

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: GRITJURK SCHOOL (FORMER)

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Cavendish-Coleraine Road GRITJURK

STUDY NUMBER: 383

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: outside

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 6 & 7 **SECTION:** 5 **PARISH:** PARISH OF GRITJURK

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 430 B31; VicRoads 72 E2; located on the north side of the Cavendish-Coleraine Road at the intersection with Roulston's Road and immediately west of the crossing with Bryan's Creek.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Former School, Cavendish-Coleraine Road, Gritjurk

Image Date: 26/03/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the of the school building, the Schinus molle (Peppercorn tree) and all of the land.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The single storey red brick building is in two joined parts, the earlier main school room and second room and the later teacher's residence. The roofs are simple gables perpendicular to each other and clad in corrugated iron. The school room is entered through an off-centre brick porch with a side door and a small window at the front. The roof of the porch copies the main roof. The main room is presently sub-divided by light-weight timber and sheeting subdivisions. There is an open fireplace with a simple but conventional timber mantel in the centre of the north wall and a side door. There are three 12 pane double-hung sash windows in the south elevation, two for the school room and one for a smaller room behind the main room. These rooms are finished with white limewash on the face brickwork and have timber floors. A passage beside the smaller room leads to the extension used as the teacher's residence. This comprises a living room with a ledge and brace door opening to the rear and a 12 pane double hung sash window, and a passage leading to the kitchen and the bedroom. The latter also have 12 pane double-hung sash windows on the south elevation. These rooms have walls clad with later plywood sheeting (partly removed) over limewashed brick and pine lining board ceilings. The floors are timber. The tapestry brick mantel surviving in the living room confirms a mid-twentieth century renovation, just before or, possibly, just after WW2. A new small detached residence has been built to the east of the school building and a modern garden established around both buildings. The Peppercorn tree, *Schinus molle*, located immediately to the south-west of the entrance of the building almost certainly dates from its time as a school.

HISTORY:

The Gritjurk School opened in 1872 as a Common School, with an attendance of 24 pupils (Blake, 38). The school was opened in response to the increased population brought about by the Land Selection Acts, which allowed small landholders to take up land previously held as part of large pastoral runs. The School had a three room teachers residence attached.

In 1873, the school became State School 1060. The first head teacher was Job Francis, who arrived in the area in 1872, with his wife Agnes nee Read (also spelt Reid or Reed) (VPI, Reg. No. 22286). The Francis' had previously been in Pitfield, and later lived in Branhholme and Portland. On arrival, a brick school with attached three room residence was made available for the Francis family. Job Francis was paid an annual salary of 132 pounds, 9 shillings and 6 pence. Mr. Francis remained as head teacher until the end of 1885. It is thought that after this he resided in Coleraine, his descendant's include Peter Francis of the Peter Francis Points Arboretum fame.

Gritjurk State School 1060 closed on 13th April, 1899 (Blake, 38), when a larger, modern school was built some distance south (Gritjurk South State School) (Campbell, Pers. Comm. 2001). The school was occasionally used for church services

The property, along with 17 acres was purchased from the Crown in 1910 by Angelo Crotch Palmer and Saxon Harold Palmer, who were both Hamilton solicitors (Public Record Office, Vol. 1275, Fol. 254873) Encumbrances referred to "A mortgage from Agnes Ferrier Ellen Walker registered 18th August and Nod. 213007 in the register..."

Angelo Crotch Palmer died on 10 August 1912, and probate was granted to his brother, Saxon Palmer, and his wife, Florence (nee Gill) (Probate File 22/02/1924). Saxon and Florence sold the school and seven acres for ninety pounds to Cornelius Walter Richardson, a labourer from Coleraine in 1924 (Volume 6188 Folio 1237562). Walker continued to own the property until his death in 1958, when the property passed to his widow Mary Kathleen Richardson of Coleraine. The land was later transferred to their son, Keith Charles Richardson in 1962, and in 1967, to their other son, Frederick Richardson. Ian Archibald Campbell and June Campbell purchased the property in 1992. The schoolroom is used for storage, and a modern home has been constructed adjacent.

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THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 6 Educating
6.2 Establishing schools
6.5 Educating people in remote places

CONDITION:

The school building, especially around the entrance and western end of the building, is in very poor condition with substantial and serious cracking.

INTEGRITY:

Fair degree of intactness

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The former Gritjurk School is located on the north side of the Cavendish-Coleraine Road, about fifteen kilometers east of Coleraine. The former school is a single storey red brick building in two joined parts, the earlier main school room and second room and the later attached teacher's residence. A mature Peppercorn Tree (*Schinus molle*) is located adjacent to the school, and dates from about 1880. The Gritjurk common school opened in 1872, in response to the increase in population associated with closer settlement and the Land Selection Acts of the 1860s and 1870s. The following year it became State School 1060, with Job Francis as head teacher. The school closed in 1899 when the larger Gritjurk South School opened. There has been no architect or builder associated with the design. The building is in very poor condition, and retains a fair degree of integrity.

How is it significant?

The former Gritjurk School is of historical and social significance to the community of Coleraine and to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The former Gritjurk school is historically significant as a rare surviving example of a rural school with an attached residence. The school provides a tangible link to the Closer Settlement and Land Selection Acts, a particular phase in the long history of the pastoral industry in the area. The school is a physical expression of the population boom which resulted from Closer Settlement, and which created social prosperity hitherto unknown in the area.

The school has social significance as an expression of the collective aspirations and dedication of the selection families.

COMPARISON:

089 National School, cnr Henty and Church Sts, Coleraine
195 State School No. 1418, Knight's Road, Byaduk North

ASSESSED BY: TFH & AEN

ASSESSMENT DATE:

10-Feb-02

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
L J Blake, ed.

Title
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1973 38,
100