

# RUPERTSWOOD



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2008



1 rupertswood macedon  
street sunbury front view  
detail of lace



h00275 rupertswood plan

## Location

3-5 MACEDON STREET SUNBURY, HUME CITY

## Municipality

HUME CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0275

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO45

## **VHR Registration**

October 9, 1974

## **Amendment to Registration**

February 10, 2005

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - June 4, 1999

What is significant?

Rupertswood Mansion built for Sir William Clarke at Sunbury in 1874-76 was one of the largest houses built in Victoria in the nineteenth century. It is located within the township of Sunbury, 35 kilometres west of Melbourne. The foundation stone for Rupertswood was laid on 29 August 1874 with some 1000 people in attendance. The mansion was built by contractors George Sumner & Co. from designs prepared by architect George Brown, whilst interior decorations were carried out by Schemmel and Shilton. The two storey bluestone mansion, surmounted by a 100 feet high tower with a mansard roof and widow's walk, was completed in 1876 and described at that time as being in the "Byzantine order of architecture". The ballroom was added in late 1881 and completed in 1882. The elaborate gates and lodge were built at the same time as the main house to designs by the architect George Brown. The stables with clock tower were destroyed by fire in 1928.

The gardens and parkland, including the artificial lake, were designed by the leading landscape architect of the time, William Sangster. The brick and cement tank, capable of holding 9000 gallons of water, supplied water to the house and grounds.

The property was sold by the Clarke family in 1922 to manufacturer Hugh Victor McKay. The pastoralist William Naughton bought Rupertswood in 1926 and the property was subdivided. Since 1927 Rupertswood has been owned by the Salesian order. The Salesian Society, an order of Catholic priests and brothers, dedicated to the care and education of young people, has approximately 17,000 members worldwide. The order was founded by St. John Bosco in 1859 at Turin, Italy, who called his congregation the Society of St. Francis of Sales after the 16th century saint, and the priests and brothers are known as Salesians.

How is it significant?

Rupertswood is of historical, architectural, aesthetic, and scientific (horticultural) importance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Rupertswood, one of the largest houses built in Victoria, has historical significance as an expression of an extraordinary way of life based on great affluence. Rupertswood became one of the principal social centres in Victoria, with hundreds of guests arriving at the estate's private railway platform to attend hunt meets, balls and house parties. The railway platform has been re-built probably in the mid twentieth century but the site is part of

the significance of the place. The estate also had its own half battery of horse artillery when Sir William Clarke formed a small permanent force in 1885. The drill hall and the vault remain as reminders of this privately sponsored regiment.

Rupertswood has important historical associations with landowner, stud-breeder and philanthropist Sir William John Clarke (1831-1897). The elaborate mansion with its large estate demonstrates the important status of Clarke whose prominence as a colonist was recognised in 1882 by his appointment as a baronet.

Rupertswood has an historical association with Hugh Victor McKay (1865-1926) who owned the Sunshine Harvester Works, for many years the largest factory in Australia. McKay achieved his long-held ambition of owning Rupertswood in 1922 but died after only four years.

Rupertswood has significant historical associations with the Catholic Church in Victoria. The Salesian order of priests, who have occupied the property since 1927, was formed in Turin, Italy by Saint John Bosco who set up schools and homes for the underprivileged of the city. The order arrived in Australia in 1923 and priests and brothers were welcomed in Melbourne by Archbishop Mannix in 1925. From 1931 to 1981 Rupertswood was the site for Eucharistic Festivals, the major annual devotional event of the Catholic Church in Victoria. The ballroom was converted to a chapel and a choir loft was added in 1964 by the Salesians.

Rupertswood is of historical significance for its association with the history of cricket as the birthplace for the Ashes, cricket's most illustrious trophy. After a social match on the property with members of the English touring cricket team in 1882, Janet, Lady Clarke burnt a bail and presented the ashes in an urn to the victorious English captain, Ivo Bligh.

Rupertswood is of architectural significance as an extraordinary example of a mansion built to reflect the wealth and prominence of the Clarke family and designed by architect George Brown in an eclectic design.

Rupertswood is of architectural and aesthetic significance for the outstanding craftsmanship and decoration of the interior. The stained glass windows by Ferguson and Urie are particularly noteworthy.

Rupertswood is of aesthetic significance for the garden and parkland designed in the picturesque style by William Sangster in 1874. Despite the loss of much of the plantings and some of the pathway system the garden retains elements from the original design such as the entrance and lodge, drives, lake and rockery, the Kept Gardens around the mansion, the escarpment, remnants of the water supply system, the household produce garden and the farm.

The gardens are of scientific (horticultural) significance. There are two rare *Afrocarpus falcata*, unusual wisteria cultivars, camellias and conifers, especially Bunya Bunya Pines and Hoop Pines which have grown to a large size and are an important landscape feature.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### **Specific Exemptions:**

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Regular Site Maintenance : The following site maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) regular site maintenance provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the maintenance of an item to retain its conditions or operation without the removal of or damage to the existing fabric or the introduction of new materials; c) cleaning including the removal of surface deposits, organic growths, or graffiti by the use of low pressure water and natural detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing; d) repairs, conservation and maintenance to plaques, memorials, roads and paths, fences and gates and drainage and irrigation. e) the replacement of existing services such as cabling, plumbing, wiring and fire services that uses existing routes, conduits or voids, and does not involve damage to or the removal of significant fabric. Note: Surface patina which has developed on the fabric may be an important part of the item's significance and if so needs to be preserved during maintenance and cleaning. Note: Any new materials used for repair must not exacerbate the decay of existing fabric due to chemical incompatibility, obscure existing fabric or limit access to existing fabric for future maintenance. Repair must maximise protection and retention of fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements. Fire Suppression Duties : The following fire suppression duties are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) Fire suppression and fire fighting duties provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) Fire suppression activities such as fuel reduction burns, and fire control line construction, provided all significant historical and archaeological features are appropriately recognised and protected; Note: Fire management authorities should be aware of the location, extent and significance of historical and archaeological places when developing fire suppression and fire fighting strategies. The importance of places listed in the Heritage Register must be considered when strategies for fire suppression and management are being developed. Weed and Vermin Control : The following weed and vermin control activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) Weed and vermin control activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; Note: Particular care must be taken with weed and vermin control works where such activities may have a detrimental affect on the significant fabric of a place. Such works may include the removal of ivy, moss or lichen from an historic structure or feature, or the removal of burrows from a site that has archaeological values. Landscape Maintenance : The following landscape maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) landscape maintenance works provided the activities do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) watering, mowing, top-dressing and fertilising necessary for the continued health of plants, without damage or major alterations to layout, contours, plant species or other significant landscape features; c) pruning to control size, improve shape, flowering or fruiting and the removal of diseased, dead or dangerous material, not exceeding 20% of the crown of the tree within a period of two years; d) tree surgery by a

qualified horticulturalist or tree surgeon necessary for the health of those plants. Public Safety and Security : The following public safety and security activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) public safety and security activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the erection of temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or secure public safety which will not adversely affect significant fabric of the place including archaeological features; c) development including emergency stabilisation necessary to secure safety where a site feature has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and represents a safety risk to its users or the public. Note: Urgent or emergency site works are to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified specialist such as a structural engineer, or other heritage professional. Signage and Site Interpretation : The following Signage and Site Interpretation activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) signage and site interpretation activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the erection of non-illuminated signage for the purpose of ensuring public safety or to assist in the interpretation of the heritage significance of the place or object and which will not adversely affect significant fabric including landscape or archaeological features of the place or obstruct significant views of and from heritage values or items; c) signage and site interpretation products must be located and be of a suitable size so as not to obscure or damage significant fabric of the place; d) signage and site interpretation products must be able to be later removed without causing damage to the significant fabric of the place; Note: The development of signage and site interpretation products must be consistent in the use of format, text, logos, themes and other display materials. Note: Where possible, the signage and interpretation material should be consistent with other schemes developed on similar or associated sites. It may be necessary to consult with land managers and other stakeholders concerning existing schemes and strategies for signage and site interpretation. Mineral Exploration : The following Mineral Exploration activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) mineral Exploration activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) preliminary non-intrusive exploration, including geological mapping, geophysical surveys, and geochemical sampling and access to shafts and adits; c) advanced forms of exploration (drilling), including the location of drill pads and access tracks where this has been the subject of on-site negotiation and agreement with representatives of Heritage Victoria, DSE and Parks Victoria, and where all significant historic site features have been identified and protected as part of an approved work plan. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates	1874,
Architect/Designer	Browne, George,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	1133
Property Number	

## History

Associated People: Owner CLARKE, SIR R; HV McKay of the Sunshine Harvester Works. McKay achieved his long-held ambition of owning Rupertswood in 1922 but died after only four years.

## Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 275 in the category described as a Heritageplace is now described as:

Rupertswood, Macedon Street, Sunbury, Hume City Council.

EXTENT:

To the extent of:

1. All the buildings and structures known as Rupertswood marked on Diagram No. 275 held by the Executive Director, HeritageVictoria including:

- B1 Main House including the ballroom and servants' wings
- B2 Gate lodge
- B3 Front fence and gates
- B4 Fountain
- B5 Former drill hall
- B6 Bluestone retaining wall and base on east side of Blind Creek
- B7 Bluestone inlet structure from Blind Creek to dam and lake
- B8 Brick and bluestone outlet structure from lake, with sluice gates
- B9 Water tank, including boiler
- B10 Vaulted brick structure

2. All the land L1 described in Certificate of Title Volume 5416, Folio 006 and Certificate of Title Volume 3475, Folio 982 and part of the railway reserve marked on Diagram No. 275 held by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria.

Dated 10 February 2005

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 6 10 February 2005 232]

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*