

OLD STRATHKELLAR



Araucaria bidwillii, located at the entrance to the driveway from the garden



Cupressus sempervirens driveway, Old Strathkellar



Old Strathkellar Driveway, looking from garden gate toward Strathkellar/Mill Road



Norfolk Is Hibiscus, located to the east of the new house at Old Strathkellar



Pittosporum undulatum, located south east of the main garden, Old Strathkellar



Olea europea Supsp. *Europea* (remaining one of two), located immediately east of new house



Old Stables, located north of new house.



Row of *Quercus robur* (east west) from the corner of the old garden down towards Strathkellar/Mill Road



Citrus aurantium (unknown cultivar), Old Strathkellar



Remains of old Orchard, Old Strathkellar, looking south east from garden

Location

Mill Road, STRATHKELLAR VIC 3301 - Property No 0120

Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 4, 2008

What is significant?

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Old Strathkellar, located on Mill Road, Strathkellar is approximately 5 kilometres north east of the centre of Hamilton township. Old Strathkellar is the location of the Wedge Brother's original pre-emptive right, dating from 1838-9, known as 'The Grange'. The Grange was the first pastoral holding taken up in the Hamilton area. Thomas McKellar purchased The Grange in 1862 and renamed it 'Strathkellar'. A very fine two storey bluestone stable survives to the rear of the property, complete with a clear area, likely to have been the stable-yard, although now part of the gardens. The stables are likely to date from as early as 1862, possibly earlier. They have the original timber joinery inside, and are excellent condition with a very high degree of integrity both internally and externally. The original bluestone homestead was destroyed by fire in the twentieth century, and a substantial modern brick house, designed by Van Tromph architects was constructed on the site of the early house. The gardens are substantial and mature, and while they retain few of the finer details such as garden beds, paths or shrubberies, the surviving mature trees still provide substantial structure. The gardens are formally laid out, with strong plantings in clumps and rows which frame the views from the elevated homestead site across to the Grange Burn (south) and the settlement of Strathkellar (east). Although most of the garden appears to date from about 1860-1870, some trees may survive from a much earlier date. A survey by C. J Tyers, Government Surveyor records that a garden was established on the site as early as 1839-40. The property is entered through a long driveway from Strathkellar Road, planted in what appears to be a random pattern of various species including *Cupressus arizonica* (Smooth Barked Cypress), *Cupressus semprevirens* (Italian Cypress), *Brachychiton populensis* (Kurrajong), *Cedrus deodara* (Himalayan Cedar), *Shinus molle* (Peppercorn), *Ulmus procera* (English Elm), *Ulmusx hollandica* (Dutch Elm), *Quercus robur* (English Oak) and *Laurus nobilis* (Bay Laurel). The gardens have a distinct pattern, with long rows of *Quercus robur* (English Oak) screening (or bordering) the south east boundary. Between this 'boundary' plantation and the garden proper are the remains of an early orchard, with several surviving fruit trees including cultivars of Apple, Pear and Plum. The orchard area is in poor condition due to the long drought conditions. The main garden has a collection of significant trees, which stand alone for their substantial age and size. These include an *Olea europaea* (Olive), once one of a pair- the other has since declined, a very early *Araucaria bidwillii* (Bunya Bunya), *Pittosporum undualatum* (Sweet Pittosporum), *Citrus aurantium* cv. (a very early cultivar of orange with small fruits) and a substantial *Lagunaria pattersonii* (Norfolk Island Hibiscus), *Prunus lusitanica* (Portugese laurel), *Ficus platypoda* (Rock fig) and *Gleditsia tricanthos* (Honey Locust). The garden and driveway retains a very high degree of integrity, and despite the drought conditions, is in very good condition.

How is it significant?

The Old Strathkellar complex is of historical, architectural, aesthetic and scientific (botanical) significance to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Old Strathkellar complex is of historical significance as the first pastoral holding to be established in the Hamilton area by the Wedge Brothers in 1848-9, and for its long continuous history as a pastoral property. It is of further historical interest for providing insight into the early life of pastoral families and their priorities, evidenced by the fine stables, the detailed plantings in the driveway and substantial gardens surrounding the main buildings. It is of architectural significance for the interesting early bluestone stables, which show a technical understanding of construction methods with local materials, and for the fine craftsmanship evident in the surviving timber joinery, a rare surviving example of this craft. It is of aesthetic significance for the impact which the gardens have on the Strathkellar and Grange landscape. The distinctive dark foliage of the many conifers in the garden, and its siting on a rise overlooking the area have ensured its aesthetic dominance of the cultural landscape in which it is set. It is of scientific (botanic) significance for its wide range of early and very substantial species of exotic trees, both in the garden itself and the driveway.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002;
Construction dates	1860,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	STRATHKELLAR, THE GRANGE,
Hermes Number	23776
Property Number	

Physical Conditions

The garden survives in good condition, although severely affected by drought.

Physical Description 1

Old Strathkellar is located approximately 5 kilometres north east of the nearby township of Hamilton, on Mill Road (sometimes known as Strathkellar Road), in the Strathkellar area. The site retains the original garden, parts of which may date from as early as 1850, and an early two storey bluestone barn, which dates from the mid nineteenth century also. The main homestead was destroyed (by fire) and a new home was built on the site of the original in the 1980s. The new homestead is an unusual, architecturally designed brick home on a substantial scale, but of little heritage value.

The new house faces directly south and east, overlooking the gardens and Strathkellar Road. The two storey bluestone barn is located north of the homestead, and faces east. The stables have much of the original timber joinery inside them, including provisions for looseboxes, tack rooms, original doors, a loft and other elements. A large flat area is located immediately in front of the stables entrance, suggesting the remains of a large stableyard, typically associated with a substantial nineteenth century pastoral holding. The gardens surround the main homestead, particularly to the east, south and west. Aerial photographs show that the 'bones' of a detailed pleasure and produce garden survive. The property is entered through a long driveway from Strathkellar Road, planted in what appears to be a random pattern of various species including *Cupressus arizonica* (Smooth

Barked Cypress), *Cupressus sempervirens* (Italian Cypress), *Brachychiton populensis* (Kurrajong), *Cedrus deodara* (Himalayan Cedar), *Shinus molle* (Peppercorn), *Ulmus procera* (English Elm), *Ulmusx hollandica* (Dutch Elm), *Quercus robur* (English Oak) and *Laurus nobilis* (Bay Laurel). The gardens have a distinct pattern, with long rows of *Quercus robur* (English Oak) screening (or bordering) the south east boundary. Between this 'boundary' plantation and the garden proper are the remains of an early orchard, with several surviving fruit trees including cultivars of Apple, Pear and Plum. The orchard area is in poor condition due to the long drought conditions. The main garden has a collection of significant trees, which stand alone for their substantial age and size. These include an *Olea europaea* (Olive), once one of a pair- the other has since declined, a very early *Araucaria bidwillii* (Bunya Bunya), *Pittosporum undulatum* (Sweet Pittosporum), *Citrus aurantium* cv. (a very early cultivar of orange with small fruits) and a substantial *Lagunaria pattersonii* (Norfolk Island Hibiscus), *Prunus lusitanica* (Portugese laurel), *Ficus platypoda* (Rock fig) and *Gleditsia tricanthos* (Honey Locust).

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

residential

Integrity

High degree of integrity to turn of the century

Physical Description 2

The Old Strathkellar site was inspected on the 14th March 2008. It was found to have an important garden, with a number of significant trees. A very early substntial stone stable survives at the rear of the modern house. The stables is divided into two separate rooms, one the stables proper, with looseboxes, mangers and all original hand carved joinery; and the tack room or carriage room adjacent. The whole building has an attic storey which is accessed from inside by a ladder, with loft doors opening out to the rear, and slit windows for ventilation.

The initial site inspection found that the trees in the garden include (but are not limited to)

Prunus lusitanica (Portugese laurel)

Araucaria bidwillii (Bunya Bunya Pine)

Schinus molle (Peppercorn Tree)

Olea europea supsp. *Europea* (European OLive)

Lagunaria pattersonii (Norfolk Island Hibiscus)

Pittosporum undulatum (Sweet Pittosporum)

Quercus robur (English Oak)

Araucaria heterophylla (Norfolk Island Pine)

Citrus aurantium cv (Orange cultivar unknown)

Ficus platypoda (Rock fig)

Gleditsia tricanthos (Honey Locust)

Ulmus procera (English Elm)

Brachychiton populensis (double check correct species at next site visit - only glanced tree)

Laurus nobilis (Bay Laurel)

Cedrus deodara

Awaiting aerial photograph to look at overall layout - interesting features include serpentine driveway avenue planted with all different species of wide range of trees, including unusual 'avenue' species such as slow growing Bay laurel. Rows of Q. robur are planted to the east of the homestead - why?

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/>