

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: KOLOR HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Penshurst-Warrnambool Road PENS HurST

STUDY NUMBER: 052

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE: COLOR, COLLORRER, PURDEET STATION, MOUNT ROUSE

PRECINCT: outside

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 2 **SECTION:** 1 **PARISH:** PARISH OF PURDEET

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 475 C25; VicRoads 73 F8; one kilometre south of the Township of Penshurst on the east side of the Penshurst-Warrnambool Road on the west side of Mount Rouse.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: State



Kolor Homestead, Penshurst, entrance tower and verandah

Image Date: 26/04/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of all of the house, the outbuildings, stables, garden, drive and yards and all of the land as defined by the Heritage Council.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Kolor Homestead Complex is located three kilometres south of Penshurst, on the Penshurst-Warrnambool Road. The Homestead and outbuildings are located 600 metres east of the main road, on the western shoulder of Mount Rouse. The homestead is a single storey, asymmetrical bluestone house, which assumes the form of a villa set within an extensive landscaped garden. The architects were the leading Melbourne firm, Reed and Barnes almost certainly with a contribution towards the landscape from the designer and artist, Edward La Trobe Bateman. The design is dominated by a three-storey tower, which is balanced, on the west side, by a timber verandah and bow window for the drawing room and, on the north side, by a projecting gable and polygonal bay window for the dining room. Three axes are generated by this design: one to the north which terminates on the Grampians, specifically Mounts Sturgeon and Abrupt; one to the west which terminates on Mount Napier; and a vertical axis through the tower which marks the entrance and fixes the villa within the landscape. The style of the house is Romanesque revival, a rare choice in the mid-Victorian period. Its plan and form, but not its style, can be compared with the homestead Narrapumelap at Wickliffe, where the equally rare French Gothic revival style was adopted. (The architects for Narrapumelap were Davidson and Henderson of Geelong.) A bedroom wing extends to the south. A service wing extends to the east beyond a courtyard a range of outbuildings of comparable quality to the house itself.

The garden exhibits a wide range of exotic species including conifers, deciduous trees and traditional shrubberies. Detailed bluestone piers and an olive tree mark the entrance gate. The approach to the house is by a typically sinuous drive, winding and rising towards it and providing glimpses of the house through Hawthorn hedges, Oaks, Pines and other exotic trees. An extensive terrace stands before the entrance and the drive continues past the stables and coach house. To the south of the homestead there is a large circular yard defined by a dry-stone wall and with Stone pines planted at its centre.

HISTORY:

The land on which Kolor Homestead Complex stands was first taken up in 1839 by John Cox (1813-1853) as part of the Mount Rouse (Billis & Kenyon, 51). He was the son of James Cox of Clarendon near Evandale on the River Nile. Cox had whaling and mercantile interests at Port Fairy prior to arriving in the area (ibid.). He was ejected from the Mount Rouse run in April 1842, as the land was required to form an Aboriginal Protectorate under the Chief Protector of Aborigines, George Augustus Robinson. The buildings of the Protectorate were located in a compound at the bottom of Mount Rouse, near the later intersection of Cox and Martin Streets in Penshurst. The land associated with the Protectorate however was very extensive and Robinson was responsible for Aborigines throughout the Western District.

The Protectorate had failed by 1851, at which time tenders were invited for grazing rights on what had been the Mount Rouse run. Adolphus Sceales was the successful tenderer but refused to complete the lease due to the lack of labour resulting from the gold rush. John Twomey then took up the lease as Purdeet or Kolor run. The leased property became freehold land in December 1870 (Billis & Kenyon). The land immediately around Mount Rouse was reserved as a public park and for a water reserve.

John Joseph Twomey was born in Meenveragh, County Cork, Ireland, and came to Port Phillip in 1843 (Grove, in Ellis (ed.), 236). He purchased the land on which Kolor Homestead stands, and with his son Daniel, they purchased almost all of the remaining land in the Parish of Purdeet (Department of Lands & Survey, 1955). The Twomey family were very influential in the area in the nineteenth Century and early twentieth century. It appears that John Twomey's son's Daniel, Edward and Timothy all carved properties from the land that was first taken up Daniel and John in the late 1850s and early 1860s. John and Daniel were in partnership on Kolor (14 300 acres), Edward held nearby Langulac (6 947 acres) and Timothy held nearby Banemore (10 829 acres) (de Serville, 491).

The first Purdeet or Kolor homestead appears to have been located to the south-west of the present house on the

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edge of the lava flow. It was situated between the north-south line dividing the bottom quarters of the Protectorate and the Penshurst-Warrnambool Road. The present Kolor homestead, and the Kolor woolshed (now on part of a nearby property, Terringa) were built in 1868 for John and Daniel Twomey. Joseph Reed of leading Melbourne architectural firm Reed and Barnes designed both buildings. The firm were responsible for many significant public buildings, including the Public Library and Wilson Hall at the University of Melbourne, and many significant private residences, including the nearby homestead, The Gums. They collaborated with the foremost landscape designer of the day, the artist, Edward La Trobe Bateman.

Kolor remained in the Twomey family until 1928. The last Twomey heir was killed in World War One, and Kolor was put up for subdivision under the Closer Settlements Act, in the early 1920s. Andreas Rentsch, the son of one of the earliest settlers at Tabor purchased the Homestead and a portion of land in 1928. He lived at the property with his family until it was sold to Hugh Robertson in 1949. It is thought that few changes occurred to the homestead or garden in this time. Robertson sold the property to Mrs. Stanley Gardiner in 1955 (Grove, in Ellis (ed), 241), whose family retained it until about 1988. The past fifteen years have seen the property change hands several times.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

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

CONDITION:

The house is in relatively good condition. Other outbuildings are in a range of conditions. The garden is intact although a tennis court to the north of the house and some garden structures are now lost.

INTEGRITY:

High degree of Integrity

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The Kolor Homestead complex is located on the western shoulder of Mount Rouse, some three kilometres south of the township of Penshurst. The complex consists of a large picturesque bluestone homestead, surrounded by bluestone outbuildings. The complex is set in a well-established garden with extended parkland. The complex is approached by a sinuous driveway planed with a range of exotic deciduous and coniferous trees. In 1838, John Cox took up the land which was to become Kolor. At this time, it was known as the Mount Rouse run. After a short time, the Government evicted Cox, when the Mount Rouse Aboriginal Protectorate comprising 100 square miles centred on the mount and the adjacent permanent spring. By 1851, the Protectorate had failed, and the squatting licence was purchased by John Twomey, as Purdeet, or Kolor. The first homestead appears to have been located to the southwest of the Mount on the west side of the Penshurst-Warrnambool Road.

Twomey's son Daniel built the present house in 1868 to the design of Reed & Barnes architects. The design of the garden was strongly influenced by Edward La Trobe Bateman. The Twomey family was a major influence in the Western District, owning nearby Langulac and Banemore, and remained at Kolor until 1928. Reed & Barnes were leading architects in Melbourne and Victoria. Bateman was the foremost landscape designer in the colony until the late 1860s. The very skilful design, which integrates the villa into its landscape, makes Kolor perhaps the most picturesque homestead in the Western District. The use of a Romanesque revival version of the fashionable Italianate style is rare. It can be compared with the equally rare use of the Gothic revival style at

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Narrapumelap, Wickliffe by the architects Davidson & Henderson of Geelong. The house and garden of Kolor are in excellent condition overall and are substantially intact. The adjoining outbuildings, drive and yards form part of the homestead complex.

How is it significant?

The Kolor Homestead complex is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Kolor Homestead complex is of historical significance as one of the earliest and most important squatting runs in the Western District, for its association with the failed Aboriginal settlement at Mount Rouse and the influential Twomey family. It is of architectural significance as one of the most important domestic designs by Reed and Barnes, for the very likely influence of Edward La Trobe Bateman, its rare use of the Romanesque revival style.

COMPARISON:

088 The Gums, Woolsthorpe Road, Penshurst

ASSESSED BY: tfh

ASSESSMENT DATE:

05-Oct-01

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR **Include in RNE** **Include in Local Planning Scheme**

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
	Victoria and the Riverina, Part 1	1933	233-4
	Cyclopaedia of Victoria	1903	531
Department of Lands and Survey	Parish of Purdeet	1957	
Paul de Serville	Pounds and Pedigrees	1991	171, 520
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	var.
Robin Grove in Jim Ellis, editor	"Kolor" in Historic Homesteads of Australia	1976	232- 241
Rodney Knight	Windows to Yesterday,	1988	15