



MEDIA RELEASE

Golden Bee scores a heritage 'A'

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In a first for Tasmania, a honey factory, apiary and associated residence have been provisionally entered in the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

The R. Stephens Golden Bee honey factory, apiary and residence at Mole Creek in Tasmania's north has a rich history as one of the first commercial honey factories in Tasmania, and one of the first commercial producers of leatherwood honey.

Chairperson of the Tasmanian Heritage Council Michael Lynch said this was certainly one of the more unusual listings he had seen entered in the Heritage Register, and it was an important and fascinating part of the State's historic heritage.

"The honey factory had humble beginnings as the hobby of its founder, Robert Stephens. At the outbreak of the First World War, Stephens enlisted in the army and while serving in France managed to undertake research into bee keeping," Mr Lynch said.

"Upon his return to Tasmania he purchased two acres of land in 1920 with his army pension, and expanded his hobby into a business.

The business has evolved on the original site under the guidance of three generations of honey-industry pioneers — the Stephens family.

"It's a terrific story to think that one Tasmanian family exports this internationally renowned honey to the world, from a site occupied since 1920," Mr Lynch said.

"Although the honey is sourced from across Tasmania's wilderness areas, all the processes are undertaken on the Mole Creek site, from the breeding of bees, the maintenance of the meticulous bee-keeping records, and packaging of honey to the marketing of the product. The place is like a living museum."

The Stephens' family home adjacent to the factory has been provisionally listed as well because its close proximity to the factory allowed the family to have a hands-on approach to their business.

"Their home was built in the 1950s in the Arts and Crafts style from local un-coursed stones set in a random rubble form, and is positioned among a picturesque garden," Mr Lynch said. "It was designed by notable Australian architect, Iliffe Gordon Anderson."

Anderson designed many substantial buildings and residences in Victoria and Tasmania including the Geelong West Town Hall, the CML Insurance Building in Geelong, the Hobart Swimming Pool, the Blue Hills Motel in Battery Point and the Glenorchy Council Chambers.

The honey factory has also brought fame to the township of Mole Creek and undoubtedly assisted in the development of a tourism industry there.

The second generation owner, Ian Stephens, is delighted that the Golden Bee honey factory and residence has been included in the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

“This means a lot to our family. It means the work the whole family has done is recorded, and that really is quite an honour,” Mr Stephens said.

“I wanted this place in the register in fact, to protect it for future generations and to highlight the tremendous history we have here.”

There is a minimum of 60 days in which objections and submissions in relation to the inclusion of the R. Stephens Golden Bee Honey Factory, apiary and residence permanently in the Tasmanian Heritage Register can be received.

For comment contact:

Mr Michael Lynch

Chairperson

Tasmanian Heritage Council

Phone: 0428 551 362