

# SA Heritage Register

Nomination form

## South Australian HERITAGE COUNCIL

To help your nomination be successful, please fill out this form with as much information as possible.

Feel free to expand the answer fields as much as you require or append information to the form.

Please note that places which have been nominated during past three years will not be reconsidered by the South Australian Heritage Council unless you can provide significant new information not provided through the previous nomination and assessment.

*For assistance with this form you may contact:*

Your local historical society or heritage adviser may be of assistance OR you may telephone an assessment officer in Heritage South Australia on (08) 8124 4960.

### A. Nominated Place

1. Name	
Name of Place / Object:	Witchelina Nature Reserve
Any other or former name(s):	1873-2010, Witchelina Pastoral Lease (comprising CL 1294/17, 1294/18, CL1429/47 & CR5764/571)
Is the place already on another heritage list?	No

2. Location					
Street Address:	Mulgaria Road				
	Suburb / Town: Farina			Post Code:	
Local Council Name:	Out of Hundreds				
Land Description: (if known)	Title:	Volume:	Folio:	Parcel Type:	Parcel No:
	Plan Type:	Plan No:	Section:	Hundred:	
GPS Location/s: (If known) Witchelina Homestead	Longitude / Easting / X			Latitude / Northing / Y (Datum = )	

3. Ownership	
Name of Owner(s):	
Contact person: (if different from owner explain relationship)	
Postal Address:	Street Address:
	Suburb / Town: Post Code:
Phone Number:	
Ownership History:	The property was purchased by  in 2010, with two thirds of the funds from the Federal Government through the <i>Caring for our Country</i> program, and the remainder from corporate partners. The attached timeline provides historical ownership and occupation information.

4. Nominator (your details)	
Your Name/s:	
Organisation/Position:	

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<b>Daytime Phone:</b>			
<b>Fax:</b>			
<b>Postal Address:</b>	Street Address:		
	Suburb / Town:	Post Code:	
<b>Email Address:</b>			

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## B. Description

5. Description of nominated place or object	
<p><b>Description of the nominated place or object and its current condition:</b></p>	<p>A former sheep and cattle station comprising the Witchelina, Mount NorWest, Ediacara and part Myrtle Springs pastoral leases, Witchelina Nature Reserve is approx. 421,000 ha in area located west of the Lyndhurst – Marree Road and east of Lake Torrens. The original leases date from 1873.</p> <p>This one property gives examples of a broad array of early SA post-European history and development. There is, of course, also rich Aboriginal history and value. The site has examples of very early exploration, the surveyor-explorers and the trigonometrical survey of the north (a technology in its infancy at the time), development of the pastoral industry, water conservation including wells, dams, tanks, pumps, and weirs, some specific and important people (McConville, Ragless family, Tarlton, Rischbieth, Kidman), communication – telegraph and rail, the problems of the rabbit and the dingo.</p> <p>Includes the ruined Mt NorWest homestead, shearing shed and other buildings; the Witchelina homestead, woolshed, shearers quarters and other buildings in good condition; equipment including the wool press, the Witchelina wagon, a dam sinking plough and other items from pre 1900; pastoral era outstations and shepherds huts including those at The Bend, Paradise, Pug Hut, Victory Well, Kingston, Willawalpa, Rischbieth Well, West Mount, Top Mount and others; fences, watering points; remnant steam pumps and stone tanks; former copper and gold mines and associated infrastructure, all derelict; land survey items (cairns, lockspits) dating to the trigonometrical survey of the north by Parry and Goyder 1858 – 1860; also remnants of the Overland Telegraph, the 1880's Ghan railway line, the 1957 Ghan railway line.</p>
<p><b>Are you aware of any modifications or additions to the place or object?</b> Can you provide dates for these changes?</p>	<p>Most built items date from 1873-1895. The Witchelina Homestead was damaged by fire in 1957 and subsequently rebuilt with new roof, and new verandas. The interior was further upgraded after 2010. The Witchelina book-keepers cottage and original shearers kitchen were upgraded internally, repointed (lime mortar) and fitted with new windows 2010 – 2020, being derelict. Pug Hut and Bend Hut (constructed 1950's) have been stabilised and made habitable.</p>
<p><b>Do you believe there may be historical items under the ground?</b> Should an archaeological investigation be considered?</p>	<p>None known</p>
<p><b>Date you inspected the place or object:</b></p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p><b>Have you had any contact with the Owner?</b></p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>
<p><b>Current use of the place or object:</b></p>	<p>Nature Reserve</p>
<p><b>Original or former use(s):</b></p>	<p>Pastoral property, sheep and cattle grazing</p>
<p><b>Are there any current or long term threats to the nominated place or object?</b></p>	<p>Human disturbance, feral animals and weeds</p>

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<b>Name of Builder:</b>	Mt NorWest ruins – Henry McConville. Witchelina buildings – John Ragless and sons.
<b>Any other information:</b>	

### C. History

6. Origins and history	
<b>Years of Construction:</b>	<b>Start:</b> from 1873 <b>Finish:</b>
<b>Name of Designer / Architect:</b>	
<b>History of the nominated place or object:</b>	<p><u>1840 – 1858. Early Exploration.</u> Edward John Eyre passed along the eastern side of Lake Torrens in August 1840, naming and climbing Termination Hill, and passing to the west of Mt NorWest (which he named) before reaching the dry salt lakes to the north, later named Lake Eyre (at that time, thought to be the northern extension of Lake Torrens). He found no water between his depot on Aroona Creek (west of present Leigh Creek), and Lake Eyre. Eyre believed the salt lakes he saw were continuous and formed a horseshoe shaped barrier preventing travel to the west and north.</p> <p>Police Corporal Alfred P. Burt, in October-November 1858 when based at Angepena in the Northern Flinders Ranges, was instructed by Police Commissioner Major Warburton to search for water in the region west and north of the Leigh Creek (ie, generally present day Witchelina) so that Warburton might cross from his camp on Lake Eyre. Burt's search for water over several weeks was unsuccessful until rain fell. Burt included a map in his report, the region's oldest known map. Even in 1858, he reported evidence of cattle watering along the Leigh Creek watercourse.</p> <p>1858 – 1860. Land Survey – in particular items associated with the surveys undertaken by Parry in 1858 and Goyder in 1860</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cairn on Delusion Hill built by surveyor Samuel Parry in 1858 while reconnoitring north from Termination Hill (this is the oldest known European structure on Witchelina; Parry's field notes give date of construction – "Saturday July 31st.-This morning I sent two of the men to Mount Delusion to erect on it a pile").</li> <li>Sites associated with Assistant Surveyor-General George Woodroffe Goyder's 1860 trigonometrical survey of the north:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 mile survey baseline between Termination Hill and 20 Mile Hill. The cairns on Termination Hill and 20 Mile Hill, and 'lockspits' at the one, two, nineteen and 20 mile survey points and at a number of stony ridges along the line have been located and the GPS location recorded. The original marking or sighting posts remain at most of</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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these locations—Goyder's field books and relevant correspondence held by State Archives, copies by [REDACTED]. The cairn on Termination Hill was originally built by Parry in 1858 but deconstructed and rebuilt by Goyder in February 1860.

- Cairns on Termination Hill, 20 Mile Hill, South Hill, Mt Nor'West and Willouran Hill, built by Goyder in 1860. Several of these were reconstructed in the early 1950's for the geodetic survey of Australia. A number of the sighting posts installed when first erected remain. Other cairns of lesser size on a number of hills, origin or purpose (if any) unknown.
- Goyder, in 1864 and then Surveyor-General, published a map of the region. The original is held in the State Library of SA. A digital copy is held by [REDACTED].
- From the early 1860's and based on the land surveys, the region was subdivided into pastoral leases.

Overland Telegraph. 1870-1872. The Overland Telegraph, from Port Augusta to Darwin, was built 1870-72 and traversed the eastern boundary of the property. Some of the original Oppenheimer iron poles are in the Witchelina dump and elsewhere on the property; numerous broken insulators can be found along the telegraph line route. The telegraph line predates the road and rail, which generally followed the same route.

There are remnants of local telegraph lines from Farina – Witchelina – The Bend - Mulgaria and Myrtle Springs – Pug Hut - Witchelina.

Pastoral era built Infrastructure. 1873 – present. Pastoral leases issued in 1873 included Witchelina, Mt Nor'West and Ediacara, all subsequently amalgamated into Witchelina. Surrounding properties (including Myrtle Springs, Finnis Springs, and Mundowdna) all predate, possibly as these leases had better water supply. The Witchelina lease transferred from McConville to Ragless in 1874. Late 1870's, McConville entered into co-ownership of the Mt Nor'West lease with Adelaide businessmen Rischbieth and Tarlton, who soon assumed full ownership. Mt Nor'West lease was transferred to Sidney Kidman circa 1895 (one of the first properties of the many that he acquired), who later (early 1900's) also held the Witchelina lease, the Mt Nor'West, Witchelina, Ediacara and part Myrtle Springs leases being all amalgamated into and known as Witchelina. Kidman Pastoral Co. sold Witchelina to Bonython et al. in 1950. Several owners 1950 – 2010. Peak sheep numbers are reported to be around 30,000. [REDACTED]

### Buildings

- Old Mt Nor'West buildings. Built in 1873 from local stone by Henry McConville, the original lessee. Includes the homestead ('Government House'), shearers quarters, shearing shed and associated buildings. All buildings in advanced decay. Below ground water tank approx 8m x 5m x 5m. 1930's cement block house, renovated and habitable. 1895

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	<p>Surveyor-General map describes these buildings as well as those at out-stations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Witchelina homestead. Built in 1879 from local stone. It was damaged by fire in 1957 and reconstructed with new verandas, roof and exterior walls cement plastered. One of the earliest houses in the north. Remains in use. From photographic comparison, original façade is similar to Myrtle Springs homestead. 1895 Surveyor-General map locates these buildings as well as those at out-stations.</li><li>• Other stone structures include, in the homestead precinct, stone water tank from same era; stone shearing shed 1878 in good condition; stone cottage and stone cook's/ mens room, both renovated and in good condition; and older stone and galvanised iron shearers quarters in derelict condition.</li><li>• Ediacara ruins. Built 1870's (?) by Boswell (?) Remnant timber dwelling and associated water supply, yards.</li><li>• Pug Hut. Three roomed hut originally outstation of Myrtle Springs, 1950's.</li><li>• The Bend outstation. Stone hut, other remnant dwelling, horse yard, stock yards, 1950's. Circular stone tank.</li><li>• Old Paradise outstation, pre 1895. Remnant stone house, remnant foundations timber house, extensive Aboriginal and European debris.</li><li>• Mirra Creek hut. Remnant hut, circular underground tank. Pre 1895.</li><li>• Rischbieth Well. Remnant stone dwelling, rectangular stone tank, well with modern windmill. Debris. Grave. Pre 1895. Site occupied from 1905 to until around 1950 by Burns family, possibly gold prospectors.</li><li>• South Well. Remnant stone hut, timbered well and stone tank.</li><li>• Berlina Well. Remnant stone tank and room for shepherd/boiler attendant, well and steam powered water pump.</li><li>• Willawalpa Hut – remnant stone dwelling</li><li>• Kingston – remnant stone dwelling, underground water tank, stone tank</li><li>• 3-Mile – remnant timber dwelling</li><li>• West Mount Hut (cement block construction, 1930's?), galvanised iron crutching shed and older stone ruin.</li></ul> <p>The original leases granted from 1873 expired after 21 years, and in the early 1890's the Surveyor-General was required to map each lease and to record all built infrastructure for valuation purposes. These maps are held by State Archives and provide the record of the properties at that time.</p> <p><u>Water supply infrastructure</u></p>
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Water is critical for a pastoral enterprise. Ragless Brothers were innovative in the introduction and use of steam powered pumps on Witchelina (see newspaper reports) but there also were steam powered pumps in use on Mt Nor'West.

- Steam boilers, pumps, stone tanks – there are boilers, pumps and other material at Top Mount, Glen View, Berlina Well, Kingston, Bungarider South (boiler and pump now in Witchelina dump) and elsewhere
- Stone tanks – The Bend, Bungarider Well, Rischbieth Well, Yadlakina Well, Kingston, Berlina Well, Spring Well
- Underground tanks – Old Mt Nor'West, Mirra Well, Kingston
- Dams – many locations
- Windmills – these post-date the steam pumping era, are (or were) at many locations
- Pipelines – Bungarider South to Mirra tank – to take water from a relatively assured location, Bungarider South, 20+ km to the north of the property; Black Hill to Busheowie, and others. Possibly Kidman era.
- Stone weirs (pre 1895) across major creeks at Mirra Creek and at Bungarider. Both weirs have failed. The Bungarider weir has been given some local, unverified connection with Chinese - in construction, and in connection with a market garden. It is locally surmised that Chinese construction workers from the Great Northern Railway (the 'old' Ghan constructed from 1878) may have had some involvement. There are records of other Chinese market gardens in the north from the same era including at Marree (Hergott Springs), Laura and Pekina.

### Fences and yards

- There are stock yards built from native timbers and many locations; and fences with native timber posts. Thousands of trees were felled for fence posts.
- A 'vermin proof' fence, that dates from the late 1800's, that attempted to keep the rabbit out is south of Witchelina homestead as is a similar boundary fence that extends for the full length of the 1873 boundary between the Witchelina and Mt Nor'West leases (which were amalgamated sometime after 1910).

Rail lines. 1878 – 1957. The 1880's narrow gauge Ghan railway line runs north-south along the Witchelina eastern boundary – remnant embankment and corridor, creek crossings (abandoned and dismantled following construction of the standard gauge railway line). Ruins of a fettler's hut at [REDACTED]

The 1956/7 standard gauge railway line, located a few km west of the earlier line – remnant embankments, bridges; abandoned and dismantled following the opening of the Tarcoola to Alice Springs railway line in 1980.

Mines and associated infrastructure. 1870's on.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Copper and gold mines in the north east of the Reserve. These include Dunn's Mine (associated derelict stone hut, underground water tank) – note Adelaide newspaper articles 1881/2 and 1899; Breadon Hill Mine; Tarlton Knob Mine (associated miner's dugouts, water tanks, domestic debris); Rischbieth Well; and others. The mines were worked periodically 1880s and 90's but seemingly failed due to low ore price, and high costs due to the remoteness and distance from Adelaide. Douglas Mawson visited the Breadon Hill locality in 1920 (Mawson's diaries are held by the SA Museum, NF has copies of relevant pages) and examined a number of the mines which seem to have been idle at that time; there has been sporadic activity at some sites since then.</li></ul> <p><u>Geological feature.</u> A significant feature, known locally as "Bubble Rocks" is located a few km from Witchelina homestead. Possibly an expression of rock formations known as Lieslegang Rings.</p>
<p><b>Historical sources used to support your nomination:</b> Please attach copies of pages from publications or newspaper articles as appropriate.</p>	<p>See attached files</p>

## D. Heritage Significance

<p><b>7. Statement of State Significance - Why is the place or object important to South Australia?</b></p> <p>It is of State heritage significance because Witchelina is an example of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The exploration and land survey of the north of SA 1840 – 1860, and the land survey archaeology (cairns, lockspits) remaining today.</li> <li>• The development and continuance of the pastoral industry in the north of SA, 1870 – 2010 and the property retains much of the early built infrastructure.</li> <li>• Retains aspects of mining, the Overland Telegraph, and the Ghan railway.</li> <li>• The property also has significant natural heritage value and is an example of changing land use from pastoralism to conservation and restoration of the landscape.</li> <li>• The property has significant Aboriginal cultural heritage values dating back a very long way..</li> </ul>
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<p><b>8. Significance Criteria</b></p> <p>The South Australian <i>Heritage Places Act 1993</i> lists seven criteria by which places are assessed as 'State significant.' Please tick the criteria you feel the place demonstrates and explain your reasons.</p>	
<p><b>It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.</b></p>	<p>Yes – development of the pastoral industry in the north of SA, and also examples of mining, in particular copper and gold. Has examples of early built infrastructure, and also of water supply infrastructure – weirs, stone tanks, steam pumps and now be managed for biodiversity conservation.</p>
<p><b>It has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.</b></p>	<p>Yes – examples of early land survey including stone cairns and survey lockspits constructed by George Woodroffe Goyder whose field books and monthly reports from 1860 are retained by State Archives.</p>
<p><b>It may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history.</b></p>	<p>Yes – now provides a platform for ongoing scientific examination of management and recovery of endangered flora and fauna in a post pastoral era environment, but under pressure from climate change impacts.</p>
<p><b>It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.</b></p>	<p>Yes – pastoral industry from 1870 to 2010.</p>
<p><b>It demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.</b></p>	<p>Yes – the effort that went into water supply – with wells and steam pumps; stone weirs; dams and pipelines to provide stock with water</p>
<p><b>It has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it.</b></p>	<p>Yes – strong and on-going associations for the aboriginal community who have links that long predate the pastoral era and that continued throughout that time; and for those who value the romantic sense of life and achievement in the pastoral era</p>

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It has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.

Yes – people include surveyors Samuel Parry and George Woodroffe Goyder (later Surveyor-General); pastoral pioneers Henry McConville and John Ragless and his seven sons; pastoralists and investors Charles Rischbieth, Robert Tarlton and Sidney Kidman.

## E. Additional Information

### 9. Images/Maps/Diagrams/Site Plans

A full range of images including maps, site plans, and photographs will help your nomination.

Please provide:

- a clear outline of the place or object being nominated within any maps or plans provided
- high quality images of the place or object (please list the total number of images being provided)
- the subject of each image
- the date each image was created
- the author of each image, and
- the copyright holder of each image (if known)

Paste images here:

Images provided in attachment

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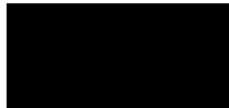
## South Australian HERITAGE COUNCIL

The South Australian Heritage Council is committed to transparency in relation to the listing process and wishes to enhance public confidence in the nomination, listing and decision-making process. The Council's policy is to make nominations for State heritage listing and submissions on provisional entries publicly available via webpage or to interested parties. The Council will adhere to the Privacy Principles and your name and personal details will not be released.

I/we,  nominate Witchelina Nature Reserve to be heritage listed.

The information I/we have provided is correct to my/our knowledge.

Your Signature/s:



Date: 2-11-2023

### Nomination Form Checklist

**Please check that your nomination includes:**

- ☐ A clear indication of the location of the place or object (including map/s). Where a number of features are nominated, show the location of each and/or a boundary surrounding the significant elements of the site.
- ☐ A history of the place or object explaining important aspects relevant to the nomination. This should generally help support arguments of cultural significance.
- ☐ A clear description of the nominated place or object/s.
- ☐ A statement of significance and indication on how the place or object satisfies one or more of the significance criteria.
- ☐ Have you taken the opportunity to discuss the nomination with a heritage assessment officer? It is strongly advised you to do so prior to submitting this nomination.

Email: [DEWHeritage@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEWHeritage@sa.gov.au)

Post: Executive Officer, South Australian Heritage Council  
Department for Environment and Water  
GPO Box 1047, Adelaide SA 5001

## Witchelina Historical Photos



Goyder Baseline 20 Mile Hill cairn



Old Mt Nor West woolshed



Goyder Baseline lockspit



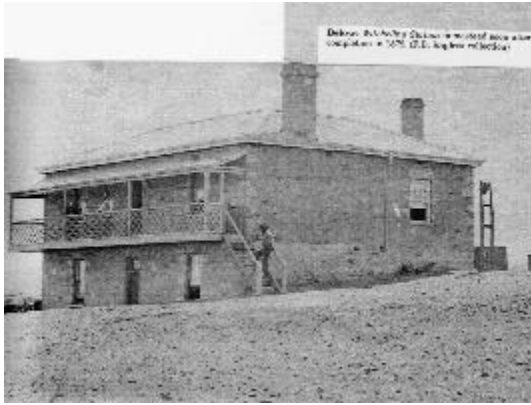
Old Mt Nor West woolshed



Old Mt Nor West shearer's hut



Old Mt Nor West woolshed



Witchelina Homestead 1879



Witchelina Homestead 2023



Witchelina Homestead 1898



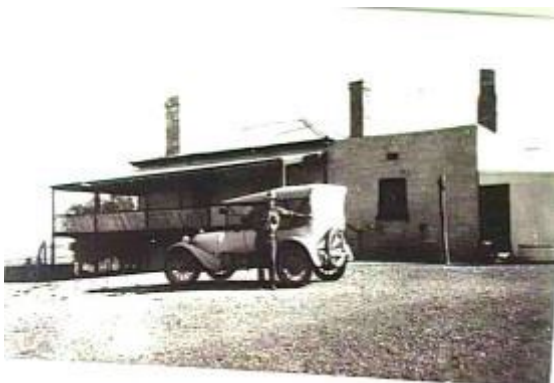
Witchelina wool team 1893



Witchelina Homestead 1912



Witchelina Wool Shed 1893



Witchelina Homestead 1932



Witchelina woolshed 2023



Witchelina woolshed shearing stands



The Bend Outstation



Witchelina woolshed shearing pens



The Bend Outstation



Witchelina woolshed wool press



The Bend Outstation



The Bend Hut



Water Pump



Telegraph Witchelina to Myrtle Springs



Water steam boiler



Mirra weir



Railway Bridge the Ghan- 1957