

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: KENILWORTH HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Cavendish-Coleraine Road CAVENDISH

STUDY NUMBER: 131

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE: KENILWORTH NORTH

PRECINCT: outside

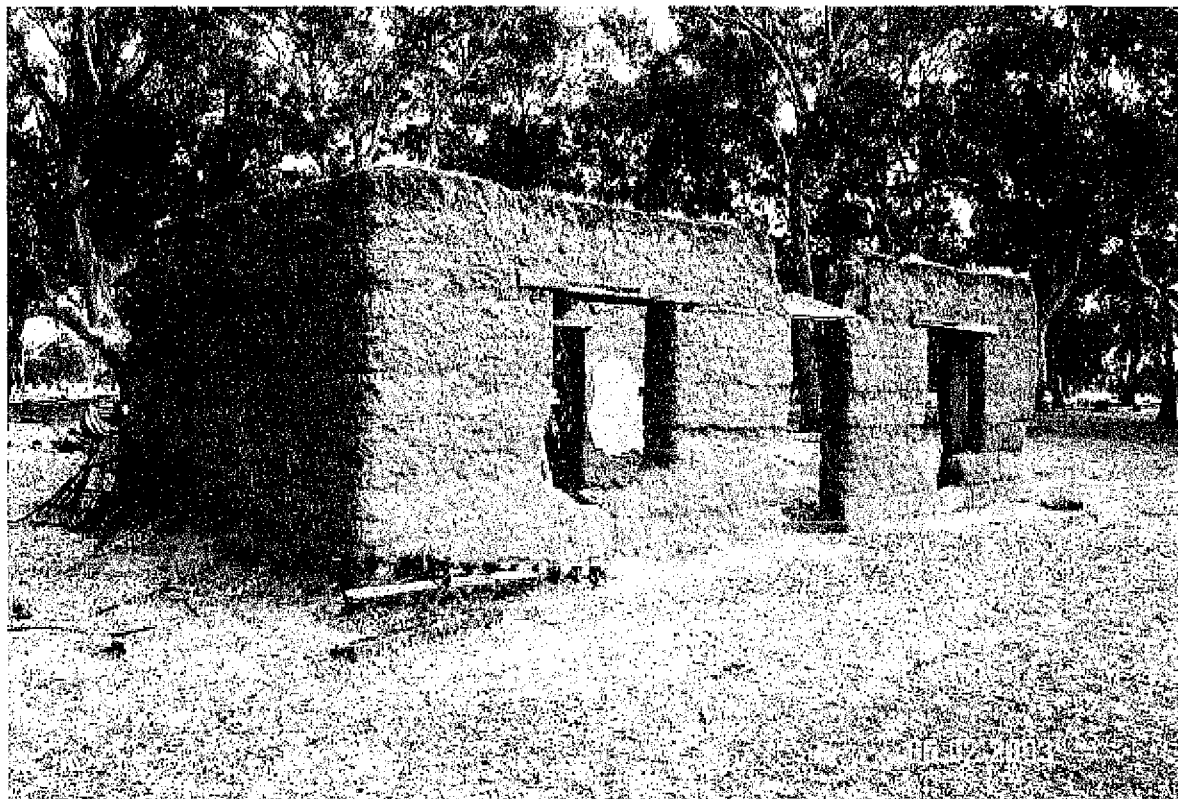
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

PARISH: PARISH OF URANGARA

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 431 B-25; VicRoads 73 B2; located on the south side of the Cavendish-Coleraine Road about one mile west of Cavendish and overlooking the junction of the Wannon and Dundas Rivers

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Pise Cottage, Kenilworth, Cavendish

Image Date: 05/02/03

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the original homestead (in ruins), the present homestead (but excluding the interiors), the men's quarters and the woolshed.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Kenilworth Homestead complex is located on the south side of the Cavendish-Coleraine Road about one mile west of Cavendish and overlooking the junction of the Wannon and Dundas Rivers. The homestead is set on a rise and enjoys extensive views across the valleys. The carcass of the 1863 homestead is incorporated into the present house but has been completely remodelled. The present house is cream brick with a low-pitched terra cotta tile roof and deep eaves. A gabled porch marks the entrance, approximately in the position of the original entrance. Pairs of cement columns 'in antis' support the semi-circular arch of the porch and a section of decorative brick finishes the gable. The fenestration is large picture windows of plate glass. The interiors of the house survive intact to the immediate post World War Two period.

The pisé house survives as a ruin although the low walls are relatively stable. It is possible to deduce the general form of the house from the surviving fabric and from old photographs. The house was single storey, symmetrical and had a verandah, possibly as protection for the mud walls. The corners of the verandah appear to have been enclosed in timber as extra pavilion rooms. There was a central front door and two windows, each supported by a timber lintel. There may have been a central passage, which led to a contiguous skillion section of two rooms. Originally the roof was probably thatch but a photograph indicates a corrugated iron roof. Piles of bricks and rubble nearby suggest that there were small outbuildings associated with the pisé building. The beds of pisé construction are clearly visible.

The men's quarters are brick, made from bricks either fired on the property or nearby at Cavendish. There are two parallel gabled roofs of corrugated iron on hardwood timber framing, now with no ceiling. The bricks are laid in two sorts of bonding, the section under one roof being Flemish and the other Colonial. There may have been an intentional use of the darker header bricks to achieve a traditional dichromatic pattern. The casement windows in the gables are slightly different sizes. The chimneys and oven at the north end have collapsed leaving gaps in the wall and there are gaps on the west as well. Also in the west wall there are gaps in two diaper-shaped sections to provide ventilation. The whole building is suffering from rising and falling damp, especially from the valley gutter. The building is in very poor condition and in need of urgent repair.

The woolshed is located on the far side of the pisé building. The walls are brick built on bluestone foundations and laid in Colonial bond. They have been limewashed internally to the eaves height although this has been rubbed back to the brick by sheep. The roof retains the original or very early short sheets of corrugated iron in five rows with the top row slightly raised for ventilation. Internally, the original hardwood posts and pens survive and sections of the slatted floor and the board may be original. The openings for the sheep to exit, along both sides, are relatively large, have shallow segmental arches of header bricks, and are finished with particularly fine joinery. Double timber gates each have a four-paned window above. At the northern end there is an elevated timber door and two openings with timber louvres. The building is in good condition.

HISTORY:

The Kenilworth squatting run, No 228 in the Portland Bay district and located at the junction of the Wannon and Dundas Rivers near Cavendish, comprising 63,000 acres with 800 head of cattle and 20,000 sheep, was one of the earliest and largest in the Hamilton district (B&K, 226). Thomas Norris, who also held Kout Narien at Harrow from 1840 to 1846 and Knebsworth at Macarthur from 1848 to 1849, took it up in 1839. He is mentioned by Surveyor Wedge as one of the first in the "Country at the foot of the Grampians" (Bride, 87). Norris abandoned the run within a year because of trouble with Aborigines (Bride, 290). According to Billis Kenyon, he died in 1849, leaving his wife, Mrs Jane Norris, as his executrix (B&K, 120). The Kenilworth licence then passed briefly to Matthew Gibson, who appears to have been a wine merchant as well as a squatter (B&K, 71; Bride, 161, n. 10 on 170, 290, 335). From 1841, James Riley and Edward Barker held the licence taking Peter Purton (or Parton) into partnership in 1847 (B&K, 226). The triple partnership was dissolved and the run was subdivided into Kenilworth North (or No. 1) and Kenilworth South (or No. 2) in 1849. James Riley kept the northern section, Edward Barker kept the southern section and the two men remained partners.

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James Riley's family was originally from Ulster in Ireland but he had connections with the wool trade through his grandfather in London and his stepfather, Thomas Brook, at the Meltham Mills in Yorkshire (HHC, research notes). James Riley was seventeen when he migrated to New South Wales with letters of introduction to important people including Hannibal Macarthur. Macarthur advised him to gain experience of the bush and of stock before taking up his own property. From 1839 to 1840, James Riley had been part of the Strzelecki expedition to Gippsland (Bride, n. 14 on 299). He overlanded stock to the Port Phillip District in 1840, stopping for a time at a place near Bannockburn or Pollock's Ford which he called Meltham and then, in 1841, more permanently on the Wannon River where he laid claim to 63,000 acres (B&K, 130; HHC, research notes). This he called Bermondsey probably after his grandfather's home, Bermondsey Abbey House, in London. He was soon in partnership with Dr. Edward Barker and the name Kenilworth probably dates from then. An 1863 map shows a "Bermondsey" near the present Kenilworth homestead.

James Riley was interested in stud animals and "records show he was well known as a stud-master" (HHC, research notes). He returned to England in 1842 to bring back fine wool sheep and the Clyde Company purchased twenty Kenilworth rams for use at Golf Hill at Bannockburn. In 1846 he married Harriet Sophia Smith of Sydney and they had fourteen children most of whom are registered as being born in the Geelong district. Three of the sons were amongst the first to attend the Old Geelong Grammar School in Moorabool Street, Geelong (HHC, research note). These two factors suggest that the family did not live at Kenilworth. However, there is a pisé building on the property, which may date from about 1846. The use of true pisé construction is extremely rare in the Western District. Only one other example is known, Spring Vale homestead at Coojar, which almost certainly dates from before 1851. The Kenilworth structure, abandoned about 1900 and now ruinous, had been well finished with a verandah enclosed between timber pavilion end rooms, plastered internal walls, all under a low pitched hipped roof typical of early colonial bungalows. There was a large stone-lined well at the rear and in the 1930s there were remnants of a garden.

Edward Barker, M.R.C.S, was born in Aylesbury, England in 1816, and the son of Jonathan Barker and Mary Ann, nee Elridge (VPI, Reg. No. 10472). He was educated at Dr. Hamilton's school, Hemel Hempstead and at London University. He arrived at Port Phillip in 1840 with his mother and brother, John who had studied law at Lincoln's Inn. Having returned to England where he was admitted to the Bar, John returned to Melbourne with another brother, William, who was also a doctor. Edward was in partnership with John Barker at Cape Schanck, Boneo and Barker's Heifer stations, all in the Westernport district (B&K, 22). From 1845 to 1868 Edward was in partnership with his brother William at Mount Alexander station (B&K, 22). In 1842, Edward Barker alone acquired the Englefield run, just south of Balmoral, but held it only briefly.

In 1844, Edward had married Madeline Charlotte Skene Scot, the eldest daughter of Alexander Scott, the lecturer on surgery at the University of Melbourne (VPI, Reg. No. 1791). They had seven children, two of whom died in infancy. Their first child, Alexander Scot was born in 1847 at the Wannon but the others were all born in Melbourne (VPI, Reg. No. 1791). As with the Riley family, this suggests that they lived away from Kenilworth. Edward Barker, M.D. is listed as a "settler on the Wannon" in the 1847 Port Phillip Directory (Mouritz, 59). Edward Barker was appointed a J.P. and took over the main work of the Hamilton Bench in its earliest years (Garden, 34). "For a time after leaving Kenilworth South, Dr Edward Barker practiced his profession on the gold fields at Mount Alexander. He then returned to England in the late fifties where he took the Diploma of F.R.C.S. (Lon). On returning to Melbourne he was appointed Lecturer on surgery at Melbourne University from 1864 to 1884" (HHC, research note). Madeline and Edward Barker both died in Melbourne in 1885 (VPI, Reg. No. 3579 & 10472).

Although the run was subdivided in 1849, the partnership between Riley and Barker continued until January 1855. Barker left and Riley took over his interest in Kenilworth South. By February 1855, Riley had sold the Kenilworth North lease to Thomas McKellar, and moved with his family to the house at Kenilworth South, remaining there for two years. He sold Kenilworth South in December 1856 to Thomas and Andrew

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Chirnside.

Thomas McKellar was born in Argyllshire, Scotland in 1819 and migrated to Victoria in 1848. He purchased Hyde Park run in 1849 "at first in partnership with James Cochran, whose interest in the property he very soon acquired" (HHC, research notes; B&K 223). In 1850, he married Catherine McColl, a sister of James McColl of Yat Nat, at the Presbyterian Church in Geelong (VPI, Reg. No. 2315). They had five sons and daughters, several of whom were born at Hyde Park" (HHC, research notes). It seems the family continued to live at Hyde Park and had a manager at Kenilworth, probably living in the pisé house. McKellar is described by Henderson as "one of the outstanding pioneers of Victoria ... a far-seeing man ... possessed of a natural Scottish shrewdness" (HHC, research notes). "Then only three years later, in 1858, having sold both Hyde Park and Kenilworth North Stations, he bought Kanawalla Station near Hamilton. In 1862 he also purchased The Grange and Croxton Stations, re-naming the former Strathkellar" (HHC, research notes).

The new owner of Kenilworth North was John Mackersey, who was perhaps the most important owner for the property. He was born in Tasmania in 1826, his father James Mackersey (or McKersy) being a Scottish immigrant with pastoral properties in the Midlands. John Mackersey married Ann Harriet Headlam in Tasmania in 1849. They had six children, three born in Tasmania and three in Victoria. His family did not join Mackersey immediately and it has been suggested that a new house, possibly timber, was built to accommodate them. A site survives on Kenilworth North with Tasmanian Blue Gums and other evidence where a house appears to have been but little trace of it now survives. Alternatively, they may have occupied the pisé house and the other house was a much smaller structure for a manager or other worker.

Mackersey was very active in the local community. As well as his patronage of the Presbyterian Church, he was local "patron" of the Cavendish National School, he was a founder of the Hamilton Pastoral and Agricultural Society and the Cavendish Cricket Club, an early member of the Dundas Road Board, and a Justice of the Peace. Don Garden comments that John Mackersey was unusual in his support for the Society because it was "township folk" rather than agricultural and pastoralists" whose aim was to stimulate pastoral and agricultural production in the district (Garden, 65). Mackersey was said to be a very good judge of stock and had to deal with all the usual problems of sheep including footrot, fluke and scab. He grew tobacco to be used as a poultice with sulphur to cure the scab. He was active in building fences to replace shepherds and he was keen to improve his flock using Ramboulet and Nigrette rams.

Mackersey's diary survives and in it he mentions the decision to be a larger stone house and that the plan and specifications were drawn up by John Shanks Jenkins (c1835-1913), architect and engineer (HHC, research notes). Jenkins was appointed engineer of the Mount Rouse Roads Board in December 1860, and served in that capacity until 1863, when the transition was made to the Shire of Mount Rouse. He designed the Mount Rouse Council Chambers in 1864. He served as both shire secretary and engineer from 1870 to 1876. He went on to have a very distinguished career in Melbourne, including the prize-winning design of Princes Bridge. He also designed Warrayure Homestead and extensions to Skene Homestead, if not the original homestead, and many other buildings in the Hamilton area.

Construction was delayed while Jenkins designed and supervised the construction of the Cavendish Presbyterian Church, which was largely paid for by Mackersey. The new house, sited to see and be seen on a hill overlooking the river, was commenced in 1863. The contractors were Messrs. I. and A. Bell who had just built the church (HHC, research notes). When the property was advertised for sale years later, the homestead was described as "a substantial brick and wood dwellinghouse on stone foundation, containing 16 apartments, with underground cellar and detached servants' rooms; a large brick tank, capacity 16,000 gallons, force pump, etc.; and garden well stocked with fruit trees and vines." The house was substantial, single-storey, symmetrical and very sober in its design but with an unusual U-shaped plan. The entrance was at the northern end, through a glazed vestibule, and the principal rooms opened off a transverse hall. Their French windows opened onto the simple timber verandah on three sides. Wings to the west included more living and bedrooms and service rooms

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around a large courtyard. There was a verandah on three side of the courtyard. The construction of the walls was also of interest being of brick with bluestone quoins, sills and lintels rather than of just coursed stone. A substantial formal garden and orchard surrounded it, tended by a gardener, possibly a Chinese man, who may have lived in a cottage in the orchard. The house survived little changed into the Interwar period when it was substantially remodelled to its present condition.

Mackersey was responsible for the present woolshed. He visited the new bluestone woolshed built at Mokanger by the Chirnside brothers in 1864. On his return to Kenilworth he organised to have a woolshed identical in plan but built in brick and also men's quarters. This story may be apocryphal since there are substantial differences, beyond just the materials used, between the two structures. It replaced a timber slab woolshed with a thatch roof. It seems to have survived for some time after the construction of the new woolshed. The new woolshed was extended with a weather board and iron wing to house the Ronaldson Tippett engine, which drove the first mechanical shears.

Like most squatters in the 1860s, John Mackersey was very much affected by the Land Selection Acts. His diary in the middle of 1865 is full of his concerns and observations of the process of survey and sale. He described the Bill being debated at the time as "most iniquitous". Nonetheless, he seems to have been on good terms with his Selector neighbours. From 1870, Mackersey tried to sell Kenilworth North and was eventually successful selling to Edward Crossley of Ararat for 48,000 pounds. It seems Mackersey made no profit and left Kenilworth with practically nothing (HCC, research notes). He went to live at Hawkes Bay, New Zealand where his diary survives in the Napier Historical Society collection.

Reuben Crossley occupied Kanawalla from 1874 under a ten-year lease and, from 1880, his brother Edward Crossley who had owned Kenilworth North from 1870, completed the lease. The Crossley family came from Dorden in Warwickshire and four brothers migrated to Australia, John in 1849, Reuben in 1851, and Edward and Eli in 1853. They established a very successful ironmongery and timber business on the central Victorian goldfields, centred on Ararat (HHC, Kenilworth research notes). Reuben Glover Crossley was married to Mary Williamson in 1854 and they had a daughter Sarah Elizabeth, born in 1857 (VPI, Reg. No. 3620, 304). Edward married Elizabeth Ann, nee Best of Concongella, Great Western in 1867. They had eight sons and six daughters, the first three born in Ararat and the rest while they were living at Kenilworth North (HHC, Kenilworth research notes). The Kanawalla lease was due to expire at the beginning of December 1883. Edward Crossley also purchased Hyde Park and Mooralla and bought out his brother's interest in Merivale, near Ararat.

Like his predecessor, Edward Crossley was very active in local affairs. He was a J.P. and a member of the committee of management of the Cavendish Presbyterian Church. He was largely responsible for the construction of the new manse in 1878. As well as fluke and footrot, he had to deal with the rabbit problem. It seems that, unlike most Western District pastoralists, he was hard hit by the bank crash of the early 1890s which suggests that he had investments and business interests in Melbourne. He lost most of the Kenilworth North property, which was taken over by the Commissioner of the Savings Banks who paid the Shire of Dundas rates. His wife and son, Edward continued to hold some of the land. The family retired to Merivale when Edward Crossley died in 1899.

The Bank sold Kenilworth North to William Philip and John Fenton in 1900. Philip was a descendent of the important dynasty founded by the Philip and Robertson families. He was born at Victoria Lagoon station in 1857 (VPI, Reg. No. 11269). In 1884 he married Amelia Francis Jane Hamilton of Bringalbert Station, north of Apsley (VPI, Reg. No. 785). They had four sons and three daughters (HHC, research notes). William had been in partnership with his brothers and for seven years managed their interest at Cape Wrath, east of Hamilton, later called Murroa. He then managed Harton Hills near Macarthur for the partnership. In 1896 he purchased the small but very early run Violet Creek, to the west of Hamilton. The brief partnership of William Philip and John Fenton was dissolved with the former keeping Kenilworth North and the latter keeping Tahara South,

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which they had also purchased.

Philip was a Shire of Dundas councillor for 21 years and President for six terms. He was a member of the Hamilton Pastoral and Agricultural Society and of the Hamilton Racing Club. Too old to serve in the First world War, he was a prominent member of the Soldiers' Fathers' Association and was influential in the erection of the War Memorial at Melville Oval in Hamilton. He was also a staunch and active Presbyterian. He sold Kenilworth North in 1910 and moved to Mount William.

The Closer Settlement Board purchased the adjoining properties of Kenilworth and Mooralla in 1910. According to the Board's promotional brochure, the former was subdivided into "27 farm allotments and 16 agricultural labourer's allotments" and the latter into 28 allotments (HHC, research notes). "Settlers faced a considerable struggle in the early years, partly because of the quality of the land but equally because, unlike others, they did not have a railway to market their produce. A Royal Commission on Closer Settlement in 1914 heard complaints about the blocks being too small to be viable and repayments being too high. In that year there were 35 holdings at Kenilworth, but only 2,989 acres were under crop of the 18,440 acres. After the opening of the Cavendish Hamilton railway in 1915, they began to progress more quickly" (Garden, 162).

Hugh Douglas Sutherland, who already had close family connections with Kenilworth and Cavendish, was the successful bidder for the homestead block. The vacant house had fallen into disrepair and the garden and orchard were overgrown and overrun with stock. He modernised the services in the house, introducing gas lighting, hot water and refrigeration. Douglas and Marian (Mimi) Sutherland also revived the garden. The Sutherlands lived at Kenilworth for 25 years, selling in 1939 to A. Leslie Brumley. The house was completely remodelled at this time. The builder then is believed to have been Reg Williams of Hamilton. The Brumley family still owns and occupies Kenilworth.

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:

The main homestead is in excellent condition. The pise homestead is in ruinous condition. The woolshed is in good condition. The men's quarters is in very poor condition. The site of the 1850s cottage, the orchard, the gardener's cottage and the pise homestead have major architectural potential.

INTEGRITY:

Original homestead is now ruinous but has potential as an archaeological site. The men's quarters are in poor condition with some serious points of failure. The woolshed is in good condition. The present homestead is in excellent condition.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The Kenilworth squatting run located to the north-west of Cavendish at the junction of the Wannan and Dundas Rivers, was taken up in 1846 by Thomas Norris, of Kout Narien at Harrow. He sold his interest to Matthew

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Gibson who soon sold out to the partnership of James Riley and Edward Barker. They subdivided the run into North and South, James Riley keeping the Northern section now known as Kenilworth. It is likely that the pisé house was built at this time. It is a very rare survivor and, although now in ruins, can be compared with the only other known contemporary example in this area, the second part of the Spring Vale Homestead complex. James Riley sold to Thomas McKellar in 1855 and he in turn sold to John Mackersey. It was he who built the brick and stone homestead in 1863 which was designed by John Shanks Jenkins, an important local architect and engineer who went on to have a very successful and distinguished career in Melbourne. Messrs. I. and A. Bell built it. Both the architect and the contractors had just been responsible for St Michael's Presbyterian Church, Cavendish, largely the gift of John Mackersey. The house, which although substantial was very conservative in style, was completely remodelled in the mid-twentieth century by the Brumley family. The builder then is believed to have been Reg Williams of Hamilton. Mackersey also built the brick woolshed and the brick men's quarters about 1864. The former retains a very high degree of integrity and is in good condition. The latter is relatively intact but is in very poor condition. No architect has been associated with the designs. Importantly, John Mackersey kept a detailed and competent diary. By the end of the 1860s, it seems the usual problems of the pastoralists and the process of Land Selection beat him and he retired to New Zealand. The next owner, also a good businessman and leader of the community, Edward Crossley also failed against the rabbits, sheep diseases and the 1890s bank crash. The Kenilworth Homestead complex passed through various hands and was something of a landmark example of Closer subdivision in the early twentieth century. The Brumley family retains Kenilworth.

How is it significant?

The Kenilworth Homestead complex is of historical and architectural significance to the community of Cavendish and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Kenilworth Homestead complex is of historical significance for its long sequence of distinguished and influential owners and as a reflection of their successes and failures. It is of particular significance for its associations with the Mackersey and Crossley families, the latter being unusual turning to pastoral pursuits after succeeding on the central Victorian goldfields. It is of architectural significance for its range of buildings including the very rare example of pisé construction and for its relatively rare use of brick construction, which, in the case of the homestead, was combined decoratively with stone. It is of further architectural significance for the association of the main homestead with the important architect John Shanks Jenkins, although the homestead has been much altered.

COMPARISON:

084 Spring Vale, Hillview Road, Coojar
109 Warrayure Homestead Complex, Rudolph's Road, Warrayure
132 Kanawalla Homestead Complex, Henty Highway, Cavendish
142 Hyde Park Homestead Complex, Hyde Park Road, Gatum

260 Burger's Cottages, Acacia, Springfield Lane, off Macarthur-Penshurst Road, Penshurst

ASSESSED BY: tfh & mgt

ASSESSMENT DATE:

05-Feb-03

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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Author	Title	Year	Page
Alexander Henderson	Henderson's Australian Families	1941	141
Alexander Henderson	Early Pioneer Families of Victoria and Riverina	1936	355-9
Claude Notman	Of Sheep and Men	1981	78
Diana M Halmarick, comp.	Thos. Robertson & Sons "Mainstays of Our Earliest Days"	2000	72, 75, 86, 102
Don Garden	Hamilton - A Western District History	1984	34, 65, 162, 164
Heather Ronald	Wool Past the Winning Post	1978	
J. J. Mouritz, comp.	The Port Phillip Almanac and Directory for 1847	1847	59, 129
Jan Critchett	A Distant Field of Murder	1990	187
P. L. Brown	'The Young James Riley', in Genealogical Society of Victoria Magazine	May 1961	
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	120- 1, 226
Shire of Dundas	Dundas Shire Centenary 1863-1963	1963	68, 69
Thomas Francis Bride, C. E. Sayers, ed.	Letters from Victorian Pioneers	1969	290