

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: MOUNT KOROITE HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Glenelg Highway COLERAINE

STUDY NUMBER: 0332

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: outside

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

PARISH: PARISH OF COLERAINE

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 430D-8; VicRoads 72 D3; located on the north side of the Glenelg Highway, opposite the Coleraine Racecourse and 3.5km east of Coleraine overlooking the valley of the Wannon River.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Mount Koroite Homestead Coleraine, 1911 Entrance.

Image Date: 15/08/2002

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the homestead including the interiors, the surrounding garden, the original drive, the woolshed and the sheep dip but excluding all the other outbuildings.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Mount Koroit Homestead is comprised of two stages of development. The first is likely to date from the purchase of the pre-emptive right in the 1860s. The second stage substantially overlays the first and dates from 1911. It was built, supposedly, on the winnings when the owner's horse won the Melbourne Cup.

The form of the earlier house was simple, symmetrical and conventional. It was single storey with four main rooms and a central passage, and may have had a verandah across the front. The front faced east across the steep decline into the Wannon Valley. The rear faced west towards Coleraine, although the town is not visible from the homestead. The surviving service wings which form a courtyard probably date from the same time. The rear of the original house and the service wings are relatively unaltered.

The second stage of the house was built in a distinctively heavy version of the Federation/Edwardian Domestic Queen Anne style. It is consciously asymmetrical with a new main entrance on the south elevation. It incorporates heavy rendered detailing, now painted white, to off-set the pressed red brick walls. The plinth of the walls is coursed, rock-faced bluestone. The projecting gables are half-timbered with roughcast. The verandahs have large plain timber semi-circular arches set within turned timber posts. The verandah of the south elevation is detailed more elaborately, especially around the front entrance which includes heavy paired posts and a gable. The roofs are all corrugated iron, painted grey. The chimneys are tall and combine cement rendered details with red brick shafts. Some of the interior detailing from this period, particularly in the dining room, is notable and some furniture survives.

A garden surrounds the house which appears to date mostly from the time of the 1911 renovation and extensions. It was tended and perhaps developed by a resident Chinese gardener. This was developed further by the previous generation and is maintained by the present. It takes advantage of the dramatic setting at the top of the valley escarpment. There is an abandoned drive of mixed pines and cypresses at the rear of the property. It is not known how this drive approached the house in the past.

The timber woolshed, in two parts, is located some distance to the east of the house and there is a ruined sheepwash nearby.

HISTORY:

The Koroite, Mount Koroite or Dundas run, Portland Bay District No. 306, was first taken up by the Whyte Brothers in March 1840 (B&K, 1974, 230). It soon passed to W. J. Purbrick and then to J. G. Robertson in November, 1843. In February 1845 it passed to William Young and Adam Turnbull after whom Adam Young, who is buried in the Mt Koroite cemetery, was possibly named. They also leased nearby Winninburn together (B&K, 151). In July 1858, the Mount Koroite lease passed to a W. Young, possibly William Young alone, or William Young Junior. In 1864, J and G Young challenged the cost of their license because only 640 acres (later amended to 962 acres) remained, the rest having been alienated in 1863 (Run File, PRO). Nonetheless, the rent was calculated on 2,340 acres of second class sheep country since no official notification had been received to the contrary. The lease was cancelled in 1867.

The original site of the homestead appears to have been in Heffernan Lane off the Cavendish-Coleraine Road. It is in a small creek valley rather than on a hillside, which is unusual. Nor is it close to the main route between Hamilton and Coleraine. It is not known when or why this site was abandoned in favour of the higher site. It was most probably linked to the purchase of the pre-emptive right. Several early plantings survive at the original site including four Italian cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens*), apple and pear trees, possibly a mulberry tree, and some minor bulbs. Most interestingly, there is a rare private cemetery located on the hillside opposite the original homestead site.

It was possibly William Young Junior who built the new homestead on the hill immediately above the original.

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From documentary and physical evidence this seems to have been in the 1860s. Although now much altered and extended, it appears to have been a conventional small house, facing east, of four main rooms with service wings forming a courtyard on the west side. An alternative, although less likely date, would be 1873 when the property was sold to John Finn Kirby for 40,000 pounds (Smith, Vol. 3, 548; HHC, Mount Koroite notes). There is some confusion about the exact ownership after this time. On the one hand, Finn's biographical entry in the Cyclopaedia of Victoria, probably written by himself and published in 1903, states that "in 1882 he joined Mr. F. G. Smallpage's stock and station business in Coleraine, and, after spending twelve months with that gentleman, he purchased the business, afterwards taking as a partner Mr. J. M. Gillespie, of the National Bank, in conjunction with whom he carried on the business for five years until 1887" (Smith, Vol. 3, 548). On the other hand, a contemporary newspaper report in 1886 states that 16 lots ranging in size from 8 to 50 acres were to be sold and that the property was managed by a Mr. Clark on behalf of Messrs. Kirby and Gillespie who were acting under instructions to sell the land under the wills of the late Charles and John De Graves (Western Agriculturist, 09/01/1886, 9). The paper comments "The sale of a portion of the Mount Koroite Estate in small agricultural allotments is, no doubt, one of the most important that has yet taken place in the Coleraine district ... it is the beginning of a new era, viz., the passing of stations situated near townships from being devoted solely to the growing of wool and mutton into the hands of settled population." These may be the blocks which include the ruins of abandoned dwellings in Heffernans Lane, adjacent to the original homestead and close to the Mount Koroite private cemetery. In any case, Finn, who was president of the local Agricultural and Pastoral Society, "strongly encourages closer settlement" (Smith, 548). In 1888, the trustees of the late Mr. Charles Degraives held 8214 acres near Coleraine (Sutherland, 1888, Vol. II, p. 57). These may be the brothers, nominated in the Government Gazette of 5th December 1879 as landholders of over 5,000 acres, Charles Degraives (1812-1874) and John Degraives (1814-1880) who managed the Cascade Brewery in Hobart but died unmarried and childless (De Serville, 1991, p. 467). Duncan Smith, a grazier who owned Balochile, north-west of Coleraine, in partnership with other members of his family, became manager of Mount Koroite in 1888, a post which he held for nine years (Smith, Vol. 3, 549).

It is not known when the woolshed was built. It is associated with a nearby sheepwash, a practice which was discontinued after the early 1870s. Presumably the woolshed dates from before the mid 1860s

John Finn Kirby, who owned *Parisian*, the winner of the 1911 Melbourne Cup, is said to have made extensive alterations to the homestead on the strength of his winnings. The horse continued to race and was raced on the Coleraine course, adjacent to Mount Koroite, in 1916 "with the greatest weight a horse ever carried in Coleraine, 14 stone 9 pounds. He was ridden by Mr. Archie Gunning. The grand old horse broke down under the weight and was beaten by "Coorinyarra" ridden by Mr. Harold Hanlon." Archie Gunning was Kirby's chauffeur and drove one of the first motor cars in the district (O'Toole, 2002). Finn was president of the Coleraine racing Club on several occasions. He was a founding director of the Coleraine and Western District Butter Factory Ltd., and chairman of directors for some years. He was a shire councillor for six years, being elected president on two occasions.

By the 1930s, John Finn Kirby was widowed and suffered ill health. The homestead was run for him and his children by a married couple, Mr. John William Gunning and Mrs. Elizabeth Gunning. John and Archie Gunning were brothers (O'Toole, 2002). Kirby also had a valet and the garden was tended by a Chinese man. Mr. Max Talbot was the manager in the later 1930s.

No architect has been associated with the 1911 extensions although it is most likely that an architect was involved. The robust detailing seems too heavy for the Melbourne architects, Ussher and Kemp who designed the Anglican vicarage in Coleraine in 1901, the extensions to Murndal in 1906 and the Uniting Church Manse in Coleraine in 1914. Oakden and Ballantyne designed the new house at The Wilderness, and possibly the neighbouring homestead, Ballaarook, about the same time, both of which are in the bungalow style. There are no other houses in the area with similar detailing. The service area of the house was renovated by the present owners in the 1980s but remains largely intact.

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Mount Koroite Homestead was sold to the Baulch family who continue to occupy it.

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

Theme 8: Developing Australia's Cultural Life

8.1 Organising recreation

8.1.1 Playing and watching organised sports

8.1.2 Betting

CONDITION:

The main homestead is in good condition internally and externally but there is some foundation failure in the south-east corner from a leaking downpipe.

INTEGRITY:

Excellent degree of integrity externally and high internally.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The Mount Koroit Homestead complex, on the north side of the Glenelg Highway and opposite the Coleraine Racecourse, is about 3.5kms east of Coleraine. It is perched on the edge of the plateau which looks over the Wannan River valley. It comprises the house, built in two main stages, the garden and yards, outbuildings at the rear and, at some distance from the house, the sheepwash and woolshed. The original site was in a small valley, near a rare private cemetery associated with the run. It is not known why or when the new site was chosen. The earlier part of the main house appears to date from the later 1860s, when the squatting lease was cancelled and the Pre-emptive right taken up. The house is single storey, built of bluestone and conventional in its form, plan and detailing. It was probably built by William Young who sold the estate for 40,000 pounds in 1873. This earlier house was substantially altered and extended by the new owner, J F Kirby, supposedly on the winnings of the 1911 Melbourne Cup. This work was in a distinctively heavy version of the Federation Queen Anne style. Some of the interior detailing from this period, particularly in the dining room, is notable. Kirby and his children lived at the house well into the 1930s in an opulent style with a manager and many staff. No architect has been associated with the construction of either stage of construction. The main house is in good condition and retains a high degree of integrity, including some of the Kirby furniture.

How is it significant?

Mount Koroite Homestead Complex is of historical and architectural significance to the community of Coleraine and to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

Mount Koroite Homestead Complex is of historical significance as one of the first squatting runs in the district, established in 1840 by the early settlers the Whyte brothers. Several of its subsequent owners were important local identities who made significant contributions to the development of the Coleraine area.

Mount Koroite Homestead Complex has additional historical significance because of the association of its owner J F Kirby with the 1911 Melbourne Cup and the thoroughbred industry.

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Mount Koroite Homestead Complex is of architectural significance for its sequence of development and especially for its 1911 alterations and additions which are unusual examples of the Federation Domestic Queen Anne style.

COMPARISON:

075 Blackwood Homestead Complex, Blackwood-Dunkeld Road, Penshurst
043 Uniting Church Manse, 81 Church Street, Coleraine

ASSESSED BY: TFH

ASSESSMENT DATE:

15-Aug-02

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
	Cyclopaedia of Victoria	1903	
	Coleraine Historical Society File Notes - Mount Koroite Homestead	n.d	
	Mt Koroite Estate Important Sale of Agricultural Lands	1886	9
Alexander Sutherland, ed.	Victoria and Its Metropolis, Vol. 2A (facsimile ed.)	1888	
Board of Land and Works	Run File - Mount Koroite Station	1858- 1864	
Department of Lands and Survey	Parish of Coleraine, County of Dundas	1956	
Gloria O'Toole, nee Gunning	Personal communication 19 October, 2002	2002	
James Smith, ed.	The Cyclopaedia of Victoria	1905	548-9
Louise Byrne and Mary Rose Dean	A History of Coleraine Racing, 1857 -1985	1985	21
Paul de Serville	Pounds and Pedigrees	1991	467
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	var.
The Western Agriculturalist	"Mount Koroite Estate Important Sale of Agricultural Land" 09/01/1886	1886	9