

Victorian Heritage Database Report  
**MOUNT KOROITE HOMESTEAD COMPLEX**

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**Location:**

Glenelg Highway COLERAINE, Southern Grampians Shire

**Heritage Status / Level of Significance:**

Stage 2 Heritage Study Complete

**Statement of Significance:**

What is significant?

The Mount Koroit Homestead complex, on the north side of the Glenelg Highway and opposite the Coleraine

Racecourse, is about 3.5kms east of Coleraine. It is perched on the edge of the plateau which looks over the Wannon River valley. It comprises the house, built in two main stages, the garden and yards, outbuildings at the rear and, at some distance from the house, the sheepwash and woolshed. The original site was in a small valley, near a rare private cemetery associated with the run. It is not known why or when the new site was chosen. The earlier part of the main house appears to date from the later 1860s, when the squatting lease was cancelled and the Pre-emptive right taken up. The house is single storey, built of bluestone and conventional in its form, plan and detailing. It was probably built by William Young who sold the estate for 40,000 pounds in 1873. This earlier house was substantially altered and extended by the new owner, J F Kirby, supposedly on the winnings of the 1911 Melbourne Cup. This work was in a distinctively heavy version of the Federation Queen Anne style. Some of the interior detailing from this period, particularly in the dining room, is notable. Kirby and his children lived at the house well into the 1930s in an opulent style with a manager and many staff. No architect has been associated with the construction of either stage of construction. The main house is in good condition and retains a high degree of integrity, including some of the Kirby furniture.

How is it significant?

Mount Koroite Homestead Complex is of historical and architectural significance to the community of Coleraine and to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

Mount Koroite Homestead Complex is of historical significance as one of the first squatting runs in the district, established in 1840 by the early settlers the Whyte brothers. Several of its subsequent owners were important local identities who made significant contributions to the development of the Coleraine area.

Mount Koroite Homestead Complex has additional historical significance because of the association of its owner J F Kirby with the 1911 Melbourne Cup and the thoroughbred industry.

Mount Koroite Homestead Complex is of architectural significance for its sequence of development and especially for its 1911 alterations and additions which are unusual examples of the Federation Domestic Queen Anne style.

## **Description**

The main homestead is in good condition internally and externally but there is some foundation failure in the south-east corner from a leaking downpipe.

The Mount Koroit Homestead is comprised of two stages of development. The first is likely to date from the purchase of the pre-emptive right in the 1860s. The second stage substantially overlays the first and dates from 1911. It was built, supposedly, on the winnings when the owner's horse won the Melbourne Cup.

The form of the earlier house was simple, symmetrical and conventional. It was single storey with four main rooms and a central passage, and may have had a verandah across the front. The front faced east across the steep decline into the Wannon Valley. The rear faced west towards Coleraine, although the town is not visible from the homestead. The surviving service wings which form a courtyard probably date from the same time. The rear of the original house and the service wings are relatively unaltered.

The second stage of the house was built in a distinctively heavy version of the Federation/Edwardian Domestic Queen Anne style. It is consciously asymmetrical with a new main entrance on the south elevation. It incorporates heavy rendered detailing, now painted white, to off-set the pressed red brick walls. The plinth of the walls is coursed, rock-faced bluestone. The projecting gables are half-timbered with roughcast. The verandahs have large plain timber semi-circular arches set within turned timber posts. The verandah of the south elevation is detailed more elaborately, especially around the front entrance which includes heavy paired posts and a gable. The roofs are all corrugated iron, painted grey. The chimneys are tall and combine cement rendered details with red brick shafts. Some of the interior detailing from this period, particularly in the dining

room, is notable and some furniture survives.

A garden surrounds the house which appears to date mostly from the time of the 1911 renovation and extensions. It was tended and perhaps developed by a resident Chinese gardener. This was developed further by the previous generation and is maintained by the present. It takes advantage of the dramatic setting at the top of the valley escarpment. There is an abandoned drive of mixed pines and cypresses at the rear of the property. It is not known how this drive approached the house in the past.

The timber woolshed, in two parts, is located some distance to the east of the house and there is a ruined sheepwash nearby.

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

Theme 8: Developing Australia's Cultural Life

8.1 Organising recreation

8.1.1 Playing and watching organised sports

8.1.2 Betting

Continuing as a pastoral property.

Excellent degree of integrity externally and high internally.

Whyte Brothers, pioneering squatters

Adam Turnbull, pioneering squatter

William Young, owner from 1843 to 1873 in partnership with Adam Turnbull and alone.

Charles and John De Graves, sometime absentee owners

J F Kirby, owner and winner of the 1911 Melbourne Cup with Parisian

Mount Koroite pre-emptive Right (now re-subdivided)

Heritage Study / Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002
Construction Date Range	1860 - 1911
Architect / Designer	
Municipality	SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE
Other names	
Hermes number	23420
Property number	

*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*