

## No. 183: Former Melton Stud

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Address	325 Clarkes Road, Brookfield
Significance	Local
Construction Dates	1906
Period	Federation
Date Inspected	6 February 2018



### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

The Federation period Melton Stud, including; the symmetrical weatherboard residence with hipped roof, brick chimney and verandah to the front and two adjacent Sugar Gums (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*), the grave of 'The Welkin' and one Sugar Gum and the weatherboard stallion box with hipped roof and attached exercise yard with approximately ten Sugar Gums that mark the outline of the original yard.

#### How is it Significant?

The former Melton Stud is of local historical and representative significance to the City of Melton.

#### Why is it Significant?

Historically, Melton Stud is significant as an early thoroughbred stud in the Melton area, an activity for which the Municipality became noted. The stud was established in 1906 by highly regarded racehorse breeder E.E.D. Clarke, brother of Sir Rupert Clarke. During his lifetime, Clarke was reported to be the 'biggest stake-winner of all time on the Australian Turf'. In the 29 years that Clarke owned Melton Stud, he purchased, bred and sold many renowned racehorses. The most famous of the horses he owned was the imported English horse 'The Welkin' whose grave is located at the site. At the time of his death, 'The Welkin' was noted as one of the most successful sires in Australia. Another of Clarke's noted horses was the Melton Stud bred 'Trivalve' who in a single year won the AJC Derby (Sydney), the Victoria Derby and the Melbourne Cup.

It is also significant for its associations with the subdivision of the substantial Exford Estate which occurred from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and marked a major new era in the history of the Melton area. (Criterion A)

The former Melton Stud is of representative significance as an example of an early Federation period horse stud complex. It includes the original residence, outbuildings and planted Sugar Gums. The weatherboard house has characteristics typical of the Federation period including the hipped roof with continuous verandah and lapped corrugated metal sheeting, as well as the face brick chimney with terracotta pots and the symmetrical composition with central entry and timber sash windows.

The nearby timber stallion box is largely intact and retains original lapped corrugated metal sheeting to the hipped roof with galvanised ogee profile gutters, both typical of the period. The structure has a timber stable door to the front and a band of louvres to the upper part of the walls.

The thirteen mature Sugar Gums, which were planted when the stud was established, contribute to the setting of the house and the grave which is located close to the property entry. Many of the Sugar Gums in the vicinity of the stallion box mark the boundary of the attached exercise yard. The location of the house at the southern end of the property, high on the riverbank overlooking the reservoir but oriented towards the outbuildings and paddocks, contributes to an understanding of the former stud, reflecting both the premier location of the land and the important standing of the horses. (Criterion D).

## Description

The former Melton Stud is located at the southern end of Clarkes Road, adjacent to the Werribee River/Melton Reservoir. The site was inspected from the road and the river reserve.

The residence and outbuildings are located at the southern end of the former stud, on the high ground close to the river. They are accessed by a short driveway off Clarkes Road. Adjacent to the driveway and surrounding the residence and outbuildings, are plantings of Sugar Gums (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*). South of the driveway, close to Clarkes Road and overlooking the river and the railway viaduct is the granite headstone of the horse 'The Welkin'. The stone is inscribed 'The Welkin 1904-1925, a sire of many winners' and is surrounded by a plain metal railing supported between turned timber posts. Other racehorses are reported to have been buried in the vicinity of the grave.



View of the house from Clarkes Road with mature Sugar Gums



Grave of 'The Welkin'

The weatherboard house is largely intact to the front and has a hipped roof clad in lapped corrugated metal sheeting. The roof continues over the verandah to the front of the house which is supported on plain timber posts (likely replaced) and has timber lining boards to the underside and timber picket fencing to either end. The deck of the verandah appears to have been replaced with a brick and concrete type.

An original face brick chimney (now painted) with terracotta pots remains to the west side. Gutters are now a quad type, though were possibly originally ogee profile, matching those that remain to the nearby outbuildings. The central entry with highlight and sidelight appears to have been partly altered, though retains its original architrave. Either side are original timber-framed sash windows. Similar windows remain to the east and west sides, with those to the west fitted with hoods.

A skillion section is located to the rear of the house, possibly dating to the Interwar period. It retains early timber windows with multi-paned upper sashes to the west side. Openings to the rear and east side of this section appear to have been altered. Located to the south-east of this section is a large tank with a modern concrete part evident above ground.

### Outbuildings

Located about 50 metres to the north of the house is a weatherboard stallion box, one of two erected in 1906. The structure is a relatively substantial horse box and is an early example of this type of building. It is roughly square in plan and has a hipped roof clad in galvanised corrugated metal sheeting with ogee profile gutters and plain timber fascia boards. A band of timber louvres to the upper part of the walls remains on three sides, whilst those to the fourth (south) side appear to have been replaced with weatherboards. A single stable doorway is located to the north-east side, consisting of separate upper and lower parts. The roof sheeting has been dislodged to this side in recent years. To the north of the stallion box, mature Sugar Gums mark the boundary of the attached exercise yard.



Stallion box located about 45 metres north of house



Outbuildings including stabling (left), cottage (centre) and another stallion box (right)

A group of outbuildings located to the north of the residence and stallion box have not been recommended to be included in the heritage overlay. Whilst a few of these buildings appear to date from the initial phase of development, these buildings are generally in a dilapidated state. All of these buildings are set back from the road and are located on the high ground close to the stream that flows into the Werribee River.

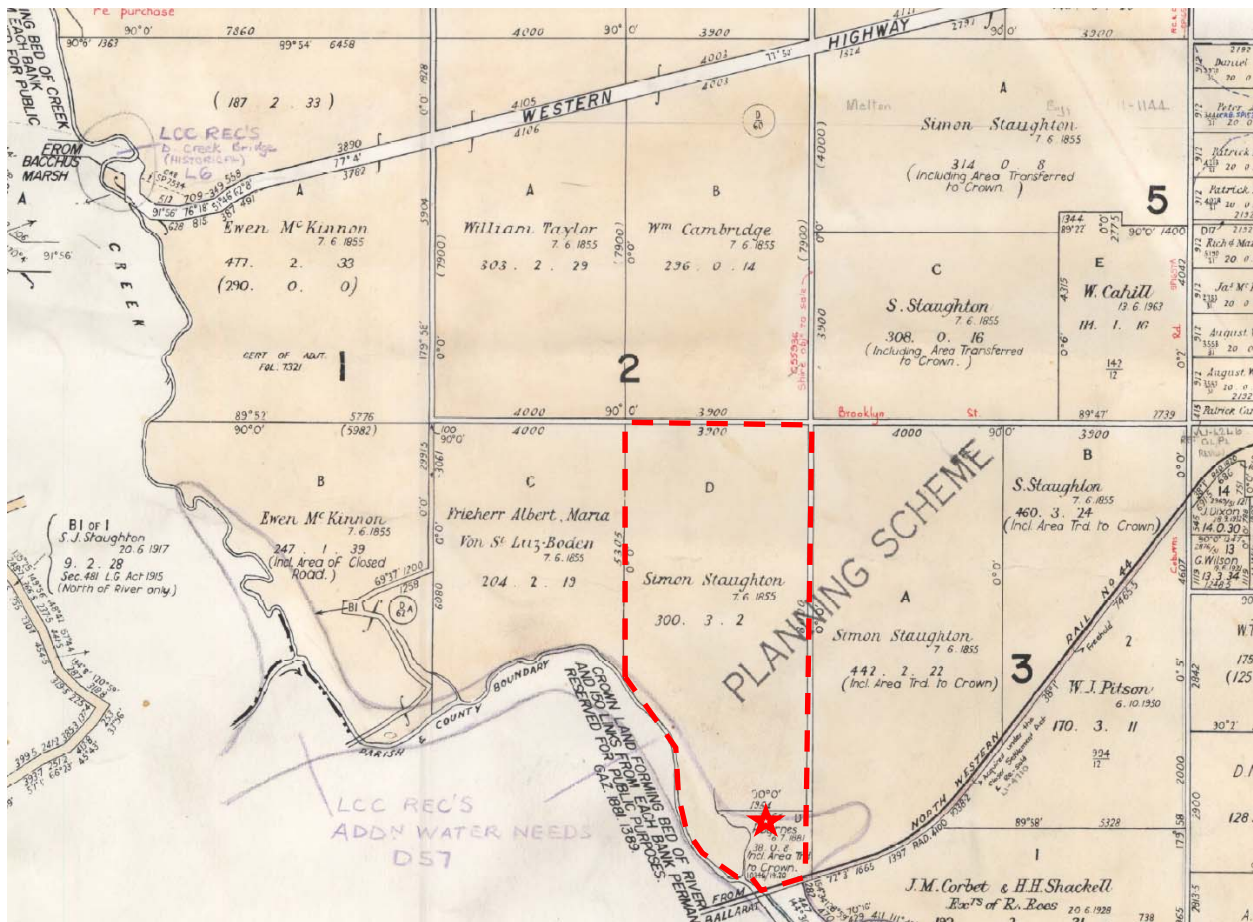
Early outbuildings are constructed of timber and have hipped or skillion roofs clad in corrugated metal sheeting. All have walls that are clad in weatherboards, except for the early manager's quarters which is now clad in corrugated metal sheeting. A narrow skillion building, likely used for stabling, remains and was possibly the yearling boxes and mens' rooms that were erected by Ernest Edward Dowling Clarke. A second, likely original, stallion box remains further to the north as does a large timber tank stand. There are also several other early weatherboard skillion structures and the remains of another building that has collapsed. A later steel-framed shed with broad gable roof is located to the south of the former manager's quarters.

### History

The subject site was part of allotments D and D1, section 2, Parish of Djerriwarrh, the former of which was granted to Simon Staughton on 7 June 1855. Allotment D1, which was only about an eighth of the size of the 122 hectare lot acquired by Staughton, was granted to P Byrnes some 26 years later in 1881. Simon Staughton was one of the largest landowners in what is now the City of Melton, and by the time of his death, in 1863, his Exford Estate was said to be approximately 100,000 acres.<sup>1</sup> On the smaller allotment, P Byrnes erected a dwelling, though this was described as being a ruin by 1906.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> David Moloney, Shire of Melton Heritage Study Stage 2, Environmental History, 2006

<sup>2</sup> *The Bacchus Marsh Express*, 9 June 1906, p2



Djerriwarrah Parish Plan, D62(4). Allotment D and D1 (small allotment at southern end of D) are indicated (dashed line)  
 The approximated location of the subject residence is also indicated (star)  
 (Source: PROV)

In 1905, 4,000 acres of the Exford Estate were offered for sale as farms from 200 to 300 acres in size. In the sale notice for these farms, it was noted that Melton had ‘long been considered one of the best agricultural districts’.<sup>3</sup> The following year, in 1906, it was reported that the subject site, which had been referred to as the Beehive Paddock, was purchased by Ernest Edward Dowling Clarke. Ernest Clarke was the brother of Sir Rupert Clarke and at the time of purchase, planned to convert the property to a stud farm and training track. At this time, it was noted that the Melton district had proved to be ‘excellent country for racehorses’.<sup>4</sup> In September of that year, it was reported that Mr E E D Clarke had purchased an adjoining lot of 137 acres from Mr W H Asher.<sup>5</sup> By 1925, Clarke owned most of allotments B and D and part of allotments C and D1.<sup>6</sup>

When Clarke purchased his first lot in Melton in mid-1906, he made plans to erect several buildings on the property including a dwelling and accommodation for horses. A description of the completed and proposed buildings along with the associated land was provided in *The Bacchus Marsh Express*.

The first to be erected were five loose boxes, with coach house, feed room, and attendant's room, all under the one roof. There is to be a private dwelling consisting of six rooms and a bathroom. Then there will be the manager's quarters; and ditto for the men employed. Also loose boxes for the stallions. The whole of the building will be of weatherboard. About thirty carpenters and labourers are employed. It is a very nice site, in full view of the viaduct and just a few yards from the ruins of the old dwelling occupied by the late P Byrnes, on the banks of the Werribee river and Wagner's gully.<sup>7</sup>

3 *The Bacchus Marsh Express*, 30 September 1905, p3  
 4 *Sunbury News*, 2 June 1906, p3  
 5 *The Bacchus Marsh Express*, 15 September 1906, p2  
 6 Certificate of Title, Col 4965, Folio 993000  
 7 *The Bacchus Marsh Express*, 9 June 1906, p2

By August of that year, both the house and at least one of the stallion boxes had been erected. An overview of the progress was published in the local newspaper with Clarke reported to be clearing the property of tree stumps and planting hundreds of Sugar Gum trees in their place. At this time, Clarke was planning to breed racehorses on the property using his stallion Emir, who was one of the best weight-for-age horses of the period.<sup>8</sup>

The rooms of the homestead are very large and commodious with a splendid large verandah. All are fitted with hot and cold water pipes, and Mr Clarke is to be seen (for pastime) rising out stumps with Trehwella jacks, and in the holes he has planted hundreds of sugar gum trees, so in the course of a few years he will have a forest on a small scale around his dwelling. Mr Clarke's racehorse, Emir, is to do stud duty here [...]. His box and exercise yard are now ready, and to look into it one would think it was luxurious. The stumps are being removed from the land, so that there will be as little as possible to injure any animal.<sup>9</sup>

In July 1906, Ted Heriot took charge of stud known at the time as 'The Beehive'.<sup>10</sup> The following year, in 1907, a well was sunk at the property to a depth of 145 feet and a windmill erected with a large tank and trough to supply the adjoining paddocks which were reported to be nearly cleared of stumps and fallen timber.<sup>11</sup> Despite the large investment in the stud, in 1907, it was reported that Clarke intended to sell the property as none of the mares that were mated with Emir were in foal.<sup>12</sup> By 1910 however, Clarke's stud was describes as 'well equipped' and he was looking to replenish his stock of thoroughbreds by importing a sire. That year, Clarke imported English bred horse 'The Welkin', who at his death was noted as 'one of the most successful sires that ever did stud duty in Australia', with his progeny having won nearly 550 races.<sup>13</sup>

By 1920, James Scobie one of the long standing managers of the stud, had been appointed.<sup>14</sup> The following year, the stud was noted as 'possibly one of the best, if not actually the best appointed stud in Australia' with Clarke reported to spare 'neither time nor expense'.<sup>15</sup> Six years later, The Governor General and his wife (Lord and Lady Stonehaven) visited the stud and were reported to be 'very much taken back at the running grounds and the superior stud arrangements which are very little below the best that can be seen in England'.<sup>16</sup>

In 1927, the Clarke bred 'Trivalve' won a notable treble by winning the AJC Derby at Randwick, Sydney, the Victoria Derby and the Melbourne Cup both at Flemington. Four years later, reports claimed the Mr E E D Clarke was the 'biggest stake-winner of all time on the Australian Turf', his horses having won over £150,000 in the 30 years he has been racing.<sup>17</sup>

Several years later, in 1935, Clarke decided to sell Melton Stud. It was to be sold in two lots of 318 and 280 acres, with the subject sire being part of the larger lot, located to the south of what is now Brooklyn Road. A description of the buildings on the site was provided in the sale notice.

The Homestead, a very substantially-built and commodious bungalow residence in most excellent order, containing seven large rooms, sewered inside and out, electric light, bathroom, hot and cold water, and every conceivable convenience for a gentleman's home, pleasantly situated on a high bank overlooking the river and weir; also on this portion of the stud farm is erected a manager's cottage of three rooms, kitchen, bathroom and bath, as well as a good sleep-out. Two splendid stallion boxes, with extra large exercising yards attached; both these boxes have electricity installed; 13 yearling boxes and men's room to accommodate four men, and two big motor sheds. In addition to the electric light plant there is an accessory gas plant (Simpatrol). cost £160; nine exercising yards, harness rooms, men's quarters of four very large rooms. Including kitchen, bathroom and bath, and bath-heater, feed rooms with two copper boilers, sand rolling ring, all most substantially fenced. All of the paddocks are permanently watered by windmill and piping feeding large concrete troughs, each about 10ft. 6in. x 5ft. and about 4ft. deep. A very large weaning shed, divided into two partitions with yards attached for colts and fillies surrounded by sheltering hedges. The whole of this stud farm is conveniently subdivided into numerous paddocks, and they all communicate with each other by well placed gates.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *The Age*, 30 January 1941, p4

<sup>9</sup> *The Bacchus Marsh Express*, 18 August 1906, p2

<sup>10</sup> *The Bacchus Marsh Express*, 28 July 1906, p2

<sup>11</sup> *The Bacchus Marsh Express*, 29 June 1907, p2

<sup>12</sup> *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 23 November 1907, p14

<sup>13</sup> *Leader* (Melbourne), 16 April 1910, p14 and *Weekly Times* (Melbourne), 4 July 1925, p70

<sup>14</sup> *Examiner* (Launceston), 10 January 1920, p5

<sup>15</sup> *Referee* (Sydney), 26 October 1921, p7

<sup>16</sup> *Sport* (Adelaide), 29 January 1926, p2

<sup>17</sup> *Referee* (Sydney), 22 July 1931, p9

<sup>18</sup> *The Australasian*, 16 March 1935, p19

The southern part of the stud was sold for to Victor Newhouse, Grazier for £17/acre who noted that it would continue to be used as a stud farm.<sup>19</sup> Only four years later the site was transferred to Solomon Green, Pastoralist. Following the death of Green, the site was registered to Melton Park Stud Pty Ltd in 1949 and in 1950, the site was transferred to R H & E G Jones and E C and I H Britt.<sup>20</sup> When the site was acquired by new owners in the late 1940s, it was noted that near the marked grave of 'The Welkin' were the resting places of other noted Clarke owned horse including 'Cyklon', sire of 'Trivalve' and many other good stayers.<sup>21</sup>

## Thematic Context / Comparative Analysis

*City of Melton Historical Themes:*

Pastoralism

Farming

Horses, hounds & hares

*Known comparable places in the City of Melton*

Historically, the former Melton Stud is amongst the earliest of the thoroughbred studs in the Municipality. Other comparable horse studs include:

- HO17 - Melton Park, 691-801 Bulmans Road, Toolern Vale (Place no. 008): Constructed in 1889, it includes a weatherboard house, timber stables and mature trees, underground tanks and tank stands.
- Emirates Park, formerly Stockwell Stud and Callan Park, Diggers Rest-Coimadai Road, south side, west of the east branch of Kororoit Creek (Place no. 91): It is not clear if any early fabric remains.
- Former Tara Stud, 2-6 Sherwin Court, Melton (Place no. 239): Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century period timber house and timber outbuildings including stables.
- HO68 - Kippenross, 429-455 Bulmans Road, Melton West (Place no. 177): Significant fabric includes the substantial brick house constructed in 1915, an underground tank, an outbuilding and an avenue of Sugar Gums.

Other Federation period dwellings constructed of timber and of a modest size in the Municipality include:

- HO22 - Kuloomba, 2203 Diggers Rest-Coimadai Road, Toolern Vale (Place no. 024): Weatherboard house with hipped and gable roof constructed circa 1904-07.
- HO46 - House, 1376-1432 Calder Highway, Diggers Rest (Place no. 073): Largely intact weatherboard house with gambrel roof and convex hipped verandah, constructed early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- HO89 - Balmoral Farm 2120—2224 Melton Highway, Melton (Place no. 237): Weatherboard house with similar hipped roof and continuous verandah. Constructed in circa 1914, the house is more altered than that at the former Melton Stud.
- HO1217 - Bonnie Doone, 339-365 Tarletons Road, Plumpton (Place no. 438): Largely intact weatherboard house with hipped roof and continuous verandah, constructed in 1906.

## Condition

House – largely intact

'The Welkin' grave – largely intact

Stallion box - largely intact

Other outbuildings and cottage – varied, though most are altered

Sugar Gums – show sign of canopy dieback and are in need of pruning.

## Integrity

House – good

'The Welkin' grave – good

Stallion box - good

Other outbuildings and cottage - varied

<sup>19</sup> 'Racing Stud Sold', *The Mercury* (Hobart), 4 April 1935, p14

<sup>20</sup> Certificate of Title, Volume 5976, Folio 148

<sup>21</sup> *Weekly Times*, 18 February 1948, p27

### Previous Assessment

The site was first identified as being of potential heritage significance in Stage One of the *Shire of Melton Heritage Study, 2002*. It was then identified as 'Melton Stud' (former). The site was thought to possibly include an early prefabricated corrugated iron outbuilding, grave of 'The Welkin', horse stalls/boxes, 1 weatherboard and 1 corrugated iron cottage, old pepper trees, viaduct view.<sup>22</sup> In the final report for Stage Two, the site was included in Schedule 3A as a 'conservation desirable place'. It was one of 57 such places.

### Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	Yes, approximately 13 Sugar Gums
Outbuildings and/or Fences	Yes

### Recommended Extent of Heritage Overlay

Significant elements would be included in a serial overlay consisting of three separate parcels. These would consist of:

- The house, including a curtilage of 10 metres and two Sugar Gums.
- The stallion box and associated exercise yard, including a curtilage of 5 metres. This includes approximately 10 Sugar Gums which mark the boundary of the exercise yard.
- The grave of 'The Welkin', including the adjacent mature Sugar Gum and a curtilage of 5 metres.



Recommended extent of Heritage Overlay  
(Source: Nearmap, 07 March 2018)

<sup>22</sup>

David Moloney, *Shire of Melton Heritage Study Stage One 2002: Places of Potential Heritage Significance*, p60