

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: RIVERSIDE HOMESTEAD COMPLEX

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Falkenbergs Road WANNON

STUDY NUMBER: 313

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: outside

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

ALLOTMENT: 1 & 2 **SECTION:** 8 **PARISH:** PARISH OF REDRUTH

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 431 E24; VicRoads 72 E5; located on the east side of Falkenberg's Road, about 5.5kms south of the township of Wannon and overlooking the Wannon River..

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Local



Riverside, Falkenburg's Road, Wannon, garden entrance

Image Date: 15/11/01

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the house but excluding the interiors, the garden within the circular fence and all the outbuildings.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Riverside homestead is located on the east side of Falkenberg's Road about 5.5kms south-west of Wannon overlooking the Wannon River valley. It is a single storey weatherboard house painted white with a hipped corrugated iron roof, built after 1886. Its form is irregular and its style transitional between Italianate and the Federation period with some features, such as the gable detailing, suggesting the local Queen Anne movement. The verandah has been modified, probably in the 1920s, suggesting that the entrance to the house has been reoriented. Several rooms in the house have been remodelled, probably in the 1920s, thus presenting an eclectic mix of interior decorative styles.

The house addresses the view to the Wannon River valley and is situated within an unusual circular garden, with substantial garden beds and paths, now planted out in a style typical of the Interwar years but with many substantial earlier trees. The major plantings are typical and include: a pair of Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) at the pedestrian gate; a Canary Island Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) at the entrance; a Peppercorn (*Schinus molle*), a Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*), a Loquat tree (*Eriobotrya japonica*); a Golden Elm (*Ulmus procera* 'Aurea'); and an Ash (*Fraxinus* sp.). Generally the garden is planted out with low shrubs and perennials, including many camellias and other common 'cottage' garden types. Privet hedges are used as borders to the path and drives and sections of the boundary fence. There are also Tree Ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*). Several mature specimens of conifer form a background to the garden. The whole is enclosed within a circular capped post and wire fence. In the garden there is a summerhouse covered by a very old Wisteria.

Near the entrance to the garden there are timber stables and coach houses with men's quarters at the rear. These are comprised of several gabled forms, suggesting additions over the years. More recently the building has been used as garages. It is painted white.

Beyond the house and garden are several outbuildings, including woolshed, workshop or barn, storehouses and garages. Of these the woolshed is the most important. It appears to date from after the First World War, the time of Riverside's greatest success in sheep breeding. It is large, built of corrugated iron and had up to twelve stands. It is in good condition and, with various modernisations, remains significantly intact. The workshop or barn appears to date from after the Second World War, possibly from the 1950s wool boom. It is also corrugated iron, has a monitor ventilator along the roof ridge, is in excellent condition and retains a high degree of integrity. Nearby there is an old Caltex petrol pump and a newer tall Caltex oil sign. There are two water tanks, one elevated and the other of concrete on the ground.

HISTORY:

Alexander Thomson selected the land on which Riverside stands in November 1858. It had been part of the Mepunga squatting run established by the De Little Brothers, later taken up by William Messer (or Mercer) and Charles Arnot. In January 1858, Alexander Thomson purchased the Mepunga Pre-emptive Right and the lease was cancelled in 1866 (B&K, 57 114, 149, 242). Riverside was established in 1886 according to the date on the front gate although the house is more likely to date from the early 1890s. A ruined chimney in a paddock between the house and the river has been suggested as the site of the original house but no further information about it has come to light. It may be a remnant of pre-selection occupation.

Riverside's first owner was Johann Falkenberg, born in Nekla Prussia who, according to his gravestone in the Byaduk Cemetery, had left Hamburg on the 'Hermann' and had arrived in South Australia on 16 November 1853. He worked there with his older brother, Gottlieb who had arrived in 1847 (Willoughby, 242). He moved to Victoria in 1854 to work at the Pierrepont run south-east of Hamilton but returned to South Australia. He returned to Victoria in 1865, selecting land at Byaduk and calling his property Bonnie Hills. He married Ann Hallam in 1868, and they had three daughters, four sons and a stillborn child. Ann Falkenberg died at Byaduk on 14 December 1881 aged 32 (VPI, Reg. No. 9648; gravestone Byaduk Cemetery). Johann

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Falkenberg died at Byaduk on 9 June 1899 aged 64. "The late Mr. Falkenberg was very successful in all his undertakings, and by his skill and industry he was able to acquire considerable landed property throughout the Western District. The quality of the stock raised on his holdings was recognised by Victorian and South Australian buyers, and cattle turned off as fats brought consistently high prices; he won many prizes with his fat bullocks at the various shows. He was liked and respected by all for his sterling character and his genial and kindly nature." (Victoria and Riverina, 418)

Their eldest son Wilhelm Falkenberg who took over Riverside was born at Byaduk in 1872 (VPI, Reg. No. 14588). His life and successes are described in detail in 1933 in Victoria and Riverina: a biographical record of some of the pioneer families of Victoria and the Riverina. "His first property was "Ardonachie", a holding of 500 acres, but he later, at the age of 21, came to reside on his father's "Riverside" property, where he started bee-keeping in a large way, producing 5 to 7½ tons of honey each season from 50 to 75 hives. At that time he was one of the pioneers of the industry. After his father's death he carried on the Wannon grazing properties in addition to the bee-farming, which had to gradually give way to the many activities connected with his large pastoral interests. The "Riverside" property, which has been increased since W. Falkenberg took it over by the purchase of 5160 acres from "Brung Brungle", "Winninburn", and "Bochara" estates, now carries 6400 sheep, and is well known for the quality of the clip, which topped the market in 1927. The flock has been built up by careful breeding over many years, and a splendid commercial type of sheep on the lines of the Corriedale has been developed." (Victoria and Riverina, 419)

Riverside was important for sheep breeding, specifically the cross breeding of Merinos ewes and Lincoln rams. The results were so successful that the Falkenberg stud was one of the best of its class for wool and mutton production and wool from the Falkenberg flock topped the Australian market for the year 1928 in the crossbred section, ten bales realising the wonderful price of 32¼d per lb. (Victoria and Riverina, 419)

Wilhelm Falkenberg married Ellen Harrison and they had two sons, Stanley and John (Jack) who continued to work the property in partnership for many years, and a daughter, Dorothy. Stanley, who was born in 1903, enlisted at Hamilton and served in the Second World War (NAA, Series B884, Service No. V351636). He married and had children. Wilhelm died in 1942 (Willoughby, 242+) but Ellen survived him by many years. It was Ellen and then Dorothy who established and consolidated the homestead's important garden.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

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.

CONDITION:

Very good

INTEGRITY:

High

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is Significant?

Riverside Homestead is located on the east side of Falkenberg's Road about 5.5kms south-west of Wannon overlooking the Wannon River valley. It is a single storey timber house with an irregular plan and demonstrates a late interpretation of the Italianate style with Queen Anne influences. No architect or builder has been associated with its construction. The original occupants were Wilhelm and Ellen Falkenberg. Wilhelm was the

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son of a Prussian migrant, Johann Falkenberg with South Australian connections and an English migrant, Ann Hallam who selected land successfully at Byaduk. The Falkenbergs were, at first, apiarists but this was superseded by a very successful sheep and cattle-breeding program, which led to prizes, top prices and general recognition for the excellence of their flock and herd. Their sons Stanley and John continued to manage the property. The house is set within a garden unusual for its circular plan but typical of its late nineteenth and early twentieth plantings. The house and garden were substantially improved in the Interwar years and remain substantially intact to that period. The house is in good condition. The house is surrounded by the usual outbuildings, which complete the complex. Substantial outbuildings, including a large woolshed, complement the homestead.

How is it Significant?

The Riverside Homestead complex is of historic and architectural significance to the communities of Wannon and Byaduk and to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Riverside Homestead complex is of historic significance because of its associations with the Falkenberg family of mixed Prussian and British descent who succeeded both at Byaduk and at Wannon. Their success in sheep and cattle breeding is particularly notable and this is reflected in the woolshed. The Riverside Homestead is of architectural significance for reflecting that success over several generations and specifically for its unusual circular garden and for its picturesque form and setting.

COMPARISON:

006 Wannon Lea, Morgiana Road, Wannon
400 Schultz Residence, W Schultz Rd, Tarrington
450 Beekeeper's Farm, off Anderson's Road, Glen Isla
452 Barnes Honey Site, Old Henty Highway, Glen Isla

ASSESSED BY: tfh & aen

ASSESSMENT DATE:

10-Jul-03

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
	Victoria and Riverina: a biographical record of some of the pioneer families of Victoria and the Riverina	1933	418-419
Department of Justice Victoria	Pioneer Index Victoria 1836 - 1888	2001	
Lorraine Joy Willoughby	Following the Falkenbergs: Gottlieb and Johann Falkenberg from Nekla, Posen Prussia: commemorating 150 years in australia, 1847-1997	1997	242-304
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	57 114, 149, 242