

Historical archaeological site card

Heritage Inventory number and name

THOMAS FIRST MILL SITE
H7922-0537

Date received

Wednesday, 13 September 2023

Date accepted

30/7/2024

Hermes Number

210132

1. Place details

Place name: THOMAS FIRST MILL SITE

Heritage Inventory Number (if any):

Other or former names:

Municipal Council: WHITTLESEA CITY

Address: PLENTY VALLEY PARK, OFF 640 BRIDGE INN ROAD MERNDA
3754 ALLOT. 2010 PARISH OF MORANG LAT: 37.60916° S LON:
145.10290° E

Geographical coordinates (GDA94 or WGS84)
expressed in degrees and decimals of a degree:

Mapsheet name and number (1:100,000 only): 7922

2. Cadastral location

County: Bourke

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Parish: Morang

Township:

Section: X1X

Allotment: Lot/Plan 2010\PP3183

Standard Parcel Identifier (SPI): 2010\PP3183

3. Details of site owner or land manager (where known)

First Name:

Surname:

Business or organisation name: PARKS
VICTORIA

Position title:

Address:

Email address:

Telephone:

4. Details of site occupier (where known)

First Name:

Surname:

Business or organisation name:

Position title:

Address:

Email address:

Telephone:

5. Aboriginal cultural values

Site has known Aboriginal values YES

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Site is recorded on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register YES

6. Current description of site

Please provide description:

The site of Thomas's first mill is marked by scattered cut and squared basalt building stones in approximate rectangle measuring 5 by 6 metres, possible extending further. Located on river flats just below a rock ledge on the Plenty River. The blocks are about 20 x 30 x 40-50 cm. A water race can be followed upstream for about 50 metres beside the river. the location is just near the outlet of a drain which is fed from the Siriani channel to the north west. This may also have originally been utilised as part of the intended water race. The site is located about 50 metres upstream of the masonry dam built for the Carome Mill in about 1842 (H7922-0046)

Date recorded: Thursday, 23 March 2023

On Victorian Heritage Register

On Heritage Overlay

Associated sites: Yes. This is the first site chosen by Moses Thomas for his mill, abandoned when the Yan Yean Pipeline was constructed. was installed. The second site is VHI H7922-0040

7. Place history

Please provide a brief history of the place (at least 1 to 2 paragraphs):

Moses Thomas emigrated to Victoria in 1842 on the 'Robert Benn' from Greenock Scotland. He built the Mayfield Mill in 1855 as part of his larger farming and contracting activities. It was a little later than the other mills in the area and may have benefitted from a more developed technological and manufacturing base available at the time.

Thomas's mill was located on the Plenty River upstream of the existing Carome Mill at 'Marsh Farm'. He had earlier in 1854, started building the mill at another site just downstream of the final site, but this was made inconvenient because of the pipeline to the Yan Yean reservoir crossing the line of the water race. He abandoned this work after sinking foundations. It is this earlier site which reveals evidence in the form of levelled ground, cut stone and foundations trenches, as well as possible contemporary small artefacts such as glass, ceramics and metal, which is identified in this site record.

Moses Thomas had previously been in partnership with his brother John, as building contractors in 1850, and so had the skills to build the mill himself. A Petition for compensation for the loss of water has the following statement:

...Mr. Thomas became possessed of land having a frontage to the Plenty River, with a view to erect a flour-mill, to be driven by water power. In 1852 levels were taken, and in 1854 he sank foundations for the mill. After expending about £100 these operations were abandoned, on account of the line of pipe track coming between the site for the proposed mill and the main road. He afterwards commenced to work on the other side of the pipe track, where the present mill now stands.

(PARLIAMENT. LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 1868. The Argus Wednesday 5 August 1868, page 4.)

8. Analysis of site (interpretation)

Include phases in the development of the site, functions and activities represented, as well as current place use:

Some of the blocks of stone appear to have been dislodged either by flooding, or more likely disturbance by hand digging when a nearby drain was excavated. Most appear to be in a disturbed condition, but some are in situ. It is unlikely that these blocks would have come to the site by any other means as the only construction in the vicinity is the Yan Yean pipe track. There was work being undertaken in the 1870s to convert the pipe to a masonry aqueduct, but the stones from this work are much larger and finished in a quite different manner with quite rough axe cut faces, instead of the chisel and hammer faces of the blocks at the mill site.

9. Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The archaeological remains of the first unfinished Moses Thomas Flour mill, comprising remains of the foundations, water race and artefact deposit.

How is it significant?

The first Thomas mill site is of historical and archaeological significance at the local level

Why is it significant?

The first Thomas mill site is of historical significance as evidence of the initial construction and then abandonment of the site in consequence of the construction of the Yan Yean Pipe Track, and for its association with Moses Thomas. It is of and archaeological significance for the potential to reveal information on the construction methods and techniques of early flour mill design, and the technology of milling in the mid nineteenth century.

10. Suggested Protection : Heritage Inventory

11. Threat

Is the place under any threat? If so, what is the threat?

14. Recording archaeologist's details

First Name:	Gary
Surname:	Vines
Business or organisation name:	Gary Vines
Position title:	
Business or company address:	16 Raymond St, Preston Victoria 3072
Email address:	
Telephone:	93557003

15. Declaration

I state that the information I have given on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge.



Thomas 2nd mill site

Thomas 1st mill site

MERNDA CENTRAL WETLANDS

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