

BACCHUS MARSH HERITAGE STUDY.

Ref: 31

Richard Peterson Architect & Conservation Consultant. Daniel Catrice Historian 1994.

NAME: Greystones.		
ADDRESS: Rowsley-Exford Road, Rowsley.		
TITLE DETAILS:		
USE: Estate homestead		
SIGNIFICANT DATE: 1875-1995	CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1875-6	
SOURCE: 1		
ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS:	DATE: 1875-76	SOURCE: 3-7
DESIGNER: Lloyd Tayler & Frederick Wyatt	BUILDER: G. Kirby	SOURCE: 5
CRITERIA: H1, 3; A1.2.	HISTORIC THEME: Pastoralism	
DESCRIPTION:	STYLE: Gothic	STORIES: 2 DETACHED.
MATERIALS: WALLS Stone	ROOF: Slate	STRUCTURE: Loadbearing
CONDITION: Very good	INTACTNESS: Good	THREATS: None
SIGNIFICANT INTACT ELEMENTS: MATERIALS. FORM. FACADE. VERANDAH. ROOF FORM. PLAN/LAYOUT. USE. PARAPET DECORATION. VERANDAH DEC. CHIMNEYS. WALL DECORATION. DOORS. WINDOWS. UNPAINTED FINISH. INTERIORS. OUTBUILDINGS/GARDEN STRUCTURE. FENCES/GATES. GARDEN. TREES. PLANTING FORMATION. AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS.		
SIGNIFICANCE:		
TYPE: HISTORICAL. ARCHITECTURAL.		
LEVEL: STATE		
DESIGNATION EXISTING: HBCR. RNE. PLANNING SCHEME. NT.		
RECOMMENDED CONTROL/NOMINATION: HBR. RNE. PLANNING SCHEME.		
MAP NO: R2.06 & R1.06 SURVEY: RP, JS DATE: 30.12.93, 20.3.95.		
NEGS: 2.14/X. 1-18/1012.33.		



HISTORY: Greystones was erected in 1875-76 for the pastoralist, Molesworth Greene. The homestead was originally part of the Glenmore estate, a 55,000 acre (22,259 ha) run established in December 1840 by the squatters Charles James Griffith and James Moore,¹ taking over from W McKenzie. The run covered 55,000 acres (22,258 ha) on Parwan Creek and Werribee River and carried 20,000 sheep. By the 1880s it was reduced to 11,508 acres (4,657 ha).

In 1848, Moore sold his interest in the property to Molesworth Greene, the eldest son of William Pommeroy Greene, and a nephew of Charles Griffith.² Griffith and Greene also leased the adjoining Mooradoranook. They also purchased crown land and established adjoining estates. The squatting licence was forfeited in 1869, but by this time much of the land was held in freehold. Griffith was a Member of the Legislative Council in 1851-2, 1853-6, Member of the Legislative Assembly in 1856 and Chairman of the Board of Education in 1862-3.

Drystone walls were constructed extensively across the Keilor Melton Plain from the 1850s, when land tenure became more firmly established; until the 1880s, when cheap barbed wire became more commonly available.

In 1875, Greene commissioned the architects Lloyd Tayler and Frederick Wyatt to design his residence on the Glenmore estate,³ to replace an earlier slab building. The architectural drawings were completed in June and according to one local source, promised "a very handsome appearance":

the internal accommodation of the house will consist of large dining and drawing rooms, splendid entrance hall and highly finished staircase in polished blackwood, with several other rooms on the ground floor, also a very complete set of servants' offices and other outbuildings. The upper floor will contain a large number of bed rooms, bath rooms, dressing rooms and closets, all in keeping with the style of the house. The fittings throughout being of the best kind, and including all the latest improvements, such as speaking tubes, to the servants offices, electric bells in all the best rooms and hot and cold water all over the house.⁴

The tender for its construction was awarded to a Melbourne builder, G. Kirby. The bluestone was excavated on the property, and the freestone, for the chimneys and the quoins, was obtained from the Darley quarry (Ref: 370).⁵ The bluestone for the buildings

¹ *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.4 1851-90.

² *Ibid.* Peel pp. 131-2, Moore & Oomes, pp. 9, 47 & 167; Billis & Kenyon. Vines, G. *Built to Last, Dry Stone Walls in Melbourne's Western Region*, LMW 1990.

³ *Bacchus Marsh Express*, 31 July 1875.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 31 July 1875.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 16 October 1875. *Australasian*, 2 July 1895. Valentine, *The House that Wool Built*, p.28 suggests that the bluestone came from the Hawkesbury, New South Wales. This is not possible as bluestone is a Victorian stone, but perhaps some Hawkesbury sandstone was used.

and garden wall would have had to be carted a considerable distance, as the site is located on the Rowsley Scarp, well above the basalt plains. In April 1876, the *Bacchus Marsh Express* reported that the residence was nearing completion, but that "a great deal of work remains to be done to the interior...and the stables and servants offices are not far above ground".⁶ These structures, including the drystone wall were completed by the end of the year.⁷

Greystones symbolised Greene's standing in the community. He represented the Parwan Riding on the Bacchus Marsh Shire Council, and was Shire President in 1886-87, 1897-98 and 1909-10.⁸ The role of landed proprietor was performed with authority and dignity:

while he has somewhat of the old English squire, and while he has somewhat of the exclusiveness of the lord of the manor, it is certainly not to be classed as hauteur.⁹

Griffith and Greene divided the estate about 1879, and worked the two properties, Glenmore and Greystones, separately.¹⁰ Greystones earned prominence in agricultural circles for animal husbandry, improvement to water conservation, fire breaks, cultivation of artificial grasses (lucerne) and tree plantation.¹¹

In 1888 Donald Mackinnon wrote to his father

I have been out of town from Saturday to Monday at Bacchus Marsh staying with Molesworth Greene's people. They have a handsome house in a good situation facing the You Yangs and Corio Bay and flanked by the Anakies and the Pentland Hills... the Greenes live a good style. They don't have a butler but contemplate this addition to the establishment and you have to wear dress clothes. It is not nearly such a free place as Noorat in the same style. Greene makes his money out of cattle from the Bulloo. At the Greene's as much French as English is spoken.

Greystones can be identified as the home of Ada Cambridge's mysterious 'mistress of G', who espoused Artistic things years before the International Exhibition of 1880 gave Melburnians some idea of 'the rudiments of modern art'. In 1916 when old Mr Molesworth Greene - in white linen jacket, dark trousers and scarlet cummerbund - welcomed Joan Weigall to Greystones the table was still in place. His young guest noted,

⁶ *Bacchus Marsh Express*, 15 April 1876.

⁷ *Ibid*, 22 April 1876. Peel, pp. 131-2, Moore & Oomes, *Bacchus Marsh: A Pictorial Chronicle*, pp. 99, 47 & 167. Billis & Kenyon. Vines, G., *Built to Last, Dry Stone Walls in Melbourne's Western Region*, 1990.

⁸ Moore and Oomes, *op. cit.*, p.9.

⁹ Cited in Williams, W., *A History of Bacchus Marsh*, p.153.

¹⁰ Osborn, *The Bacchus Story*, p.103.

¹¹ *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.4 1851-1890.

Unlike most of the station owners, the Greene family were interested in a great many things besides their own sheep. they were the sort of people who bought expensive books about Art and Poetry, and had them lying about for a visitor to browse through and there were many paintings in heavy gold frames... the Italian lady with long black hair stabbing herself in a milk white bosom adorned with realistic trickle of scarlet blood - I think a genuine Guido Reni.¹²

Following Greene's death in 1916, the property was inherited by a son, W.P. Greene. In 1934, the pastoralist and meat industry leader, Sir William Angliss purchased Greystones and 579 acres (3,472 ha) from the estate of the late W.P. Greene.¹³ It is now held by his daughter, Mrs Diana Gibson and has 4,450 hectares.¹⁴

There have been minor contemporary alterations and additions including a separate art gallery by the architect Peter Clarke.¹⁵

VISUAL DESCRIPTION: Greystones stands on the lower slope of the Brisbane Ranges at the edge of the basalt plain near Rowsley at Grid Ref. BU684186. The two-story homestead is the centre of a pastoral establishment with stables, other outbuildings, garden with stone walls and gates. The house is bluestone with sandstone dressings and a slate roof, in a Romantic asymmetrical configuration and a loosely Gothic style. Generally it has a hip roof, but two wings (one single and the other double storey) have a more steeply pitched gable whose parapet-end is decorated with a ventilating slot. The double-story gable is the entrance, with a pointed arch opening to the recessed porch. The single-storey gable has a canted bay; another projecting wing has a double-storey bay, surrounded at ground level by a timber verandah. Windows all have pointed segmental heads, but may occur in singles or pairs. Sandstone dressings surround all openings and at corners, but not regularly as quoins. These are smooth, but the bluestone is rockfaced. The sandstone dressings have deep markings and the chimney flues are expressed. There is a sandstone string-course at first floor level.

Stables are white-painted brick. There is a central 2-storey hip-roofed block, with a ventilator lantern and single storey wings, beside a courtyard, one terminating in a further double-story block.

¹² Terence Lane & Jessie Serle, *Australians at Home. A Documentary History of Australian Domestic Interiors from 1788 to 191*, pp.229 & 230, quoting: D. McKinnon to Daniel McKinnon, 4 June 1888, McKinnon papers. MS 2415285, LaTrobe Collection, SLV; A. Cambridge, *Thirty Years in Australia*, p.135 and J. Lindsay, *Time Without Clocks*, p.126.

¹³ Osborne, *ibid.*, p.103, *Argus*, 26 May, 1934, and J.V. (Lady) Angliss, *Sir William Angliss, An Intimate Portrait*, pp.224-226, 229 & 230.

¹⁴ *Business Review Weekly*, May 23, 1994.

¹⁵ Gary, assistant gardener, to RP, 20.3.95.

Garden. The garden appears to be contemporary with the house, of 1 - 1.5 hectares. There is a long winding, densely planted driveway. It is surrounded by a substantial drystone wall. A large lawn extends in front of the house, but the main garden falls down a steep hill. A series of terraces incorporate two front rose gardens, one set in lawn and the other in paths of brickwork. The rockery is unusually large and a feature. The shrubbery is intersected by many interesting paths.¹⁵ There are two pairs of elegant wrought iron vehicular gates, with delicate scrolling patterns.

Wall. The wall is also a particularly fine example of the waller's craft. It has a distinctive cope of rounded boulders about 500x350mm and stands about 1.2 metres high, rising to nearly two metres at the entrance gates. The body of the wall varies in technique, having 50% quarried and shaped stone along the section near the entrance, and purely weathered fieldstone for the remainder. The entrance also features unusual regular sloping courses, a feature unique in the region and possibly in Victoria. Again however, the remainder of the wall is less elaborately finished, although it does have extensive plugging and regular throughstones. A number of sections have been rebuilt, some rather unprofessionally.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: There are no comparable estates, houses, gardens, stables or drystone walls in Bacchus Marsh. Staughton Vale (ref: 94), Bullengarok Park (ref: 325) and Exford (ref: 369) are outside the municipality and less substantial. Ellerslie (ref: 105) and Manor House (218) are earlier and less substantial. Comparable stables are refs: 31, 157, 174 & 268 and comparable drystone walls, refs. 27 & 41. In other walls the drystone forms the base only to a post and wire fence. Comparable estates so near to Melbourne are difficult to identify. Werribee Park, the Chirnside estate, is no longer in private hands. Stylistically, the house may be compared to the work of Davidson and Henderson such as Larra (1869), Barwon Park (1869) Narrapumelap (1873-8); also to Devon Park (1882-83).

SIGNIFICANCE: Greystones is a two-storey Gothic homestead designed by the architects Lloyd Tayler and Frederick Wyatt and built in 1875-76 for Molesworth Greene as the centre of his pastoral estate. It has an extensive mature garden with an important drystone wall around.

There are various outbuildings including two-storey stables and coach-house, strapper's rooms, butcher's shop and slaughterhouse (still both in weekly use), dairy, wells, staff dining room, household staff accommodation and shearing shed.

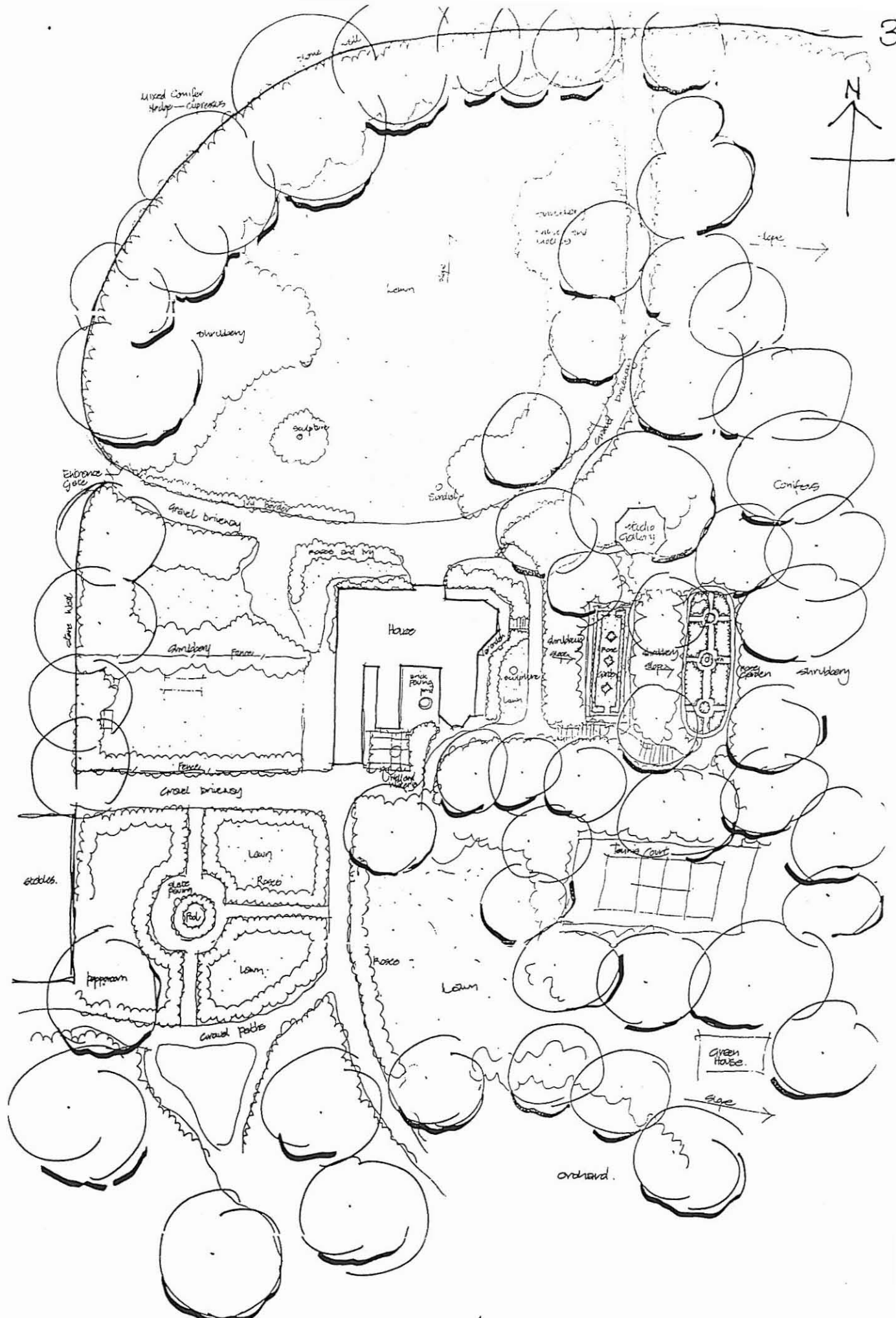
Greystones is of state historical significance as an extraordinary surviving embodiment of a way of the pastoral way of life and its values-structure at a place so near of Melbourne. This is expressed in the array of buildings still in use and their staffing arrangements, which demonstrate continuity of practice at least since the 1930s. It is also significant for its association with Molesworth Greene and later, Sir William Angliss.

¹⁵ Peter Watts, Edited: Margaret Barratt, *Historic Gardens of Victoria. A Reconnaissance*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne 1983, pp. 132-133.

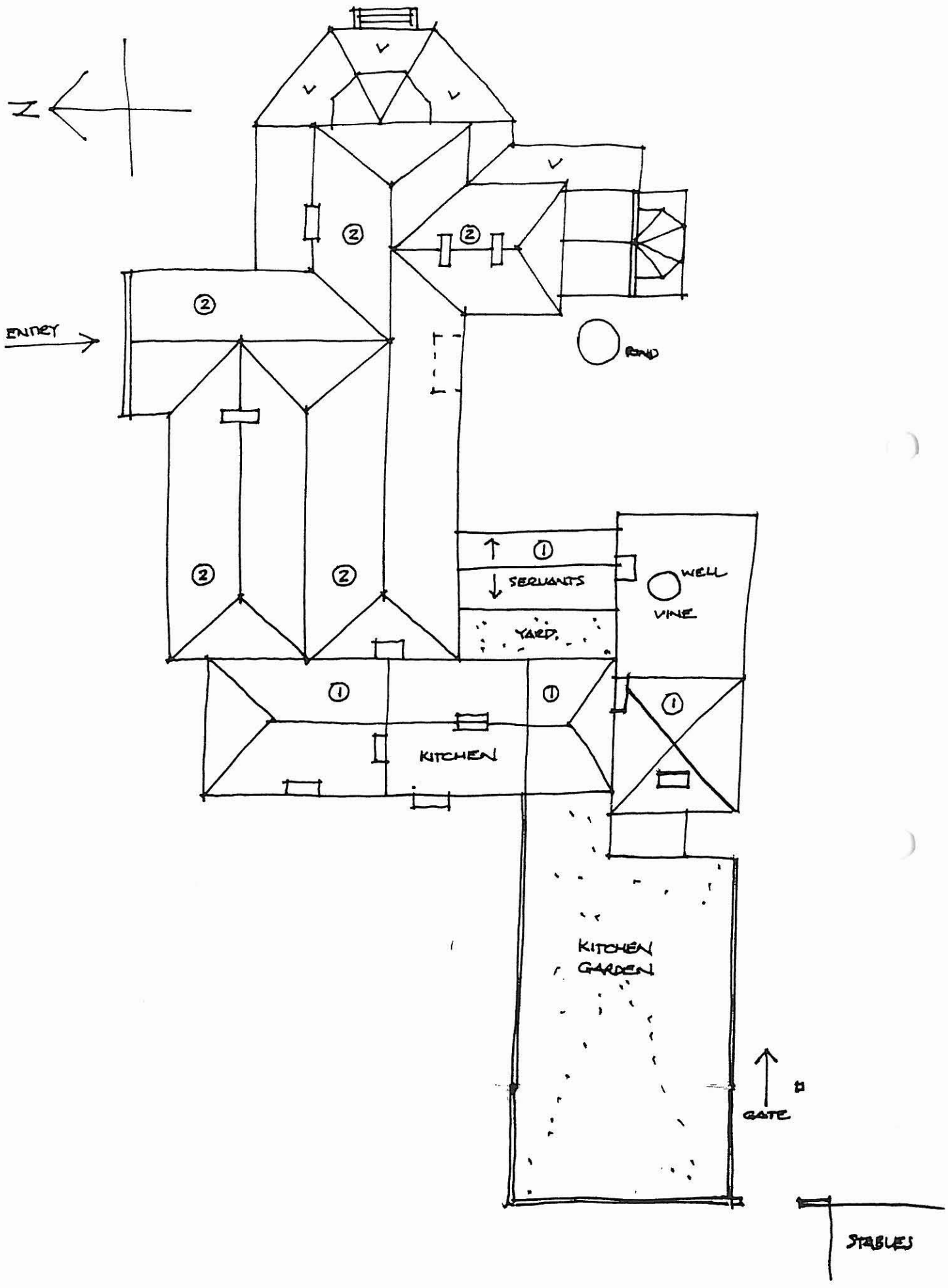
Greystones is also of architectural significance at state level as an important large Gothic homestead, set in an appropriately significant garden and outbuildings. It is an important domestic work by the Melbourne architects Lloyd Tayler and Frederick Wyatt, demonstrating workmanship in local stone. The drystone wall is a particularly fine example of the waller's craft, featuring unusual regular sloping courses, possibly unique in Victoria.

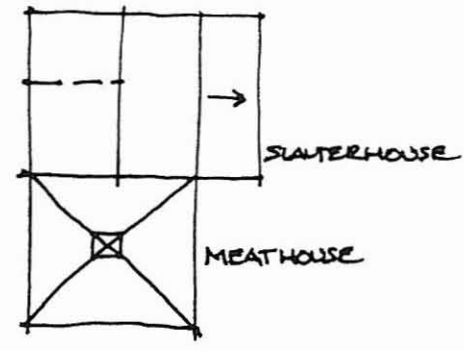
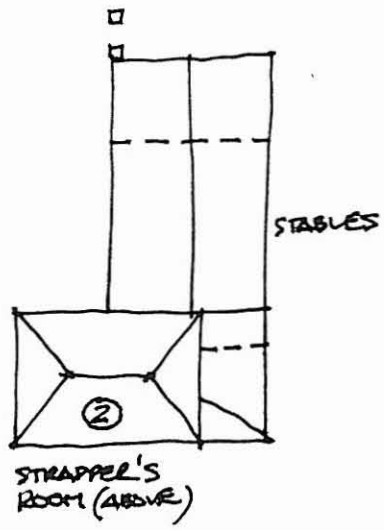
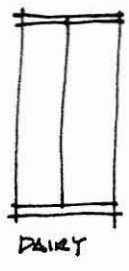
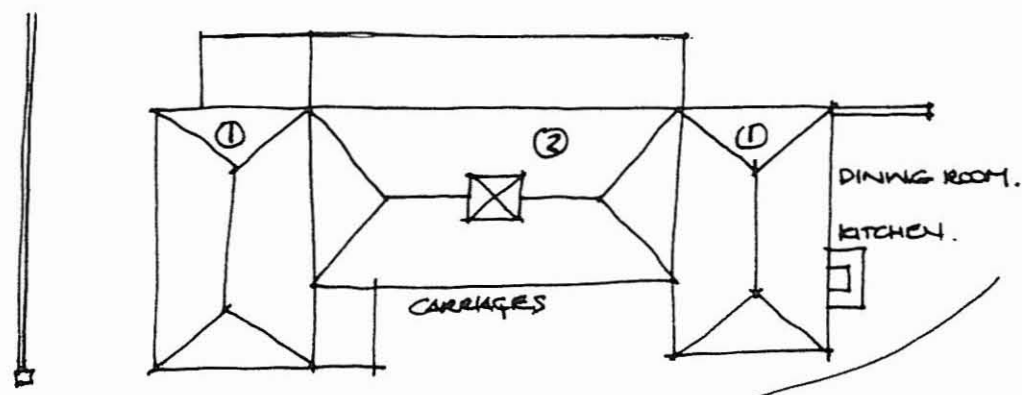
INTACTNESS: Very good.

CONDITIONS & THREATS: Apparently, very good.



'GREYSTONES'
ROWSLEY





NOTE: MEATHOUSE, SLAUGHTERHOUSE
DAIRY, ETC STILL OPERATE.

← WOOLSHED.

