

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: MIRTSCHIN'S HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Springfield Lane PENSHURST

STUDY NUMBER: 441

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: outside

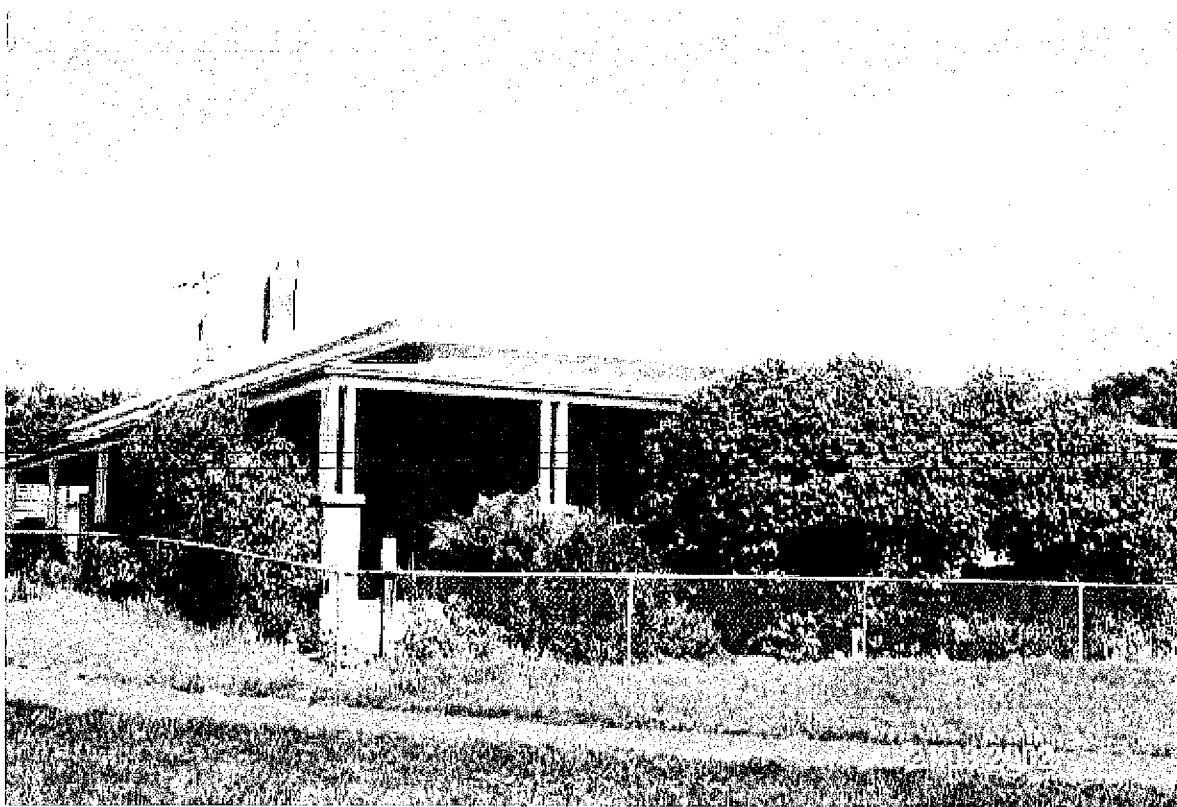
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: part B **SECTION:** XV **PARISH:** PARISH OF BORAMBORAM

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 474 D16; VicRoads 73 D8; located off the Penshurst-Macarthur Road in Burger's Road, 10kms due west of Penshurst

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Mirtschin Homestead (second), Springfield Lane, Penshurst

Image Date: 21/03/2002

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the house and outbuildings, but excluding their interiors, all of the stables, the dairy, the woolshed, and all drystone walls and an area of 10,000sqm to include the structures.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Mirtschin's Homestead is located at the end of a long driveway off Springfield Lane, approximately 10km west of the township of Peshurst. The homestead complex consists of a bluestone homestead, and stables, an early orchard, a later corrugated iron woolshed and as a number of structures made of bluestone surrounding the homestead. These include an outdoor bread oven, smoke house, cow shed, pigsty.

The bluestone house was originally of four rooms, built in the 1870s, and was extended in 1937. It is a single storey symmetrical house with a central passageway and rooms to either side. The front door is symmetrically arranged, with a twelve pane double hung sash window on either side. The homestead has a simple corrugated iron hipped roof, and corrugated iron verandah supported by timber and concrete posts. It is thought that the verandah was replaced in the Interwar period. The exterior of the homestead appears to be in very good condition, and retain a good degree of integrity (the interiors were not inspected). This homestead was built to replace the earlier lehmwickle homestead which was built by the first Mirtschin family who settled this allotment. This early homestead was located 20 metres south of the current homestead, and was of two storeys. It was removed in 1973, and it is possible that some archaeological potential may exist at that site.

About 50 metres south of the bluestone house is a simple bluestone stable, with a corrugated iron gabled roof. The stable is divided into two sections, defined by timber doors which are painted yellow and red. The yellow double timber doors were for the stables, and the red single timber door indicated the wheat shed. The stables appear to be in excellent condition, and retain a high degree of integrity.

To the west of the homestead, a primitive domed bread oven built of stone and simple one roomed stone smoke house. The oven is in poor condition and the smoke house is in fair condition. A cow shed and pigsty constructed of crude uncut stones are located some distance east of the house, and are long low rectangular structures. The cow shed is half corrugated iron, and has some associated stone walls. The pigsty and cow shed are both in fair condition. The bread oven, smoke house, cow shed and pigsty all retain a high degree of integrity.

An orchard is located some distance east of the house, and has a number of fruit trees in it surrounded by a stone wall. The species and varieties of the orchard have not been inspected. The orchard appears to be in good condition and retains a very high degree of integrity.

The woolshed is made of corrugated iron, and located adjacent to the cow shed, some distance east of the house. It replaced an early timber woolshed burned down in 1963.

HISTORY:

The Boram Boram Parish Plan shows that a G. G. Crouch purchased the two allotments, A (to the west) and B (to the east), of section XV (15), comprising 312 acres each, possibly early in 1853 but probably after 1855. Nothing is known of George Crouch who may have been no more than a speculator. A plan of 'Suburban and Country Lands & the Township of Peshurst near Mount Rouse in the Parishes of Yalimba and Boramboram' was published in 1855 with his name on Section XIV but not on the adjacent allotment. Johann Friedrich Krummnow purchased the neighbouring 1,584 acres, which was to become the utopian commune of German Lutherans called Herrnhut. These two allotments were then amalgamated and re-subdivided into a northern, middle and southern third. The Albert family established a farm on the northern third, Peter Burger established Acacia on the middle third and the Mirtschin family established farm on the southern third, bounded by the Peshurst-Macarthur Road.

Johann Mirtschin emigrated with his family on the Helene in 1851 (Uebergang, 49). He arrived with a number of other Wendish families in the Lyndoch Valley in South Australia, and the following year he and his family travelled by sea to Portland while the other members of the Wendish party travelled overland (ibid.). The

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Mirtschins were temporarily based at Portland, in which time Pastor Schurmann et with them and some of the group purchased land at Hamilton (then known as The Grange). In 1853, along with five other settlers, Johann's father purchased 624 acres near Mount Rouse, and they named their community Gnadenthal, meaning Valley of Grace (ibid., 50). It was at this time that Johann built the two storey pug house which remained for nearly 120 years.

In 1871, Johann married Ernestine, the eldest daughter of Johann and Johanne Uebergang in 1871 (Uebergang, 46). It is believed the couple lived with Johann's family until he inherited the land. Johann and Ernestine had nine children between 1872 and 1891, and perhaps as a result of their rapidly growing family, a more substantial bluestone residence was built in the mid 1870s.. Johann Mirtschin died aged 79 in 1919 (ibid.50), and his third son, Paul managed the farm while Ernestine, her unmarried daughter Emma and handicapped son, Eddie lived on a cottage on the farm. After Ernestine and Eddie's deaths, Emma continued to provide assistance to Paul and his wife Annette (nee Matushka) who continued to reside in the newer bluestone residence. The property is now owned and run by the fourth continuous generation of the Mirtschin family.

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 homestead and stables are in very good condition, the other stone outbuildings are in good to fair condition, and the site of the earliest mud house is potentially of some archaeological significance.

INTEGRITY:

high degree of integrity

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

Mirtschin's Homestead Complex is a complex of bluestone buildings located off the Penshurst-Macarthur Road in Burger's Road, 10kms due west of Penshurst. The homestead complex consists of a bluestone homestead and staff quarters, bluestone stables, an early orchard, a later corrugated iron woolshed and as a number of structures made of bluestone surrounding the homestead. These include an outdoor bread oven, smoke house, cow shed, pigsty. An archeological site is located immediately adjacent to the current homestead, where a two storey Lehmwickle structure dating from the 1850s was located. This was removed in 1973. The Mirtschin Homestead complex is built on land which was purchased by Johann Mirtschin and five other Wendish settlers in 1853. Each family was given an allotment of land, on which they built similar pug or Lehmwickle houses, an intact example of which survives at the adjacent Burger family property, Acacia. A later homestead was built in the mid 1870s as Johann and Ernestine's family grew. The bluestone homestead, servants quarters and stables are in very good condition, and retain a high degree of integrity; the smoke house, oven, pigsty and cow shed are in good condition and retain a high degree of integrity.

How is it significant?

Mirtschin's Homestead Complex is of historical, architectural, social and archeological significance to the

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Gnadenhal community and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

Mirtschin's Homestead Complex is of historical significance for its long association with the Mirtschin family, who have had continuous ownership of the property since 1853. It is of further historical significance for the range of outbuildings which are adjacent to the homestead, and those which are some distance away. These buildings indicate a self sufficiency and a utopian ideal which is indicated in the name which the original settlers of the German community chose, Gnadenhal, meaning 'Valley of Grace'. The complex is historically significant for demonstrating the early immigration and settlement of a minority German group, specifically the Wends or Sorbs into Western Victoria from South Australia. It is of social significance as one of the best and most intact demonstrations of their lifestyle. It is of further significance for its links with the settlement of the Wimmera. The complex is of architectural significance as a complete small mixed farm and especially for the use of vernacular construction techniques. The site is considered to be of archaeological significance for the potential which the site of the original Lehmwickle house may have to yield information about the past.

COMPARISON:

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

205 Albert Homestead Complex, Springfield Lane off Penshurst-Macarthur Road, Penshurst

239 Herrnhut Ruins, Day's Lane, Penshurst

ASSESSED BY: TFH & AEN

ASSESSMENT DATE:

19-Feb-03

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
Alan Uebergang	The Uebergang Families in Australia 1848-1985	1985	48-52
Mr. & Mrs. Mirtschin	Personal Communciation 21 March, 2002	2002	