

## HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

---

**Name** Slab Hut and outbuilding  
**Address** 580 Tunnecliffs Lane KNOWSLEY **Grading** 2008 Local  
**Building Type** Hut/Shack  
**Assessment by** Context Pty Ltd




---

**Recommended Heritage Protection** VHR No HI No PS Yes

**Architectural Style** Victorian Period (1851-1901)  
 Vernacular

**Maker / Builder** Unknown

### Integrity

Fair

## History and Historical Context

### History of the Shire of McIvor

The land around the former Shires of Strathfieldsaye and McIvor had a long history prior to the arrival of Europeans. The Jaara Jaara people are the original inhabitants of the area.

The area around Port Phillip was explored by Sir Thomas Mitchell, the Surveyor General of New South Wales, and a large party in 1836, on the homeward leg of a journey to Portland Bay. Impressed by what he perceived as the bounty of

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

---

the land, Mitchell named the area *Australia Felix*.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Port Phillip district was opened up for settlement soon thereafter, and much of the land in the Western districts of Victoria, including the former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye, was subsequently dominated by a series of pastoral runs. Much of the former Shire of McIvor was licensed to David Jennings as part of the Campaspe Plains run. The run covered an area of more than 144,900 acres and was populated with an estimated 12,000 sheep. Campaspe Plains was subdivided in 1852, and John Hunter Paterson established Derrinal Station on a portion of the land. His license was transferred to William Speed in 1853, and then Alfred Leonard Wilton in 1865. The license was eventually forfeited in 1880.<sup>[2]</sup>

The discovery of gold at Bendigo and surrounding areas changed the face of the district and brought about new patterns of settlement and expansion. William John Bulling claimed to be the first man to discover gold at McIvor, and he was granted a £400 reward for the find. By 1853, over one hundred prospectors had assembled at Wild Duck Creek in the hopes of striking it rich. This number expanded the following year, and included some 2,000 Chinese immigrants.<sup>[3]</sup>

Development of the McIvor district was led by Heathcote, where facilities emerged in conjunction with an increasing population brought on by the gold rushes. The town site of Heathcote was surveyed by Phillip Chauncey and first land sale at Heathcote held on the 24th January 1854.<sup>[4]</sup> The Heathcote and Waranga District Road Board was formed in 1861, and became the Shire of McIvor in 1864, encompassing a number of the small towns in the district.

Religious and educational facilities were established early in the development of the Shire, initially at Heathcote, then gradually spreading to other small towns in the district. Following the cancellation of leasehold, land holdings were of a smaller scale and pastoralists were gradually overtaken by farmers. Pre-emption rights allowed squatters to purchase up to 640 acres of their pastoral leases and many took advantage of the opportunity to establish smaller holdings. Grazing, agriculture, dairying and viticulture were mainstays for the region. Alongside agriculture, the timber industry was of vital importance to the district and a number of sawmills were established. Gold and alluvial mining continued in the district for a number of years after the height of the gold rushes.

Construction of the railway from Wandong to Bendigo took place in three stages and was officially opened in October 1888. The railway encouraged further development of the region and provided an easy means of transportation of both goods and people to and from the district. The development of the Eppalock weir in the 1930s, and its incorporation into Eppalock Reservoir in 1960-65, provided local farmers with an accessible water source for their crops. <sup>[5]</sup>

In 1994 the Shire of McIvor was amalgamated with nearby Shires to form the City of Greater Bendigo.

## **History of Slab Hut and outbuilding, 580 Tunnecliffs Lane, Knowsley**

The slab hut and outbuilding at 580 Tunnecliffs Lane, Knowsley, was built upon Allotment 9A, Parish of Knowsley East, which was granted by the Crown to James Stacey on the 9th April 1881. Stacey's allotment covered a fairly substantial area of 80 acres and 29 perches.<sup>[6]</sup> Stacey is recorded in titles records as a labourer, who had been living in Heathcote prior to his purchase of the land at Knowsley.<sup>[7]</sup> He had held the allotment prior to 1881 under the Selection Act, so the hut may date from the 1870s.<sup>[8]</sup>

Stacey mortgaged the property to William Duncan on the 18th July 1887, and sold the place to William Duncan on the 18th December 1889, and this may have been due to a default on the mortgage.

Targeted community consultation with George Harris reveals that former owners were the Duncans, who were located on 'Ellerslie' property. Duncan lived there for many years, and it has been there for well over 100 years. It was also thought likely for peppercorn trees to be as old.<sup>[9]</sup>

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

---

[1] Randell, J. O. (1985). *McIvor: A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote*, Shire of McIvor, p. 1.

[2] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 31.

[3] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 31.

[4] Randell, J. O. (1985), p. 21.

[5] Heritage Victoria, (n.d), *Eppalock Weir*, Hermes entry 6482

[6] Certificate of Title, Vol. 1261, Fol. 114

[7] Certificate of Title, Vol. 1261, Fol. 114

[8] File No. 8337 under Sections 19 & 20 of the Land Act of 1869 is noted on the Knowsley East Parish Plan (dated 1877, with later amendments).

[9] Targeted community consultation with George Harris.

## Primary sources

Targeted community consultation with George Harris.

Certificate of Title, Vol. 1261, Fol. 114.

Parish Plan of Knowsley East, undated

## Secondary sources

Randell, J. O. (1985), *McIvor, A History of the Shire and the Township of Heathcote*, Shire of McIvor, Heathcote, Victoria.

Heritage Victoria, (n.d), *Eppalock Weir*, Hermes entry 6482

## Relevant Historical Australian Themes

4.0 Transforming the land

4.3 Grazing and raising livestock

## Description

### Physical Description

The timber slab building at 580 Tunnecliffs Lane appears to be of an early date of construction, and is possibly the original hut on the property. There is an adjacent timber slab outbuilding of similar construction. The peppercorn trees are of considerable size and age and contribute to the setting of these buildings. The hut is built of post and beam with hardwood timber slab walls. The interior has not been investigated. There is a brick chimney at one end of the hut. There have been alterations to the structure in the form of weatherboards to at least one gable end and windows that have been

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

---

replaced. Unlike the similar structure at Kimbolton, this one has window openings roughly formed in the paling walls. The roof cladding has been replaced with corrugated iron.

## Physical Condition

Fair

## Conservation Policy

Retention and preventative treatment of the timber slabs is recommended.

## Comparative Analysis

Compare with property number 194578, 223 Mangans Lane, Kimbolton.

## Statement of Significance

*What is significant?*

The two timber slab buildings at 580 Tunnecliffs Lane are significant.

*How is it significant?*

The slab buildings are of local historic and technical significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

*Why is it significant?*

Historically, the complex of slab buildings and mature peppercorn trees serves as tangible evidence of the selection era, particularly its early phase when very modest buildings such as these were constructed. *Criterion A*

Although some examples of slab construction still exist in the City of Greater Bendigo, most have been altered or are in poor condition. Slab construction is relatively rare in the area. *Criterion B*

## Assessment Against Criteria

### HERCON CRITERIA

Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion A*

Possession of uncommon rare or endangers aspects of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion B*

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history. *Criterion C*

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments.  
*Criterion D*

# HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

---

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics. *Criterion E*

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period. *Criterion F*

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions. *Criterion G*

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history. *Criterion H*

## Recommendations 2008

**External Paint Controls**

No

**Internal Alteration Controls**

No

**Tree Controls**

Yes

**Fences & Outbuildings**

Yes

**Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted**

No

**Incorporated Plan**

Yes

**Aboriginal Heritage Place**

No

## Other Recommendations

It is recommended that the slab buildings at 580 Tunnecliffs Lane, Knowsley be added as an individual place to the Heritage Overlay of the Greater Bendigo City Planning Scheme with the schedule entry as shown above. The extent of registration to be defined by a map. The recommended Incorporated Plan is the 'Permit Exemption Incorporated Plan - Former Shires of McIvor and Strathfieldsaye.'