

## MIRTSCHIN'S HOMESTEAD COMPLEX



23644 Mirtschin Homestead complex homestead 1854



23644 Mirtschin Homestead complex cowshed 1855



23644 Mirtschin Homestead complex cowshed woolshed 1850



23644 Mirtschin Homestead complex verandah 1852



23644 Mirtschin Homestead complex machinery shed 1853



23644 Mirtschin Homestead complex oven smoke house 1847



23644 Mirtschin Homestead complex old garden 1857



23644 Mirtschin Homestead complex service wing 1849



23644 Mirtschin Homestead complex stable 1848



23644 Mirtschin Homestead complex stable 1851



23644 Mirtschin Homestead complex woolshed 1856



23644 Mirtschin Homestead complex cow yards 1858

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## Location

Springfield Lane PENSHURST, Southern Grampians Shire

## 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 - March 5, 2004

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 Gnadenthal 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, Gnadenthal, 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.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002;
Construction dates	1853,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	23644
Property Number	

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## Physical Conditions

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.

## Physical Description 1

Mirtschin's Homestead is located at the end of a long driveway off Springfield Lane, approximately 10km west of the township of Penshurst. 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.

## **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

Theme 8 Developing Australia's cultural life

8.12 Living in and around Australian homes

8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

## **Usage/Former Usage**

Residential and Farming

## **Integrity**

high degree of integrity

## **Physical Description 2**

Mirtschin family

*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/>*