PROPOSAL TO NOMINATE AN ITEM OF ENGINEERING INTEREST
THORPE WATERMILL

Item Name:	Thorpe Watermill		
Other/Former Names:	Axford Corn Mill		
Locality:	Thorpe Farm near Bothwell, Tasmania		
Address:			
Co-ordinates			
Nominated by:	Anthony Ellis COUPE		
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EHA Branch Chair:	Indrek Tults **Approval Date: June 2025**		
Current Owner:	Dr William Bignell		
Original Owner:	Thomas Axford		
Current use:	Not in use		
Former use:	Grinding of wheat and cutting of chaff		
Proposed use:	Item of interest		
Item Condition:	In need of further restoration		
Designer:	Thomas Axford		
Builder:	Thomas Axford		
Started:	1823	**Completed:**	1824
History: **(100 to 600 words)**	Thomas Axford arrived in Hobart Town with his wife and family in November 1822. He immediately set about building a watermill on his Thorpe property and it was well established by 1825. The mill operated for 81 years under a succession of owners. Milling continued at Thorpe until 1906 when competition from larger steam roller mills closer to the larger population centres made it uneconomical to produce flour with stones and water wheels. Although the waterwheel was used to drive a chaff cutter until 1916, the death knell was finally sounded when the old waterwheel axle broke. Numerous attempts were made to repair and renew it, these efforts were finally abandoned so that the watermill fell into disrepair. The channels became silted and overgrown with willows, and much of the lower level woodwork rotted and was carried away in the floods which regularly inundated the mill. The Bignell family has carried out restoration starting in 1975 to the point where by July 1977 stone ground whole meal was once again being produced at the Thorpe Mill using water power.		
Description: **(100 to 600 words):**	The heart of any watermill is the waterwheel itself. The waterwheel turns as a result of the weight of the water held in the buckets. The waterwheel		

	generates about 4 hp revolving at 8 rpm. It was usual practice in mill construction to have expensive cast iron cogs meshing with wooden cogs to save wear. Grain arrived at the front door of the mill in carts or wagons and the bags were manhandled into the main room to a position under the sack hoist. The sack hoist would lift the bags right through to the top (granary) floor. Unless the grain was either stored in large bins or tipped straight into the large hopper feeding the Smutter on the floor below. This machine removed all impurities from the grain, such as dirt straw weed seeds and smut (black fungi). The wheat would gravitate to the millstones where it was ground to wholemeal. To produce the white flour it was necessary to raise the wholemeal back to the second floor using an endless belt carrying buckets. The wholemeal tipped into the "Reel Separator " and was sifted according to size into four main products----flour, middlings, bran and pollard. These fell through a chute to the ground floor and were bagged and weighed. Quite often a farmer would bring along his cartload of grain for gristing and was able to leave the same day with a load of flour, bran and pollard.
Engineering Significance:	The Thorpe watermill is the only known example of a traditional water-driven flour mill that can be operated in the original manner.
Webpage Summary: **(200 to 300 words)**	The water for the mill is diverted from the Clyde river. Thorpe Watermill is the only known Australian example of a traditional water driven flour mill that can be operated in the original manner.
Engineering Theme	Engineering and Technology
Heritage Listing: (State and/or Local Authority)	Tasmania