

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: WILDERNESS HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Wilderness Road GRITJURK

STUDY NUMBER: 034

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE: OLD HOMESTEAD SITE - THE WILDERNESS

PRECINCT: outside

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

PARISH: PARISH OF GRITJURK

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

Access from 'The Wilderness' woolshed entry off Gritjurk Road, past the woolshed and down the hill.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Wilderness Homestead (second), Wilderness Road, Gritjurk façade

Image Date: 26/03/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the original homestead site including all above and below grounds remains and the surviving exotics plantings and an area of 10,000sqm around the site and 2. All the present homestead (but excluding its interiors and its garden) and an area of 10,000sqm around the house.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

An early photograph and rough sketch plan show that the original Wilderness homestead complex was a collection of small vernacular timber buildings, which faced south-west across the deep valley of a tributary of Bryan's Creek (CHS, file). It comprised the main house, which was one and two rooms deep, under a large hipped roof, with verandahs along the front and the rear. The roof may have included an attic because another old photograph of the façade shows a skylight (Wood, notes). There was a detached kitchen linked to the house by a covered way and this building appears to have included a store and a staff bed-sitting room. An office enclosed one end while two small buildings closed the other, one being used as a dairy and bedroom, the other as a laundry and nursery. Beyond there were various outbuildings. The complex was demolished in the 1920s and little remains above ground. It was located approximately 1.9km south-west of the present homestead and close to the present woolshed.

In front of the house there were steps in line with the front door leading to a circular lawn which included a Monkey Puzzle Tree (*Araucaria heterophylla*) and garden beds beyond. The tree survives. Other steps seem to have descended from a terrace or path in front of the front verandah. There was a pergola in the front garden and a large Ash (*Fraxinus* sp).

The remnant plants still demonstrate the primary elements in its layout. The layout was semicircular, set out immediately in front of the homestead, on a sloping hill. The garden appears to have been divided into sections. The western part of the semicircle is planted with edible fruit trees, including *Ficus carica* (Fig), *Morus nigra* (Mulberry), *Pyrus communis* (pear) and *Malus domestica* (Apple) trees. Immediately joining this, and continuing the semi-circle to the west is a row of *Crataegus laevigata* (hawthorn) which may have been a hedge. To the west of the site, there is also a collection of specimen trees, including a fine specimen of *Pinus canariensis* (Canary Island Pine), *Araucaria heterophylla* (Monkey puzzle), *Pinus radiata* (Monterey Pine) and *Ulmus procera* (English Elm). The site also has a fallen *Pinus* specimen, presumed to be *Pinus radiata*, and a number of *Ulmus procera* suckers. There is also the remains of a very formal planting of *Cupressus torulosa* which are located to the north west of the site, presumably planted as a hedge along a carriageway immediate to the homestead. The site also displays evidence of the former carriageway, as large fence posts on either side of a track indicate the former route of this, as does the raised surface. There is a natural spring to the immediate west of the garden, planted around this are several common fig (*Ficus carica*).

The present homestead is a rambling single-storey timber house with wide timber verandahs on three sides, two main entrances serving a hall and a transverse passage, and a service wing forming a courtyard at the rear. The low-pitched roof with deep eaves is covered with galvanised iron. The main rooms have rectangular bay windows. Other windows are plain double-hung sashes. The interiors, which are understated and representative of the early modernist movement, have been sympathetically refurbished with most change limited to the service areas. The garden and setting of the present homestead supports its architectural character. The outbuildings at the present homestead are not significant.

HISTORY:

Pringle Whyte, one of five brothers who settled much of the area north of Coleraine as the vast Koroite, Konongwootong and Dundas runs, was the first to take up the Wilderness squatting run. It was subdivided from Konongwootong in 1849, along with Melville Forest, with which it continued to be associated (B&K, 229). In March 1852, it was taken over by the partnership of Henry Monro, Andrew Rose Cruickshank and Alfred Arden. Within a year, Arden had withdrawn to concentrate on his main property, Hilgay to the south-west of Coleraine and later Claude Lorraine at Tahara.

Cruickshank was a substantial merchant in Melbourne and, from 1856 to 1858, an MLC in the colony's first elected parliament, later becoming president of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce (De Serville, 385). In the 1847 Port Phillip Directory he is listed as a merchant in Portland. It would seem that he was an absentee

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partner at The Wilderness, perhaps supplying capital and connections in Melbourne and Portland. He had married Catherine Reid in Melbourne in 1842 (VPI, Reg. No. 716) and he married a second time to Elizabeth Rickards in 1857 (*ibid.*, Reg. No. 320). (Although de Serville has him married to an Annie Rickards only, the daughter of Prideaux Rickards, this seems unlikely according to the dates.) No children are registered in Victoria as being born to either marriage. Garryowen describes him as an accountant and tells how he saved a woman's life in 1844 'near Brighton' (Finn, 865 & 897). Cruickshank had other squatting interests: Bassett, near Branhholme; Crawford near Hotspur; and Whittlebury, near Macarthur (B&K, 53). According to Billis and Kenyon, Andrew Rose Cruickshank died in 1857, aged 37 but his death is not registered in Victoria.

Henry Monro was the son of Professor Monro of Edinburgh (B&K, 116). He was in partnership with Cruickshank at Crawford, from 1843 to 1849, at Melville Forest from 1852 to 1859; and at Bassett, from 1858 to 1862. He married a Mrs. Jane Christie at St James Church, Melbourne in 1841 (VPI, Reg. No. 4323; B&K, 116). Monro is not identified by de Serville as a gentleman or otherwise as a man of property. He appears to have managed the properties owned by the partnership.

It seems likely that the site of the original homestead complex dates from the 1852 purchase of the license although it may have been an earlier out-station of Konongwootong subsequently re-used by Pringle Whyte. It was certainly developed as shown both by the number of buildings in the photograph and by the plants surviving from homestead garden. Vegetable and fruit gardens were located immediately in front of the house, a tradition continued at the newer homestead (Small, pers. comm., 26/3/02).

The Wilderness and Melville Forest were taken over by Samuel Proudfoot Hawkins in April 1858 (B&K, 80 & 229). He had been a surveyor with Robert Russell and, according to Garryowen, he was in Melbourne as early as 1841 (Finn, 890). Before taking over The Wilderness and Melville Forest, he had interests in: Cashmere on the Wando River north of Casterton from 1849 to 1851; Spring Bank on the Glenelg River south of Casterton from 1852 to 1854; and Wando Vale B, also on the Wando River north of Casterton from 1855 to 1859 (B&K, 80). It may be that he was also a publican for a short period about 1847 at the Porcupine Inn, Harcourt (B&K, 80, PPA&D, 93).

Hawkins was born in Dumfries, Scotland in 1819. He married twice, firstly to Jane Hutchison (or Hutcheson) in 1849 (or 1850) at the Presbyterian Church in Portland and, secondly, to Mary Ann Adamson in 1865 just after he sold The Wilderness (VPI, Reg. Nos. 34314, 2306 & 2710). He had five children with his first wife, who was also called Jeanie and Janie, all of whom were registered at Portland. He had two by his second wife, also registered in Portland. Hawkins appears to have died in 1867 (VPI, Reg. No. 5050). Curiously, after this date four more children are registered at Portland with a Samuel Proudfoot as their father and Isabella Gray as their mother, the last being born in 1887 whose third given name is 'Carruthers', Samuel Proudfoot's mother's maiden name (*ibid.*, Reg. No. 30908). It may be that S. P. Hawkins, the surveyor, had a son of the same name. The fact that all these events occurred at Portland, particularly during Hawkins' ownership of The Wilderness and Melville Forest, suggests that Hawkins was also an absentee owner.

John McPherson took over the Wilderness licence in February 1864. He was born on the Isle of Skye in 1798 and had married Helen Watson in 1825 before arriving at Port Phillip in 1839 (B&K, 109). Before taking over The Wilderness, he held Spring Bank from 1841 to 1852, relinquishing it to S. P. Hawkins, and Nerrin Nerrin from 1846 onwards. He died in Melbourne in 1875, aged 76 (B&K, 109; VPI Reg. No. 6221)

Charles Rowe was the next to take over the Wilderness licence in March 1868. He married Katherine Sophie (or Catherine Sophia) in 1864 (VPI Reg. No. 57) and they had seven children registered in Coleraine or Dundas and an eighth registered at Rokewood in 1886 (*ibid.*, Reg. No. 5863). Sadly, at least three of their children died in a diphtheria epidemic in 1871 (*ibid.*, Reg. No. 661, 662, 3443; CHS notes). Charles died at Merton, in Geelong aged 79 in 1919 (CSWV). His wife, Kate Faris predeceased him in 1913 aged 76 (CSWV). Both are buried in the Coleraine Cemetery.

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The Wilderness squatting licence was cancelled in 1876 (B&K, 229). By 1888, it was owned by George Alfred Broughton who was paying 13/-, the standard rate, to shearers per hundred head of sheep at The Wilderness according to the Western District Sheepfarmers Association 'Notice to Shearers'. It was a time of much industrial tension between pastoralists and shearers.

In 1872, Broughton, who was born in Harrow, married Emily Oakley Bancroft, who was born in Adelaide (VPI, Reg. No. 1375). They had at least five children, three boys and then two girls, whose births were registered at Harrow.

Broughton, according to the Cyclopaedia of Victoria was "the owner of The Wilderness Estate, Coleraine, which consists of 7,000 acres, carrying between 5,000 and 6,000 sheep and 150 cattle, and is managed by Mr. H. B. Broughton, one of his sons. Mr. Broughton also owns the Karabeal Estate, near Hamilton, which comprises 3,000 acres, carrying about 4,000 sheep, managed by another son, Mr. A. R. Broughton, and he is assisted at Kout Narie by another son, Mr. G. E. Broughton, LL.B., who has been admitted to practice as a barrister and solicitor, but relinquished the legal profession in favour of sheep-farming" (Smith, Vol. 2, 551-2). Broughton divided The Wilderness into four runs: The Wilderness; Ballarook; Toolang; and Kurtuk, providing one for each of his three sons.

This prompted the old house to be abandoned and a new house to be built at some distance from the original and on higher ground. Documents held at The Wilderness show that the architects for the new house were Oakden and Ballantyne of Melbourne. It was built immediately after the turn of the century.

Percy Oakden was one of the more senior members and most successful of his profession in the later nineteenth century with an intercolonial and international practice (Lewis, 348). He had several partners over the years including the very important early architect, Leonard Terry. G. H. M. Addison, based in Brisbane, and Henry Kemp, in Melbourne, became partners in 1887. Under the pressure from the depression of the 1890s, the firm became just Oakden and Kemp and then Kemp left for Sydney in 1895. Kemp returned and formed the innovative partnership, Ussher and Kemp which was important for the development of the Federation style. 'In 1901 Cedric H. Ballantyne, who had been Oakden's pupil and then his chief draftsman, joined him in a partnership' which was responsible for several important commercial buildings in Melbourne (Lewis, 349).

As shown in his 1885 book 'What to Build and How to Build It', Oakden, was responsible for a move away from typical Victorian domestic architecture, advocating a more honest use of building materials, promoting new forms of construction, and providing more open planning. But the new house at The Wilderness goes beyond even the Federation style. It is an early example of the informal Bungalow style, influenced by both the East and West Coasts of the United States as well as by the Arts and Crafts tradition of Britain. It may be more the work of Ballantyne who was a generation younger than Oakden (Smith, Vol. 1, 381).

After the Broughton family sold up in the 1920s, the owners were Charles Morrell Armytage, eldest son of Charles Henry Armytage of Fulham and Como, and his wife Leila, nee Halloran. Then their son Peter Armytage occupied The Wilderness who subsequently moved to one of the great family properties, Mount Sturgeon at Dunkeld (de Serville, 271). The next owners were the Botterill family. The present owners, Peter and Pam Small have owned The Wilderness since ??

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.1 Grazing stock

Theme 5: Working

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5.8 Working on the land

CONDITION:

At the original site, all of the fruit trees, the *Pinus caneriensis* and the *Pinus raditata* are in good condition. The other trees are in fair condition. The archeological potential of the site is limited by its current use as a charnal pit, which may have removed physical evidence.

At the present site, the house and the garden are in good condition.

INTEGRITY:

The original homestead complex has been demolished.
The present homestead is relatively intact.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is Significant?

The Wilderness Homestead complex is in two parts: the original site which is close to the woolshed and overlooks a branch of the Bryant's Creek valley, and the present site which is on higher ground about 1.2kms to the north-east. Pringle Whyte, one of several brothers who pioneered the Coleraine area, established the squatting run in 1849. It had a series of owners including Henry Monro, Andrew Rose Cruickshank and Alfred Arden in partnership who probably established the original homestead and garden. Single storey and built of timber, it assumed a simple vernacular form with a detached kitchen. Samuel Proudfoot Hawkins, formerly a surveyor with Robert Hoddle, was another important occupant. All the buildings of the original site have been demolished to ground level but many plants survive from the garden. George Broughton, of Kout Narien, established the present house and garden after his purchase and subdivision of the property in the early twentieth century. An early example of the Bungalow style, the house was designed by leading Melbourne architects, Oakden and Ballantyne. Its garden dates from the same time. Subsequent owners include a branch of the important Armytage family and the Botterill family. The present house has been modernised internally but remains substantially intact externally and is in excellent condition.

What is Significant?

The Wilderness Homestead Complex, both original and present sites, is of historical and architectural significance.

Why is it Significant?

The Wilderness Homestead Complex is of historical significance for its sequence of owners including several individuals and families who were important for the development of pastoralism in the Western District. Its ownership by a partnership is typical, local interests combining with metropolitan capital. The Wilderness Homestead second house is of architectural significance as the work of leading Melbourne architects, Oakden and Ballantyne and as an early example of the informal Bungalow style.

COMPARISON:

119 Koononwootong Creek Homestead (former) for the abandoned garden
042 Park Hill (Second site) for new house and garden

ASSESSED BY: TFH & AEN

ASSESSMENT DATE:

09-Jul-03

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR Include in RNE Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

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