

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: WILLOWBROOK

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Macarthur-Penshurst Road Springfield Lane PENS Hurst

STUDY NUMBER: 368

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: outside

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 2 **SECTION:** 1 **PARISH:** PARISH OF YATMERONE

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 474 D13; VicRoads 73 E8; located on the south side of the Macarthur -Penshurst Road about 6.0kms west of Penshurst and 700m from the road facing north.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Willowbrook, Macarthur-Penshurst Road, Penshurst façade

Image Date: 26/05/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All of the exterior of the house, all of the outbuildings and all of the land within a radius of 20m of any edge of the main house or outbuildings.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The present house at Willowbrook is a single storey and symmetrical about the central front door. It is built of rockface bluestone, some possibly recycled from the original house, and with vermiculated blocks as alternating quoins around the windows. The conventional front door has a fanlight and sidelights. The two front windows are tripartite with double hung sashes and the mantels of the brick chimneys are in the opposite walls. There is a projecting wing on the west elevation, presumably the original dining room, with a service wing beyond it. The tripartite double hung sash window has a conventional pressed metal hood over it. The front verandah continues around the west side and gives access by a door to the dining room. The verandah posts are turned timber and support simple curved timber brackets.

The stone walls of the house have been painted and the roof has been reclad with Decramastic sheeting imitating tiles. The windows of the service wing have been altered. (The interiors have not been inspected.)

HISTORY:

The Yatmerone Parish Plan shows that an A Burger purchased allotment 2 of section 1, comprising just over 92 acres, on 30 December 1857. This was Andreas Burger who was born in Meschwitz, Saxony in 1853, the fourth son of his parents, Peter and Agnes Burger who had emigrated to South Australia in 1851 (Burger, 116). The Burgers were one of several Wendish families who emigrated together, finally settling at Gnadenthal, west of Penshurst. Andreas Burger also purchased allotments 3 and 4. A preliminary survey plan of "Country Allotments in the Parishes of Yatmerone and Boram Boram indicates that the land was elevated slightly above the edge of the lava flow, with some of the land being marshy.

The land purchased by the various Wendish families cost on average, one pound, two shillings and sixpence an acre (Burger, 11). The three blocks purchased by Andreas totalled 435 acres but by the 1870s he was rated only for 345 acres, presumably having disposed of some of the land (SMR RB, 1870, No.47).

Andreas Burger married Anna Mirtschin in 1860. About 1861, they built a house on his land called Willowbrook where they brought up a family of four sons (three dying in infancy) and five daughters. Their income is said to have been derived from dairying, pigs and calves (Burger, 116). Andreas was a devout member of the Tabor Lutheran congregation to which he donated a communion set. All his children were educated at the Tabor school. Andreas died in 1907 predeceased by his wife who had died in 1897.

The original Willowbrook house was a simple rectangular structure well built of coursed bluestone. It appears to have been symmetrical with four main rooms in the main wing and a staircase in the central hall leading to attic rooms. It appears to have been identical to the original house built nearby in 1864 on the property called Acacia (Burger, 13 & 118). The vernacular form could be said to be derived from German precedents. An example survives at pastor Schurmann's house, east of Hamilton. The bluestone house may have been preceded by timber and clay structures of wattle and daub, as was the case at Acacia which survive there and at several other homesteads.

The death of Andreas appears to have triggered the demolition of the original house which was replaced by the present bluestone house in 1909. There is a block of stone carved with this date in the gable of the west elevation. Acacia has a similar date stone. The new house is very traditional and even old-fashioned for its time. It is not known if an architect was responsible for the design. Some of the stone may have been recycled from the original house, as is known to have happened at Acacia, and it is particularly well built. It may be that Lodge Brothers, the best local stonemasons who built the second Tabor church in 1910, were the builders.

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The second Willowbrook house passed to Agnes Bertha Burger, the ninth child of Andreas and Anna Burger. She was born at Gnadenthal in 1880 and married Reinhold Friedrich Linke who was born in the same year at nearby Croxton East. They were married in 1905 and had seven children. After the Second World War, Willowbrook was owned by their grandson Bryan Linke, whose son Greg and daughter-in-law, Angela now own 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
8.12 Living in and around Australian homes
8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

CONDITION:

The house is in very good condition.

INTEGRITY:

high degree of integrity

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The original Willowbrook farm was established about 1860 by Andreas Burger and his wife, Anna, nee Mirtschin. He was the fourth son of the pioneering family of Burgers and an important member of the community of Wendish settlers from Saxony in Germany who migrated for religious and economic reasons. Having arrived in south Australia and passed through Portland, this group of families established a close knit community around the area which they called Gnadenthal. Andreas and Anna built their house in 1861. This was demolished and a new house constructed, possibly recycling some of the bluestone, in 1909. The present Willowbrook is in very good condition and retains a high degree of integrity.

How is it significant?

Willowbrook is of historic and architectural significance to the township of Penshurst and to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

Willowbrook is of historic significance as it represents the success over several generations of German Lutheran migrants, specifically the Burger, Mirtschin and Linke families, in the Gnadenthal area. It is of architectural significance as a late use of Victorian style, form and materials reflecting the conservative values of the owners, and the German Lutheran community who settled in the area. The range of outbuildings represents a previous way of life, being a very small holding with a focus on self sufficiency.

COMPARISON:

260 Burger's Cottages, Acacia, Springfield Lane, Penshurst.

ASSESSED BY: tfh

ASSESSMENT DATE:

26/05/2002

EXISTING LISTINGS:

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HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR Include in RNE Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

| Author | Title | Year | Page |
|----------------|---|------|-----------------|
| Raymond Burger | The Burger Family in Australia, 1851-1983 | 1983 | 116-7, 142-5 |
