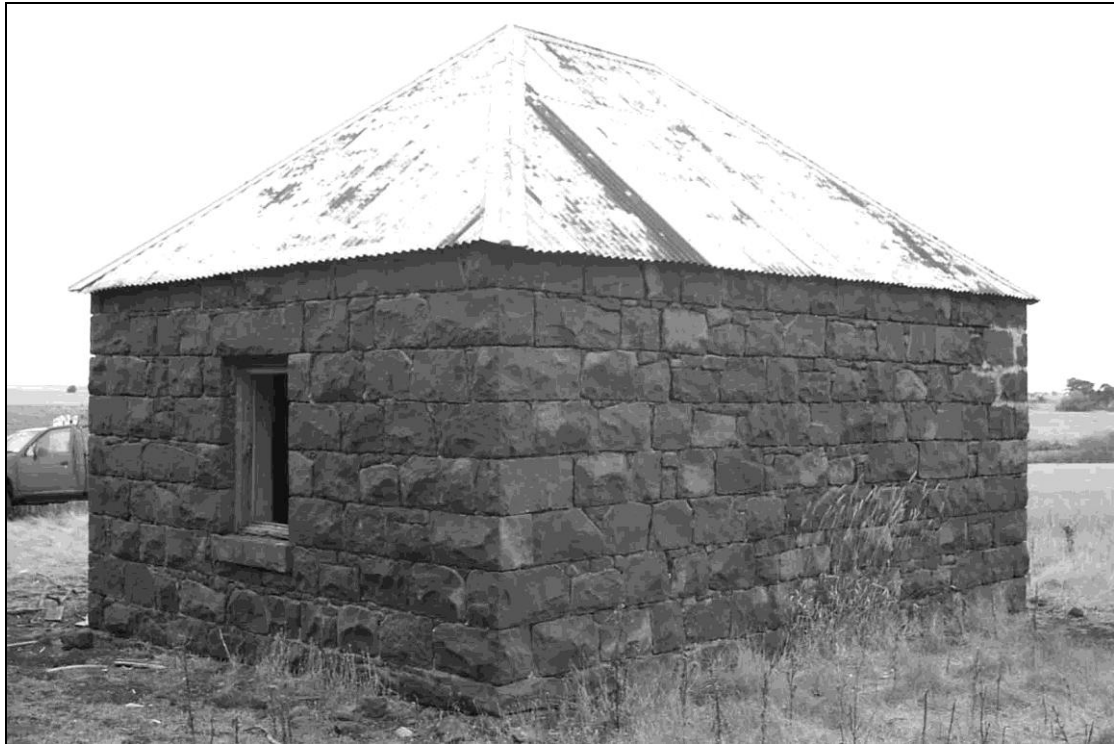
Recommended for inclusion in the Melton Planning Scheme Heritage Overlay.

Recommended Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls:

External Paint Controls: *No*
Internal Alteration Controls: *No*
Tree Controls: *Peppercorn tree & gum tree adjacent to buildings*
Outbuildings and/or Fences: *Dry stone walls*

Other Recommendations:

- Given the perilous state of the timber building, it is recommended that a photographic analysis of this building be prepared.
- The dry stone walls is an outstanding example of this type of place in the Shire of Melton. Together with the other walls on the Mount Kororoit Farm, it is a major contributor to a precinct of State heritage significance. Parts of it are undermined by rabbit burrows and under imminent threat of collapse. As with all the walls on Mount Kororoit Farm it is also in need of standard repairs. It is highly recommended that a Conservation Management Plan be conducted of the dry stone walls on the property.



Rear view of bluestone cottage (built late 1860s).



Dry Stone Wall in front of the cottages, overlooking Kororoit Creek. Built late 1860s.