

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: PENSURST RACECOURSE

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Racecourse Road PENSURST

STUDY NUMBER: 293

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: Penshurst

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

PARISH: PARISH OF YALIMBA

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 475 C11; VicRoads 233R9; located on the north-east side of Racecourse Road about 1.5kms north-east of the centre of the township of Penshurst

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Grandstand, Racecourse, Penshurst

Image Date: 13/02/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the main buildings including the grandstand, judges box, kiosk, horse stalls, betting ring and the racecourse tracks, fencing and all the land in the reserve.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The grandstand is typical in its raking form over ground floor facilities. The bar and toilets are in the bluestone ground floor and the stand is constructed in timber. The bluestone walls are full height at the front but are only to sill height at the sides and rear. The roof is a simple gable and there are remnants of cast iron decoration as brackets on the front posts. The grandstand is simple compared with those at Coleraine and especially Hamilton racecourses. A substantial grassed mound has been formed in front of the stand to extend and improve the viewing area. A single storey skillion addition has been made at the rear. A similar extension for toilets has been made at one end which, like the grandstand wall above it, is clad with corrugated iron. The original timber windows have been replaced by aluminium framed sliding windows. The original weatherboards have been replaced by pressed cement sheeting.

The kiosk is a timber structure with a low-pitched hipped corrugated iron roof. It has large panels which are hinged to open up the bar and provide some shelter. A crude metal verandah has been added on the grandstand side to improve the shelter. V-jointed boards form the panels and the wall below the bar where they are set diagonally.

The judges' box or tower is located immediately adjacent to the grandstand. It tapers slightly and is raised on a high metal frame, including an intermediate landing, and then consists of three storeys above. Possibly originally clad in timber, the walls are now imitation brick sheeting. Its roof is a simple skillion. Access is from a metal ramp at the rear. There is a satellite dish located at the base of the tower.

The planting around the course is not distinctive and comprises for the most part senescent common Monterey Cypresses, *Cupressus macrocarpa*.

HISTORY:

The land for the Penshurst Racecourse was gazetted as a Racecourse and Recreation Reserve on 17th October 1864. The land comprised over 79 acres on the north-east edge of the township. This was just two years after the reservation of the Coleraine Racecourse, important for its association with the famous horsemen, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh Junior. The latter's sister married the son of Dr Watton, the medical superintendent of the Aboriginal Protectorate at Penshurst.

The Shire of Mount Rouse approved an application by William Murphy, publican at the Penshurst Hotel for an extension of his licence to a booth at the racecourse on St Patrick's Day 1864 (Shire of Mount Rouse, 1964; SMR RB 1863 #126). This must have been a temporary facility because no mention is made of a racecourse or turf club in Bailliere's Gazetteer published in 1865.

The grandstand was built in 1896 (Shire of Mount Rouse, 1964). The kiosk was built after the First World War. The judges' box, other standard facilities, fencing and earth works date from after the Second World War or are substantially renovated earlier structures. The Monterey Cypresses appear to date from the early twentieth century.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 8: Developing Australia's cultural life

8.1 Organising recreation

8.1.1 Playing and watching organised sport

8.1.2 Betting

8.5.4 Pursuing common leisure interests

CONDITION:

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The buildings are in fair condition.

INTEGRITY:

The grandstand retains a high degree of integrity

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The land on which the Penshurst Racecourse is located, about 1.5kms north-east of the township, was reserved for the purpose in 1865. Races were held there immediately if not before, with liquor being supplied under the licence of local publicans. It may be that the great horseman and poet, Adam Lindsay Gordon and his riding companion, Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh, who had close connections with Penshurst, raced there. The small conventional timber and bluestone grandstand was built in 1896 when the Monterey Cypresses may have been planted. It has been much altered and extended. Other facilities followed including a kiosk used as a bar, stalls for horses, the judges' box and the other facilities necessary for official thoroughbred racing. No architect or builder has been associated with the design of the grandstand. The grandstand and the other buildings are in fair condition. The cypresses are senescent and have poor form.

How is it significant?

The Penshurst Racecourse is of historical significance to the community of Penshurst and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

Penshurst Racecourse is of historical significance for its association with the early history of racing in the western District and the passion for and importance of good horsemanship in rural Victoria in the nineteenth century. It has further historical significance for its continuous association with the thoroughbred horse racing industry over 100 years.

COMPARISON:

033 Coleraine Racecourse, Glenelg Highway, Coleraine
410 Hamilton Racecourse, Henty Highway, Hamilton

ASSESSED BY: tfh

ASSESSMENT DATE:

14-Jan-04

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
	Government Gazette, 12th February 1892	1892	
Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh	After many days: being the reminiscences of Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh	1918	
Mount Rouse Shire Council	Shire of Mount Rouse, In the Centre of the Fertile Western District of Victoria: Centenary Celebrated	1966	