

Victorian Heritage Database Report
THE GUMS



Location:

Woolsthorpe Road, PENSHURST VIC 3289 - Property No 0001

Heritage Status / Level of Significance:

Stage 2 Heritage Study Complete

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

The Gums Homestead Complex is located 12 kilometres east of Penshurst, on the Woolsthorpe Road. There are two surviving homesteads dating from 1852 and 1876, and the potential archaeological remnants of the original homestead, dating from as early as 1839. The 1852 homestead (known as the Gottereaux homestead) was built for Henry Gottereaux, a retired Imperial Army Officer, to replace the 1839 slab homestead. It is a small, symmetrical, single storey weatherboard house (said to be pre-fabricated) with a timber verandah across its facade, and bay windows located either side of the front door. The house has been extended several times over the years but some extensions have since been demolished. The roof is now clad with corrugated iron, which replaced earlier Morewood and Rogers galvanised iron roof tiles. A mature nineteenth century garden including a substantial Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*) survives around this homestead. Low stonewalls designed to stop floods from Muston's Creek surround the garden. The site also has separate bluestone

structures at the rear of the Gottereaux homestead; workmen's cottages and stables also exist to the north.

Some 800 metres southwest lies the later homestead, built in 1875 for William Ross, to express his increasing prosperity and to house his large family. Joseph Reed, of prominent Melbourne Architectural firm, Reed & Barnes, designed the building. The homestead is a symmetrical, two storey rendered building with a single storey timber verandah on three sides. A single storey portico marks the entrance. The house is in a severely restrained Classical revival or Italianate style, which has been linked with the palazzo and villa forms. The internal planning and detailing of the house is grand but conventional with its central hall, the main staircase, which divides at the landing, and the principal rooms on either side. There are bedrooms on the first floor, the two above the drawing room requiring a blind window in the facade to accommodate the wall between them. At the rear there is a large courtyard, surrounded by a verandah with services accommodated in the single storey wings and a covered water tank in one corner. The service wing is unusual in its use of narrow stones as well as larger stones. The homestead is set in the remains of a very substantial and complex garden. Many of the trees within the garden have been recently removed, as have many of the original plantings of shrubs and hedging, although the basic layout of the garden survives. The majority of the trees, which date from, the original 1875 design are in very good condition. The garden also has what remains of a substantial and unusual collection of conifers, many of which may have been supplied by Government Botanist and Director of Melbourne Botanic Gardens, Baron Ferdinand Von Mueller. Bluestone stables are located some distance from the rear of the house. The bluestone in the stables has been laid in a similar manner to the service wing of the main house, which uses distinctive narrow stones as well as large stones.

How is it significant?

The Gums homestead complex is of historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the State of Victoria and to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Gums Homestead Complex is of historical significance as one of the earliest pastoral properties and for its association with William Ross, an important pastoralist, who was a member of the Legislative Council and a leading member of the Presbyterian Church. The Ross family and their descendants have maintained continual ownership of the property since William Ross purchased it in 1864. The complex is also important historically when the three homesteads are viewed together. Together, they reflect the growing success of pastoralism in the differing styles and sizes of the three structures. The complex is also historically important as it represents a social change in status with the building of the last homestead. The garden is interesting historically as it represents a wide variety of plants which were commercially available in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and displays complex elements of axial design which were traditionally associated with public buildings and gardens. Of further interest is the possible sourcing of plant material from Baron Ferdinand Von Mueller, the Government Botanist and Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens. Ross is said to have had a keen correspondence with Baron Von Mueller, who may have supplied the unusually diverse range of native and exotic conifers, which appear in the garden layout from earliest times.

The complex is of architectural significance for its association with Joseph Reed, and possibly Edward La Trobe Bateman, who may have designed the garden. It is an excellent example of the severely restrained Classical revival or Italianate style, which has been linked with the palazzo and villa forms. Its conservative formal architecture can be contrasted with the highly picturesque architecture of Kolor Homestead nearby.

Description

The main house and its stables are in excellent condition. The old house is in excellent condition and its various outbuildings are in good condition.

The Gums Homestead complex is located approximately 12 kilometres east of the township of Penshurst. The Complex consists of the second homestead (built by Gottereux) and associated garden and outbuildings, the third or main homestead (built by William Ross) and associated garden and outbuildings.

The original homestead is a small, symmetrical, single storey weatherboard house (said to be pre-fabricated) with a timber verandah across its facade, and bay windows are located on either side of the front door. The house has been extended several times over the years but some extensions have since been demolished. The original main hipped roof and various extensions were clad with 'Morewood & Rogers' galvanised iron roof tiles, which remained in place until the late 1950s when they were replaced with corrugated iron sheets. Two chimneys have been removed at an unknown date. The weatherboards of the house have a beaded edge and remain largely intact. The extension to the south side was built about 1900 and the walls are made of smooth concrete block. The homestead is sited on a slight rise looking across Muston's Creek, set in a mature garden, with a substantial Canary Island Pine (*Pinus canariensis*). The garden is bounded by low walls, which are intended to control flooding from the creek. At the rear of the house there are separate bluestone structures, believed to date from the Burchett ownership, which are now used as sheds. To the north of the house there are two stone workmen's cottages, a stable, a relatively new meat house, and various sheds.

The main house or second homestead is a symmetrical two storey rendered building with a single storey timber verandah on three sides. A single storey portico marks the entrance. The house is in a severely restrained Classical revival or Italianate style, which has been linked with the palazzo and villa forms. Its conservative formal architecture can be contrasted with the highly picturesque architecture of Kolor Homestead nearby. Both were designed by the leading Melbourne architect, Joseph Reed of Reed and Barnes. It may be that Edward La Trobe Bateman, as with Kolor, was also responsible for the layout of the garden.

The internal planning and detailing of the house is grand but conventional with its central hall, the main staircase, which divides at the landing, and the principal rooms on either side. A library or study was included behind the drawing room, an unusual facility in homesteads. There are bedrooms on the first floor, the two above the drawing room requiring a blind window in the facade to accommodate the wall between them. At the rear there is a large courtyard, surrounded by a verandah with services accommodated in the single storey wings and a covered water tank in one corner. Some distance from the house there are stables. These are built of bluestone laid in a similar manner to the service wing of the main house, which uses distinctive narrow stones as well as large stones. The service wing has been lime washed. .

The remains of a large formal Victorian garden are visible at the larger homestead site. Originally the garden had a symmetrical axis perpendicular to the house which bisected an ellipse created by the drive and which extended into the landscape. The drive and gravel paths were defined by low hedges, which confined formal plantings in the beds. Much of this design is now removed. The axis remains and now passes over a modern ha-ha.

To either side of the central lawn and paths, there were extensive plantings of exotics, particularly conifers including Monkey Puzzle, Hoop and Canary Island Pines, and conifers including Monterey Cypress. The other major plantings were of Oaks and Elms. Some distance from the main garden there are very substantial grouped plantings of similar evergreen trees, which also include Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) to provide a contrast in scale and form.

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.1 Grazing stock

Theme 5: Working

5.8 Working on the land

Continuing as a pastoral property

The house retains a very high degree of integrity but the garden has lost much of its original planting and structure.

Burchett Brothers (Frederick, Henry and Charles), first owners of the squatting lease.
Mrs Rebecca Cheyne, trustee

Walter Glass Cheyne, leaseholder?
 James Darling Wilson, leaseholder
 Henry Gottreaux, leaseholder
 Horace Flower, leaseholder
 William Lilly Hawkins, leaseholder
 Henry Edington, leaseholder
 John Moffat, owner
 William Ross, owner of the third house and garden
 The Agar family, present owners
 Joseph Reed, architect and partner of Reed and Barnes
 Edward La Trobe Bateman, designer landscape architect and artist

The Gums Pre-emptive Right

Heritage Study / Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002
Construction Date Range	1876 - 1877
Architect / Designer	Reed, Joseph
Municipality	SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE
Other names	
Hermes number	23128
Property number	0001

This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online