United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

ection number	Page		
	SUPPLEMENTAR	Y LISTING RECORD	
NRIS Reference	Number: 8800153	Date Listed: 9	/22/88
McGregor Ranch		Whitman	WA
Property Name		County	Stat
	on Properties in	Eastern Washington MPS	
Multiple Name			
notwithstandin in the nominat	g the National Pation documentation U he Keeper	cions, exclusions, or amount of the service certification. 9/22/88 Date of Action	
SHPO, confirme	d that this prope der criterion B a	on with David Hansen, WA erty should be considere and this fact will be in	đ
	egister property	file out nomination attachmen	

OMB No. 1024-0018

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National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets

(1 offir 10-300a). Type all entities.			
1. Name of Property			
historic name McGregor Ra	anch		
other names/site number N/A			
2. Location			
street & number			not for publication
city, town (ca. 6 miles so	outh of) Hooper		x vicinity
state Washington code	WA county Whitman	code 07	75 zip code
3. Classification			
Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Res	ources within Property
x private	building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
public-local	x district	10	4 buildings
public-State	site		sites
public-Federal	structure	4	structures
<u> </u>	object		objects
	•	14	4 Total
Name of related multiple property listing	a:	Number of cont	ributing resources previously
Grain Production in Eastern	Washington		tional Register0
4. State/Federal Agency Certifica	tion		
Signature of centifying official Washington State Office State or Federal agency and bureau In my opinion, the property meets	e of Archaeology and Histo		on Date On Date Continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official			Date
State or Federal agency and bureau			
5. National Park Service Certifica	tion		
I, hereby, certify that this property is:	()		
entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register.	Patrick Andr	mo	9/22/88
removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)			
	Signature of the	ne Keeper	Date of Action

Current Func	tions (enter categories from instructions)				
Agricult	ure: animal facilities, storage				
outbuildings					
Domestic: single dwelling					
Materials (en	ter categories from instructions)				
foundation	concrete				
walls	wood				
roof	asbestos				
other					
	Agricult outh Domestic Materials (entire foundation walls				

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Situated amidst grain fields about 5 miles southeast of the small town of Hooper, the McGregor Ranch consists of three clusters of farm buildings standing along two rural gravel roads. Two building groups at either end of the complex are focused around the residences of two of the four McGregor brothers who founded the ranch in the late nineteenth century. The other building assemblage is centered around the barn and is composed of grain and livestock feed storage facilities. Of the total 17 buildings, 12 appear to be at least 50 years old. The other 5 are of more recent construction. The McGregor Ranch is representative of the farmstead property type identified in the Grain Production in Eastern Washington Multiple Property Documentation Form. The ranch retains the characteristic elements of the type, including two residences, a barn, three bunkhouses, a harness shop, a chicken house, hay sheds, and other ancillary structures.

Among the best preserved structures at the ranch is the Peter McGregor house along the Thomas Flat Road at the western edge of the complex. Spindlework on the recessed half-facade front porch and decorative bargeboards under double-hung wood sash windows distinguish this cross-gable vernacular frame structure. Original shiplap siding and wood shingles under the gables further strengthen its historic appearance. Subtle decorative elements such as corner boards and molding under the gables and roof eaves help articulate the simple lines of the otherwise unadorned, 1 1/2-story residence. The foundation is stone and mortar, composition shingles cover the roof, and an original brick chimney protrudes from the center of the roof. There is a shed-roofed extension on the rear which appears original. Overall the house measures ca. 40 X 23 feet.

A gabled, covered walkway connects the rear of the house with the adjacent automobile garage, which is also of shiplap construction. Behind the house is a two-story structure comprised of a concrete root cellar on its lower level and a frame bunkhouse above of shiplap and shingle construction matching that of the house. Entry to the root cellar is via a ground-level door facing the house. A wooden stairway leads to the only door at the rear of the single-room bunkhouse, which has original double-hung sash windows. The structure measures ca. 13 feet square, stands ca. 15 feet high to the top of the bunkhouse gable, and appears to be unaltered. About 80 feet to the east outside the fence that encloses the yard, garden, and main buildings is a gabled chicken house also of shiplap construction. All structures appear to date from the turn of the century.

Approximately 500 meters (1650 feet) to the southwest at the opposite edge of the ranch is the Archie McGregor house. Built about the same time (1901), the structure retains some of its historic appearance despite numerous alterations. Perhaps most importantly, the house retains its original shiplap siding and decorative shingles under the gables, as well as

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its original mass and configuration. The most significant alterations include: new windows; conversion of gable dormers to shed-roof dormers; removal of spindlework on the roofline and front porch; replacement of the bannister on the front porch; and clipped gables replacing the original pointed gables and sunburst decorations. The house has been remodeled on its interior.

At the rear of the house off the shed-roofed back porch, an enclosed causeway, with shiplap siding matching the house and bunkhouse, has been installed connecting the house with the bunkhouse. Similar to the root cellar/bunkhouse behind the Peter McGregor house, this structure is also frame and gabled on its upper level above a high (ca. 6 feet) foundation. Like the other structure, the lower level housed a root cellar. Unlike the Peter McGregor structure, however, the building behind Archie's house has a stone foundation and is built into the hillside, with the door at the rear of the bunkhouse opening to ground level on the raised hillside. The uncoursed native basalt stone foundation continues into a retaining wall extending several feet to the west, creating an upper terraced lawn.

East of the Archie McGregor house is a metal-sided automobile garage of recent construction. To the east of the garage is a bunkhouse where some of the harvest crews were lodged. Measuring about 15 X 65 feet, the building has shiplap siding like the nearby house and smaller bunkhouse. Its gable roof is covered with composition shingles, as are the two awnings over the front entrances near opposite ends of the facade. The structure's fenestration pattern is unchanged, with double-hung wood sash windows throughout. There is a small gabled extension with an entryway on the rear of the bunkhouse. Although not architecturally significant, the building is one of the largest and best preserved bunkhouses in the Palouse, and as such bears significance as a contributing structure on the McGregor Ranch.

Standing barely 6 feet east of the bunkhouse is large shiplap building with a high, steeply-pitched gable roof. Known as the "Tack Building," it is a harness shop complete with old saddles, bridles, and the sewing machine used for repairing equipment associated with the many draft animals once required on the ranch. The structure has double-hung wood sash windows with decorative crowns. It stands on a crude stone foundation and measures about 15 X 27 feet. Like the nearby bunkhouse, the harness shop is a contributing structure at the ranch.

Immediately to the east is another non-contributing structure: it is a pole barn (#1 on the sketch map) of modern construction consisting corrugated metal siding supported by a wood pole and lumber frame. Open on its eastern side, the building serves as a parking shelter for farm machinery. It is a large structure, measuring 35 X 150 feet. A few feet to the east is another pole barn (#2) measuring 35 X 100 feet. It is of similar age and construction, but is a higher building with a regular (centered) gable roof. Entry to the structure is via large, full-height sliding at either end. The barn houses combines and other farm vehicles and implements.

To the north is a modern machine shop of concrete block construction. Measuring 35 X 70 feet, the shop is also a non-contributing structure on the ranch. Northwest of the shop is a small frame shed used for storage, measuring 20 X 20 feet. Immediately northeast of the shop is a small frame garage which, like the shed, has a gabled corrugated metal roof.

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Standing about 300 feet north of the garage is a stock barn that appears to be of considerable antiquity. It is open on two sides, with feed bins and stalls in the sheltered, open-sided areas. Large sliding wooden doors are on the north end of the barn, which stands on a concrete pier foundation and has a gable roof covered with composition shingles. Livestock are fed and sheltered in part of the structure, with the remainder used for storage of apparently unused farm equipment. The barn measures 40 X 60 feet.

North of the barn across Thomas Flat Road stand a granary and two hay sheds. The hay sheds are of identical construction and dimension, built of sawn lumber atop concrete pier foundations. They measure 15 X 100 feet, are completely open on the ground story, and are enclosed with board siding on the upper level. There are no floors in the structures either at ground or upper levels. Composition shingles cover the shed roofs.

The granary appears to be one of the oldest structures on the ranch. It was, and still is, used for storing sacked seed grains. Measuring 18 X 40 feet, the building is of tongue-in-groove frame construction atop a stone and mortar/post and pier foundation. Its gable-on-hip roof is covered in corrugated metal. There is a small wooden door on the north gable above the hip. The structure has a sturdy wooden floor. Sliding wooden doors enter on three sides.

The contributing elements of the farmstead buildings convey a sense of the historic development of the grain industry in this dry, predominantly rangeland country of the western Palouse. Noncontributing elements are less than fifty years old. Only the land circumscribed by standing structures is included in the nomination; other wheat fields subsequently have been merged with larger holdings.

Contributing Resources:

Peter McGregor House (Building)
Root Cellar-Bunkhouse I (Building)
Archie McGregor House (Building)
Bunkhouse III (Building)
Storage Shed (Building)
Stock Barn (Building)
Hay Shed II (Structure)

Peter McGregor Garage (Building) Chicken House (Structure) Bunkhouse II (Building) Tack House (Building) Archie McGregor Garage (Building) Hay Shed (Structure) Granary (Structure)

Noncontributing Resources:

Archie McGregor Garage II (Building)
Pole Barn II (Building)

Pole Barn I (Building)
Machine Shop (Building)

8. Statement of Significance		
Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in ationally x state		
Applicable National Register Criteria XA B C II) ,, ,, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	D	
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions) Agriculture	Period of Significance 1901-1938	Significant Dates
	Cultural Affiliation	
Significant Person Peter, John, Archibald, & Alexander McGregor	Architect/Builder not known	

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Few ranches in Eastern Washington can claim association with a family more significant in the agricultural history of the region than the McGregor family. From their headquarters in and near the tiny company town of Hooper they founded and built in western Whitman County, the McGregors profoundly influenced, and sometimes led, the transformation of agricultural practices on the Columbia Plateau from open range to agribusiness. Besides raising sheep, which was originally their primary preoccupation, the McGregors were pioneers in converting rangeland to wheat fields and were considered the "Wheat Kings" of the Palouse in the early 20th century. In addition to their role as premiere wheat, amd grain merchants, the family raised cattle, hogs, other grains, alfalfa, and apples. As family descendant and historian Alexander Campbell McGregor wrote in Counting Sheep: From Open Range to Agribusiness on the Columbia Plateau, the McGregors also

operated feedlots and a packing plant; . . . organized an irrigation company; made loans; sold general merchandise, insurance, farm machinery, and agricultural chemicals; hired their own agronomists; became land merchants; and even organized a gold mining company—all as an independently financed family corporation headquartered in a small company town. The history of this enterprise illustrates the impact of the application of agricultural science and technology on a specific ranching and farming business during a century of "agricultural revolution."

Their farmstead was the center of their agricultural empire. The well preserved complex meets the registration requirements of the property type "Farmsteads" established in the Multiple Property Documentation Form for Grain Production in Eastern Washington. Both the structural and associative integrity of the majority of the buildings conveys a strong sense of the property's historic character. Despite the presence of modern structures, the farmstead retains its essential character-defining elements, most particularly in the two residences, the barn, and bunkhouses. In addition, the McGregor Ranch possesses documented historical significance within the context of grain growing in eastern Washington.

Peter, John, Archibald, and Alexander McGregor, founders of the ranch, were born in Ontario, Canada, to a farming family. In 1882, Peter and Archie emigrated to southeastern Washington. John followed his brothers in 1886, and Alex joined his siblings in Whitman

9. Major Bibliographical References	
McGregor, Alex. "Boom Days in the Sheep Busines 2, no. 1 (Spring 1974).	
Seattle: University of Washington Pres Interview with Craig Holstine, 1988.	
McGregor, William. Interview with Craig Holstine Plat Book of Whitman County. Seattle: Anderson	and Glen Lindeman, 1987. Map Company, 1910.
Previous documentation on file (NPS):	See continuation sheet
preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)	Primary location of additional data:
has been requested previously listed in the National Register	State historic preservation office Other State agency
previously determined eligible by the National Register	Federal agency
designated a National Historic Landmark	Local government
recorded by Historic American Buildings	University
Survey #	Other Specify repository:
Record #	
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of property <u>ca. 20 acres</u>	
Zone Easting Northing	Southwest corner $3 \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 4 & 1 & 7 & 6 & 6 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 5 & 1 & 7 & 3 & 6 & 8 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$ Zone Easting Northing
C $1 \cdot 1$ $4 \cdot 1 \cdot 7 \cdot 9 \cdot 1 \cdot 0$ $5 \cdot 1 \cdot 1 \cdot 7 \cdot 3 \cdot 6 \cdot 8 \cdot 5$ Southeast corner	$\begin{array}{c ccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$
Verbal Boundary Description	
Beginning at the northeast corner of the nominate of Thomas Flat Road, approximately 500 feet east o McGregor roads, follow the fence south/southeast the edge of grain fields to McGregor Road approximately 100 feet to a point even of the nominate of the	f the southeast corner of Thomas Flat and from Thomas Flat Road along tree line at ately 1400 feet. Cross McGregor Road and
Boundary Justification	
The boundaries are drawn to include all remains	ing buildings at the ranch complex and
pasture land between the buildings. The amoreonsiderable extent of the complex, which served a	ount of property nominated reflects the
of one of the largest farming and ranching enterpri	ises in eastern Washington. The adjacent
	x See continuation sheet
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Craig Holstine, Historian	
organization Archaeological & Historical Service, street & number Eastern Washington University	
street & number Eastern washington oniversity	telephone (509) 359-2239 state Washington zip code 99004

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County in 1900. The first two brothers to arrive homesteaded on dry rangeland in the western reaches of the county. Before entering business for themselves, Peter and Archie worked for other farmers, usually herding sheep, which was their ancestral occupation in both Scotland and later Canada. Before long the McGregors had their own flocks and entered the sheep business.

The McGregor brothers formed a partnership that was eventually to become an agricultural empire in southeastern Washington. The empire was formed as a result of shrewd, well-timed land acquisitions at a critical moment in the history of the Columbia Plateau. John, the only one of the brothers to avoid bankruptcy and remain in the sheep business during the depression of the mid 1890s, bought the first grazing land that would later be included in the partnership's extensive holdings. At that time, the Northern Pacific Railroad (NP) owned every other section of land; the need to gain access to private holdings within that "checkerboard" pattern of ownership led the McGregors to lease railroad land for grazing rights. A year later, financial troubles forced the NP into receivership, and railroad directors eagerly offered to sell Columbia Plateau rangelands they considered "utterly unprofitable." In the fall of 1896, John McGregor acted quickly, buying 2,755 acres adjacent to leased grazing land for seventy-five cents an acre. next year he acquired 5,440 acres adjoining the land he purchased in 1895. He soon signed additional railroad grazing leases, bringing an area of rangeland 21 miles long and 17 miles wide under the McGregor's control. The brothers wisely acquired additional lands by arranging postponed payment schedules that came due after the profitable years for sheepmen in the late 1890s.

Those lucrative years prompted John, Peter, and Archie to encourage their younger sibling, Alex, to sell his drugstore in Chicago and move to Washington. By the time Alex arrived in 1900, the brothers had purchased all but the southeast quarter of Section 8, T 14 N, R 38 E. That property, an alternate section situated amongst leased railroad rangeland, was to become the headquarters for the McGregor brother's operations. Once Alex moved onto the southeast quarter, all four then lived within the same section, each having 160 acres. Peter's residence was built on his land in the northeast quarter, Archie constructed his house in 1901 a short distance to the west on his E 1/2 W 1/2, and John established his place along the road in the W 1/2 W 1/2.

This location near the junction of two dirt roads was the logical place to establish the ranch's base of operations. Barns, harness shops, a bunkhouse, and other ancillary buildings were soon erected there. Probably most of the older structures remaining at the ranch were erected in the years between 1901 and 1909. Reportedly two horse barns were razed in the 1970s. During the heyday of ranching with draft animals, reportedly 100 men and over 300 horses were required to harvest the wheat crop. Not all of those men and animals were housed at the complex, but the McGregors undoubtedly maintained facilities that would have accommodated considerable numbers of employees and draft animals.

Archie's house served as the ranch headquarters until he built a second house in Hooper in 1910. The ranch house later served as a dining hall for harvest crews and a residence for the ranch foreman. The other brothers also built homes in Hooper and moved off the ranch. (Peter maintained residences in Spokane, and, after his election to the State Legislature, in Olympia as well). Management of the family enterprise then moved to the company's town,

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which soon contained over a dozen residences, a company store, a hotel, fruit and grain warehouses, and other buildings reflecting the diverse nature of the McGregor enterprise.

In the early days of the McGregor ranch, feeding their growing flocks of sheep in winter presented problems for the brothers. Their attempts to raise corn, rye, and barley were not as successful as their experiments growing wheat for hay, which they began after the turn of the century. Agreements with the railroad prevented their growing grain on leased grazing lands, until 1901 when they gained options to buy the properties. The McGregors then began "breaking" sod on extensive acreages of Palouse hills and planting wheat. They were pioneers in converting sheep rangeland to wheatfields, although they were not alone. The dry, light-colored soil of the western Palouse had at first appeared less attractive to grain farmers than the darker soils to the east. Once most of the fertile lands in the eastern Palouse had been taken and the economic outlook improved after the depression of the mid 1890s, farmers began breaking the sod of the western Palouse.

The process was laborious. Native grasses had to be burned, and sagebrush uprooted by teams of horses and mules and either burned or plowed under. Horse-drawn wood or iron-framed harrows with steel teeth were used to break up the soil. The McGregors used both horses and mules for a great variety of tasks on their ranch. Teams of eight animals pulled mechanical seeders. Before 1907, the brothers hand-seeded by "broadcasting" from the back of a wagon. Planting of winter wheat usually began with fall rains in late September. If it died from lack of moisture or frozen from lack of snow cover, spring planting would be done with the hope that wheat would mature before being killed by summer heat and drought. Like sheep ranching, wheat farming was a risky business in the dry lands of the western Palouse.

By 1905 the McGregors had 1,096 acres in wheat, 435 in summerfallow, and 369 in newly-broken sod, or a total of more than 1,900 acres of cultivated land. At that time, the brothers also had over 15,000 sheep and nearly 500 head of cattle. They held onto their grazing leases until the properties were offered for sale, expanding their holdings at a time when available lands were becoming scarce and expensive. Railroad policies were such that ranchers holding grazing leases could expand their ranches easily through legal purchase without violating federal land laws on the public domain, as was the case so frequently elsewhere throughout the West. In addition to railroad land, the brothers also bought lands from banks, real estate firms, insurance companies, and the federal government. So extensive were their holdings that the McGregors were able to supplement their income from sales of lands on the fringes of their ranch for considerable profits. In 1901 John McGregor was paid just over \$31,000 for land that had cost him slightly over \$6,000 only a few years earlier.

Between 1896 and 1905, the McGregor brothers transformed their business from a small-time sheep operation to an enormous ranching, farming, and real estate enterprise. In July 1905 they incorporated the McGregor Land and Livestock Company at \$200,000 capital stock. By that time, livestock had been supplanted by wheat at the Columbia Plateau's most important agricultural product, a fact not overlooked by the McGregors. That year the brothers decided to become serious commercial wheat farmers and expand their acreage devoted to the crop of gold. Of the 10,000 acres of McGregor land suited for cultivation, only one-fifth had been planted in wheat. Over the next ten years, the McGregor corporation converted about 8,000 acres of rangeland to wheat fields. Already by 1911, the McGregor brothers

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were being heralded as the "wheat kings" by virtue of their harvest of over 100,000 bushels in a single year. By the time wheat prices peaked at the end of the First World War, between 10,000 and 11,000 acres had been converted, and wheat had become the corporation's single most profitable endeavor. The massive transformation of rangeland to cultivation still left 25,000 acres in rocky pasture, however. The McGregors continued in the sheep business, which was reliable and more stable than wheat, whose price tended to fluctuate wildly.

Commercial farming was something in which the McGregor brothers could claim little experience. Their acreage was so extensive and the management so complex they decided to divide their land into parcels and lease out farms to individual tenants. For twenty years, the McGregors rented portions of their property to tenants under agreements that called for payment of a third of all hay, livestock, and wheat to the landlords, who provided grain sacks, fence posts and wire, and other necessities. Using materials provided by the McGregors, tenants constructed numerous buildings, including houses, at various locations around the ranch. Tenantry continued until the agricultural depression following World War I and the near failure of crops in 1924 eliminated profit margins necessary to maintain the system. During those two decades, the brothers continued to farm portions of the ranch themselves, however.

Expansion of their investments in wheat brought the McGregors considerable financial reward. As their profits grew, they bought new farm machinery and a grain elevator, and converted to handling grain in bulk prior to 1920, long before most farmers did so in the Pacific Northwest. By 1920 the corporation was handling 150,000 bushels a year in its storage facilities, which also included a flathouse in Hooper where sacks of wheat were stored. In addition to wheat grown by the McGregors and their renters, the two facilities stored wheat raised by seventeen other farmers in the immediate area. The McGregors had become grain merchants on a large scale, and committed to a continued boom in the industry that was not to be sustained.

The sudden drop in wheat prices in 1920 left the McGregors unable to collect on many debts owed them by local farmers. Their cattle business had also fallen on hard times, losing money in six of twelve years between 1909 and 1920. Unwise and/or unlucky investments in mining ventures, irrigation projects, and other unprofitable schemes left the corporation's future uncertain as the nation suffered through the agricultural depression of the 1920s and the Great Depression of the 1930s. But the corporation's diversity, the brothers' willingness to apply scientific methods to farming (especially in the use of fertilizers and erosion control), and the recovery of the international wheat market helped pull the McGregors through hard times.

The McGregor Land and Livestock Company weathered numerous serious reversals and survives to this day. Its land holdings have remained fairly constant since 1920: the corporation farms about 8,000 acres of wheat and owns or leases roughly 24,000 acres of rangeland. Technological developments have altered the structural and human components of the ranch: only seven employees now farm roughly the same acreage that once required 100 men and over 300 draft horses. The focus of the family business has also changed: the McGregors passed a milestone in their history in 1974 when they finally abandoned the sheep business, which had become too labor-intensive for the times. The company now concentrates on agricultural chemicals, cattle, various farm service industries, and of course, wheat. Despite some

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poor years and serious market declines, wheat over the years was consistently the single most profitable commodity produced by the McGregors until eclipsed in the 1950s by more capital-intensive farm service industries (primarily fertilizers and agricultural chemicals). Just as they were pioneers in sheep and wheat, the McGregors continue their prominence on the frontiers of modern agriculture.

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Verbal Boundary Description (continued)

metal pole barns. There the boundary turns west approximately 250 meters (ca. 825 feet) to the southwest corner at a fence junction. The boundary then follows the fence 200 feet north past the Archie McGregor house, turns 90 degrees east to the road into the place, and turns north again following the road to its intersection with the Thomas Flat Road. From that point, the boundary runs east approximately 205 meters (ca. 675 feet), crosses the road and goes north 100 meters (330 feet) past the granary. There it turns east and continues to a point north of the easternmost hay shed. The boundary then turns 90 degrees south, goes past (east of) the hay shed, crosses Thomas Flat Road east of the barn, and continues east past the junction with McGregor Road and past the Peter McGregor house to the northeast corner of the nominated property and point of beginning.

Boundary Justification (continued)

historic grain fields have been merged with (and are indistinguishable from) vast land holdings and are not included in the nominated property.

