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ABOVE: The Stephens house at Mole Creek which has been heritage listed.
LEFT: Ian Stephens, the son of owner Robert Stephens, and a honeycomb frame.

Honey farm on register

A HONEY factory, apiary and associated residence at Mole Creek have been provisionally entered on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

Robert Stephens became fond of beekeeping while he served in France during World War I.

On his return to Tasmania in 1920, he bought land at Mole Creek to build his own honey factory from his army pension.

Since then, the Golden Bee Honey Factory has expanded and has been owned by three generations of the family, who export honey around the world.

Tasmanian Heritage Council chairman Michael Lynch said this was one of the more unusual listings he had seen, but it was an important and fascinating part of the state's historical heritage.

Second-generation owner Ian Stephens said he was delighted the factory and residence was set to appear in the register and said it was an honour for the family.

Heritage listing to preserve honey history

MATT SMITH

ONE of the state's original commercial honey operations is set to make history as an unusual entry on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

The R. Stephens Golden Bee honey factory, apiary and residence at Mole Creek in the state's North has been provisionally listed on the register.

Tasmanian Heritage Council chairman Michael Lynch said it would be the first time a factory and a home would be placed on the register together.

The business started in 1919 when first-generation owner Robert Stephens returned from World War I armed with beekeeping wisdom from France.

During the next 80 years,

the business grew to be one of the state's most successful.

It now supplies about 35 per cent of Tasmania's honey and 3 per cent of Australia's honey.

Mr Stephens' son Ian was delighted to discover the business looked set to be placed on the heritage register.

"It means that history is preserved from the

beginnings of the business," he said yesterday.

"Otherwise it would have just been lost."

Mr Stephens said the future of the business was bright with his three sons Ken, Neal and Ewan helping out and ready to take over when he had had enough of the honey industry.

Mr Lynch said the listing was unique not only because

of the business but because the homestead was designed by Australian architect Iliffe Gordon Anderson.

He said members of the public would have about three months to make submissions supporting or opposing the factory and home being placed on the register.

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