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# BLACKWOOD HOMESTEAD COMPLEX AND CEMETERY



23171 copy of 4143 Blackwood Dunkeld 3rd house

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## Location

Blackwood-Dunkeld Rd 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 -

What is significant?

Blackwood Homestead Complex and Private Cemetery is located on the Dunkeld - Blackwood Road, eight kilometres north east of the township of Penshurst. The separate elements of this complex are the original two

roomed bluestone homestead, constructed after 1842; a second bluestone homestead built in 1864; a private cemetery; a bluestone and timber woolshed, the current Blackwood homestead, stables and coach house (constructed in 1891) and four acres of garden and parkland (dating from the same period as the current homestead). The current homestead and stables were designed by prominent architectural firm, Butler and Ussher in 1892 and constructed within 18 months by local contractor Charles Hosking for Robert Blackwood Ritchie, the nephew of James Ritchie, who took up the Blackwood run in partnership with James Sceales in 1843. The homestead and stables are set in a large simply laid out typical late nineteenth century garden, with a simple perennial plantings immediate to the homestead, large stretches of lawn and curved beds of shrubs, with a carriageway curving through the garden to the front of the homestead, finishing in a circular turning area adjacent to the front of the house. A low stone wall encircles the garden to the south and west, with exotic specimen trees forming a park on the slopes below the homestead.

The original Blackwood Homestead, a simple two-roomed bluestone cottage, is located constructed of bluestone. The cottage is believed to have been built for James Ritchie between 1843 and his accidental death in 1858. The second Blackwood Homestead, a substantial eight-roomed bluestone villa was designed by James Ritchie's successor, his brother Daniel in 1864. The homestead was to house their growing family when they returned from a visit to Scotland in 1864. The second homestead was never used as a residence, as Daniel Ritchie suddenly while in Scotland in 1865, aged 49. The homestead has been used as a Shearer's quarters since the 1870s.

The Private Cemetery contains the unmarked graves of members of the Ritchie Family, and the grave and obelisk erected to James Ritchie, the first Ritchie of Blackwood. The Private Cemetery is a small area of land enclosed by rough stone walls.

How is it significant?

Blackwood Homestead Complex and Private Cemetery is of Architectural and Historical Significance to the State of Victoria and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The current Blackwood Homestead and Stables of Architectural significance as the best example of the Picturesque Aesthetic as an architectural style in the Southern Grampians Shire. Of further architectural significance are the architects, the influential partnership of Butler and Ussher, who operated from Melbourne in the late nineteenth century. The architectural feature of a long single storey gabled composition of the main building gives a distinctly Australian character to an architectural idiom derived principally from contemporary English works (NER). Blackwood Homestead complex is of historical significance as it demonstrates three separate homesteads which were built as demonstrations of the increasing pastoral fortunes of the Ritchie family. Further historical importance is attached to the complex for the long association with the Ritchie family, many of whom are buried in the private cemetery.

## Permit Exemptions

It may be possible to exempt works in service areas of the homestead if these have been substantially altered since the construction of the house.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002;
Construction dates	1840,
Architect/Designer	Butler, Walter Richmond,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	BLACKWOOD HOUSE,
Hermes Number	23171

## Physical Conditions

Excellent integrity for the present homestead. The earlier developments have not been inspected.

## Physical Description 1

Blackwood Homestead Complex and Private Cemetery are located one kilometer west of the Blackwood-Dunkeld Road, approximately eight kilometers north east of the center of the township of Peshurst. The separate elements of this complex are the original two roomed bluestone homestead, constructed after 1842; a second bluestone homestead built in 1864; a private cemetery; a bluestone and timber woolshed, the current Blackwood homestead, stables and coachhouse (constructed in 1891) and four acres of garden and parkland (dating from the same period as the current homestead).

The original Blackwood Homestead was built in the in the mid 1840s, after James and John Ritchie (in partnership with James Scales) took up the original Blackwood run of 35 000 acres in 1842. The homestead was later converted to Peshurst North School.

The second homestead, designed and built by Daniel Ritchie in 1864 as a 'fine stone villa' is much more substantial, eight roomed bluestone villa. It is also constructed of locally quarried bluestone. This residence was never lived in as Daniel died while on a visit to Scotland in 1865. It has been since used as Shearer's quarters.

A private cemetery, located some distance from the current homestead contains several unmarked graves of the Ritchie family, as well as and an obelisk dedicated to James Ritchie, who died in 1857, aged 45 when his horse bolted and threw him against a tree. The private cemetery is surrounded by a bluestone fence with a simple nineteenth century steel and wire gate.

The third bluestone homestead and separate stable block, constructed in 1891 by the leading architectural firm, Butler and Ussher for Robert Blackwood Ritchie are located on a hill top overlooking the surrounding plains with view of the Grampian Ranges a is surrounded. The remains of a nineteenth century pleasure garden surround the homestead. Beyond the homestead garden parkland of exotic specimens has been laid out

The homestead and stables are constructed of local bluestone in the Picturesque Aesthetic style. The homestead, which is situated quite separate to the rest of the buildings, is considered to be unique in its composition for the hip with a long ridge running the entire length of the east elevation. "The south elevation consists of gables, a half hip roof and an observational composition and an observation tower, which combine bluestone in the walls, sandstone for window details, half timbering and plaster to the gable ends, and Major's patent terra cotta tiles from Bridgewater (UK) for the extensive roof and subsidiary gables. The interior is treated in the Jacobean manner and has Dado paneling and strong timber cornice details with paneled ceilings. To the south side of the intimate entrance porch are the principal formal rooms, the hall, the drawing room with a delightful octagonal bay off one corner, the dining room and the billiard room. To the north of the entrance are the more private morning room and bedrooms, which proceed along the east front and return around the north elevation. The service section and servants' rooms are to the west beyond the hall and bedroom corridor such an extended plan is not found in suburban residences of the Melbourne Queen Anne" (Register of the National Estate).

## 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

Theme 9: Marking the phases of life  
9.7 Dying

- 9.7.1 Dealing with human remains
- 9.7.3 Remembering the dead

## **Usage/Former Usage**

Continuing as a pastoral property

## **Integrity**

Very high degree of integrity

## **Physical Description 2**

Ritchie family

## **Physical Description 3**

Blackwood Pre-emptive right

## **Extent of Registration**

[Draft] All works to the house, outbuildings, stable woolshed and garden should be according to a CMP.

*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/>*