

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** THE GUMS

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Woolsthorpe Road PENSURST

**STUDY NUMBER:** 054

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**PRECINCT:** outside

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ALLOTMENT:** 13 & **SECTION:** A **PARISH:** PARISH OF BOORPOOL  
14

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 475 D-11; VicRoads 73 H8 ; off the Woolsthorpe Road on the east side one and a half kilometres north of its intersection with the Hamilton Highway, about twelve kilometres east of the township of Penshurst.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** State



The Gums, Penshurst, Second Homestead

**Image Date:** 26/04/02

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the house, outbuildings and garden, and 2. The original homestead and grounds including 10,000 sq m of land centred on the homestead.

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## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

The Gums Homestead complex is located approximately 12 kilometres east of the township of Peshurst. The Complex consists of the second homestead (built by Gottereaux) 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 façade, 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 Aleppo Pine (*Pinus halepensis*). 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 Aleppo Pines, and conifers including *Cupressus macrocarpa*. The other major planting was 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.

## **HISTORY:**

The Gums squatting run, of 16 000 acres was first taken up in December 1839 by brothers Henry Burchett (1820-1872), Charles Gowland Burchett (1817-1856) and Frederick Burchett (1824-1861) (Billis & Kenyon, 218), after their arrival in Port Phillip in August 1839. The three brothers held opposing views on the most

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appropriate stock for the run to carry. Henry believed it was suited to sheep, while Charles and Frederick preferred to run cattle (Boldrewood, 126). In 1843, Charles started a business in Melbourne and sold his share of the run and stock to his brothers, who retained the ownership of the Gums until 1849 (*ibid.*). Although Henry Burchett held an equal share in the property, between 1843-1849 he relocated all his stock to his newly purchased property 'Coree' near Port Fairy, while retaining a share in The Gums, this decision led to the eventual sale of The Gums to Henry Gottereaux and his silent partner, James Darling Wilson (then residing in England) in 1849 (*ibid.*).

Gottereaux was a former officer in the Imperial Army (File Note, HHC). Gottereaux built a "pretty, spacious, wide verandahed brick cottage, dooming the snug old slab homestead, where we had all sent so many pleasant hours, to be turned into offices" (Boldrewood, 127). This house survives today but altered and extended and with extensive outbuildings of the period. The property generated enough income that in 1854 Gottereaux was able to buy out his partner, Wilson. In March 1862, the property was sold to Horace Flower and William Lilly Hawkins. Flower was a Port Fairy merchant who had various pastoral interests with a variety of partners. The collapse of William Rutledge and Co in 1862 bankrupted Flower, and he was forced to sell many of his interests. Shortly after, in May 1862, the 'Parish of Boorpool' plans show The Gums listed as "H. Eddington's home station and pre-emptive right".

William Ross purchased The Gums in 1864. Ross was a pastoralist who had been born in the Madras Presidency in 1827, to parents from Inverness, Scotland (File Note - HCC). He arrived in Australia at age 16, and selected his first property, 'Meilman' on the Murray River, which he retained for 20 years, before he purchased The Gums at age 38 (File Note - MR&DHS). Ross married Amelia Barrows (age 18) within two years of purchasing the property, and had nine children. Ross was highly influential in the district, a President of the Mount Rouse Shire, Member of the Legislative Council for the Western Province, Justice of the Peace and elder of the Presbyterian Church.

The Ross family first lived in the cottage built by Gottereaux in 1862. The cottage soon became too small for the growing family, and it was decided to build a new homestead. The well-known Melbourne architect, Joseph Reed was hired to design an imposing two storey, rendered bluestone Italianate mansion of 80 squares, as well as substantial bluestone stables. The cost was in excess of six thousand pounds (File Note-MR&DHS). The new building was to be located just 800 metres from the homestead they currently resided in.

De Serville (168) describes William Ross' desire to build the new homestead as a typical example of pastoral prosperity, "The importance of a new house was both functional and symbolic. A modern building was needed to house the growing family and servants, to entertain, and to put up visitors who stayed more frequently as leisure increased. The succession of houses at The Gums illustrates some of the developments of buildings and architecture in pastoral Victoria"

It is not known who designed the complex garden at the new homestead. It is possible that Edward La Trobe Bateman may have been responsible (or may have assisted Ross), as he was working at nearby Kolor, and had sketched the Gottereaux homestead for William Ross when he first came to the Gums.

It appears that Ross was a strong advocate of planting trees, in a time when the majority of pastoralists were removing them. He appears to have been interested not only in planting exotic species, but preserving the indigenous flora of the area. Prior to building the new homestead in 1875-6, Ross had undertaken extensive tree planting, in the new homestead garden and around the property (File Note-MR&DHS). Ross apparently was in correspondence with the Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens at this time, Baron Ferdinand Von Mueller, who may have supplied some of the specimens and plantation trees. Von Mueller encouraged experimental plantings of exotic trees, particularly those useful for timber, on pastoral properties throughout Australia. Although no records survive, it is estimated that Von Mueller distributed hundreds of thousands of tree seedlings throughout Australia in his role as Government Botanist and Director of the Melbourne Botanic

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Gardens. Ross also delivered lectures on tree conservation in Penshurst and nearby Caramut in 1886, and in the same year moved a motion in the Legislative Council to allow the State Nursery to distribute trees to farmers and pastoralists (ibid.).

In 1900, William Ross was killed when accidentally shot by his son, Francis. His sons, John, Alexander, Stuart and Francis inherited the property, but Stuart and Francis sold their portion of the property to Alexander, who also took the homestead. John retained his portion, and re-named it North Gums. Alexander only had one child, Rosemary, who was born in 1912. It is not known when Alexander died, but it appears that since his only child was Rosemary, the property was put into the hands of managers, John R. Ross and John Harrison (MRHS). Rosemary married Doctor William Agar in England after World War Two and returned to live in Melbourne, where they had five children. They did not return to The Gums until 1967 (ibid.).

The Gums has been in the Ross family and their descendents since 1864,, and continues to be run as a working farm.

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

## **INTEGRITY:**

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

## **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 1862 and 1875, and the potential archaeological remnants of the original homestead, dating from as early as 1839. The 1862 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 façade, 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 Aleppo Pine (*Pinus halepensis*) 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,

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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.

## COMPARISON:

052 Kolor Homestead Complex, Penshurst-Warrnambool Rd, Penshurst  
078 Gringegalgona Homestead, Gringe Dip Road, Gringegalgona

**ASSESSED BY:** tfh

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

06-Oct-01

## EXISTING LISTINGS:

## HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR  Include in RNE  Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

## REFERENCES:

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---

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Page</b>
Clive Lucas	Australian Country Houses	1987, 1992	82-4
Department of Lands and Survey	Parish of Boorpool	1862	
Diana M Halmarick, comp.	Thos. Robertson & Sons "Mainstays of Our Earliest Days"	2000	233
Hamilton History Centre	File Note - The Gums	n.d	
Mount Rouse & District Historical Society	File Note - The Gums	n.d	
Paul de Serville	Pounds and Pedigrees	1991	293
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	var.
Rolf Boldrewood (Thomas Alexander Browne)	Old Melbourne Memories	1884 and 1969	124-31