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REGISTER NOMINATION REPORT

Date: 21/9/84 Item Reference: 6630-11187

DUGOUTS HISTORIC SITE  
MITCHELL FLAT  
BURRA.

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Historically, this item represents the early period of underground habitation in Burra - a settlement phase prominent in folklore, but lacking firm evidence to do with the day to day lifestyle of the occupants.

Physically, the item consists of a series of shallow depressions in cleared land above the bank of Burra Creek. It is potentially an important site for archaeological investigation.

Environmentally, the item is inconspicuous, in semi-rural land on the outskirts of Burra.

The integrity of the item is minimal. The site may however, contain evidence underground.

NOMINATION SOURCE/THREAT/OWNER

This report has been prepared in response to a nomination by the Burra Burra Branch of the National Trust. The property is part of a deceased estate, and is expected to be auctioned soon. The land has some potential for subdivision and development, although it is not considered a particularly attractive proposition. The level of threat is uncertain.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION BRANCH RECOMMENDATION:

..... *Bernie C. Ramsay* .....  
f Manager

It is recommended that this item be included/~~not be included~~ on the Register of State Heritage Items, and that it be categorized H1, H3, 3.1.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

.....  
Chairman

South Australian Heritage Act 1978-82	Register of State Heritage Items ITEM EVALUATION SHEET Historic Site	Ref. No. 6630-11187
	Item DUGOUTS, BURRA	Status -
Age 1845-1860	Subject Present Use Code: 1003 Paddock Original Use Code: 0310 Underground Dwellings	Site Type

		E	VG	AG	FP	NA
History	Context Buried ruins of dugouts occupied in the early years of mining settlement at Burra.		X			
	Person/Group South Australian Mining Association			X		
	Event 1852 flood		X			
Physical	Natural Elements A cleared paddock, used intermittently for sheep grazing			X		
	Man-Made Elements A series of depressions believed to represent caved dugouts. No other surface evidence. State of underground evidence is unknown.		X			
	Representation Scarce example of a rare form of habitation	X				
	Continuity -					X
Environment	Local Character In its present state, the site makes no contribution to the historic character of Burra				X	
	Landmark Inconspicuous				X	
	Alterations -					X
Integrity	Condition Ruinous				X	
	Compatibility Disused as habitation site					X

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### Supplementary Information

No comment can be made on adaptation, use or interpretation. It is believed the site has potential for archaeological investigation, but any decisions on its future must await the outcome of that investigation.

Part of the property is available for development without intruding into the area where the indications of former dugouts lie.

### History and Sources

Burra is hailed as one of Australia's first mining towns, sharing this distinction with Kapunda. Its early housing arrangements by the predominantly Cornish miners are however, unique in Australia.

Copper was first discovered at Burra in 1844 by two shepherds, William Streair and Thomas Pickett, in separate places along the Burra Creek. Kapunda, approximately fifty miles to the south, had commenced as a copper mining town in the same year, exploiting the deposit discovered on Bagot's land in 1842. At Burra, Streair's find proved worthless, but Pickett's "bubble" of copper became the Burra Mine - a "monster" mine which spawned the townships surrounding it, eclipsed its sister town of Kapunda in production, and restored the colony to a sound financial state during the latter half of the 1840's and 1850's. In 1861, a further discovery of copper at the head of Yorke Peninsula uncovered an even larger deposit of the ore, out-stripping the Burra Mine production. By the time the two mines at Kapunda and Burra closed, they had produced copper worth 5,700,000 Pounds. Of the total, Burra Mines produced 4.7 million Pounds, and in 1859 employed a maximum of 1,170 men (Bailliere's Gazetteer, 1866,47). On a capital of 12,320 Pounds the Burra Mine returned 800,000 Pounds in dividends. (RGSSA Vol. 56,48). By comparison, Moonta Mine subsequently became the first mine in Australia to pay dividends exceeding 1 million Pounds.

The mine attracted miners from Cornwall, who settled in the alien landscape in the best way they could. From contemporary accounts, they preferred to live in dugouts along the Burra Creek, even when the South Australian Mining Association built rows of cottages for rental. The difference between the dugout and company cottage was initially availability, rental (the dugouts being rent-free) and independence. Estimates of the number of people living along the creek bed vary, ranging between 2,500 and 4,000. In 1851, the Census listed a population of 1,763 men, women and children out of nearly 4,000 people living in dugout homes along Burra Creek. The Census stated: "There are no houses, the dwellings being excavated in the banks of Burra Creek". Even allowing for some dwellings on the mine site,

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### History and Sources

the census infers no independent building. However, other reports state that by 1846, four rows of cottages had been built by S.A.M.A., and 22 were in the process of construction. A visitor to Burra in 1851 describes the dugouts as follows:

"In these strange dwelling places, which take up two miles of the creek on both sides, the great bulk of the miners and their families reside, being permitted by the Burra Company to do so rent free. A busy hum pervades the creek, swarms of children are at every door, here and there a knot of gossips is collected, and every now and then the scene is diversified by the chatter of a tame magpie, the barking of quarrelsome curs, the neighing of horses stabled alongside the huts, or the fluttering of red skirts and other apparel drying in the open air".

One old-timer, William Copley, M.P., described his memories of the Burra dugouts in early 1850 more explicitly:

"The Burra Creek when I first knew it was a chain of deep waterholes and magnificent gum trees. On, or rather in, both banks, for more than a mile in length, it was as densely populated as a rabbit warren. The first thing a new-chum did, no houses being available, was to excavate in the banks of the creek, a dwelling of one or more rooms according to the size of his family.

These underground abodes were cosy in winter and cool in summer, most of them were nicely furnished, and all were kept scrupulously clean and sweet by frequent whitewashings. Light was admitted by a window on each side of the door. Of course, there could only be one entrance, the 'house' having neither back nor sides. A hole from the fireplace to the surface carried off the smoke; but as the road from the township to the mine passed over these dwellings, it was usual to place over these holes a cask with the ends knocked out, so as to prevent nocturnal travellers from falling into the kitchen below. Practical jokers, however, would sometimes remove these protections; and then the family at supper would probably be startled by the hurried and undignified entrance of an unbidden guest, whose language would often be more scriptural than religious".

(Observer, 22/1/1898)

Floods in 1852 washed away many of the two and four roomed dugouts, and by 1860 most occupants had shifted to the Cornish miners' stone cottages still seen throughout the townships of Kooringa and Redruth. A mass exodus of miners to the Victorian goldfields in 1851 would have decreased the population living in the dugouts considerably. According to the Register of 8/7/1851, the mine on the eve of the gold-rush was employing 988 workers and the population of Kooringa, Aberdeen and Redruth totalled about 4,300, of whom 2,600 lived in dugouts. Others lived in 100 houses owned by the Company and about 330 owned by others (This contradicts the Census of 1851 cited earlier).

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Subsequent building of the township of Kooringa and Redruth, together with the refusal of the South Australian Mining Association to offer any relief to flood victims, discouraged the continuance of creek bed dugouts. A few have been restored by the National Trust and give some idea of the dimensions and scale involved. However, depressions along the creekbed, and in the gully out of Burra on the side of the road leading to Baldina indicate that further remains of dugouts still exist. Because of their rarity in the light of Australian mining history, such remains at Burra warrant careful archaeological investigation prior to any major change in the landscape.

### Sources

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Cash Books, Journals.
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## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE ACT, 1978

*Entry of Items on the Register of State Heritage Items*

There has been an increased community awareness of the need to protect those buildings and features of our State which reflect our cultural heritage. The South Australian Government has recognised that awareness by passing the South Australian Heritage Act, 1978, for which the Minister for Environment and Planning is responsible. In accordance with the provisions of the Act, the Register of State Heritage Items is being compiled.

Where the Minister considers that an item (defined as any land, building or structure) that is not on the Register is part of the physical, social or cultural heritage of the State and that the item is of significant aesthetic, architectural, historical or cultural interest, then the Minister may enter that item on the Register.

Pursuant to the provisions of the South Australian Heritage Act, 1978, I, Don Hoggood, Minister for Environment and Planning and Minister for the time being administering the said Act, hereby give notice that I have entered on the Register of State Heritage Items and the items described in The Schedule hereunder.

Items listed in The Schedule were previously placed on an Interim List in accordance with the provisions of section 15 of the South Australian Heritage Act, 1978. Excepting items owned by the Crown and those within the area of the corporation of the city of Adelaide, the remaining items listed in The Schedule are subject to Part V of the Planning Act, 1982. That Act requires that no development, including demolition, conversion, alteration of, or addition to any item, is permitted without the written consent of the relevant Planning Authority. Items within the area of the corporation of the city of Adelaide are subject to the provisions of the City of Adelaide Development Control Act, 1976.

Dated at Adelaide, 18 November 1985.

D. J. HOPGOOD, Deputy Premier and Minister for Environment and Planning

## THE SCHEDULE

Name	Address
Corporation of the City of Adelaide	
Thebarton Mounted Police Barracks .....	Port Road, Adelaide 5000. Section 1015, hundred of Adelaide.
Adelaide High School and Observatory Site .....	West Terrace, Adelaide 5000. LG. volume 1782, folio 40, section 543, hundred of Adelaide.
District Council of Barmera	
Humphrey Pumps .....	Trussell Terrace, Cobdogla 5346. Section 853, Cobdogla irrigation area.
District Council of Barossa	
Wilksch Cottage .....	Yettie Road, Williamstown 5351. CT. volume 4249, folios 701 and 702, allotments 20 and 21 of portion of section 34, hundred of Barossa.
Corporation of the city of Burnside	
Boundary Wall—Glenside Hospital .....	Glen Osmond Road, Eastwood 5063. Mental Hospital Reserve, <i>Government Gazette</i> 24.2.83, section 621, allotments 10, 12, 18, 22; CT's volume 4116, folio 12 and volume 2394, folio 97, part allotment 2; CT. volume 2219, folio 6, part allotment 82; CT. volume 2219, folio 11, part allotment 87; section 265, hundred of Adelaide.
District Council of Burra Burra	
Former Dugouts Sites .....	George Street, Burra 5417. CT. volume 985, folio 116, Allotments E and K, part section 1, hundred of Kooronga.
District Council of Central Yorke Peninsula	
Point Pearce Mission—Former .....	Point Pearce 5573. L.G. volume 3970, folio 106, sections 295, 298, hundred of Kilkerran.
District Council of East Torrens	
Dwelling 'Grove Hill' .....	120 Old Norton Summit Road, Norton Summit 5136. Memorial No. 105, book 539.
Corporation of the Town of Gawler	
Old Bushman Hotel .....	9 Cowan Street, Gawler 5118. CT. volume 3915 folio 51, portion of allotment 96, section 24, hundred of Mudla Wirra.
'Trevu' House .....	1 Deland Street, Gawler 5118. CT. volume 4195, folio 147, allotment 4, portion of section 3073, hundred of Barossa.
Railway Hotel .....	27 Eighteenth Street, Gawler 5118. CT. volume 3663, folio 91, allotment 22, subdivision of section 2, hundred of Mudla Wirra.
Office E. & W. S. Main Depot .....	Julian Terrace, Gawler 5118. <i>Government Gazette</i> 8.7.76, portion of part section 24, hundred of Mudla Wirra.
Old Spot Hotel .....	Murray Street, Gawler 5118. CT. volume 4137, folio 703, allotment 82, portion of section 4, hundred of Nuriootpa.
Pile's Building .....	Murray Street, Gawler 5118. CT. volume 3132, folios 91, 93 and 94, section 24, portion of allotment 93, hundred of Mudla Wirra.
McKinlay Memorial and Pioneer Park .....	Murray Street, Gawler 5118. Parklands, <i>Government Gazette</i> 9.7.36, and Indenture of Conveyance, No. 43, book 319, 26.12.1864.
Professional Offices .....	25 Murray Street, Gawler 5118. CT. volume 92, folio 44, part allotment 204, section 24 and part section 4, hundred of Nuriootpa.
Essex House .....	92-100 Murry Street, Gawler 5118. CT volume 4169, folio 801, allotment 2, section 24, CT volume 4169, folio 800, allotment 1, portion of section 24, hundred of Mudla Wirra.
House .....	11 Railway Terrace, Gawler 5118. CT volume 1643, folio 79, allotment 137, part section 8, CT volume 4089, folio 252, allotments 135 and 136, part section 8, hundred of Mudla Wirra.
Gasworks—Former .....	Seventh Street, Gawler 5118. CT volume 269, folio 244, allotment 105, section 3, hundred of Mudla Wirra.
Corporation of the City of Happy Valley	
'Mackereth' Cottage .....	Mathews Road, Dorset Vale. CT volume 2228, folio 74, part section 1427, hundred of Noarlunga.
Corporation of the Town of Hindmarsh	
Joiners Arms Hotel .....	9 Manton Street, Hindmarsh 5007. CT volume 871, folio 8, portion of allotment 80 of section 353, hundred of Yatala.
Corporation of the City of Kensington and Norwood	
Town Hall, Norwood .....	125 The Parade, Norwood 5067. CT volume 3131, folio 15, volume 391, folio 9, part block 2 of section 277, allotments 20 and 21 of section 277, hundred of Adelaide.

Name	Address
<b>District Council of Lincoln</b>	
Poonindie Brickworks .....	Poonindie. CT volume 1538, folio 129, portion of section 12, hundred of Louth.
Poonindie Mission—Superintendent's Residence ..	Poonindie. CT volume 4192, folio 699, allotment 12 of portion of section 127, hundred of Louth.
Poonindie Mission—Bakehouse Complex and Well .....	Poonindie. CT volume 4182, folio 651, allotment 3 of portion of section 127, hundred of Louth.
Poonindie Mission—Schoolhouse .....	Poonindie. CT volume 4182, folio 648, portion of section 127, hundred of Louth.
<b>District Council of Mannum</b>	
Shearer House and Observatory .....	Anna Street, Mannum 5238. CT volume 3683, folio 51, allotment 39 and part allotment 38, part section 114, hundred of Finnis.
<b>Corporation of the City of Marion</b>	
Dwelling Hamilton's Winery .....	Morphett Road, Glengowrie 5044. CT volume 3597, folio 25, portion of section 176, hundred of Noarlunga.
<b>District Council of Meningie</b>	
Point McLeay Mission—Former .....	Via Tailem Bend 5259. L.G. volume 4057, folio 870, sections 21, 290, 291, 469, 635, 636, 637 and 638, hundred of Baker.
<b>District Council of Munno Para</b>	
Adamson's Flour Mill—Former .....	Smiths Creek, Smithfield 5114. CT. volume 4161, folio 955, allotment 44, part section 4160; CT. volume 4161, folio 956, allotment 26, section 1679, hundred of Munno Para.
<b>Corporation of the Town of Naracoorte</b>	
Naracoorte Station Group .....	Stewart Terrace, Naracoorte 5271. CT. volume 4190, folio 171, allotment 71 of part section 1, hundred of Naracoorte.
<b>District Council of Northern Yorke Peninsula</b>	
Kadina Mortuary and Cemetery .....	Drain Road, Kadina 5554. L.G. volume 106, folio 6, section 2179, hundred of Wallaroo.
<b>Moonta Cemetery</b> .....	Petallick Road, Moonta 5558. L.G. volume 617, folio 107, section 2250. L.G. volume 149, folio 41, section 2232, hundred of Wallaroo.
<b>District Council of Penola</b>	
Office Shop:	
Former Butter and Cheese Factory .....	Riddoch Street, Penola 5277. CT. volume 4121, folio 768, portion of allotment 108 of portion of section 3, hundred of Penola.
Neilsons Cottage .....	Via Penola-Naracoorte Road, Penola 5277. CT. volume 3457, folio 169, hundred of Penola.
<b>Corporation of the Town of Peterborough</b>	
Railway Roundhouse .....	Railway Terrace, Peterborough 5422. CT. volume 3859, folio 129, part section 216, hundred of Yongala.
<b>District Council of Robe</b>	
Dwelling—'Attic House' .....	Victoria Street, Robe 5276. CT. volume 4040, folio 879, portion of allotment 9 of section 218, hundred of Waterhouse.
<b>Corporation of the Town of St Peters</b>	
Plumbers Shop .....	Payneham Road, College Park 5069. CT. volume 1726, folio 99, portion of allotment 2 of portion of section 257, hundred of Adelaide.
<b>Bon Marche Building</b> .....	1-13 Payneham Road, College Park 5069. CT. volume 3825, folio 167, portion of allotment 1, portion of section 257, hundred of Adelaide.
<b>District Council of Strathalbyn</b>	
Office .....	8 Albyn Terrace, Strathalbyn 5255. CT. volume 4166, folio 340, allotment 9 of part section 2600, hundred of Strathalbyn.
Arsenic Labyrinth .....	Wheal Ellen 5255. CT. volume 4104, folio 450, allotment 1, section 1198, hundred of Strathalbyn.
<b>District Council of Victor Harbor</b>	
Soldiers Memorial Gardens .....	Esplanade, Victor Harbor 5211, section 766, hundred of Encounter Bay, Recreation Reserve declared under Act of Parliament 1281/1917.
Station Master's Residence—Former .....	2 Flinders Parade, Victor Harbor 5211. CT. volume 2407, folio 81, part section 16, hundred of Encounter Bay.
<b>Shop and dwelling</b> ..	8 Railway Terrace, Victor Harbor. CT. volume 4028, folio 526, part allotments 66 and 81 of part section 16. CT. volume 4028, folio 527, allotment 66 of part section 16, hundred of Encounter Bay.
<b>Shop and Dwelling</b> .....	9 Railway Terrace, Victor Harbor 5211. CT. volume 99, folio 68, allotment 65, hundred of Encounter Bay.
Causeway and Jetty Historic Site .....	Victor Harbor 5211, Marine and Harbours Reserve, section 666, <i>Government Gazette</i> 29.4.65, hundred of Encounter Bay.
Former Post Office .....	Yankalilla Road, Victor Harbor 5211. CT. volume 2407, folio 80, section 714, hundred of Encounter Bay.
<b>District Council of Willunga</b>	
Former Temperance Hotel .....	Aldinga 5173. CT. volume 4237, folio 21, part section 400, hundred of Willunga.
'Delabole'—Mining Village Ruins and Slate Quarry .....	Delabole Road, Willunga 5172. CT. volume 4163, folio 333; CT. volume 4032, folio 462, part lot 102, portion of section 758 and other land, part sections 753, 757, hundred of Willunga.
<b>District Council of Yorketown</b>	
Lime Kiln and Jetty .....	Wool Bay 5576. <i>Government Gazette</i> 5.10.22, section 393, hundred of Dalrymple.