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# KENILWORTH HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

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## Location

Cavendish-Coleraine Road, CAVENDISH VIC 3314 - Property No 002

## Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

## Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

## Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 12, 2003

What is significant?

The Kenilworth squatting run located to the north-west of Cavendish at the junction of the Wannon and Dundas Rivers, was taken up in 1846 by Thomas Norris, of Kout Narrien at Harrow. He sold his interest to Matthew Gibson who soon sold out to the partnership of James Riley and Edward Barker. They subdivided the run into North and South, James Riley keeping the Northern section now known as Kenilworth. It is likely that the pise house was built at this time. It is a very rare survivor and, although now in ruins, can be compared with the only other known contemporary example in this area, the second part of the Spring Vale Homestead complex. James Riley sold to Thomas McKellar in 1855 and he in turn sold to John Mackersey. It was he who built the brick and stone homestead in 1863 which was designed by John Shanks Jenkins, an important local architect and engineer who went on to have a very successful and distinguished career in Melbourne. Messrs. I. and A. Bell built it. Both the architect and the contractors had just been responsible for St John's Presbyterian Church, Cavendish, largely the gift of John Mackersey. The house, which although substantial was very conservative in style, was completely remodelled in the mid-twentieth century by the Brumley family. The builder then is believed to have been Douglas & Henry of Hamilton. Mackersey also built the brick woolshed and the brick men's quarters about 1864. The former retains a very high degree of integrity and is in good condition. The latter is relatively intact but is in very poor condition. It is thought that the architects were Walter and Auty of Warrnambool. Importantly, John Mackersey kept a detailed and competent diary. By the end of the 1860s, it seems the usual problems of the pastoralists and the process of Land Selection beat him and he retired to New Zealand. The next owner, also a good businessman and leader of the community, Edward Crossley also failed against the rabbits, sheep diseases and the 1890s bank crash. The Kenilworth Homestead complex passed through various hands and was something of a landmark example of Closer subdivision in the early twentieth century. The Brumley family retains Kenilworth.

How is it significant?

The Kenilworth Homestead complex is of historical and architectural significance to the community of Cavendish and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Kenilworth Homestead complex is of historical significance for its long sequence of distinguished and influential owners and as a reflection of their successes and failures. It is of particular significance for its associations with the Mackersey and Crossley families, the latter being unusual turning to pastoral pursuits after succeeding on the central Victorian goldfields. It is of architectural significance for its range of buildings including the very rare example of pise construction and for its relatively rare use of brick construction, which, in the case of the homestead, was combined decoratively with stone. It is of further architectural significance for the association of the main homestead with the important architect John Shanks Jenkins, although the homestead has been much altered.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002;
Construction dates	1846,
Architect/Designer	Jenkins, John S,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	KENILWORTH NORTH,
Hermes Number	23210
Property Number	

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## Physical Conditions

The main homestead is in excellent condition. The pise homestead is in ruinous condition. The woolshed is in good condition. The men's quarters is in very poor condition. The site of the original 1850s slab cottage, the orchard, the gardener's cottage and the pise homestead have major architectural potential.

## Physical Description 1

Kenilworth Homestead complex is located on the south side of the Cavendish-Coleraine Road about one mile west of Cavendish and overlooking the junction of the Wannon and Dundas Rivers. The homestead is set on a rise and enjoys extensive views across the valleys. The carcass of the 1863 homestead is incorporated into the present house but has been completely remodelled. The present house is cream brick with a low-pitched terra cotta tile roof and deep eaves. A gabled porch marks the entrance, approximately in the position of the original entrance. Pairs of cement columns 'in antis' support the semi-circular arch of the porch and a section of decorative brick finishes the gable. The fenestration is large picture windows of plate glass. The interiors of the house survive intact to the immediate post World War Two period.

The pise house survives as a ruin although the low walls are relatively stable. It is possible to deduce the general form of the house from the surviving fabric and from old photographs. The house was single storey, symmetrical and had a verandah, possibly as protection for the mud walls. The corners of the verandah appear to have been enclosed in timber as extra pavilion rooms. There was a central front door and two windows, each supported by a timber lintel. There may have been a central passage, which led to a contiguous skillion section of two rooms. Originally the roof was probably thatch but a photograph indicates a corrugated iron roof. Piles of bricks and rubble nearby suggest that there were small outbuildings associated with the pise building. The beds of pise construction are clearly visible.

The men's quarters are brick, made from bricks either fired on the property or nearby at Cavendish. There are two parallel gabled roofs of corrugated iron on hardwood timber framing, now with no ceiling. The bricks are laid

in two sorts of bonding, the section under one roof being Flemish and the other Colonial. There may have been an intentional use of the darker header bricks to achieve a traditional dichromatic pattern. The casement windows in the gables are slightly different sizes. The chimneys and oven at the north end have collapsed leaving gaps in the wall and there are gaps on the west as well. Also in the west wall there are gaps in two diaper-shaped sections to provide ventilation. The whole building is suffering from rising and falling damp, especially from the valley gutter. The building is in very poor condition and in need of urgent repair.

The woolshed is located on the far side of the pise building. The walls are brick built on bluestone foundations and laid in Colonial bond. They have been limewashed internally to the eaves height although this has been rubbed back to the brick by sheep. The roof retains the original or very early short sheets of corrugated iron in five rows with the top row slightly raised for ventilation. Internally, the original hardwood posts and pens survive and sections of the slatted floor and the board may be original. The openings for the sheep to exit, along both sides, are relatively large, have shallow segmental arches of header bricks, and are finished with particularly fine joinery. Double timber gates each have a four-paned window above. At the northern end there is an elevated timber door and two openings with timber louvres. The building is in good condition.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.1 Grazing stock

3.5.2 Breeding animals

3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries

Theme 5: Working

5.8 working on the land

## **Usage/Former Usage**

Continuing as a pastoral property

## **Integrity**

The site of the original homestead (now demolished) has potential as an archaeological site, as does the ruinous pise building. The men's quarters are in poor condition with some serious points of failure. The woolshed is in good condition. The present homestead is in excellent condition.

## **Physical Description 2**

Thomas Norris, first lease holder of Kenilworth squatting run

Matthew Gibson, second lease holder of Kenilworth squatting run

James Riley third lease holder of Kenilworth squatting run (in partnership with Edward Barker) & first leaseholder of Kenilworth North after subdivision; second leaseholder of Kenilworth South.

Edward Barker, third lease holder of Kenilworth squatting run (in partnership with James Riley); First leaseholder of Kenilworth South after subdivision

Peter Parton, fourth lease holder (in partnership with James Riley and Edward Barker) of Kenilworth squatting run

Thomas McKellar, second leaseholder of Kenilworth North

John Mackersey, third leaseholder of Kenilworth North

Thomas Edward Bostock, third leaseholder of Kenilworth North

Sloane and Jeffrey, fourth and final leaseholders of Kenilworth North until the cancellation of the leasehold in 1884.

Thomas and Andrew Chirnside, third and final leaseholders of Kenilworth South until the cancellation of the lease in 1867.

### **Physical Description 3**

Kenilworth Pre-emptive Right

*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/>*