

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: NAREEN HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Coleraine-Nareen Road NAREEN

STUDY NUMBER: 117

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: outside

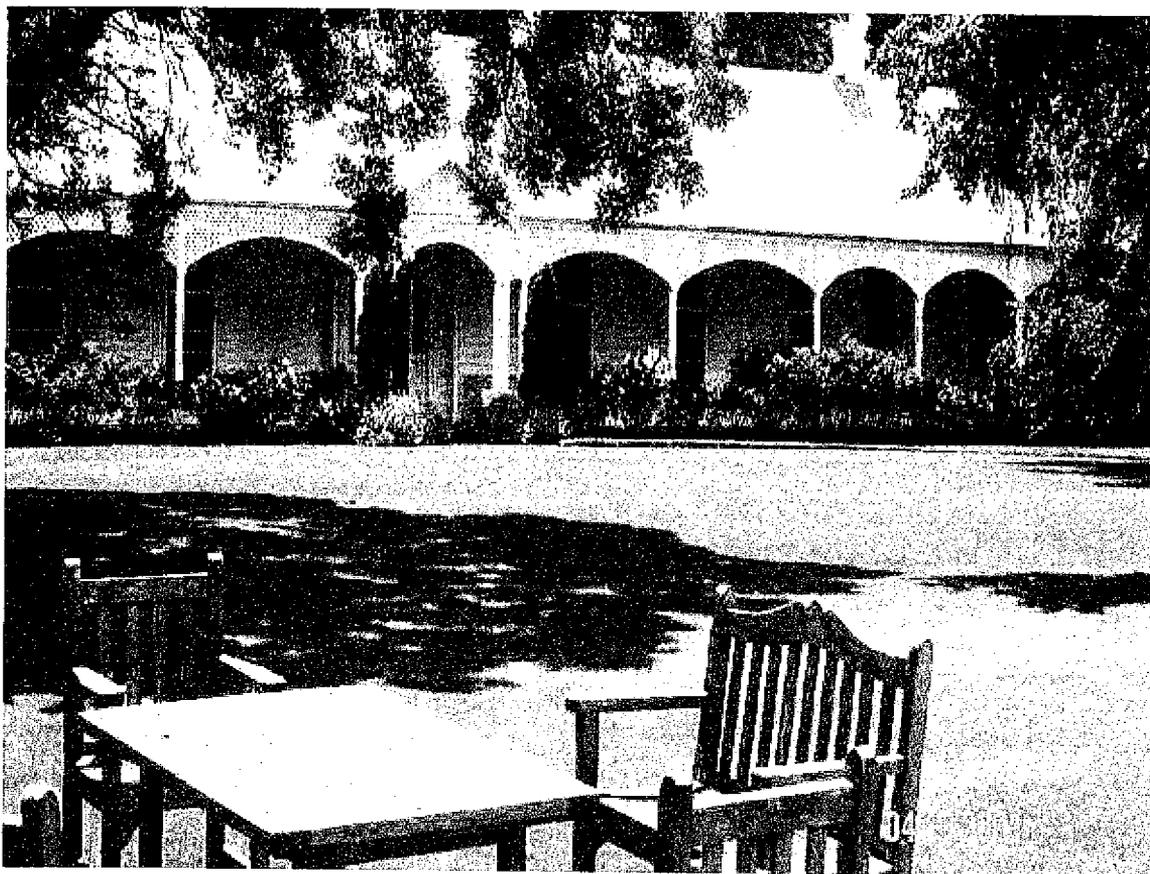
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

PARISH: PARISH OF TARRAYOUKYAN

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 387 C14; VicRoads ; 54 B7; located on the Coleraine-Nareen Road (Moore Road) two kms north-east of Nareen and the intersection of Moore Road and Steep Gully Road.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: State



Nareen Homestead Complex, Coleraine - Nareen Road, Nareen

Image Date: 04/12/01

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All of the main house (but excluding the interiors); the immediate outbuildings (including the meathouse, underground tank, petrol pump and garage/stables); the watertank and the tennis court; all the front, side and rear gardens; all the woolshed (but excluding the 1980s extension); all the cookhouse known as Jack Willoughby's Cottage (but excluding the later cottages); all the machinery shed; and all the drive.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The homestead at Nareen is a long, single-storey, weather board building with a timber verandah along the façade. It is approached by a gravel drive with a turning circle with an Evergreen Oak, *Quercus* ??, planted in 1952, at its centre and a modern trellis at the far end of the façade. The use of trellis in the valence of the verandah, with its shallow arches, is unusual and is repeated on the side porch and the rear verandahs. The principal entrance is marked by a small gable in the verandah roof. The front door is a typical late Victorian type with side lights and fan lights. The façade fenestration is simple, being tall double hung sash windows. The hipped roof is low-pitched and covered with corrugated iron. The building's form could be described as a bungalow, and in this sense, anticipates early twentieth century domestic architecture and the Colonial revival style.

The plan of the house is unusual for its period, having a wide but short main hall with a fireplace, and a long transverse passage. The principal rooms are 'en-filade', which has been strengthened by the conversion of two end rooms into one. One of these rooms was Malcolm Fraser's study when he was Prime Minister. The original details, joinery and mantelpieces survive in the principal rooms but no early decoration. The transverse passage ends at a side entrance. Service and smaller rooms open off the passage at the rear. The service rooms have all been modernised.

Behind the front wing there are smaller, possibly earlier, timber buildings now used for bedrooms. These have 12-pane double hung sash windows, which, with other details, suggest a possibly earlier date. On the other hand, all the red brick chimneys (now painted) are uniformly detailed in a late nineteenth-century style. Beyond the homestead in the rear garden there is a meat house, and underground water tank and timber coach house and stables converted into a garage. There are also more modern facilities including a larger water tank on a mound and a tennis court.

The homestead looks eastwards across a well cultivated garden with hedges as its boundary and beyond into the broader landscape. Much of the garden dates from the early 1960s. Although "there were 24 palms in the garden and a small Australian planting to the left of the [*Cupressus macrocarpa*] hedge" in 1946, few major earlier plantings survive (Fraser). Those which do include an Atlantic Cedar, *Cedrus atlantica glauca* and key trees which mark the corners of the garden's rectangular plan. A small copse of trees was planted on axis with the front door. Two rose gardens were established and later a new rose garden with David Austin roses. The garden is further sub-divided into compartments, including a citrus grove and orchard to one side and a kitchen garden and herb garden on the other. At the rear of the house there is a modern tennis court with facilities. One of the rarer trees is a Dawn Redwood, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, rediscovered in China in 1943.

There is an extensive collection of outbuildings behind the homestead. The most impressive of these is the woolshed, which was built in stages, and includes what appear to be the 1888s original shed and the post World War 2 extension. This extension is a large corrugated iron building on a steel frame with a semi-circular section similar to a 'Nissan hut'. It is said to have been used as a hanger at the original Hamilton airport at Pedrina Park. (The new Hamilton airport was critical for the Prime Minister's easy access to and from Canberra.) The machinery shed is also of significance. There are several worker's cottages, the most important of which is the cookhouse known as Jack Willoughby's Cottage after a stockman who worked on the property. Others date from the 1950s and 1960s.

One of the most distinctive aspects of Nareen is the main drive off the Nareen Chetwynd Road. It is lined with *Radiata Pines*, *Pinus radiata*, which are not rare, but the way the drive deliberately weaves between them is perhaps a unique design in the Western District. For the most part the planting comprises three rows of trees, with sometimes a fourth and fifth. The drive shifts between the rows creating a sense of picturesque intrigue and anticipation. The date of the drive is not known but it may have been planted early in the twentieth century.

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HISTORY:

The present property, Nareen was originally part of the southern section of the vast and very early Kout Narien (or Court Nahring) run which was sub-divided in 1848 into Chetwynd and Pigeon Ponds or Mooree (B&K, 230). Mooree was further sub-divided in 1859 when the Koolomurt section of 35,048 acres was purchased by Edward Willis. He and his brother William were the sons of Richard Willis MLA (1777-1855) of Wanstead Park, Tasmania (Eldershaw, Pike, ed., 604). Koolomurt was run as a sheep stud with strains from several important flocks from England, New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. "In 1860 Willis visited Europe and purchased rams from the celebrated flocks of Saxony. For many years the Koolomurt stud was one of the best in Australia. About 1880 Thomas Shaw [of Wooriwyrite near Darlington] the noted sheep classer, considered that the Koolomurt merinos were the best he had ever been asked to class" (Neeson, 7). The property was also an important horse stud. By 1886 Edward Willis had subdivided Koolomurt further and Nareen was created from its southern portion.

Nareen was purchased by James Graham (1819-1898), "one of Victoria's most prominent men of commerce ... a good provider rather than a high liver" (Strahan, 282-3; de Serville, 241-2, et al). James Graham was a merchant, agent and politician who was extremely significant in the fledgling colony of Victoria (Graham, var.). He had extensive pastoral interests in various parts of Victoria. He had extensive commercial interests including railways, insurance, and the export of wool. As a philanthropist, he was involved with the Old Colonists Association and the Australia Felix Immigration Society. He was a founding member of the Melbourne Club. A member of the initial Legislative Council, he was also a member of the new Council under the 1856 Constitution from 1866-86.

By 1904, Nareen had passed to Frederic Lionel Graham who was born in 1864, the son of James Graham and Mary, nee Alleyne, (PIV, Reg. No. 22297). He was described as "Landowner and Grazier, Nareen, via Coleraine, ... the proprietor of the Nareen Estate, which he purchased in 1900 from the executors in the estate of the late Hon. Jas. Graham. Previous to that date he had leased Koolomurt conjointly with Mr. John Haines" (Smith, 545 & 547). The description continues "The Nareen Estate comprises 9,000 acres of very fine land, well watered by springs and dams, and the average rainfall is 28 inches. The sheep bred on the station are of the merino breed, descendants of the famous flock presented to King George 111, by the King of Spain, and purchased in 1824 by the late Mr. R. Willis, the father of the original owner of the property. Mr. Graham contemplates trying what may be done with the land in the way of lucerne sowing, etc., being of the opinion that such soil should carry more than at present with proper treatment, on which point he is doubtless correct, and it is to be hoped that his experiments will be crowned with success" (Smith, 545 & 547).

James Graham's son-in-law, John Haines who had his own direct political connections, was also later at Koolomurt. He was a son of the late Hon. William Clark Haines, who formed the first "Haines Ministry" on the occasion of the division of New South Wales from Victoria" (Smith, 547).

According to Peter Leake, the present house was built in 1885 (Leake, 93). If this is true, the present house must have been built about the time of subdivision, which is unlikely, and that James Graham was responsible since his son, Frederic would have been no more than twenty-one years old at the time. No architect or builder has yet been connected with the design and construction of Nareen. Its simple, low bungalow form, emphasizing the horizontal lines and contiguous roof, is unusual and harks back to early colonial homesteads. Also unusual is the planning, with a wide but short front hall, with a fireplace, and a long transverse passage. One end of this has a substantial side entrance close to the former coach house and stables, and is now close to the garage. These characteristics were to appear subsequently in several houses in the area, such as Park Hill at Wannan and Wilderness, at Gritjurk. The gently arched verandah frieze is a simple trellis, which is also unusual, that is repeated at the side entrance and on the rear verandahs. All these characteristics would have been innovative in the mid 1880s, especially outside metropolitan Melbourne.

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However, there is some doubt about the suggested date of construction. Although all the brick chimneys are similarly detailed and typical of the late nineteenth century, the homestead is clearly made up of several distinct parts some of which appear to be older. Surviving twelve pane, double hung sash windows at the rear and other details suggest an earlier date of construction. On the other hand, the front and side doorways are conventionally Victorian. It may be that an existing house, used as an outstation, was substantially altered and extended after subdivision and sale in 1885. Alternatively, Frederic Graham may have built the present homestead soon after 1904. It is more likely that details old-fashioned by 1904 would survive in a relatively remote location rather than innovative details be used in 1885.

After the Graham family, Nareen was owned by Mr. Chaffey (a member of the family which pioneered irrigation at Mildura), a Mr. Price, C. Lane & Co., and then it was purchased by the Fraser family in 1946. Mrs. Fraser Senior began the present garden and this was further developed by her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Tamie Fraser, with the continuing service of Mr. Les Potter as head gardener over thirty years. In the past there was "a Chinese gardener who carefully tended the vegetable garden" (Leake, 93). Although not landscaped professionally, the garden is informed by a strong awareness of English landscape gardening even from the later eighteenth century. It remains one of the most extensive, complete and best maintained homestead gardens in the Western District. Tamie Fraser was a founder of the Australian Open Garden Scheme and opened Nareen to the public from the 1980s.

The most notable member of the family was Malcolm Fraser, born in 1930, who was elected to the Federal seat of Wannon in 1955 and who became a key member of the Liberal Party. He was the Minister for the Army (1966-68), Minister for Education and Science (1968-1969 and 1971-1972), Minister for Defence (1969-1971). He was Leader of the Opposition during the Constitutional crisis which led to the dismissal of the Whitlam government in 1975 when he became Prime Minister. Having won government again in 1977 and 1980, the Liberal Party lost to the Australian Labor Party, led by Bob Hawke, in 1983. Since then Malcolm Fraser has fulfilled many substantial national and international roles as an elder statesman. The property Nareen was closely associated with him as a politician and increasingly as Prime Minister. He maintained an office in the main wing of the house. In his private life, he developed an extensive collection of camellias and bred a new variety of camellia japonica later registered as "Tamie Fraser". Nareen was sold by the Fraser family in 2000.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.1 Grazing stock

3.5.2 Breeding animals

3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries

Theme 5: Working

5.8 working on the land

CONDITION:

All the buildings are in excellent order.

INTEGRITY:

Excellent degree of integrity

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

Nareen Homestead Complex is located immediately north of the small settlement of Nareen which grew up at a crossroad during the 1860s as a result of the Land Selection Acts. The property Nareen dates from the

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subdivision in 1885 by James Graham of the early squatting run, Koolomurt, itself a subdivision of the Mooree and Kout Narien runs at Harrow. Graham was a prominent and well respected member of society and commercial life from the earliest period in Victoria's development. He was both a MLC and a MLA. As the first owner of Nareen, Graham appears to have built at least parts of the existing structure. Nareen passed to his son, Frederic Lionel Graham and it is more likely that the homestead dates from soon after 1904. The house is unusual for that time for its bungalow form and internal planning. No architect or builder has yet been associated with the design or construction. The next significant owners were the Fraser family, particularly the Hon. Malcolm and Mrs. Tamie Fraser. Nareen came to be specifically associated with Malcolm Fraser's period as Prime Minister from 1975 until 1983. The garden, already extensive and well established, was developed further and flourished under Malcolm and Tamie Fraser in their private time. A new camellia in their collection at Nareen was called "Tamie Fraser". The garden was an early participant in the Australian Open Garden Scheme, of which Tamie Fraser was a founder. The unusual drive of Radiata Pines is of interest for the way the roadway weaves picturesquely through the plantings. The homestead and garden are in excellent condition and retain a high degree of integrity from the Fraser period although Malcolm Fraser's study was converted into a billiard room after 2000. There are other significant structures in the complex, the post World War 2 woolshed extension, said to be a recycled building from the original Hamilton airport, being the most important. It is substantially intact and in very good condition.

How is it significant?

Nareen Homestead Complex is of historical, social and architectural significance to the State of Victoria and the Shire of Southern Grampians.

Why is it significant?

Nareen Homestead Complex is of historical and social significance for its associations with James and Frederick Graham and particularly for its association with Malcolm Fraser, as a Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and then Prime Minister of Australia, reflecting his background, values and private life. The Nareen Homestead Complex is of architectural significance as an unusual example of domestic architecture for its time, for its garden setting, especially after 1960 as developed by Tamie and Malcolm Fraser, and for its range of outbuildings, particularly the former prefabricated war-time structure now used as a woolshed.

COMPARISON:

034 Wilderness Homestead Complex, Wilderness Road, Gritjurk

037 Tulse Hill Homestead, Carapook Rd, Carapook

042 Park Hill (Second Site), Falkenbergs Road, Wannon

ASSESSED BY: tfh

ASSESSMENT DATE:

28-Nov-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
	Australian Open Garden Scheme Guidebook	1987	102-3
Ewan Neeson	"A Place of Oaks", History of Nareen and Tarrayoukyan		7
Frank Strahan, in Douglas Pike ed.	'Graham, James (1819-1898)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 4	1972	282-3
J. Ann Hone, in Bede Nairn, ed.	'Willis, Edward (1816-1895)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 6	1976	407-8

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James Smith, ed.	The Cyclopaedia of Victoria	1905	551-2, 545, 547
John Patrick	Gardens of Victoria		No. 36
P. R. Eldershaw, in Douglas Pike, ed.	'Willis, Richard (1777-1855)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 2	1979	604-5
Paul de Serville	Pounds and Pedigrees	1991	var.
Peter Leake	Homesteads of Australia Felix	1973	93-96
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	var.
Sally Graham	Pioneer Merchant, The Letters of James Graham 1839-54	1985	var.
Tamie and Malcolm Fraser	The Histroy and Description of the Nareen Garden		no date