

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: ROYSTON

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Henty Highway BRANXHOLME

STUDY NUMBER: 216

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: outside

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 4 **SECTION:** 3 **PARISH:** PARISH OF BRANXHOLME

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 473J C13; VicRoads 233 S5; located on the west side of the Henty Highway about 0.7kms south of the centre of Branxholme

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Royston Homestead, Henty Highway, Branxholme.

Image Date: 26/03/02

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. a) All the main house and all of the land within a 50m radius from any edge of the house, including the workman's cottage, the drive and the garden immediately in front of the 1860s wing, and the mature Lemon Scented Gum, Palm and the Cork Oak.

B) The timber stables and all the land in a radius of 10m from the timber stables.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Royston is a single storey bluestone house set on a substantial rise overlooking the Arrandoovong Creek valley and beyond towards Mount Napier. (This is the same view as that enjoyed by the new wing at Audley Homestead, probably built about 1860 for George Coldham, who is said to have been Catherine McPhee's lover.)

The windows are two paned, double hung sashes. The pair of low pitched hipped roofs are corrugated iron. The walls of the house are rock faced bluestone with simple struck joints. Because the quoins are raised and the stones around the openings are dressed to form architraves, it seems likely that the walls were intended to be rendered. The house is generally symmetrical about the front door but the second room on the north side projects. There may have been an early verandah. In any case, a timber verandah with cast iron brackets appears to have been added early in the twentieth century, probably after the First World War. [This appears in the John Collins collection of photographs held in the State Library.] Other alterations appear to date from this time including a new entrance on the south side, facing the main garden. The garden contains several early plantings including a Cork Oak, a Fan Palm and two Eucalyptus citriodora. These appear to date from the early twentieth century.

The house has been extended towards the rear using a rendered surface which simulates the original rockface finish of the bluestone. A new verandah replaced that which existed previously.

The original timber stable building survives at the rear in a paddock to the south-west of the house.

HISTORY:

Royston, located less than a kilometre to the south of Branxholme on the Henty Highway, was built in 1868 for Catherine McPhee. The date is inscribed on the northern chimney. The story goes that it was built for her by her lover, George Coldham Junior, son of the owner of Audley Homestead who had died in 1862. The Victorian Pioneers Index shows Ellen McPhee was born to Catherine McPhee in Branxholme in 1862 and no father's name is given (VPI Reg. No. 19288). In 1884, an Ellen Coldham married William Bowen at Audley (ibid., 2710). The following year, the birth of Catherine Ella Bowen, daughter of Ellen and William is registered at Branxholme (ibid., 746). It is said that the bluestone for the house was quarried on the Audley property. Miss Catherine McPhee purchased the five acre block of land in July 1868 for 35 pounds from Charles Schrodt. He had purchased it from Thomas Galliver for 30 pounds who had purchased it from John Johnston for 15 pounds. Johnston had purchased the Crown Grant in 1858 for 12 pounds, 13 shillings and 2 pence.

Miss McPhee owned the land and the house until 1904. She had mortgaged it several times for 130 pounds, suggesting a consistent valuation on the house of about 100 pounds. Two local doctors briefly occupied the house, Dr J F Matthews in 1889 and Dr N B Gandevia from 1890 to 1892. Then it was occupied by Mr. John Fletcher and his family until 1905 when it was purchased by Archibald McDonald, a schoolmaster at Wallacedale, who used to walk to and from his school. His ownership and occupation were brief, since, by 1907, it was sold to the Gough family, long time settlers and hoteliers in Branxholme. Four generations of the Gough family occupied the house until 1954. It may be that they were responsible for the construction of a timber and cast iron verandah and other alterations.

In more recent times, the house was owned and occupied by Peter James Black who appears to have been responsible for replacing the early twentieth century verandah and for building the substantial extensions at the rear of the house.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 3. Developing local, regional and national economies

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3.24 Selling companionship and sexual services

Theme 8 Developing Australia's cultural life

8.12 Living in and around Australian homes

8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

Theme 9 Marking the Phases of Life

9.2 Forming families and partnerships

Establishing partnerships

Bringing up children

9.5 Living outside a family/partnership

CONDITION:

The house is in excellent condition.

INTEGRITY:

low degree of integrity externally and internally

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

Royston is a single storey bluestone house to the south of Branxholme, set on a substantial rise overlooking the Arrandoovong Creek valley towards Mount Napier. The house was built in 1868 for Catherine McPhee who was said to be the mistress of George Coldham Junior, the younger son of the owner of nearby Audley Homestead. No architect has been associated with the design, nor any building contractors. The house was altered and extended by the Gough family in the early twentieth century, long term settlers and hoteliers in Branxholme. Substantial plantings which date from the Edwardian period survive in the garden, and provide a fuller picture of the way the house and garden were designed to compliment each other. The house was further altered after 1954. While the house is in good condition, its pre World War Two integrity has been compromised. Beyond the house, a set of original timber stables survive, in good condition, with a good degree of integrity, and a workman's cottage also survives with a relatively high degree of integrity.

How is it significant?

Royston is of historical significance to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

Royston is of historical significance as an example of a house and garden deliberately laid out to capture a view (to Mount Napier), which was incidentally the same view her (said) lover would have seen from his nearby property, Audley Homestead. It also represents a different sensibility, that of the a private space for its owners (the garden in front of the 1860s wing). The earliest parts of the house and garden, along with the timber stables and workmans cottage represent a previous way of life, and the twentieth century alterations to the house illustrate changing focus away from the picturesque towards the practical. It is of further historical significance for its associations with the original owner, Catherine McPhee, and her connection through George Coldham to the Audley Homestead.

COMPARISON:

113 Audley Homestead Complex, Branxholme-Byaduk Road, Branxholme
349 Burn Brae, Hamilton Highway, Peshurst

ASSESSED BY: tfh

ASSESSMENT DATE:

28/03/2002

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EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR Include in RNE Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Agnes V. Walter	Branxholme 1843-1973	1973	43
Press clipping from Hamilton History Centre Files.	"Old Home Built for a Lady"	1968	