
WILDERNESS HOMESTEAD COMPLEX



23106 The Wilderness
Gritjurk facade 2011



23106 The Wilderness
Gritjurk bay window 2012



23106 The Wilderness
Gritjurk front 2010



23106 The Wilderness
Gritjurk rear 2008



23106 The Wilderness
Gritjurk side 2009



23106 The Wilderness
Gritjurk rear 2013

Location

Wilderness Road, GRITJURK VIC 3315 - Property No 151

Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 24, 2003

What is Significant?

The Wilderness Homestead complex is in two parts: the original site which is close to the woolshed and overlooks a branch of the Bryant's Creek valley, and the present site which is on higher ground about 1.2kms to the north-east. Pringle Whyte, one of several brothers who pioneered the Coleraine area, established the squatting run in 1849. It had a series of owners including Henry Monro, Andrew Rose Cruickshank and Alfred Arden in partnership who probably established the original homestead and garden. Single storey and built of timber, it assumed a simple vernacular form with a detached kitchen. Samuel Proudfoot Hawkins, formerly a surveyor with Robert Hoddle, was another important occupant. All the buildings of the original site have been demolished to ground level but many plants survive from the garden. George Broughton, of Kout Narrien, established the present house and garden after his purchase and subdivision of the property in the early twentieth century. An early example of the Bungalow style, the house was designed by leading Melbourne architects, Oakden and Ballantyne. Its garden dates from the same time. Subsequent owners include a branch of the important Armytage family and the Botterill family. The present house has been modernised internally but remains substantially intact externally and is in excellent condition.

What is Significant?

The Wilderness Homestead Complex, both original and present sites, is of historical and architectural significance.

Why is it Significant?

The Wilderness Homestead Complex is of historical significance for its sequence of owners including several individuals and families who were important for the development of pastoralism in the Western District. Its ownership by a partnership is typical, local interests combining with metropolitan capital.

The Wilderness Homestead second house is of architectural significance as the work of leading Melbourne architects, Oakden and Ballantyne and as an early example of the informal Bungalow style.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002;
Construction dates	1847,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	OLD HOMESTEAD SITE - WILDERNESS,
Hermes Number	23106
Property Number	

Physical Conditions

At the original site, all of the fruit trees, the *Pinus caneriensis* and the *Pinus raditata* are in good condition. The other trees are in fair condition. The archeological potential of the site is limited by its current use as a charnal pit, which may have removed physical evidence.

At the present site, the house and the garden are in good condition.

Physical Description 1

An early photograph and rough sketch plan show that the original Wilderness homestead complex was a collection of small vernacular timber buildings, which faced south-west across the deep valley of a tributary of Bryan's Creek (CHS, file). It comprised the main house, which was one and two rooms deep, under a large hipped roof, with verandahs along the front and the rear. The roof may have included an attic because another old photograph of the facade shows a skylight (Wood, notes). There was a detached kitchen linked to the house by a covered way and this building appears to have included a store and a staff bed-sitting room. An office enclosed one end while two small buildings closed the other, one being used as a dairy and bedroom, the other as a laundry and nursery. Beyond there were various outbuildings. The complex was demolished in the 1920s and little remains above ground. It was located approximately 1.9km south-west of the present homestead and close to the present woolshed.

In front of the house there were steps in line with the front door leading to a circular lawn which included a Monkey Puzzle Tree (*Araucaria heterophylla*) and garden beds beyond. The tree survives. Other steps seem to have descended from a terrace or path in front of the front verandah. There was a pergola in the front garden and a large Ash (*Fraxinus* sp).

The remnant plants still demonstrate the primary elements in its layout. The layout was semicircular, set out immediately in front of the homestead, on a sloping hill. The garden appears to have been divided into sections. The western part of the semicircle is planted with edible fruit trees, including *Ficus carica* (Fig), *Morus nigra* (Mulberry), *Pyrus communis* (pear) and *Malus domestica* (Apple) trees. Immediately joining this, and continuing the semi-circle to the west is a row of *Crataegus laevigata* (hawthorn) which may have been a hedge. To the west of the site, there is also a collection of specimen trees, including a fine specimen of *Pinus canariensis* (Canary Island Pine), *Araucaria heterophylla* (Monkey puzzle), *Pinus radiata* (Monterey Pine) and *Ulmus procera* (English Elm). The site also has a fallen *Pinus* specimen, presumed to be *Pinus radiata*, and a number of *Ulmus procera* suckers. There is also the remains of a very formal planting of *Cupressus torulosa* which are located to the north west of the site, presumably planted as a hedge along a carriageway immediate to the homestead. The site also displays evidence of the former carriageway, as large fence posts on either side of a track indicate the former route of this, as does the raised surface. There is a natural spring to the immediate west of the garden, planted around this are several common fig (*Ficus carica*).

The present homestead is a rambling single-storey timber house with wide timber verandahs on three sides, two main entrances serving a hall and a transverse passage, and a service wing forming a courtyard at the rear. The low-pitched roof with deep eaves is covered with galvanised iron. The main rooms have rectangular bay windows. Other windows are plain double-hung sashes. The interiors, which are understated and representative of the early modernist movement, have been sympathetically refurbished with most change limited to the service areas. The garden and setting of the present homestead supports its architectural character. The outbuildings at the present homestead are not significant.

Historical Australian Themes

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

Usage/Former Usage

Continuing as a pastoral property

Integrity

The original homestead complex has been demolished.

The present homestead is relatively intact.

Physical Description 2

Pringle Whyte, first owner of squatting licence

Henry Monro, Andrew Rose Cruickshank and Alfred Arden, later owners

Samuel Proudfoot Hawkins, former surveyor and later owner

George Broughton, first owner of freehold

Charles Armytage, second owner of freehold

Oakden and Ballantyne, architects in 1901

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/>