

Kuruc-a-ruc Homestead Complex



Kuruc-a-ruc



Kuruc-a-ruc Homestead



Kuruc-a-ruc, looking north from garden



Kuruc-a-ruc rear kitchen addition c. 1990s



Kuruc-a-ruc Mens Quarters



National Estate Register, 2003.



National Estate Register, 2003.



National Estate Register, 2003.



Extent of registration map for Kuruc-a-ruc April 2010.jpg

Location

Kuruc-a-ruc Road ROKEWOOD, GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Municipality

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

Heritage Listing

Golden Plains Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

The Kuruc-a-ruc homestead complex is located on the northern side of the Kuruc-a-ruc Creek. The squatting run dates from the late 1830s when it was taken up by the Derwent Company which soon sold the lease to Aitchison and Co., with David Aitchison the sole proprietor by 1852 who applied for his 640 acre Pre-emptive Right the next year. The central part of the homestead probably dates from this time. It is a single-storey stone structure with a pair of hipped roofs, the front of which extends to incorporate the wide timber verandah on three sides. In October 1857, pastoralists John senior and his sons William, John junior and Nairne Guthrie Elder, took over the ownership of the Kuruck Kuruck pastoral run. The homestead was extended on both sides in 1866 to the design of architect, Alexander Davidson who had arrived in Rokewood from Scotland late in 1864. The detailing is particularly fine. Outbuildings were also designed by Davidson. Alone and subsequently in practice with his architect cousin, George Henderson, he went on to become one of the best and busiest architects in the Western District. Their success was largely based on their Presbyterian connections. The Elder family was staunchly Presbyterian and there are direct links with Davidson first major commission in Victoria, the Rokewood Presbyterian Church. The property was sold in 1963 to Muller Brothers and in 1973 to the present owners, the Boyle family. The homestead was restored and reoccupied by the Boyle family in 2002. A recent sympathetic extension includes a new kitchen, dining and living area. The conventional homestead garden with its extensive plantings of mature exotics, especially conifers, which was rehabilitated during the 1990s probably dates from the mid 1860s. Although there is no surviving early decoration in the homestead, the complex is substantially intact with a high degree of integrity. An outbuilding, a pair of workers' cottages survives as a ruin some distance to the south-east of the homestead. The early woolshed, once a key part of the complex was demolished in the nineteenth century with a new woolshed built in 1929.

How is it Significant?

The Kuruc-a-ruc homestead complex, Rokewood is of historical, social and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it Significant?

The Kuruc-a-ruc homestead complex, Rokewood is of historical significance as the focus of one of the oldest squatting licences in the Western District and for its direct associations with important early pastoral companies and individual squatters including David Aitchison and, for a century from 1863, the Elder family. It is of further historical significance for the intimate interaction between pastoralism and gold-mining. It is of social significance as a classic model of homestead life and for its relationship with the surrounding district and towns, especially religiously through the staunch Presbyterianism and traditional Scottish kinship loyalties of the owners. It is of architectural significance for its extended early bungalow form, more typical of NSW than Victoria after the discovery of gold. The extensions and outbuildings are of particular architectural significance as some of the earliest works of Alexander Davidson, the young Scottish architect who lived briefly at Rokewood and went on to develop, with his partner George Henderson, as one of the most important firms in Western Victoria.

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|--------------------|----------------------|
| Architect/Designer | Davidson, Alexander, |
| Hermes Number | 23691 |
| Property Number | |

Physical Description 1

The Kuruc-a-ruc homestead complex comprises the main homestead, built in at least three main stages, its surrounding garden including many mature trees, two substantial outbuildings facing each other across the entrance courtyard and, at some distance, the ruins of men's quarters. The homestead faces south and looks towards the Kuruc-a-ruc Creek.

The homestead is all single-storey. The central section is built of stone now rough-cast with exposed bluestone quoins. It has two low pitched hipped iron roofs the front one of which is continuous with the verandah roof. The verandah, on three sides, is supported by simple squared timber posts. Three pairs of French doors open onto the verandah. Internally a transverse passage, situated under the second roof, gives access to the rooms across the front, the larger being the dining room and the smaller being an office. Chimney breasts are in the east and west walls. The passage terminates in a vestibule with the 'front' door on the east elevation. Various details, such as varnished cedar joinery, and materials, such as hardwood floorboards in the passage and very wide pine floorboards in the drawing room, indicate an early date of construction. Smaller, simpler rooms are located under the rear roof. A large 'vestibule' door connects the passage with the new rear wing. Additions were made on both sides and these are grander in style with detailing and materials typical of the 1860s. (Some fittings were stolen when the house was abandoned and the sympathetic and appropriate replacements should not be confused with original fittings.) The hipped roofs of these additions are slate. The windows, with deep varnished reveals are either French doors or four-paned double-hung sashes with timber panels below. The walls are coursed rock-faced bluestone. The verandah continues across the south elevations of the additions.

The garden includes a wide range of natives and exotics, with a typical emphasis on exotic conifers. Two matching old *Cupressus sempervirens* (Italian cypress) were called Gog and Magog by the Elder family. The garden also includes old olive and mulberry trees. Its conventional plan probably reflects the original, or at least the 1860s period. Beds are edged with large bluestone boulders, although this may be a major restoration from the later 1970s to 1990s. On axis with the central French door of the south elevation there is a *Cedrus deodard* (Deodar Cedar) with two side plantings of *Araucaria bidwillii*, (Bunya Bunya Pine). Elsewhere there are *Cupressus macrocarpa*, (Monterey Cypress) including trees which form something of a border. Under the trees are typical low plantings including various succulents such as Aloes, Lilacs, Plumbago and ground-covers. The drive from the west leads to a large graveled space in front of the homesteads. The western edge of the garden is bounded by a simple timber picket fence which incorporates a concave double gate swung from tall timber posts.

Outside the fence are two 'opposing' single-storey outbuildings creating a large entrance yard. The building on the south side is random rubble freestone with bluestone quoins around the door. Some of the freestone blocks are large and act as quoins. The windows are twelve-paned double hung sashes. The doors are ledge and brace. The hipped roof is covered with short sheets of corrugated iron over timber shingles. A small dormer above the main door gives access to the roof space. (The interior was not inspected.) The opposite building is coursed bluestone with similar doors and windows. There are skillion sections on the west and north sides. The date '1864' appears above the main door. The north skillion wall is built with vertical slabs set on a low brick plinth. Although vernacular in style and form, the buildings are well-built and finely detailed, suggesting that these may be the work of the architect, Alexander Davidson.

Some distance from the main homestead complex there is a residential duplex, probably men's quarters. It is single-storey and built of coursed random rubble freestone with bluestone quoins. There are massive chimneys at either end and a skillion extension at the rear. The building is in ruins with no roof, windows or doors. Differences in the masonry suggest that the walls may have been extended to provide extra height and possibly to change the roof form.

Along the Rokewood-Shelford Road and Kuruc-a-ruc Road boundaries there are fine dry stone walls with an entrance in Kuruc-a-ruc Road.

Kuruc-a-ruc homestead complex is significantly intact, including the original homestead and its side wings, two major outbuildings, the garden and surrounding park and other works. The rear service rooms have been much altered. Its integrity is high for the main homestead, outbuildings and garden. At some distance staff quarters survive but are ruinous.

Historical Australian Themes

The Australian Heritage Commission devised the Australian Historic Themes in 2001. The following themes have influenced the historical development of the Kuruc-a-ruc Homestead Complex.

3 Developing Local, Regional and National Economies

3.3.3 Prospecting for precious metals

3.4 Utilising natural resources

3.4.3 Mining

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.1 Grazing stock

3.5.2 Breeding animals

5 Working

5.1 Working in harsh conditions

5.1.2 Coping with dangerous jobs and workplaces

5.8 Working on the land

8 Developing Australia's Cultural Life

8.14 Living in the county and rural settlements

Physical Description 2

Kuruc-a-ruc Homestead Complex, to the extent of the exteriors and interiors of the main house (but excluding the new living room/kitchen extension), all of the two stone outbuildings, the drive, the garden, the ruined men's quarters and the perimeter dry stone walls, generally contained within an area 200.0 metres x 200.0 metres square and aligned with the axis of the house. [The exact polygons to circumscribe the buildings, works and structures should be determined in association with the owner.]

Physical Conditions

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Integrity

Kuruc-a-ruc homestead, outbuildings and garden retain a high degree of integrity.

Extent of Registration

Kuruc-a-ruc Homestead Complex.

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/>