

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** KOORNONG HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Henty Highway BRANXHOLME

**STUDY NUMBER:** 143

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

---

**PRECINCT:** outside

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**ALLOTMENT:** 3A **SECTION:** 11 **PARISH:** PARISH OF AUDLEY

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 473 A-24; VicRoads 72 G7; located on the south-east side of the Henty Highway about 10.0kms north-east of Branxholme on the north bank of the Arrandoovong Creek.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Koornong Homestead, Branxholme, façade

**Image Date:** 09/04/2002

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the exterior of the house, the exterior of the outbuildings and worker's cottage, and the garden around the house including the front and side gardens and the rear service yards.

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** KOORNONG HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Henty Highway BRANXHOLME

**STUDY NUMBER:** 143

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

---

## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

Koornong Homestead is a single storey rendered brick house, with projecting wings about a central verandah. Originally the house was asymmetrical, and was surrounded on two sides by an 'L-shaped' verandah. Designed by the Hamilton architect Frank Hammond, the original style was a late 19th century version of the Italianate. One old photograph shows the verandah to have been timber with simple timber brackets but this may have been an Edwardian alteration. A photo taken in 1928 shows a timber verandah with shallow segmental arches and uprights in the spandrels (Halmarick, 204). There is a projecting polygonal bay window on the north side with a concave pitched roof, typical of Hammond's work. This is now balanced on the south side by a larger rectangular bay window with three sets of double hung sashes, part of the Interwar addition of a billiard room designed by Robert Hamilton. The interior of this room, along with the surviving billiard table, are important. The front door, remodelled at the same time, is treated in a neo-Georgian style. The replacement timber verandah is paved with concrete tiles set in green grouting. The walls throughout are rendered brick. The roof is corrugated iron.

An earlier kitchen wing survives at the rear, although much altered. Its careful and elaborate eaves detailing, different from the late 19th century detailing of the front wing, suggests a fine house may have existed beforehand.

There is a side entrance on the north elevation. There is the usual range of outbuildings including staff quarters at the rear of the main house in a separate wing and a worker's cottage across the drive. The house is enhanced by its well-established and now mature garden setting and the drive. The garden appears to date from the 1930s.

## **HISTORY:**

The present Koonong Homestead appears to stand on section 11 allotment 3A, being a grant of 75 acres or 30.35 hectares dated 27 October 1862. The Audley Parish Plan indicates the first freehold owner as G. C. Darbyshire. Alternatively, it stands on section 13 allotment 4A, a grant of 275 acres or 111.3 hectares dated 18 October 1870 in the same name. The latter allotment was originally proposed as a reserve, possibly for a dam, according to the preliminary survey. It notes a marsh, a hut on the northern boundary, and a fence, probably of wire dividing off the north-eastern third of the allotment and joining another wire fence just outside to the south-east running diagonally. This is the boundary of the Narrawong (or Narrawang) run to the west, Audley (or Euremete) to the south and Arrandoovong (or Arrandoorong) to the east.

George C. Darbyshire was a district surveyor who owned the pastoral lease for Upper Audley, now known as Koornong. He paid 16,882 pounds for the land. It may be that Darbyshire built a house at Koornong and that the present kitchen wing survives from this time because the 12-paned double hung sash window on the south elevation and the detailing of the eaves are both more typical of the early 1860s rather than later.

Alexander Armstrong appears to have been the second owner and the one who changed the name to Koornong. This may have been the Alexander Armstrong of Warrambine (or Warrambeen), near Shelford (de Serville, 1991, 370 & 457). Thomas Philip, the son of William Philip of Cape Wrath, was the subsequent owner and probably the builder of the 1890s portion of the house (de Serville, 1991, 483). The Hamilton architect, Frank Hammond was certainly responsible for the new house at Cape Wrath, built at the same time, which was called Murroa. It seems most likely that Koornong, a smaller version of Murroa was also designed by Hammond.

William Norton Chute Ellis bought Koornong in 1919. Don Garden writes "The son of a pastoral family with interests in South Australia and New Zealand, Ellis had trained as a lawyer but had developed a variety of pastoral and business interests" (Garden, 1984, 213). He was also active in the district's social, business

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** KOORNONG HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Henty Highway BRANXHOLME

**STUDY NUMBER:** 143

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

---

and political spheres, being a leading figure of the Nationalist and United Australia Parties.

Ellis sold in 1929 to A. C. Trewin who, by the middle of 1932 and at the height of the Depression, had to sell. The notice of sale by tender states that the estate consists of 6,465 acres and that "The homestead is a fine brick structure, surrounded by 1.5 acres of garden, with water laid on, electric light, hot water system, and sewerage, good concrete drains, asphalt tennis courts, the whole forming an ideal home with all conveniences for working the property. Good woolshed, dip, and drafting yards." The successful tenderer was William Goodwin Beggs, a local stock and station agent who had common business interests with Ellis including the backing of Ansett Airways and the public float of the Hamilton department store, John Thompson & Co. (Garden, 1984, 194 & 213). Soon after he purchased Koornong in 1932, Beggs commissioned the fashionable Melbourne architect, Robert Hamilton to renovate and extend the house (Lorraine Dawson, nee Beggs, pers. comm., 17/8/2002). The major changes were the addition of a billiard room on the south side and the consequent remodelling of the front verandah. The work was in a tasteful mixture of the Art Deco and neo-Georgian styles. It seems likely that Hamilton also did the renovations at nearby Bassett, owned by other members of William Beggs' family. Subsequent owners have been the McEachern, Watson, Sharrad and Rivett families.

The sequence of ownership of Koornong is:

George C. Darbyshire, first owner  
Alexander Armstrong, second owner  
Thomas Philip, third owner  
William Norton Chute Ellis, fourth owner  
A C Trewin, subsequent owner who sold in 1932  
William Goodwin Beggs, subsequent owner  
Ralph McEachern, subsequent owner  
Ian and Helen (nee McEachern) Watson, subsequent owners  
Sharrads, subsequent owners  
R E Rivett, subsequent owner

## **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 house, outbuildings, garden and drive are in excellent condition.

## **INTEGRITY:**

Retains a high degree of integrity to its mid-1930s appearance.

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is significant?

The Koornong Homestead Complex is located about 10kms north of Branxholme. The main house reflects three major periods of construction. Started by George Derbyshire, the local government surveyor in the

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** KOORNONG HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Henty Highway BRANXHOLME

**STUDY NUMBER:** 143

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

1860s, it was substantially extended by Thomas Philip in the late nineteenth century and then modernised and extended in the mid-1930s by William Beggs. All the owners of Koornong have had pastoral interests and Beggs was an important backer of Reg Ansett. The house is complemented by an extensive mature garden, largely dating from the 1930s, the drive and the usual range of outbuildings. The complex is in excellent condition and retains a very high degree of integrity from the Interwar period.

## How is it significant?

Koornong Homestead is of historical and architectural significance to the community of Branxholme and to the Southern Grampians Shire.

## Why is it significant?

Koornong Homestead is of historical significance as a property representative of the development of the pastoral industry late in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Koornong has particular historical significance for its series of owners, who were important public officials and businessmen, who made valuable contributions to the social, commercial and political fabric of the region.

Koornong Homestead is of architectural significance firstly as an example of the work of the important Hamilton architect, Frank Hammond and secondly as an example of the work of the leading Melbourne architect, Robert Hamilton. The architecture of the homestead is reinforced by the continuing development of the garden.

## COMPARISON:

113 Audley Homestead Complex, Branxholme-Byaduk Road Road, Branxholme

115 Arrandoovong Homestead Complex, Chrome Road, Branxholme

335 Kinvonvie, Murndal Road, Yulecart

114 Bassett Homestead Complex, Bassett Road, Branxholme

**ASSESSED BY:** tfh

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

9/12/2001

## 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
Alexander Henderson	Early Pioneer Families of Victoria and Riverina	1936	148
Diana M Halmarick, comp.	Thos. Robertson & Sons "Mainstays of Our Earliest Days"	2000	204-205
Don Garden	Hamilton, A Western District History	1984	194, 211, 213-4
Lorraine Dawson, nee Beggs	personal communication	17/8/2002	
Lyell Horwood, ed.	From Ship to Sheep: the Philip family of Miga Lake and their descendants	1984	
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	204, 205

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** KOORNONG HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Henty Highway BRANXHOLME

**STUDY NUMBER:** 143

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

---

Timothy Hubbard Pty Ltd

City of Hamilton Conservation Study

1991 69-70