

**Struan House  
Conservation Management Plan**

**Habitable Places  
2015**

**Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure,  
South Australian Government**

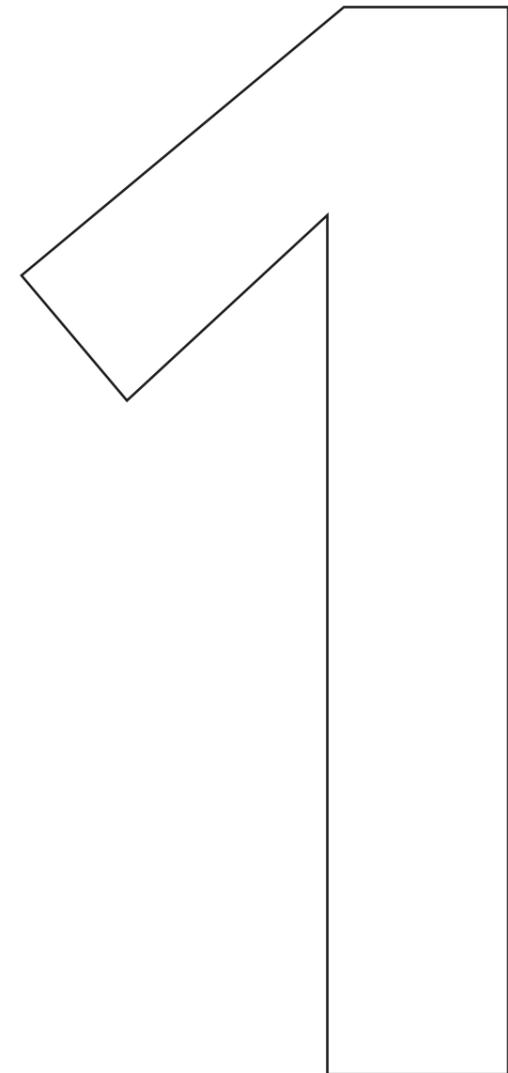
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### Document Status

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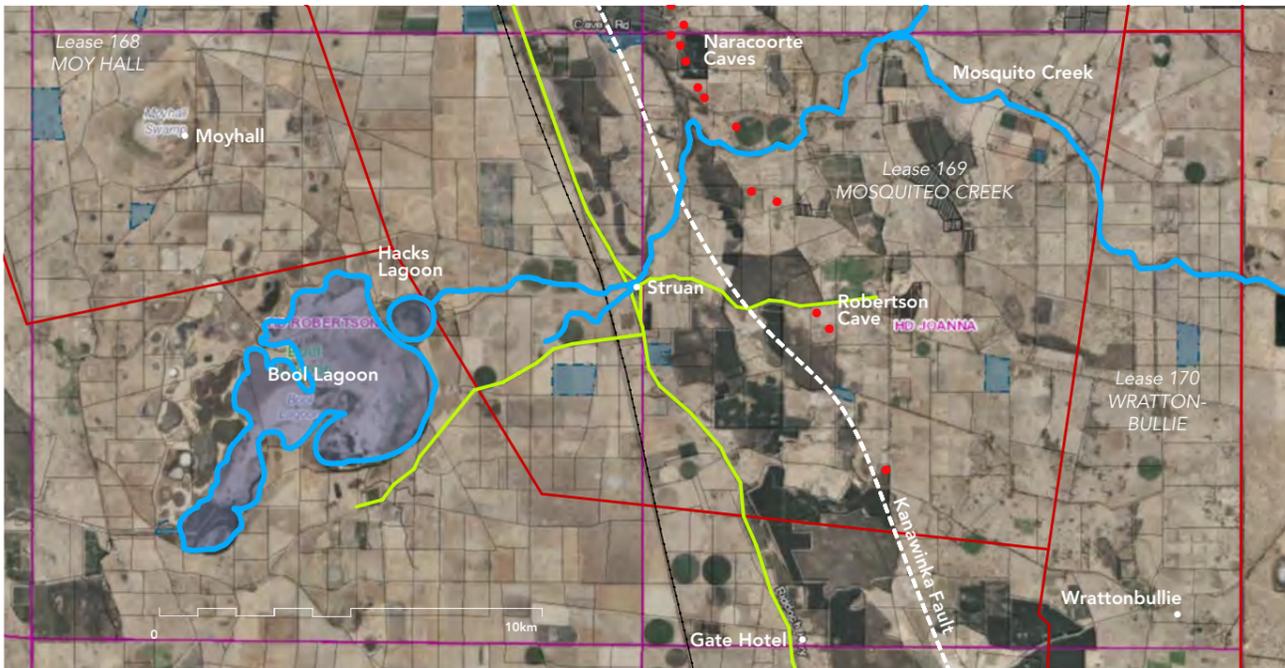
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Regional Plan showing the relationship of Struan to Adelaide and Portland.

District Plan showing Struan in the context of the early leases, geographic and landform features.



## 1.1 Location

Struan House is in the South East of South Australia, 347km from Adelaide. It is adjacent to the Mosquito Creek bridge on the Riddoch Highway, 15km south of Naracoorte, 33km north of Penola and 15km west of the Victorian border. The Struan House Road and Joanna Road are close to the house site.

The Certificate of Title is CR 5594/380, Volume 5609 Folio 672. It is owned by the Crown. The Custodian is the Minister for Primary Industries and Natural Resources. The title encompasses four sections and two allotments. It has an area of approximately 1110ha comprising the Struan Agricultural Centre.

Struan House is located on Section 375 as shown in Diagram Book Page 51, Hundred of Robertson. Refer Appendix A.

## 1.2 Heritage status

The heritage value of Struan House was first identified by the National Trust of South Australia in the 1970s.<sup>1</sup> It was given a Classified status. It was included in the Commonwealth Register of the National Estate. These listings did not provide any legislative protection.

The heritage value was formally assessed in the South East Heritage Survey in 1983.<sup>2</sup> It was recommended as a State heritage place. Both buildings were entered onto the SA Heritage Places Register as State Heritage Places on 28th May 1991, providing legislative protection.

Struan House is item number 10249. It is described as Office (former Dwelling ‘Struan House’). The Second House is separately registered as item number 10248. It is described as Former Farmhouse linked to Struan House.

## 1.3 Project aims and scope

The aim of this Conservation Management Plan (CMP) is to provide:

- A description of the stages of construction, integrity and current condition of the buildings. Description of the original internal layouts and finishes, including decorative painting.
- An updated statement of cultural significance based on a careful analysis of the documentary and physical evidence. Assessment against State Heritage criteria.
- Analysis of the landscape setting of the buildings.
- Management priorities and conservation policies reflecting the significance of the place.
- A Dilapidation Survey.

The primary scope of the CMP is the Second House and Struan House. However the CMP will also consider relevant fabric outside of these places that has a bearing on their significance. This includes:

- The land bounded by the Riddoch Highway and the Struan House Road.
- The landscape setting of the buildings and the gardens.
- Views and vistas to the buildings from the public roads.
- The Robertson Family Cemetery.
- The Roadside Cemetery.

### Exclusions

Places and services that are outside of the scope of this CMP are:

- Assessment and conservation policies for associated objects and artefacts.
- Indigenous cultural heritage assessment.
- Archaeological assessment and investigations.
- Assessment of historic Overseers Cottage<sup>3</sup> west of the Riddoch Highway.
- Assessment and policies for the sheds,<sup>4</sup> which incorporate footings of the original stables.
- Assessment, policies and action plans for the cemeteries.
- Assessment, policies and action plan for the historic Government Bridge.

### Place Names

The indigenous name for the locality of Struan is not recorded. The first name used by the Robertsons was the Mosquito Creek Run and Mosquito Plains. Later it was also known as Roberstons Plains.

The name Struan was not adopted until the construction of the Struan House, and the property became known as the Struan Estate.

The township of Naracoorte was originally spelt as Narracoorte.

There were various alternative spellings for Wrattenbullie, including Wrattenbullie and Warrattenbullie.

In this report the names current at the time under discussion are used.

## 1.4 Methods

The preparation of the Conservation Management Plan accords with the standards and principles set out in the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, The Burra Charter. The Charter sets out a sequence of collecting and analysing information before making decisions. Understanding cultural significance comes first, then development of policy and finally management of the place in accordance with the policy. The policy for managing a place must be based on an understanding of its cultural significance.<sup>5</sup>

The following method was employed in preparing this CMP.

### Review of previous studies

The following studies were reviewed:

1987 Conservation Management Plan, Lothar Brasse.

1990 Struan Paint Analysis, Lothar Brasse and Helen Wiedenhofer.

2002 Dilapidation Survey, DAIS Design and Heritage Management. Exterior and interior dilapidation and repairs were documented.

2006 Architectural Documentation, Danvers Shultz Holland Architects. This includes documentation of structural and services upgrades.

2010 Heritage Asset Surveys, Swanbury Penglase Architects. There is a separate survey for each building. They are a brief description of each building element and an assessment of condition. A photographic condition survey was included.

Struan Research Station Annual Reports 1964–1970, State Records S.A.

Department of Agriculture website ‘A History of Agriculture in South Australia’.

### Historical research

The historical context and the stories of settlement, buildings, uses and users, builders and architects are presented in Chapter 2. The key documentary sources are:

- NTSA Room in Struan House (room 26). This collection of documents and objects has been compiled by the Naracoorte NTSA together with staff at Struan House. While most of the documents are copies, some of original historic plans and photographs are on display in the formal rooms and hallways of Struan House.
- NTSA Naracoorte historic photo collection.
- A History of Naracoorte by Judy Murdoch and Heather Parker 1963.
- Naracoorte Library.
- Penola Local History Room.
- City of Mt Gambier Local History Room and Les Hill Collection.
- State Heritage Branch files, Keswick, DEWNR.
- State Library of SA (SLSA). A collection of Robertson business

- papers provided by Judy Murdoch is held by the State Library.
- State Records of SA (SRSA).
- The Border Watch, The Register and The Naracoorte Herald, accessed via Trove.

#### Site investigations

The consultant team undertook field investigation on site over eight visits between April 2014 and February 2015. A detailed visual inspection of each building and the landscape setting was undertaken. We were seeking physical evidence of the construction, finishes and materials that would provide insights in the building design and changes over time. A photo record of each building was prepared. Dilapidation was recorded.

#### Consultation

Consultation with the building managers and stakeholders, including:

- Local historians.
- Interviews with past and present staff of the research centre.
- Discussions with DPTI property management and building maintenance officers.
- Discussion with DPTI heritage architects.

#### Analysis and Assessment

The historic and physical evidence are analysed and discussed in Chapter 3. The understanding of the building and its history are the basis for assessing the cultural significance of the place in Chapter 4.

#### Policies and Actions

Conservation policies based on the *cultural significance* are presented for the site as a whole, for both buildings and for the landscape setting.

Guidance on the approvals and the control of repairs and conservation work are also provided in Chapter 5.

Actions required to implement the conservation policy and to conserve each building are provided in the form of Heritage Works Plans (HWPs). The HWPs record the construction details, dilapidation/condition, relative significance and guidelines / recommendations for each building element.

A cost plan for urgent conservation actions is provided at Chapter 6.

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### **1.5 Acknowledgements**

Habitable Places sincerely appreciates the generous contributions of many participants in this CMP:

- Luigi Vitali, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.
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- John Cooper, Louise Rose, Phillipa Clarke, Narelle Scott, Struan Agricultural Centre.
- Ron Ellis, Mick Deland, ex- Struan Agricultural Centre.
- Judy Murdoch, Wendy Ehlert, Shane Smith, NTSA Naracoorte.
- David Hood, Naracoorte.
- Lynn Lowe, Stephanie Edgeworth, Mt Gambier Local History

- Centre.
- Rev Fr David Price, Christ Church Mt Gambier.
- David Smith, St Andrews Presbyterian Church Penola.
- Ricky Koopman, Susan Briffa, Les Hill Collection, Mt Gambier Library.
- Nick Nicholson, National Gallery Australia.
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- Matthew Gordon Clarke, Tamara Wenham, SA State Records.
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- Daniel Thornalley, Department Education & Childrens Services.
- Maria Shanahan, Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library.
- Lew Chapman, Grant Eldridge, Suzy Russell, State Library SA.
- Susan Gray, Wattle Range Council.
- Jane Haynes, Naracoorte / Lucindale Council.
- Lynette Zietz, Jenny Richter, Waite Institute Library.
- Dr Julie Collins, Architecture Museum, School of Art, Architecture & Design, Uni SA.
- Warren Joel, Ex-owner Leonard Joel Pty. Ltd., Melbourne.

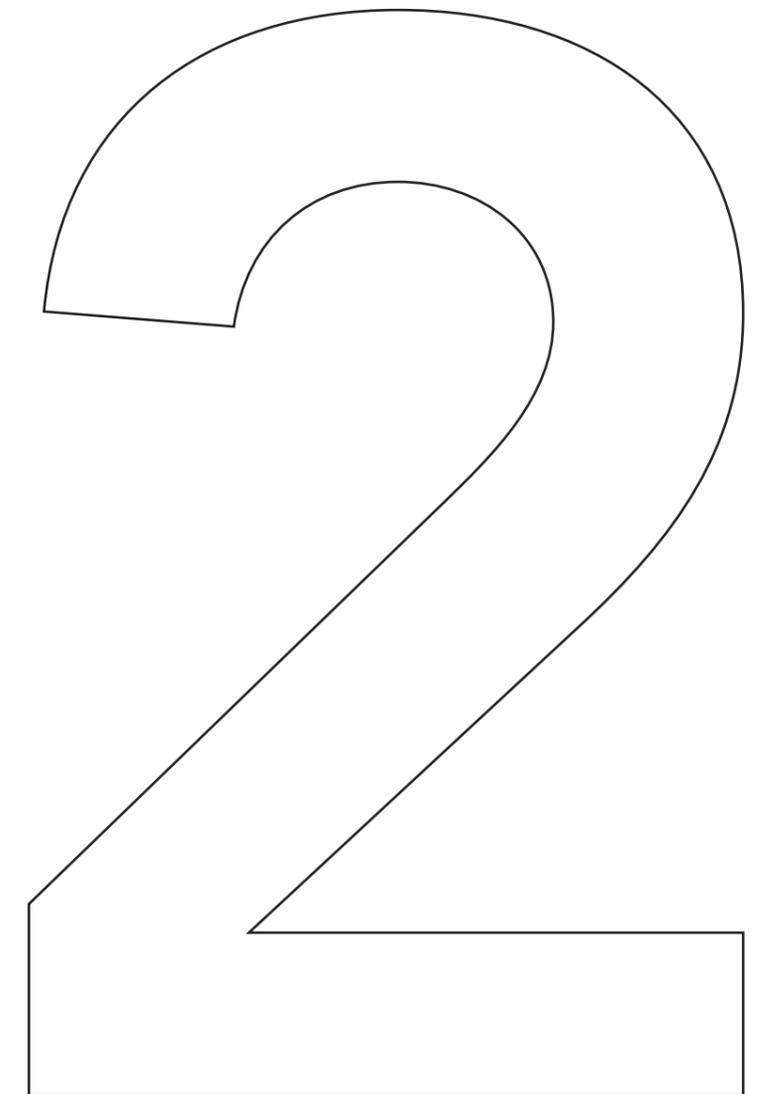
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### **1.6 Authorship**

The project team for this CMP consisted of:

- Richard Woods, Team Leader, Habitable Places.
- Trish Cameron, Historic Research, Habitable Places.
- Ron Woods, Graphic Design, Plural.

- 2 History
- 2.1 The physical environment and pattern of settlement
- 2.2 Indigenous History
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- 2.13 Community Use





The SE - NW pattern of the landform, vegetation and transport of the South East remain evident in this satellite view. Image Google Maps

## 2.1 Physical environment and pattern of settlement

The unique landform and hydrology of the South East of South Australia is a key determinant of the pattern of human land-use and development. It is the framework that underlies the location of settlements, townships, roads and communication. It determined soil and vegetation and subsequent pastoral and agricultural land uses. It has played a formative role in every chapter of the story of Struan House.

The Otway basin is the geological formation that underlies the southern margin of South Australia and Victoria and extends offshore. It formed when Australia rifted away from Gondwana, which occurred about 95 million years ago.<sup>1</sup> Shallow marine deposits in the basin formed the limestones which characterise the karst landscape of the Limestone Coast, and which provided the building materials for Struan House.

In more recent geological time a series of stranded ranges parallel with the Lower South East coastline were formed. These were once coastal shorelines. They are evidence of thirteen receding coastlines deposited in response to high interglacial sea levels extending back nearly one million years.<sup>2</sup> Between the ranges are broad flats with heavy soils that overlay deep shelly, sandy and coralline limestones and aquifers. Relative to most of South Australia the South East has a high and reliable rainfall. Prior to settlement and drainage, the whole landscape was a series of seasonal wetlands separated by the ranges. Below the surface the groundwater moved slowly towards the coast. With winter rains, the water table rose to the surface, forming swamps and wetlands that are now characterised by heavy black soils. The excess surface water flowed slowly northwest between the ranges. At openings in the ranges the surface water flowed through flooding the next flat, eventually collecting in the chain of coastal lakes, or discharging into the Southern Ocean via creeks at Maria Creek and into the Coorong via Salt Creek.<sup>3</sup> Rivoli and Guichen Bays, formed where the coastal erosion has broken through the front line dunes, provided natural ports at Beachport and Robe.

In the east there is another landform, the Kanawinka fault. Formed about 800,000 years ago, this fault in the underlying basement rock uplifted the Naracoorte ranges to form a plateau.<sup>4</sup> This fault line 'runs like a spine through the South East of South Australia and into Western Victoria. It is the determining factor in the depth and flow patterns of underground water – our region's lifeblood'<sup>5</sup> The watershed of the plateau is in Victoria. The catchment drains westwards via the Morambro, Naracoorte and Mosquito Creeks, which cut through the low escarpment depositing large volumes of seasonal water onto the Naracoorte flats.

Struan is located at an intersection of many of these landform features, which also contributed in the formation of the nearby Naracoorte Caves, a world heritage place. In this locality, the Kanawinka fault underlies the Naracoorte East Range. The Mosquito Creek cuts a valley through the escarpment and spreads over a floodplain and to accumulate in the Bool Lagoon. It was an ideal site for settlement, with an annual rainfall of 600mm, abundant water from sub-artesian bores and wells, and the permanent Mosquito Creek. In 1935 there were seven windmills within three quarters of a mile of Struan House.<sup>6</sup>



Mosquito Creek Struan near Naracoorte. Prior to European settlement Mosquito Plains country had an abundant food supply of birds, animals and natural resources such as perennial water. An aboriginal clan could move seasonally between the hills and the plains to access or escape water. The picturesque 'park-like' landscape of grassy woodlands was probably created and maintained during aboriginal occupation.<sup>1</sup> It was attractive to the Scottish settlers who saw not only its natural beauty but also its potential for making money. SLSA B 28781\_20

Mosquito Creek c1923. With grazing the diverse shrub and ground layer was modified leaving a park-like grassy woodland. SLSA B28781\_18



### Vegetation

Reflecting the underlying landform, Joanna, on the plateau between Struan and the border was fertile, well drained and well watered. It supported grassed plains and the red gums that provided timber for the first slab huts, and for the Second House. The Naracoorte East Range directly behind Struan had infertile shallow soils. It supported sclerophyll scrub and the stringybarks that provided the bark slabs to roof the first shepherds huts. The flood plain to the west had heavy soils but was seasonally inundated, supporting tea tree and rushes for thatched roofs. Bool Lagoon provided abundant birdlife for the table.

The vegetation types were a ready guide to the land qualities, and were self-evident to the Robertson brothers, seeking to secure the best land. Goyder, valuing the pastoral runs of the South East in the 1860s, including the Mosquito Creek Run, meticulously observed and recorded the land forms and vegetation types. His work 'reflected the uncommon perspective of someone who saw the landscape as a whole and continuous system'.<sup>7</sup>

The landscape today reflects the modification of this natural environment through the history of land use, in particular vegetation clearance and drainage of the swamps. The Mosquito Creek Run, a land tenure laid over this resource rich landscape was the foundation for the wealth expressed by Struan House.

Vegetation and soil types influenced the changes to land tenure over time, determining where and when pastoral runs were resumed for closer settlement. This is reflected in the gradual contraction of the Robertson's estate and its purchase by the Government for agricultural research purposes.

### Pattern of settlement

The pattern of parallel ranges and plains determined European access and settlement of the region. In wet winters, travel in the South East was almost impossible.<sup>8</sup> The swampy flats were only accessible towards the end of summer, after most of the water had drained away. Many of the pastoral homesteads like Struan and Dartmoor and later the townships including Penola and Naracoorte were sited on ranges, providing dry ground. The pattern of buildings within the homesteads and the townships extending from SE to NW followed the orientation of the ranges.

Before drainage and roads, the eastern slopes of the ranges provided a natural line of going. It is there that first bullock tracks and later roads, railways and highways were located. This pattern can be read today in the pattern of main roads linking South East towns. The intimate proximity of Struan to the track from Penola to Naracoorte had an impact on the social history and prominence of the site. Views of Struan from the Riddoch Highway remain central today to the significance of the place.

In contrast, access from Naracoorte to the coast across the ranges and swamps was fraught before the Kingston railway. The Robertson's wool clip was transported overland to Portland, where the going was better, rather than to the closest port at Robetown. Imported building materials came from Victoria or Port MacDonnell rather than Adelaide.



Buildings at Binnum Binnum north of Naracoorte, old house on left and new homestead on right with pastoralist family members on veranda and indigenous people at the front circa 1870. Each group is formally dressed for the occasion of the photograph: possum skin cloak, traditional headgear, crinolines, jackets and a party dress. NNTSA Naracoorte 010-00051

Communication conformed to the same pattern. In the 1860s the telegraph between Naracoorte and Penola followed the range and ran close behind Struan House. Telstra cubicles and mobile phone masts mark this same route today. The Robertsons turned to Victoria for banking and business, rather than towards a distant Adelaide.

## 2.2 Indigenous History

Smallpox had decimated the indigenous population across Australia before John and William Robertson arrived at Mosquito Plains. Aboriginals had no immunity to diseases such as smallpox and measles brought into New South Wales by the first British settlers. Due to the extensive aboriginal trade routes across the continent the impact of disease was severe.<sup>2,3</sup> The Sydney smallpox epidemic of 1829 - 30 'ravaged' the indigenous population of southern Australia.<sup>4</sup>

Colonial newspapers scantily addressed the tribe of indigenous people occupying Mosquito Plains. Identification of the indigenous people living at Mosquito Plains prior to British settlement remains inconclusive.<sup>5</sup> Mosquito Plains may have been located at the intersection of Meintangk country extending west to Cape Jaffa and Maria Creek, the Marditjali country extending east toward Coleraine, the Bunganditj country to the south and the Potaruwitj to the north.<sup>6</sup>

Colonial reports of corrobories at Naracoorte and the Naracoorte Caves<sup>7</sup> sometimes involving 500 aboriginals 'from all parts' were found in a personal diary and also a much later reminiscence.<sup>8</sup> Widespread use of indigenous place names in the district is evidence of proximity between the pioneer settlers and the indigenous occupants.

During the early years of settlement some early Mosquito Plains and Naracoorte settlers conflicted with indigenous groups over sheep<sup>9</sup> or viewed them as threatening or 'war-like'.<sup>10</sup> Others such as Captain Butler, Protector of Aborigines for the Guichen Bay and the South-Eastern Districts, reported in 1850 on 'the continued good conduct of the natives;' and found 'nothing unfavourable about them' in police-station returns.<sup>11</sup> George Riddoch, later reminiscing about district indigenous people in the 1860s, viewed them as 'fairly civilised, smart, sharp as needles, as docile as whites, ready to do a good day's work for wages.'<sup>12</sup>

Settlers occupied 'the best watered sites', such as Mosquito Creek plains<sup>13</sup> bringing them into direct competition for land and resources. In 1872, the year before construction of Struan House commenced, a small number of 'remaining Mosquito Creek aboriginals' were 'camped in wurlies in the ferns just across [Robertson's] bridge'.<sup>14</sup> By then coursing had removed most of the wallabies and kangaroos previously available to indigenous people along Mosquito Creek.<sup>15</sup>

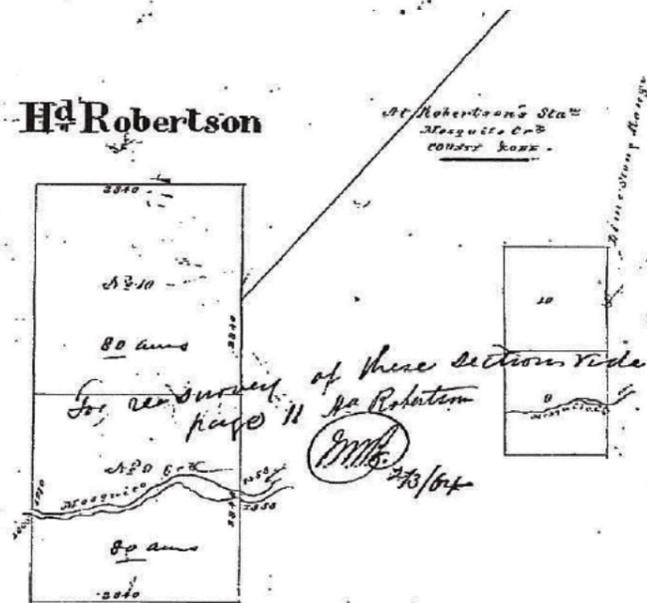


First House circa 1844. John and William Robertson built the first hut on the Struan site when 'Mosquito Plains' was covered in blackwood, honey-suckle, sheoak and red gums.<sup>16</sup> The earliest Robertson residence was a modest slab hut built from readily available materials, the blackwood, and red gum on their bush run. The future laird of Struan House John Robertson's story began at Mosquito Plains in 1842 with squatter settler brothers living in tough conditions and needing basic, functional accommodation.<sup>17</sup>

The provenance of this image is deserving of further investigation. It may be amongst the earliest images of the colony and one of very few taken at this time. South Australia's earliest known datable photographic views were taken circa 1850 and reside in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery possibly having been sent home to relatives by pioneering Scots such as John and William Robertson.<sup>70</sup> NTSA Naracoorte 010-00050

Out of Hundreds South Diagram Book Vol 1 p 6, 1849

*Diagram of 30<sup>th</sup> Sect<sup>ns</sup>  
Counties Robt & Grey  
Surveyed and Plotted by G. Bellair, Esq.  
Oct. 1849.*



### Pioneers

John and William Robertson were amongst the earliest settlers in the South East, arriving at Mosquito Plains only 6 years after the colony of South Australia was proclaimed.<sup>12</sup>

John Robertson settled on Mosquito Creek, establishing his head quarters in a slab hut. Like the other pioneers who 'stuck to business', John Robertson 'soon acquired considerable wealth, in flocks and herds, though it was a question for some time whether he or the mosquitoes would hold out longest'<sup>18</sup>

The Robertson brothers' first two decades at Mosquito Plains pre-dated South East newspapers. Brasse's Struan Conservation Study 1987 identified the official government documents that provide primary evidence for the early acquisition of Robertsons' Mosquito Plains land holding on which Struan House stands.<sup>19</sup>

### 2.3 First House

In 1842 Scottish brothers John (1808 -1880) and William Robertson (1811-1864) established a sheep run at Mosquito Creek.<sup>1</sup> It began with a simple slab hut, now demolished, overlooking the Mosquito Creek, about 200m north east of the current Struan House. Despite many local impediments it developed into a highly successful Merino sheep station also renowned for the quality of its cattle and horses. John Robertson was a leader amongst the early South East pioneers whose intuition, hard work and perseverance developed suitable breeds of Merino sheep for their specific South East environment.<sup>2</sup>

John aged 29 and William aged 26 left Scotland accompanied by their brother Duncan aged 38, his wife Anne and their three children.<sup>3</sup> They left Oban, Inverness, as 'assisted passengers'<sup>4</sup> in 1838 on board the St George.<sup>5</sup> After arriving in Sydney in November, John and William worked in New South Wales for a year. Then, like many other Scottish immigrants, they headed via Port Phillip Bay for Western Victoria.<sup>6</sup>

John Robertson was the first European squatter on the Wannan River in Western Victoria around 1840. He established a large pastoral run which he named Struan after his Scottish clan heritage.<sup>7</sup> William may have squatted on a nearby property.<sup>8</sup> Two years later in 1842 John and William set out in search of additional grazing property.<sup>9</sup> They were part of a pastoral land rush that followed the lowering of the wool tariff by the British Government. Australian colonies supplied a quarter of the British wool market by the late 1830s.<sup>10</sup> However contrary to expectations the 1840s proved very difficult years. The colonial economies were depressed following the drop in London's wool prices and meat became unsaleable. The cost of transporting sheep from Van Dieman's land to the mainland colonies became prohibitive.<sup>11</sup>

John and William travelled from western Victoria by bullock dray through the dense bracken with at best blazes or notches on trees for signage.<sup>13</sup> They were the first European settlers at the 'New Country' soon known as 'Mosquito Plains'. The land selected was centred on the red gum lined Mosquito Creek which was fed by permanent springs.<sup>14</sup> The land to the north had 'a long bank of arable well drained country right to the western boundary' and to the south had heavier, wetter soil that sustained summer pastures.<sup>15</sup>

In 1842 the South Australian Colonial Government introduced annual occupational licences for pastoral runs. Only John Robertson's name appeared on the first Occupational Licence in 1843.<sup>20</sup> As a consequence he is frequently attributed as the first official settler at Mosquito Plains,<sup>21</sup> 'the first squatter and the first lease holder in the Naracoorte district and one of the earliest settlers in the south east'.<sup>22</sup> However John and William ran the property in partnership, and both (or neither) were first. Again in 1844 only John Robertson's name appeared on the second Occupational Licence.<sup>23</sup>

In 1845 John and William Robertson made three applications for Occupational Licences but only one was successful. Both were named on Occupational License number 64 for a 60 square mile run<sup>24</sup> that went 'from two to three miles west of the Victorian border to Bool Lagoon, with the Mosquito Creek running through the centre of it'.<sup>25</sup> John and William were each spending at least some time at Mosquito Plains in the

This remarkable 1856 image of the Robertsons home station shows the slab hut had been extended and an adjacent, separate weatherboard kitchen had been built. There was also significant clearing of gums around the first station with only a few left to shade the stock.

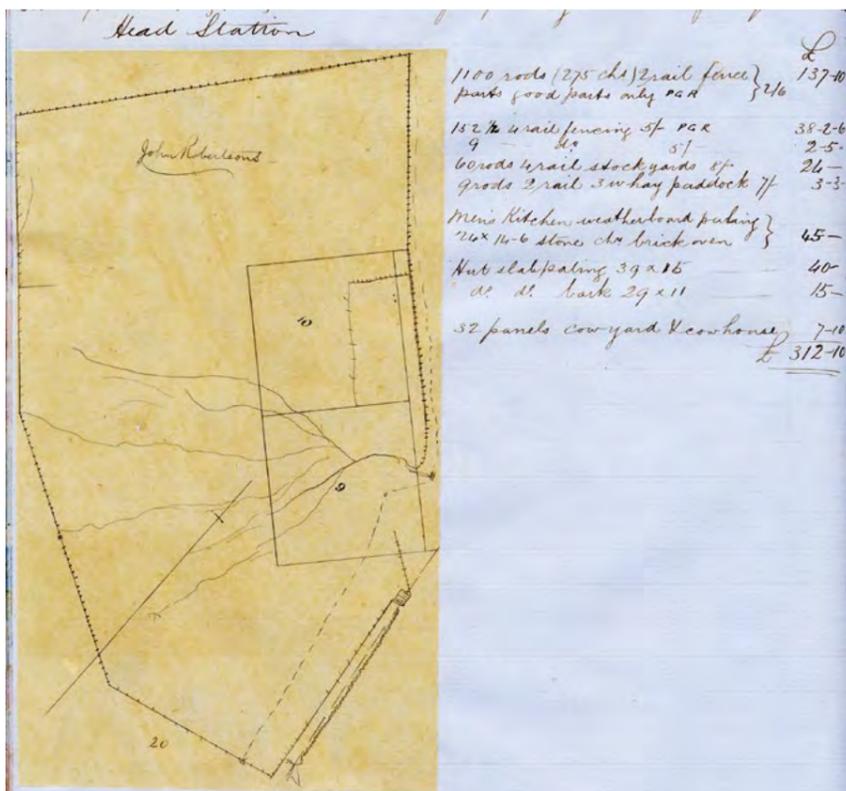
This photo, the second of only two found of the Robertsons' first station at Mosquito Plains, illustrates the simple materials used in the slab hut and the scale of the first residence when compared with Second House and Struan House.

This photograph was taken by photographer R. McClelland who from Melbourne visited Portland and then 'Apsley, Mosquito Plains, Penola, Mount Gambier, and Guichen Bay'. He 'used a new chemical' to produce Daguerreotype plate photographs of 'views of buildings at the home Stations, [and] also landscapes in any other part of the bush'.<sup>68</sup>

Visible in the photo are the extended slab hut, the weatherboard men's kitchen and possibly another hut. These improvements were valued and described by Goyder in 1864-65 by which time the slab hut extended to 39'x15'. The weatherboard men's kitchen with paling roof, stone chimney and brick oven was 24'x 14'6". A slab hut with a bark roof measured 29' x 11'.<sup>39</sup> Other improvements later valued by Goyder and partially visible in the photograph were 1100 rods or 275 chains of 2 rail fencing, 152 1/4 4 rail fencing, 60 rods of 4 rail stock yards and 9 rods of 2 rail hay paddock fencing.<sup>40</sup>

The structure extending over the bank of Mosquito Creek was a sheep wash. This was used to remove the grease from the fleeces prior to shearing. Sheep were lead into the sheep wash then 'forced to swim' in the creek 'between 2 logs on which men stood to force them under, by various means several times in the crossing'. The process was repeated at least twice before the sheep were dried out in the adjacent yards.<sup>41</sup> SLSA B36865

Goyder's hand drawn sketch showing Sections 9 and 10 was pasted into a folio alongside the transcribed description of the home station improvements. On the early station were at least six shepherd's huts including one 'two room paling hut' near the world heritage listed Naracoorte caves.<sup>42</sup> SRSR GRG35\_653 image 135



#### 1845 Occupational Licenses

John and William Robertson's 1845 Occupational License Number 64 for a 60 square mile run were '£5 a year. For every ram, ewe, weather or weaned lamb the sum of one penny. For every cow, steer, heifer or calf above 6 months, the sum of sixpence. For every horse, gelding, mare or foal above the age of 6 months the sum of two shillings and sixpence'.<sup>31</sup>

#### 1851 Pastoral Leases

In 1851 the South Australian government replaced occupational licenses with pastoral leases. Rental was regulated by the classification of the land: £1 per square mile for first class land, 15/- per square mile for second class land and 10/- per square mile for third class land. John and William Robertson secured a 14 year lease for the Mosquito Creek run, lease No 169, comprising 140 square miles (89,827 acres or 36,352 ha) of 'second class' land at 15/- per square mile.<sup>32</sup> The Robertsons' lease was reduced to 59 square miles in 1859.<sup>33</sup> It was subsequently increased to 68 square miles in 1865.<sup>34</sup>

#### Remarkable Scottish pioneers

'The dour and rugged old Scotchmen — the pioneers of the South East — who took up their virgin holdings in a vast and practically unknown wilderness, must have been remarkable men. Some of them secured great prizes; some lost their all. They ran great risks, endured great hardships, and faced and overcame what to some men would have been appalling obstacles'.<sup>46</sup>

#### Generosity

John Robertson's renowned generosity was extended to friends, family and those in need. In 1853 he invited his recently widowed sister Margaret Smith and 6 nephews to emigrate to Mosquito Plains where he had plenty of room and 'vacancies for the boys'.<sup>53</sup>

In 1860 a critically injured mailman who had fallen from his horse near John Robertson's home station was taken to a bed 'at the Robertson home' where he received prompt medical attention.<sup>54</sup> Robertson also provided assistance to the continuous stream of itinerant workers who passed through his station.

early to mid 1840s. William MacIntosh, 'the founder of Naracoorte', travelled to the district in July 1845 with William Robertson, 'who was transporting horses and cattle overland for stocking the Robertsons' run'. He noted both John and William Robertson were 'occupying' Mosquito Plains.<sup>26</sup> MacIntosh was part of the 'great land rush between 1844 and 1847' where 20,000 acres of well watered South East land was claimed by 'about 50 pastoralists'.<sup>27</sup>

In 1849 John and William Robertson moved to freehold land adjacent to the head station. Two 80 acre blocks, Sections 9 and 10 were surveyed and plotted.<sup>28</sup> Both John and William Robertson's names are recorded for the purchases of Section 9 on 16th March 1850 for £72<sup>29</sup> and Section 10 on the 2nd April 1851 for £80.<sup>30</sup> These two sections lay to the west of the first homestead, on the western slope of the range and extending over the floodplain.

John and William Robertson had the good fortune to be in the right place at the right time to reap the rewards of an enormous pastoral property. However it required good commercial and farming sense and much tenacity to overcome the obstacles and to transform the Australian bush at Mosquito Plains into a highly profitable sheep run.<sup>35</sup> John and William's early arrival allowed them 'the best land' in the region' with good access to summer water for their sheep station.<sup>37</sup> They selected land of a better and more uniform quality and depth than adjacent land.<sup>38</sup>

Not all were so lucky. Many of the first wave of Scottish pastoralists in the South East succumbed to the effects of flooding, waterlogged grounds and foot rot. Kangaroos and rabbits competed with stock for available food. Foxes naturalised from the hunt threatened lambs. There was the ever present risk of bush fires such as Black Thursday in February 1851.<sup>43</sup> The pastoral workforce was impacted in the early 1850s when the gold rush took many men away in search of riches. As a result the price of lamb was high but the labour required to prepare it was limited.<sup>44</sup>

During 1855 and 1856 the gold rush abated. Many men returned to Naracoorte to settle on holdings they had acquired before gold was discovered in Victoria. This coincided with a steady stream of British immigrants into the district.<sup>45</sup>

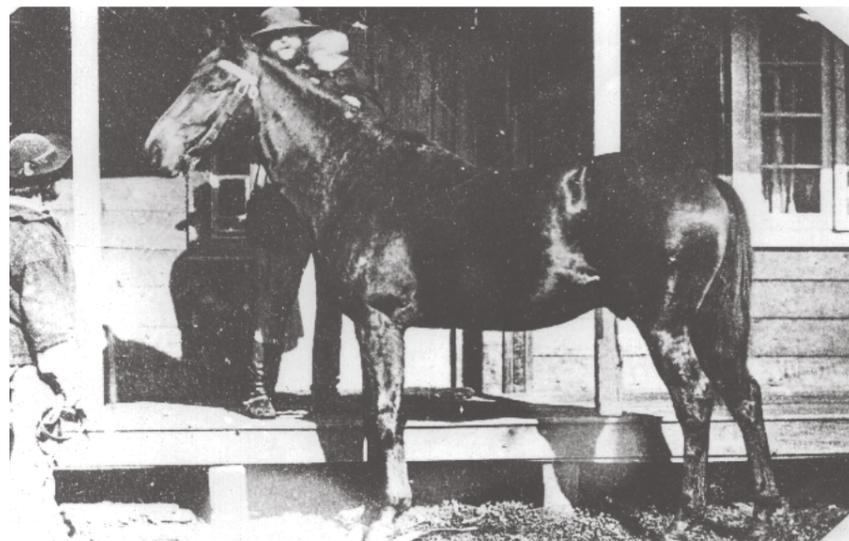
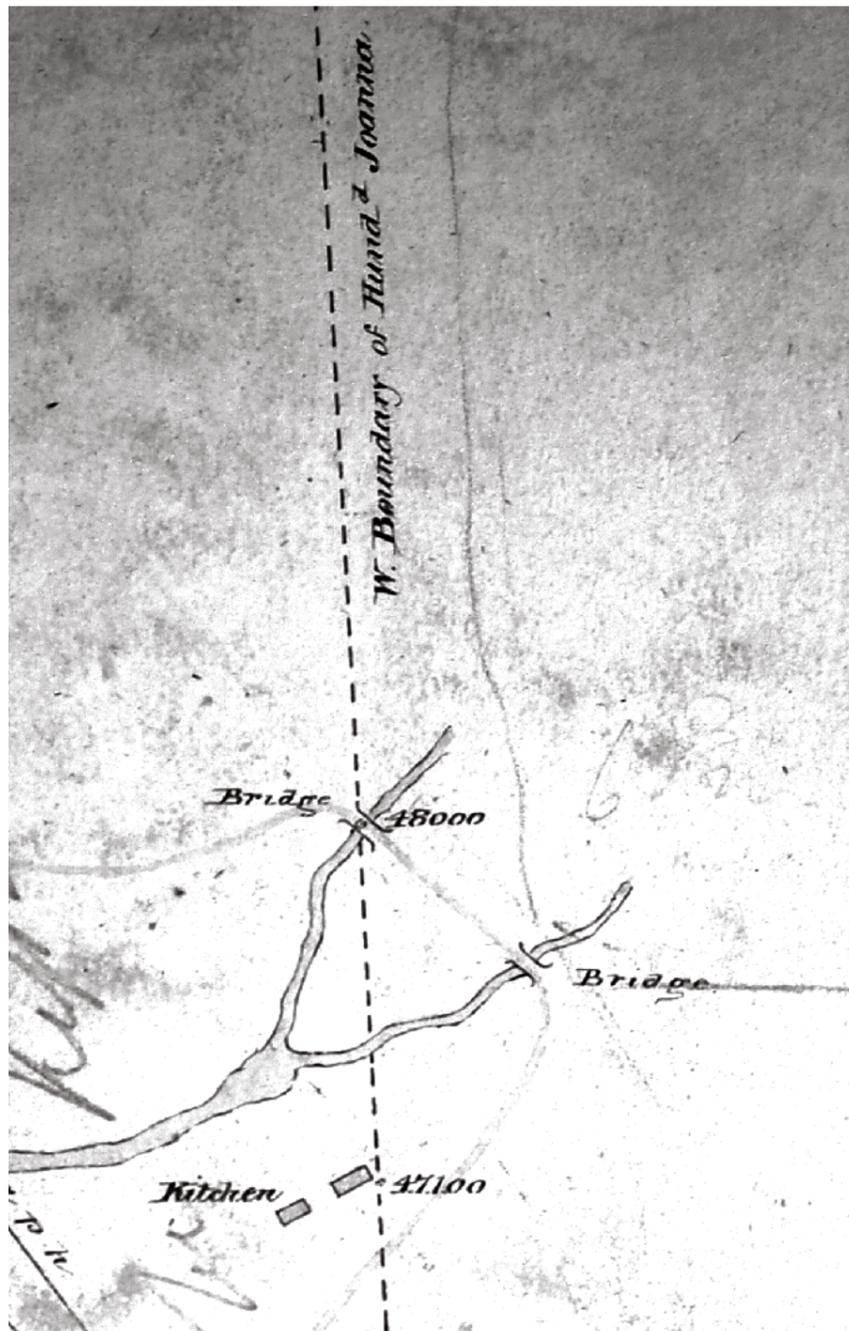
The Robertson brothers' occupancy at Mosquito Plains preceded the establishment of the adjacent township of Kincaig, later Narracoorte.<sup>47</sup> They established their large pastoral holding at Mosquito Plains in the absence of local services for banking, stock and mail.<sup>48</sup> Business was conducted mostly in Portland two days travel distance from Mosquito Plains. In contrast, communication with Adelaide took four days and required crossing the Murray River.<sup>49</sup> Both brothers maintained social connections with the Portland district and divided their time between Mosquito Plains and Portland.<sup>50</sup> These established business and social connections were maintained even after transport to Adelaide improved.<sup>51</sup>

It is unclear exactly how long John and William Robertson shared the timber homestead at Mosquito Plains. In 1852 William married Anne McPherson in Melbourne and purchased the Wando Vale run in Western Victoria from an unrelated Scotsman John George 'poor man' Robertson. In 1854 the Robertson brothers bought Woodford Station on the Glenelg River but sold it within only a few months of purchase with

The head station buildings were situated just inside the eastern boundary of the Hundred of Robertson, overlooking the two wooden bridges constructed by the Robertsons. The track from Naracoorte to Penola ran behind the buildings. 1864 Hundred of Robertson Diagram Book p11 detail.

John Robertson holding one of his children in front of a timber cottage, possibly the weatherboard kitchen of the First House. In front of John Robertson was his thoroughbred racehorse 'Sportsman.'

Photographer McClelland took Daguerreotype plate portraits 'to such a degree of sensibility as to produce pictures as quick as lightning - most invaluable for taking children and animals in motion'.<sup>69</sup> 1865 SLSA B 36867



#### Heroic woman

Mrs Susan Robertson was one of many 'wives of the pioneer squatters and farmers who deserve special and honourably mention. They were heroic women attending to household and dairying matters' under difficult circumstances.<sup>58</sup>

The First House was central to the activities of the head station working buildings, surrounded by outbuildings, sheep yards and the sheep wash. This would have been a busy but at times trying environment for the six years Susan Robertson spent raising a young family in the First House.

#### Naracoorte Caves

The now world heritage listed Naracoorte caves were located on John and William Robertson's pastoral run.<sup>61</sup> Reverend Julian Woods, mentor to Sister Mary McKillop, wrote in 1858 that the caves were 'like an immense Gothic cathedral, and the numbers of half-finished stalagmites which rise from the ground like kneeling or prostrate forms, seem [like] worshippers in that silent and solemn place'. Temporary huts 'were the only sign that any great subterranean excavation might be expected on the Robertsons' property'.<sup>62</sup> One of the caves was named 'Robertson's Cave'. Another, coined as 'Robertson's Parlour' is now known as 'Robertson's Chamber'.<sup>63</sup> The caves became a popular local picnic destination from the mid 1850s.

#### Timber cottage for John Hales

The Robertson's First House would later become home to Mr John Hales for twenty years.<sup>64</sup> After working for Henty and McFarlane at Portland, Mr Hale first worked for John Robertson on Warrattenbullie sheep run before moving to Struan home station. He was the Struan stud master for over twenty years.<sup>65</sup>

A timber building was later moved onto land owned by one of John Robertson and William Shiels' descendants, Mr E. Shiels. This suggests it was probably the weatherboard kitchen, a building more amenable to relocation than the slab hut. After Shiels' death it was sold and later dismantled.<sup>66</sup> In 1937 it was noted that the first home was 'long since' demolished'.<sup>67</sup>

its 10,000 sheep and 200 cattle for £12,000.<sup>52</sup>

Mrs Susan Robertson, nee Susan Ann Frazer (1832-1906), like John Robertson, migrated from Invernesshire, Scotland. She arrived in Australia in 1850. John was 47 years old when he proposed to 23 year old Susan at Satimer Station, her uncle Mr Alex Davidson's home near Casterton. She was the daughter of an administrator to Lord Lovat while John's father was a farm worker.<sup>55</sup> It is reported that Susan rejected John's initial proposal but accepted the following morning.<sup>56</sup> They married at Portland in 1855. Their first family home was the slab hut and weatherboard kitchen with paling roofs on the Mosquito Plains run.<sup>57</sup>

John Robertson was a community leader while living in the First House at Mosquito Plains. In 1856 he was instrumental in the establishment of the Presbyterian Church after it was voted the most appropriate denomination for the first church for Naracoorte, reflecting the majority of Scots in the district.<sup>59</sup> In 1859 he was elected an inaugural committee member of the Pastoral Association at a meeting in the Merino Inn Hotel where the licensed publican was W T Gore. The committee planned to purchase land from Mr MacIntosh for the show grounds.<sup>60</sup>

The substantial stone Second House reflected the improved 'post gold rush' economic conditions for the South East pastoralists who had become the 'jewel in the crown of the colony's pastoral economy'.<sup>1</sup> The successful pastoralists were 'riding high on the sheeps back'.<sup>2</sup> They upgraded from slab huts to 'lavish homes' while securing their position by freeholding 'more of their choicest land'.<sup>3</sup> Habitable Places 2014



#### Self made rough specimen

Governor Daly's travelling party including a Mr Waterhouse were guests at the Second House in February 1863. Waterhouse wrote a journal with unflattering impressions of his host John Robertson: 'On our way we stopped at a Mr Robertson's who is a self made rough specimen of a not very superior Scotchman, but who has we are informed managed to amass a fortune of something like £25,000 a year. His sole gratification appears to be in his horses and even here judging from his appearance he takes his pleasure sadly.'<sup>14 15</sup>

SLSA PRG 1513/1/2 p9-10<sup>13</sup>

into my boots. On our way we stopped at a Mr Robertson's who is a self made rough specimen of a not very superior Scotchman, but who has we are informed managed to amass a fortune of something like £25,000 a year. His sole gratification appears to be in his horses & even here judging from his appearance he takes his pleasures sadly. Nothing strikes one more in travelling in the southeastern district than the number of <sup>very</sup> wealthy men particularly Scotchmen who are scattered through it. There are Robertsons, Camerons, McIntoshes, McIntyres &c. Many of these are Highlanders of the R. C. religion, farming a small

#### Goyder's 1865 valuations

G.W. Goyder valued the nearby Morambro, Binnun, and Hynam sheep runs at £18 per square mile 'but Mosquito Creek and Narracoorte runs at only £12 per square mile'. Despite opposition to these 'high' valuations 'princely fortunes' were soon made from the sheep runs.<sup>26</sup>

#### Supporter or spy?

John Robertson, builder Henry Smith, painter William Robbie and architect W T Gore were well known to each other prior to their involvement in the construction of Struan House. In April 1868 they all attended a meeting for the election of Mr Hughes in the seat of Victoria. One issue strongly advocated by Mr Hughes was to bring 'the runs possessing agricultural land into the hands of the farmer.' Did John Robertson attend as a supporter or a spy?<sup>27 28</sup>

## 2.4 Second House

John Robertson's second homestead at Robertsons Plains was built in 1861 to accommodate his growing family.<sup>4</sup> It accommodated nine Robertson children after the birth of youngest child Elizabeth in 1870. John's brother William had vacated Robertson Plains almost a decade before the Second House was built.<sup>5</sup>

John Robertson, while residing in the Second House continued as a Naracoorte community leader. He was actively involved in the Presbyterian Church, the Kincaig Institute (1864), the Pastoral and Agricultural Society, Australia's first Coursing Club (1867)<sup>6</sup> and early country horse racing (1865).

Although no substantiating historical evidence was found, the Second House was probably designed by local architect W T Gore.<sup>7</sup> Lothar Brasse considered it 'a good example of simple, Scottish Colonial style' due to its simple masonry and symmetrical plan and that 'Gore had inspired numerous Georgian style buildings for pastoralists in the South East.'<sup>8</sup> Stonemason Joseph Hosking was either contractor or subcontractor for the Second House.<sup>9</sup>

Second House matched the social expectations of a successful South East pastoralist in the early 1860s. Despite it being the venue for frequent and generous Robertson hospitality, Second House's architectural qualities received little attention following commencement of the Border Watch newspaper in 1861. One 1865 exception referred to the Second House as 'Mr Robertson's mansion'.<sup>10</sup> Visitors made comments reflecting its social standing. In 1866 a business traveller offered accommodation at 'old settler Robertson's' described the Second House as 'a handsome house finely situated and most elegantly furnished.'<sup>11</sup> Another visitor wrote just before tenders were advertised for Struan House 'In a deflection on the Mosquito Creek is the homestead of Mr John Robertson; and the number and size of the buildings scorned to proclaim the abundance and wealth of the owner.'<sup>12</sup>

Mr Cooper's survey plans from 1864<sup>16</sup> show the Robertsons' freehold property at Mosquito Plains included the extant Second House and now demolished outbuildings, substantial stone stables, a woolshed and stockyards all sited on Section 9 as well as a cultivated paddock on Section 10.<sup>17</sup>

John and William Robertson continued leasing Run No 169 annually. Despite obstacles their profits allowed them to increase the lease holding from 59 square miles in 1859 to 68 square miles in 1865<sup>18</sup> and gradually buy parcels of the original run as they became available with extensive surveying and the progressive proclamation of Hundreds in the district.<sup>19</sup> They purchased freehold land in the Conan Hundred on 29 August 1861, Joanna Hundred on 12 June 1862 and the Hundreds of Robertson and Naracoorte on 24 October 1867.<sup>20</sup>

Surveyor-General Mr Goyder re-valued the leasehold land at Robertson Plains in 1865. The Colonial Government was promoting agricultural land use 'especially wheat crops' at the expense of pastoralism despite the pastoralists providing significant government revenue. Pastoralism had added £66,000 to revenue, an eight-fold increase from 1857 to 1862.<sup>21 22</sup>

Sruan Stables in 1947. The stables are first shown in 1864 in Diagram Hundred of Robertson p11. SRSA GRG29/136\_376



Today only the footings of Sruan stables remain supporting the floor of the Agronomy Shed. Habitable Places 2015

Crower homestead (1866) is an example of Gore's two storey Georgian homesteads, constructed in the same period as the Second House. Habitable Places 2005



#### Army of locusts

During the 1860s many itinerant workers received support from the South East pastoralists. Diametric opinions were expressed on the demands the itinerant swagmen seeking work placed on landholders.

In 1865 'The Swagmen Nuisance' compared 'the invading hordes of swagmen' from over the border to 'an army of locusts threatening to eat up the country before them'. It saw nothing positive in the swagmen except that they might provide labour for any future sheep shearing and road making jobs. Until then 'the put upon squatters must grin and bear the burden of them. But it is very hard that they should.'<sup>35</sup>

The opposing view favoured the more reliable, familiar swagman labour that saved on worker's travel and accommodation expenses and rejected labour selection by 'scheming' agents in Adelaide.<sup>36</sup>

The debate highlighted there was no shortage of available labour as there had been during the 1850s gold rush.<sup>37</sup> Despite newspaper comment that 'all improvements on the [South East] stations are at a stand still',<sup>38</sup> many pastoral homesteads were extended or upgraded. By the mid 1860s John Robertson financed the purchase and development of Warrattenbullie.

#### Her Majesty's Mail

John Robertson extended hospitality to the coach service that replaced the mailman on horseback even when the ride was without serious mishap<sup>42</sup>. On one trip 'those travelling by her Majesty's Mail Coach to Adelaide departed Mt. Gambier just before midnight and in the dark the journey was an exhilarating and exciting exercise, admirably calculated for bracing up a weak nervous system, quickening the pulsations, shaking off paling humours and squeamishness, and generally reducing the system to firm, sinewy toughness'. Arriving at the Second House many hours later the mailman and his passengers were all 'charmed with the kind attention of that gentleman who, according to his custom, has sent out a couple of trays of freshly gathered grapes' that were gratefully consumed.<sup>43</sup>

Robertsons Plains was not what Mr Goyder had expected. He deemed that it was unsuitable for agriculture.<sup>23</sup> His survey was undertaken after an extended drought when a scarcity of grass threatened sheep survival and depressed the lambing rate.<sup>24</sup> Goyder considered that the previous valuations had overvalued the land that was 'inundated for part of the year' and which restricted transport of sheep and supplies to three months per year.<sup>25</sup> John Robertson benefited from Goyder's lower valuation as it kept his expenses low and raised more capital for his 'extension' to Second House.

In the first half of the 1860s very wet seasons and floods were followed by years of drought that caused great losses to the squatters.<sup>29</sup> In 1864 John Robertson was 'a heavy loser' when a fatal horse disease killed his best breeding mares.<sup>30</sup> Sheep stealing was an ongoing threat. Despite extensive preventative measures to defeat 'the sheep thieves', John Robertson's nephew William Robertson had 700 sheep stolen from his adjacent Moyhall property in 1863.<sup>31</sup> Summer bush fires were a constant threat. In January 1865 workmen took two weeks to extinguish fires that destroyed 'many miles of fencing' and pastures at Robertsons Plains, Warrattenbullie, Broadmeadows, Morambro, and Narracoorte sheep stations.<sup>32</sup> In 1866 the practice of 'over-stocking' impacted on the pastoralist's profit with a shortage of fodder after 'the old rootlets of grass' were not allowed to seed.<sup>34</sup> Kangaroos competed with stock for food although the popular coursing hunts drastically reduced their numbers within a few decades.

Concern with moves for the South East to realign with Victoria and the potential loss of revenue probably influenced the Colonial Government in 1862 to budget £2,000 for a road from Mount Gambier to Naracoorte. This would allow for the inaugural mail coach service to get from Port MacDonnell to Adelaide in 4 days.<sup>39</sup> However the budget was insufficient for the construction of a bridge over Mosquito Creek.<sup>40</sup>

Until local bank branches were opened, the Colonial Government's South East mail service on horseback was crucial for the running of the Robertson pastoral empire. Its temporary cancellation in the 1850s was a firm reminder for John Robertson of the valuable role it played.<sup>41</sup> From 1862 John Robertson's support extended to the mail coach passengers after the South East mail service changed from horseback to coaches and the contractor carried passengers to defray expenses.

While John Robertson lived in the Second House significant improvements in communications facilitated the operations of the large South East pastoral stations. In 1863 the telegraph between Naracoorte and Mount Gambier was established.<sup>44</sup> In 1864 Mr Todd, the South Australian Government's superintendent of telegraphs visited Naracoorte to inspect the new telegraph line from Port MacDonnell to Naracoorte, which ran behind Robertson's Second House. Todd, 'pleased with the works', travelled on to Melbourne to negotiate the proposed direct telegraph line from Adelaide to Sydney.<sup>45</sup>

Penola and the 'small Naracoorte township'<sup>46</sup> were increasingly providing local services to the pastoralists. The potential for large pastoral deposits from pastoralists such as John Robertson facilitated the construction of substantial bank branches in Penola in 1866 and Narracoorte in 1867.

Warrattenbullie Shearers Quarters (still standing) and Shearing Shed (demolished) demonstrate the scale of John Robertson's pastoral operations. Photos Davies Family.

"Vice President" at BelleVue Merino stud. The Robertson brothers were renowned for high quality fine wool based on Merinos imported from Mr James Gibbon's BelleVue stud in Tasmania.<sup>60</sup>

In 1866, two very fine, pure bred German rams imported directly from Germany from 'the celebrated flocks of Mr Steiger were added to the stud of Messrs. Robertson, Mosquito Plains'. The rams 'equal to any that ever came into the district', cost about £100 each. They were sent via MacDonnell Bay [Port MacDonnell] after arriving in Melbourne only a few weeks earlier.<sup>61</sup>

Rams auctioned by John Robertson in 1873 were from 'carefully selected' Learmonth and Gibson's Ewes and there were 'no inferior sheep.'<sup>62</sup> Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office PH30\_1\_150



#### Warrattenbullie

Acquisition and development of the Warrattenbullie run was a major plank of John Robertson's business strategy. He built a substantial new stone shearing shed, designed and then tendered by WT Gore in November 1866, that became his 'shearing headquarters'.<sup>51 52</sup> The two storey Warrattenbullie Shearers Quarters, also presumably built around this time, became the primary shearing shed for Robertsons Plains, Warrattenbullie, and later Elderslie.

Stone shearing sheds with elevated timber floors improved profits compared with early timber paling or slab sheds that had only dirt floors. They allowed significantly more sheep to be shorn per week with less risk of damage to the wool in inclement weather.<sup>53</sup>

#### Sheep breeding

'John Robertson of Struan, William Robertson of Moyhall, and Adam Smith of Hynam, deserve to be remembered, not only for the interest they took in the primitive community of Narracoorte, but for their combined labours in improving the breed of sheep in the South-Eastern district.'<sup>54</sup>

The Merino breed John and William Robertson selected for their Mosquito Creek stud proved to be generally disease free, and more robust and healthy than other breeds in Australia.<sup>55</sup> Merinos had a large quantity of good quality, fine wool. With the absence of kemp the fleece was all wool. Robertson's Merinos coped well with the extremes of climate at Mosquito Plains and when necessary could travel distances to water.<sup>56</sup> Sheep on the station were kept in separate pastures to the cattle.<sup>57</sup>

#### Invincible Robertson sheep

The Robertson brothers' sheep were 'invincible', winning eighty per cent of sheep prizes at the 1864 Penola Show. As William Robertson had lived in Wando Vale for many years since the early 1850s John was credited as the 'flock master who bred outstanding quality sheep.'<sup>58</sup>

The record-keeping skills and pride in the family's pastoral history enabled John Robertson's son Alexander to quote the results of the 1864 Penola Show when he was interviewed over 70 years later.<sup>59</sup>

#### Skilled and loyal staff

John and William Robertson's vast station could not have succeeded without many skilled and loyal staff to develop the pastoral business. Many early staff learnt their pastoral skills in Britain.

Mr W. Wade was one such employee. Having trained in the Yorkshire woollen mills he worked as a wool classer for John Robertson, assisted in building up the stud, and took out a number of show prizes in John Robertson's name. He was 'a freak with sheep and horses' and an 'unorthodox', winning race horse trainer.<sup>78</sup>

#### Horse racing

Country horse racing was a passion for John Robertson. He was well known as a major sponsor of the steeplechase and flat races in the South East and Western Victoria.<sup>63</sup> He bred sthoroughbred racehorses and enjoyed winning at the country racetrack.<sup>64</sup> He employed excellent 'colt breakers' including Ned Oliver, briefly poet and steeple chaser Adam Lindsay Gordon<sup>65</sup> and other leading racehorse trainers.<sup>66</sup> Horse races were so popular that they were conducted in heats. Riders for John Robertson added 'many valuable pages to the history of racing in this State'.<sup>67</sup> Robertson's top quality race horses included Frank, Duke of Montrose, Lady Struan, Star of the West, General Struan, Who Not, Colonel, Little John, Stark, Swordsman, Haphazard, Young Haphazard, Ugly Buck, Caledonia, and Colonel Struan.

Early racing carnivals were a major two month event. John Robertson sent six or seven horses, with trainers, jockeys, and a spring cart containing feed, to the western districts of Victoria. There was keen rivalry for a win at Penola, the main local race track, and also Apsley on the border.<sup>68</sup>

#### Bad loser

Minnie Hunter in her diary 'Memoirs of a Squatters Daughter' recalls one passionate race day at Apsley when her father knocked down several Robertsons who unhappy at their horse losing, had 'rushed' the race winning jockey with such vigour as to cause damage to his cap and clothing.<sup>69</sup>

Another uncomplimentary report of John Robertson's raceday behaviour comes from Mr Mack. After a Penola handicap John Robertson overheard Charlie Drake's sarcastic comment about the defeat of Robertson's horse, Duke. John Robertson's gave Charlie a 'smack across the shoulder with his riding whip'. A few days later, regretting his impulsive act, John Robertson sent Charlie 'a handsome cheque'.<sup>100</sup>

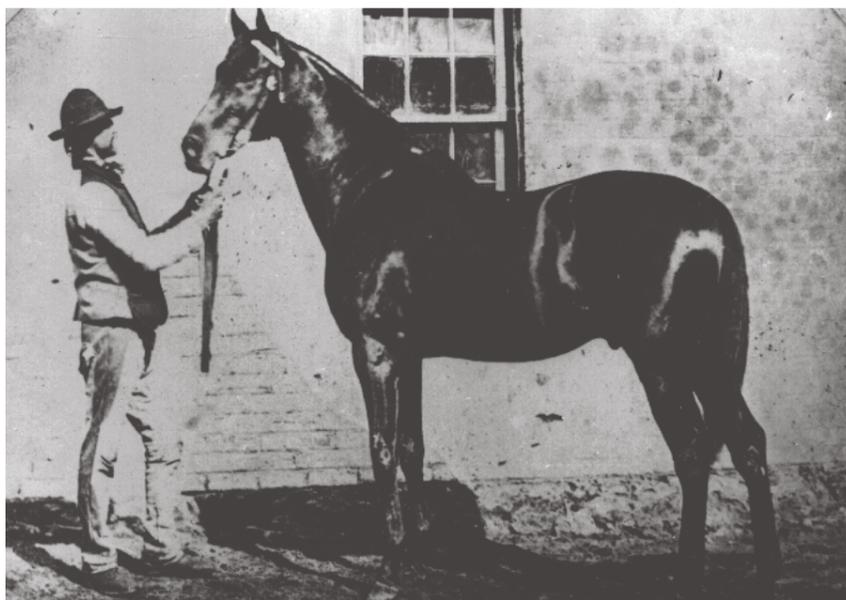
#### Bad bet

In 1863 John Robertson's filly Lady of the Lake was favoured to win the 'St. Ledger' at the Penola races. Mr. Allan McLean, of Hynam, pestered Robertson to allow him to ride another of Robertson's horses 'General Struan' in that race. Robertson initially refused as he considered General Struan had no chance of winning. He finally relented due to McLean's persistence. Robertson and his friends heavily backed 'Lady of the Lake' to win but watching the race had 'the mortification of seeing the despised General Struan romp home a comfortable winner from Lady of the Lake'.<sup>74</sup>

Prized horse Frank. Fortunately for their morale John and William Robertson owned an 'important horse' named Frank<sup>103</sup> and had some good wins.<sup>70</sup> English import Frank, a brown, medium build, thoroughbred stallion, was in John Robertson's stud from the mid 1850s until 1876. He sired stock of 'sound quality and stamina', contributing to the renowned reputation of thoroughbreds from Struan, for which the South East became famous. Frank was the progeny of Ugly Buck from Irregularity.<sup>71</sup>

Frank won several gold medals in Adelaide.<sup>103</sup> At the 1864 Penola Agricultural Festival he won the thoroughbred section as the judges considered him 'a very fine horse'.<sup>72</sup>

For many years John Robertson's son Alexander had mislaid his highly prized photo of Frank. He was very pleased to find it in 1933 when the Border Watch reporter enjoyed a dinner party at Struan House. Luckily the photo is now in the Naracoorte collection of the SLSA labelled 'Prized horse:- Frank'.<sup>73</sup> R. McClelland 1856 SLSA 36866



#### Mr Gall

Mr John Gall was born on Dallyfoor Farm in Aberdeenshire in 1830. As a 16 year old, he was deported under Scottish property law following a second criminal offence, shooting a hare instead of a rabbit on his employer's property.<sup>79</sup> His father arranged passage to South Australia where his brother-in-law had a sheep run on Yorke Peninsula. After brief, unsuccessful goldmining in the early 1850s at Forest Creek, Victoria he returned to work on sheep stations. Early in 1854 with his brother Charles he left Adelaide in the schooner Elizabeth for Guichen Bay. After drying wool from the wreck of the Julias, he met John Robertson in the 'small hamlet of Naracoorte'. He contracted to cure scabby sheep on John and William's 'Struan on the Wannan' sheep run. He was subsequently employed by the Robertsons and managed their sheep runs Wando Vale, Struan on the Wannan and finally Warrattenbullie.

While at Warrattenbullie, Gall became acquainted with the poet and daring rider Adam Lindsay Gordon who he described as 'a man of peculiar disposition, very quiet and reserved, but a rider who knew no fear, although often at a disadvantage through being short-sighted'.<sup>101</sup>

In 1862 Gall retired as Manager of Warrattenbullie Station to take up a pastoral holding in his own name. 'Mr John Robertson found, on going to settle up with him, that his salary had not been drawn for five years, he drew out a cheque for the amount of the salary, and in addition gave him a bonus of £100 per year for the last five years that he had been in the firm's employment'.<sup>80</sup>

#### James Light

In 1866 James Lidstone Light (1854-1938) lived with his family at Cave Hut where his father CR Light was a boundary rider for John Robertson. At the age of 12 he was the first wool picker when the Warrattenbullie woolshed was opened.

James Light was a shearer in several states and an experienced fencer. At one time he was employed as bullock driver at Struan carting supplies from Naracoorte. He was involved in the construction of the Kingston railway line and lived in the Naracoorte district for 75 years.<sup>81</sup>

#### Thoroughly qualified Tutor required

In 1869 a modest advertisement for the position of tutor gave no indication it was placed by the extremely wealthy John Robertson for his large family. One such advertisement read: 'WANTED a thoroughly qualified Tutor for a family at Mosquito Plains.

Apply, with testimonials, to Editor Border Watch.'<sup>83</sup>

John Robertson employed William Shiels, later the 16th Premier of Victoria, as tutor. Recent law graduate Shiels, whose fragile health delayed his legal career, was tutor for about 3 years when the Robertson family lived in the Second House.<sup>82</sup>

During this time Shiels developed a close friendship with John Robertson.<sup>84</sup>

The Second House reflected the success of John and William Robertson's pastoral enterprise but was modest compared with contemporary two storey pastoral homesteads Crower (1866), Cairnbank (1868) and John Robertson's estimated £25,000 annual income<sup>47</sup> The design of the building allowing for future extension suggested a conservative approach by John Robertson and his reluctance to over-capitalise on the jointly owned property.

John's business hand was forced (or released) when his brother and partner William Robertson died in September 1864 at Wando Vale leaving his widow Annie and 6 children.<sup>48</sup> William bequeathed his half share of the joint 'Robertson Plains' sheep run to John McPherson of Lyne Station.<sup>49</sup> In 1866 John Robertson expanded his pastoral business by investing in the Warrattenbullie run. In 1867 John Robertson purchased Williams' half share of the Robertson Plains run from John McPherson giving him full ownership and profits of Robertson Plains.<sup>50</sup>

John Robertson enjoyed kangaroo and wallaby hunting. In 1865 two 'highly successful roo hunts' on the runs of John Robertson and his nephew William Robertson 'rid the district' of about 150 kangaroos.<sup>75</sup> In June 1865 the first public coursing event in Australia was held at the housewarming of his nephew William Robertson's homestead Moyhall. 'Wild galloping, thrilling chases, and full throated shouting' prevailed and the slaughter of kangaroos was 'almost endless'. In one spill 59 year old John Robertson broke his collarbone and 'killed his horse'. This painful injury did not deter John Robertson who participated in this sport that 'continued unabated' until 1873, when the wallabies had become scarce.<sup>76</sup>

Some of Australia's most famous greyhounds are buried somewhere alongside Struan House including Rodanthe (twice winner of the Victoria Waterloo cup), Capri and Hawthorn.<sup>77</sup>

Between Naracoorte and Penola the only stations available to change or feed travelling horses were the equidistant stations of John Robertson of Robertsons Plains and Ronald McDonald of Glenroy. From 1867 mail coach horses were changed at the gate on the boundary of the Robertsons Plains and Glenroy. John Robertson's boundary rider whose hut was near the gate, checked that the gate was closed after the mail or travellers had passed through.<sup>85</sup>

John Robertson may have tired of the constant stream of travellers and mail coaches seeking refreshments as the road to Mount Gambier passed close behind the Second House. He commissioned W T Gore to design a hotel to service the mail coach and travellers' horses.<sup>86</sup> Gore tendered for construction of the Gate Hotel in March 1868<sup>87</sup> and local builders Henry Smith and Thomas Agar won the contract.<sup>88</sup>

In 1868 John Robertson and W T Gore were both listed for letting enquiries regarding 'the New Hotel at the Mail Station on the Naracoorte and Penola road, together with a paddock'.<sup>89</sup> The 'Gate Hotel'<sup>90</sup> was first licenced to James Kirby. In October 1868 he advertised 'first class accommodation for both man and horse, at moderate charges'.<sup>91</sup> Kirby ran the premises for less than three years after which the licence was not renewed. John Robertson's Gate Hotel then offered accommodation and meals for travellers and fodder and a rest stop for mail and travellers' horses until it ceased trading in 1887.<sup>92 93</sup>

John Robertson's Gate Hotel stood by the Riddoch Highway about 10 kms south of Struan House. A rose hedge and red gums framed the hotel.

Photo Sally and Andrew McLean

Today the Gate Hotel site is marked by a plaque. The rose hedge, an annual spread of bella-donna lilies and the red gums provide a living memorial.

Habitable Places 2015



#### Gate Hotel

Edith Hinton (nee Childs) lived at the unlicensed Gate Hotel as an infant when her parents managed the building. Edith revisited the hotel with her mother during her childhood and later recalled: 'it was a very lovely imposing stone building with an extra large dining room and lounge and it was beautifully furnished. Part of the Hotel was at the end of a long verandah: here the passengers would have meals and on occasions stay several days and see the countryside.' Her father's young employee 'James Skinner fed and groomed the horses and always had fresh horses ready when the coach pulled in'.<sup>96</sup>

#### Profit lucky to be nil

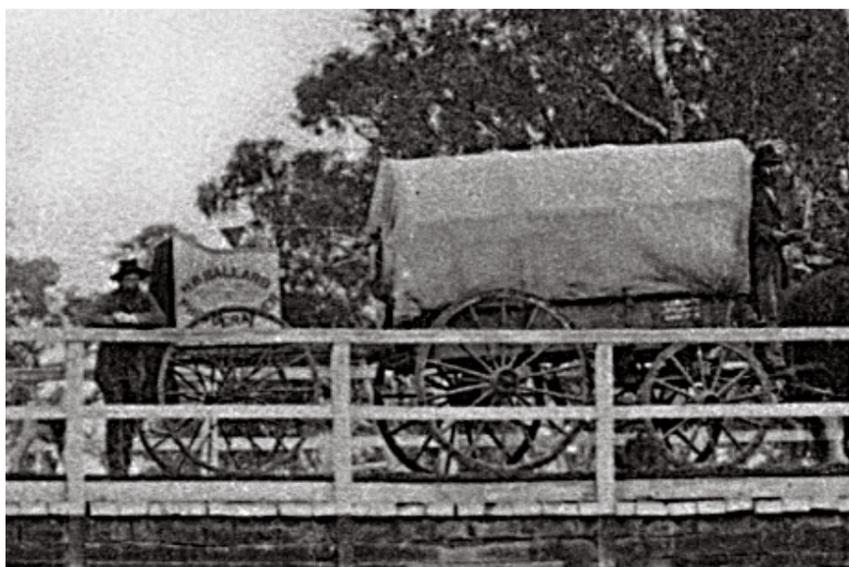
The following story provides an insight into John Robertson's Presbyterian values. A bazaar held in 1875 had raised only 1/3rd of the money required for the new St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Naracoorte. With the anticipated profits of the Naracoorte Art Union Raffle fundraiser for the new Presbyterian Church 'lucky to be nil' it was announced that John Robertson and his nephew William Robertson would be benefactors 'on condition the committee declines to accept any proceeds of the lottery.'<sup>97</sup> Interestingly, both benefactors were Art Union Raffle committee members whose role had been to 'superintend the whole conduct of the Art Union Drawing.'<sup>98 99</sup>

The Gate Hotel (1868-1954) became the Robertson's third family home at Robertsons Plains while Struan House was under construction between 1873 and 1875.<sup>94</sup> In early 1875 John Robertson was a major benefactor for the new St Andrew's Presbyterian Church.<sup>104</sup>

Enormous pastoral profits throughout the 1860s and 1870s allowed John Robertson to make major capital investments on his huge 100,000 acres of freehold and 127,000 acres of total landholdings.<sup>95</sup> Improvements included the Second House, Warrattenbullie Woolshed and Shearers Quarters, the Gate Hotel and Struan House.

This photo of Struan House is attributed to Mr HB Ballard and is dated ca 1879. The garden is newly established so it was taken only a few years after construction was completed. The picket fence had not yet been erected. SLSA B21766

The detail image reveals the strongly mottled tonings of the sandstone trimmings and the narrow stripes to the concave verandah. SLSA B21766 detail



Photography in the 19th Century was a cumbersome science, but this did not deter intrepid practitioners from travelling to remote rural regions. This delightful image of Robertsons Bridge over Mosquito Creek was taken by HB Ballard. To enhance the landscape composition he has captured his travelling outfit and posed some passers by. His handcart, with 'H.B. Ballard Photographer' in large print, served as a mobile darkroom to 'sensitise and develop his wet plate glass negatives.'

HB Ballard, artist photographer advertised his services in the Eastern Star newspaper in July 1880 and in the Border Watch in September 1880.<sup>61</sup> 'Portraits! For a few weeks only, H.B. Ballard, artist photographer from Melbourne, has the honour to announce to the residents of Mount Gambier and vicinity that he has erected his Mammoth Studio, fitted with the latest scientific appliances, next Mr Hood, Bookseller, Commercial Street, Mount Gambier. Articles of dress best suited for photography are black, brown (of all shades), drab, grey, or green.'

Following his South East excursion Ballard returned to Melbourne and exhibited photographs in the Centennial International Exhibition.<sup>62</sup> SLSA B21766-176

#### Tenders for Struan House.

John Robertson's 1873 tender invitation gave no clue that the STONE HOUSE was for the South East's largest residence, designed by the 'most important architect in the South East,' WT Gore<sup>4</sup> or that it was on an vast sheep station only surpassed in acreage by Mount Shank.<sup>5</sup>

The modest tender read: 'TENDERS will be received by the undersigned up to the 10th November next for the ERECTION of a STONE HOUSE at Robertson's Plains, where plans and specifications may be seen. The lowest or any tender not necessarily accepted. JOHN ROBERTSON. Robertson's Plains, 15th Oct., 1873.'<sup>6</sup>

#### Tender results

Tender results for ERECTION of a STONE HOUSE at Robertson's Plains were published in the Mount Gambier Standard on the 28th November 1873: 'Martin and Son, £8975 Goss, Lambert and Hosking, £6898 and H. Smith (Narracoorte) £6649.'<sup>12</sup>

No only did Smith submit the lowest tender but John Robertson must have been confident of his construction skills and business capacity through previous projects including the Gate Hotel, Warratenbullie Woolshed, Moyhall and Gringegangola. While Goss, Lambert and Hosking had unsuccessfully tendered in their own right, they were subsequently sub-contracted by Smith to undertake the stonework. The plasterwork was subcontracted to Mr T. Campbell.<sup>13</sup>

#### Foundation stone

In 1868 John Robertson's brother Duncan laid a foundation stone for his mansion Gringegalgona in Western Victoria, a building also designed by WT Gore and contracted by Henry Smith.<sup>14</sup> The celebration for the laying of the 'foundation stone' or 'first corner stone' for Struan House occurred on the 15th April 1874.<sup>15</sup> Fortunately this event was reported in the Border Watch, as the location of the foundation stone has yet to be found. Its 'Narracoorte correspondent' reported: 'To-day the foundation stone of Mr John Robertson's new house at the Mosquito Plains is being laid. I believe it is to be an occasion of great and general gaiety, and worthy the building that is to have its first corner stone laid.'<sup>16</sup>

## 2.5 Struan House

Struan House was the family homestead for pioneer squatter pastoralist John Robertson, 'as well-known as the South-East itself,'<sup>1</sup> his wife Susan and their nine children. In a park-like setting elevated above Mosquito Creek, Struan House 'in size and beauty' was 'more like an English nobleman's estate than the residence of a squatter.'<sup>2</sup> Struan House symbolises the success of colonial pastoralism in the South East and the excellence of the architects, contractors and subcontractors involved in its construction. It was occupied continuously as a Robertson family residence from 1875 until the Estate of John Robertson's late son Alexander was finalised in 1946. The Robertson family was widely acknowledged for the quality of sheep, cattle and horses, generous hospitality, dependable community support and love of horse racing.<sup>3</sup> Alexander's applied research in the paddocks adjacent Struan House not only improved Struan's fodder crops and profits but it also cultivated the local community's connection with Struan House as a potential government research centre.

Tenders for Struan House were called in October 1873. In November, John Robertson reviewed three tenders and selected the lowest tender price of £6,649 from Naracoorte contractor Mr Henry Smith. Mr Robbie's tender for the elaborate painting of Struan House was not included in Smith's contract.<sup>7</sup> The expensive marble fireplaces were also additional to the building contract.<sup>8</sup> Architect George Pannell was the clerk of works.<sup>9</sup> Mr Brewster was the garden contractor for £310.<sup>10</sup> Fortunately for Robertson, there was a strong world demand for wool in this period. Wool prices and profits were high.<sup>11</sup>

John Robertson's Struan business ledger details some of the construction expenses for Struan House but is not a complete record.<sup>17</sup> Smith's contract amount had increased by £2,203 since the original tender was accepted 18 months earlier. Smith was due 'by contracts' £8,852 but owed £311 for his supplies purchased from John Robertson, referred to as his 'beef account'.<sup>18</sup> The ledger reveals that George Pannell was employed directly by John Robertson as the clerk of works. Pannell's annual salary was £213.<sup>19</sup> Prior to its completion, the estimated cost of Mr John Robertson's 'handsome and commodious residence' had increased to over £10,000 pounds.<sup>20</sup>

The six grey granite steps leading to the main entrance were from Duncan Robertson's property Gringegalgona, near Coleraine in Western Victoria. The high quality of the granite was considered equal to the highly valued Aberdeen granite used in many substantial colonial buildings.<sup>24</sup> Many years later it was reported that the stone for the walls came from the ranges near Struan House.<sup>25</sup> It was also reported that 'all the lintels and windows are beautifully carved in sandstone'<sup>26</sup> but this is not confirmed by the physical evidence.

The large downstairs drawing room at Struan House had luxurious, high-end fittings and furnishings that proclaimed John Robertson's social standing.<sup>29</sup> The room is lit by a generous faceted bay window. The ceiling is coffered. The dominant feature of the room is a magnificent hand carved Carrara marble mantelpiece. This was awarded a prize at the 1867 Melbourne Exhibition. Along with its matching marble clock,

### Sruthan, or small stream

John Robertson named his new mansion Struan House. Struan is 'the anglicised form of an *sruthan*, or small stream, or the flow at the point where a spring appears'<sup>27</sup> It was an apt name, reflecting the proximity to Mosquito Creek. Perhaps more importantly it was the name of the Scottish territory where 'the Robertson clan exerted greatest influence.'<sup>28</sup>

The use of this place name by Robertsons in Australia was not unique to Mosquito Plains. There were pastoral properties of the same name in Launceston, Western Victoria and Queensland.



The tonal contrast between the stone trimming and the face stonework is even more pronounced in this photo, ca 1880. The newly installed picket fences separate the formal garden, left, from the orchard on the right. SLSA B19671

The view from the South East, probably of the same date, shows the stables, left, the verandahs and gables at the rear of the Second House and Struan House. The new garden plantings are not yet visible. A lone remnant Sheoak *Allocasuarina stricta* stands in the paddock between the house and the road which is enclosed with a two rail hardwood fence. The opening, far right, in the post and rail fence is closed with a 'hurdle'. A second hurdle is lying on the ground: its opening, on the line of the track, has been closed with additional posts and sliprails. Detail from SLSA B19672



### Unfinished mansion

The final completion date for Struan House remains unknown. When Smith was paid what was 'due by contracts'<sup>22</sup> it was not nearly complete. The upstairs drawing room was the only room completely finished in September 1875 when The Border Watch published a room-by-room record of the architectural features of Struan House.

The impressive ceilings were 16' high in the ground floor rooms and 14' high in the first floor rooms. The plain cornices in the bedrooms and passages contrasted with to the luxurious finishes in the formal rooms. It described the latest modern conveniences: hot and cold water in the main bathroom and the fireplaces in each room. Water was supplied from a cistern in the roof. There was a 26,000 gallon underground backup tank.

The Border Watch concluded that Robertson had fallen to sentiment by locating the new Struan House adjacent to his previous residence rather than placing it in a position of prominence at the top of the hill. It viewed Struan House as an assortment of Roman, Gothic and Corinthian styles with two components: the main house and the servants quarters on the south east. The journalist was impressed by the tower's dimensions, the stone work, the McLeans patent columns supporting the verandah and ornamental plates between the columns.<sup>23</sup> Refer to Appendix B for the full description.

### Richest squatters

'Two of three of the richest squatting properties in the colony are passed between Narracoorte and Penola, including those of Robertson and Riddoch, whose dwellings are mansions, and whose broad acres are reckoned by tens of thousands. Mr Robertson's Struan House, is a most palatial structure' which with the furniture and fittings cost about £20,000. Mr Riddoch's home Yallum Park, four miles from Penola, is also a very fine residence, which cost about £10,000.<sup>60</sup>

it had been imported from Italy at a cost of 300 guineas.<sup>30</sup> Ownership of the mantelpiece reinforced John Robertson's social standing as a highly successful pastoralist who had ascended to the top of the social ladder and was long way from 'poor man Robertson'.<sup>31</sup> From the Struan House tower the adjacent property's homestead Moyhall, 7 miles away, was 'most conspicuous',<sup>32</sup> and imparted a strong sense of domination of the landscape and the integration of the mansion and its estate.

Over 150 guests from the South East of South Australia and western Victoria were invited to celebrate the housewarming of the unfinished Struan House<sup>35</sup> at 'one of the largest (if not the largest) private party ever held in the South East' for the 'largest house in the South East'.<sup>36</sup> All the 'energies of the household staff were taxed'. The very hot weather did not deter guests from christening the 'large drawing room' dance floor 'til the wee small hours' to Naracoorte Brass Band music played on 'a raised platform' near a window<sup>37</sup> and led by W. Elsdon.<sup>38</sup> A 'sumptuous supper' was served in 2 sittings in the 'spacious dining room upstairs.' Struan House was formally christened by Reverend McCallam from Mt. Gambier and guests toasted with 'bumpers of champagne'.<sup>39</sup> The 'princely' mansion<sup>40</sup> received high praise, speculating that when finished it would compare favorably with anything in the colony with 'every comfort and convenience which modern ingenuity can supply.'<sup>41</sup> Journalists' estimates to build and furnish Struan House varied from £10,000 to £25,000.<sup>42</sup>

The opening ball displayed the enormous capital John Robertson had invested in Struan House, his business acumen and upward social mobility. Filled with antiques Struan House confirmed John Robertson's optimism and confidence in the South East pastoral industry as well as his great wealth. The grand mansion was suited to the needs and tastes of a gentleman of fortune.

In 1879, John Robertson was described as an extremely wealthy 'sheep farmer'<sup>49</sup> when he acquired Elderslie station in Victoria.<sup>50</sup> This lies over the border and directly abuts Warrattenbullie Station. Struan House then stood on the third largest land holding of the South East. It extended for 30 miles, with 61,000 acres in South Australia and 35,420 acres in Victoria.<sup>51</sup> In the 1870s John Robertson focused on improving profits through improved animal breeding and pastures.<sup>52</sup> At his death he was one of the largest sheep farmers in the south east with an estimated 110,000 sheep at Struan, Warrattenbullie and Elderslie<sup>53</sup> equivalent to that of John Riddoch at Yallum and Glencoe. Captain Gardiner leasee of the largest South East holding Mt. Shank Station, owned by the Hon. W. J. Clark, ran 130,000 sheep.<sup>54</sup>

Robertson and Riddoch built mansions on their properties both located between Naracoorte and Penola. Captain Gardiner did not build his Itallanate style mansion 'Mintaro' in Victoria until after he left the district in 1882.<sup>55</sup> Robertson's and Riddoch's houses were described as 'the best in the district' and 'as elegantly furnished inside as they are handsome outside.'<sup>56</sup>

John Robertson was an astute businessman who knew how to retain loyal staff. His permanent staff were permitted to run their own cattle and horses free of charge on the Robertson runs for their own profit.<sup>63</sup> Robertson's business success in challenging circumstances provided

The entry and staircase in 1920 retained its original decorative finishes and furniture. There was a servants bell button under the stairs.<sup>21</sup> These photos provided a guide for the decorative paint investigations in 1990 and were used to reconstruct the carpets and stair runners for the 2007 restoration of the interiors. Pastoral Review 1920



The Pastoral Review reported that the mantelpiece 'shelf supported by ornamental trusses' has 'a group of flowers and fern leaves, with a parrot on the top of the flowers in the act of flying'. The trusses, supported by two pilasters, have vases of flowers carved on them. The arch of the mantle-piece is beautifully carved with a wreath of flowers. The carving on the keystone represents a bird's nest, with an iguano making for the eggs in it, all being surrounded with foliage.<sup>33</sup>

Many decades later it was reported that this mantelpiece was the work of an Italian prisoner, but this story has not been verified: 'There is a certain sadness about it, when one pauses to consider that its intricate chiselling of birds and lizards represents the work of 365 days by a murderer serving his life sentence in an Italian prison.'<sup>34</sup> Pastoral Review 1920



#### Poor Man Robertson

The title 'Poor Man Robertson' was originally bestowed on the unrelated John G. Robertson, an early 1840s Wando Vale settler, by Land Commissioner Captain Fyans. During a court case John G. Robertson dressed in workclothes contested the smartly dressed Henty who had arrived in a horse and cart.<sup>43</sup> 'Good neighbour to the struggling,'<sup>44</sup> Captain Fryans judged that 'he didn't like to shift the poor man'. He ruled in favour of John G. Robertson for the section of Merino Downs land adjacent to the established squatter Henty's property.<sup>45</sup>

The poor man epithet was sometimes applied to John Robertson of Mosquito Plains<sup>46</sup> through mistaken identity. It stuck to him either as complement or jibe for the enormity of his achievements from a squatter start and perhaps, like John G. Robertson, an element of good luck.<sup>47</sup>

#### South East Merino breeders

In the mid 1800s the Merinos on South East stations more closely approximated those of western Victoria than those with larger frames in northern South Australia. Although the Robertsons' rams produced finer wool with a higher price per pound, the northern flocks with lower quality wool were more profitable due to their significantly higher yield. John Robertson and other innovative South East breeders cross bred their fine wool Merinos with those from the north of the colony to improve profits by increasing the size and robust quality of the flock.<sup>57</sup>

'Environmental suitability' across a variety of weather conditions was the major consideration of these early Merino breeders.<sup>58</sup>

#### Spies from over the Border

At the time of John Robertson's death all the good land in the South East of the colony was 'mopped up in large estates', with three quarters in the hands of about twenty men. The good country near the border was settled 'by squatters who came over from Victoria to spy on the land, and were so pleased with it that they 'squatted' down there'. Some of those who remained are very wealthy men and 'owners of mansions'.<sup>59</sup>

#### Colt breakers

'There were one or two excellent colt breakers working for John Robertson at Struan House in the early days, Oliver was a military man, and he was a splendid colt-breaker, while Adam Lindsay Gordon, McMorran, and others figured prominently in this task. The best early racing was done in the Great Western Steeplechase at Coleraine'.<sup>67 68</sup>

#### Struan Manager Mr John Struan Robertson

Mr John Struan Robertson (11 November 1842 - 18 April 1925), a nephew of John Robertson, migrated with his family from Doanachton, Inverness-shire, Scotland to Melbourne in 1851. After managing the Struan Estate near Merino with his father John moved to Mosquito Plains, Naracoorte in 1865, where he lived until his death at Struan House. His expertise with Merino sheep contributed to the reputation for quality of the Robertson sheep stud. He was the manager for Warrattenbullie Woolshed from its first shearing almost until his death.

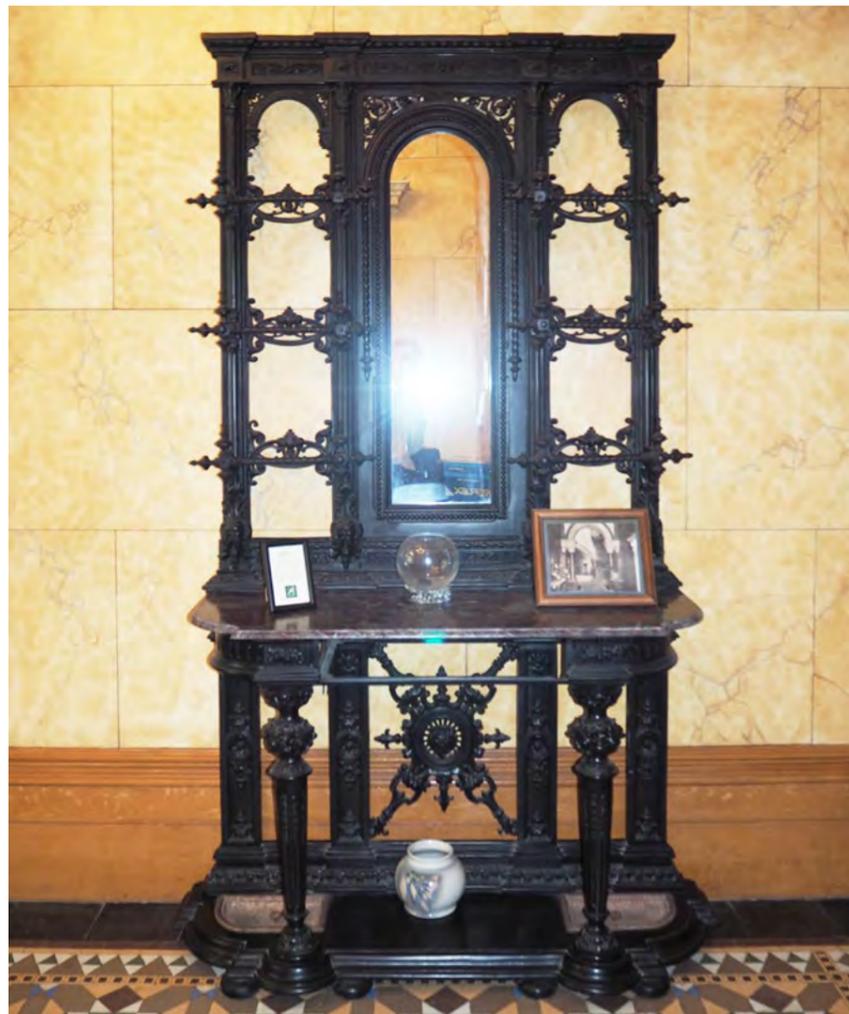
Mr J. S. Robertson judged sheep, cattle and horses at district and the Royal Adelaide shows. He owned some winning racehorses, jockeyed in the Great Western Steeplechase, and was associated with well-known riders including Adam Lindsay Gordon.<sup>69</sup>

#### Sheep farming pays well

'Judging from appearances I should say sheep farming pays well in the South-East if a 'poor man Robertson' can in thirty years become rich enough to leave nearly 100,000 sheep, besides other valuable properties.'<sup>90</sup>

The impressive walnut sideboard was covered in trophies won by 'flockmaster'<sup>88</sup> John Robertson at pastoral and agricultural shows, on the racecourse and at coursing championships.<sup>89</sup> The dresser remains in the Dining Room at Struan House. Habitable Places 2014

The Robertsons' hall stand has also been returned to its original location in Struan House. Habitable Places 2014



#### Struan House hospitality

Mr Robertson had a reputation as 'one of the most hospitable of men'. It was noted that 'his house often bore more resemblance to a hotel than a private residence'. Visitors from across the social spectrum were welcome 'and only those who passed without calling had any need to fear a reproach'.<sup>148</sup>

#### Royal eyewitness account

The visit of the two Princes to Struan House in 1881 has been embellished over time to include an overnight stay at Struan House in the 'blue room' following a brilliant reception held in the upstairs drawing room.<sup>97</sup> An eyewitness account comes from King George V himself via his personal holiday journal.<sup>98</sup> Prince George wrote that he and his brother Prince Albert 'lunched with Mr Robertson; before that we walked over his grounds, and saw in the park the small fenced enclosure within which his father rests.' They then went to see the kangaroo hounds and the stud. After lunch they drove through 'open park-like scenery to Penola', and arrived about 4 pm.<sup>99</sup>

#### No disincentive

Dummying, where large landholders gained land through agents, occurred during the 1870s. Court cases brought by the Commissioner of Lands against the purchasing agents, not the pastoralists were well documented in the South East newspapers.<sup>108</sup> There was no disincentive for John Robertson to practice dummying. It was the pastoralist's employee, family member or acquaintance that was accused of fraud and not John Robertson, the alleged beneficiary of the transaction.<sup>109</sup> One curious dummying case was allegedly against Alexander Robertson, son of John Robertson and future owner of Struan House and station. The case was abandoned after Alexander presented evidence as to the funding of Sections 153, 154, 155, and 156 in the Hundred of Robertson and stated that he farmed and lived on the separate 100 acre wheat property funded with an advance on his inheritance.<sup>110</sup>

work opportunities for new migrants with skills learnt in Britain, training opportunities in pastoral skills as well as supporting the district's emerging service industries.<sup>64</sup>

Robertson had a hierarchy of managers working for his stations. He made positions available for relatives and for the employees who had served him well on his Victorian properties. His nephew Mr John Struan Robertson, loyally managed the Struan House and Warrattenbullie estates for many years.<sup>65</sup> Another well known employee was horse-breaker and poet Adam Lindsay Gordon who was engaged for 14 months horse-breaking with Ned Oliver.<sup>66</sup>

John Robertson died at Struan House on the night of March 30 1880, following a long and painful illness<sup>70</sup> during which Melbourne's Doctor Llewellyn<sup>71</sup> and Naracoorte's Doctor Gunning provided palliative care at Struan House. Reverends D. McCalman of Naracoorte and H. H. Finlay of Penola conducted the funeral service at Struan House attended by 300 relatives and friends from all parts of the South-East, Melbourne and Western Victoria.<sup>72 73</sup> All Naracoorte businesses closed for the day.<sup>74</sup> An urgent public railway meeting at the Royal Oak Hotel in Penola was postponed due to the number of residents attending the funeral. These gestures reflected that 'the respect shown to his memory' was equal to 'the benefit he bestowed'.<sup>75</sup>

#### Social status

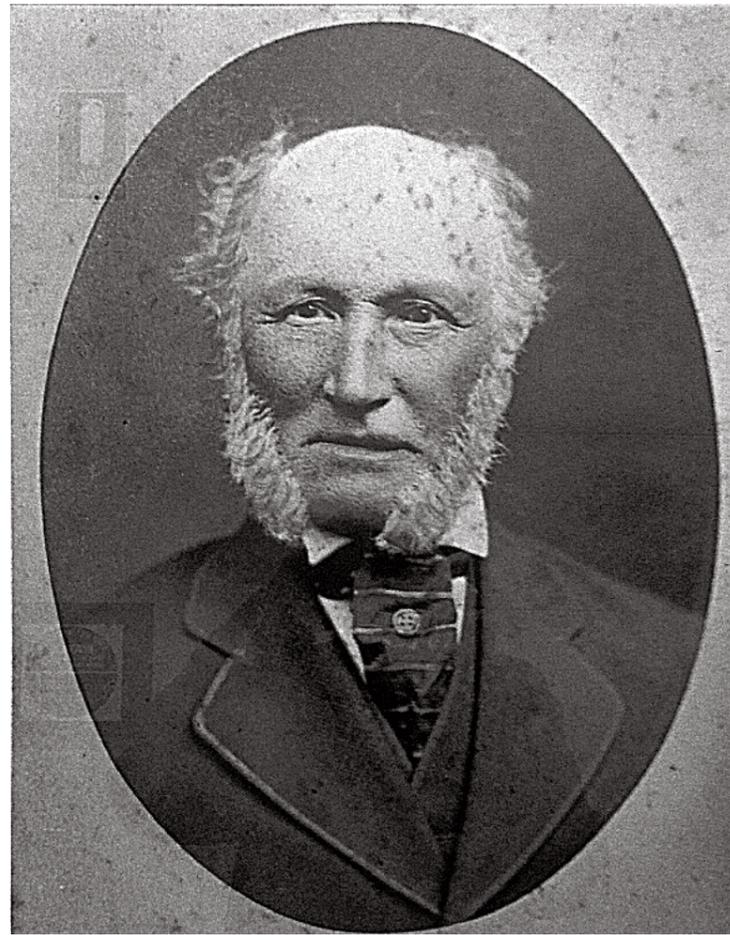
Struan House offered renowned hospitality to both celebrity and local visitors. Premier Boucaut stayed overnight on Boxing Day 1875. His party was 'hospitably entertained at John Robertson's new mansion' during a South East tour with Surveyor General Goyder to review the drainage situation.<sup>91</sup> Struan House received the South Australia Governors Jervois and Ferguson. Governor Jervois stayed at Struan House with John Robertson in 1879<sup>92</sup> and again in late 1880 after John's death.<sup>93</sup> Governor Ferguson stayed at Struan House in 1881.<sup>94</sup> South Australian circuit judges also stayed at Struan House. Mr Justice Stow adjourned court on a Saturday afternoon in May 1878 and drove out to visit John Robertson at Struan House for an overnight stay.<sup>95</sup>

The 1881 royal visit to Struan House by two British Princes, Albert and George, later King George V, was the ultimate social recognition for Struan House and the Robertsons.<sup>295</sup> Unfortunately John Robertson senior did not live to celebrate this occasion.<sup>96</sup>

#### Dummying

In 1869 the Government introduced the Strangways Act also known as the wastelands amendments. It aimed to restrict the large squatter's holdings and increase multiple smaller individual land holdings for agricultural rather than pastoral use.<sup>100</sup> The act provided credit for individuals to purchase up to 260 acres on the condition that they personally occupied and improved their holdings.<sup>101</sup> Subsequent amendments increased the land holding to 1000 acres with more lenient purchase terms in an attempt to improve the sustainability of closer settlement.<sup>102</sup> It resulted in a competition for land between large pastoralists and small landholders and influenced John Robertson's land acquisitions during the 1870s<sup>103</sup>. John Robertson utilised this legislation

Framed original photographic portraits of John and Susan Robertson on display in Struan House passageway.



#### Laird of Struan House

Obituaries for the late John Robertson printed across colonial southern Australia summarised his qualities, passions and achievements.<sup>76</sup> He was famous for hospitality offered over four decades,<sup>77</sup> had been interested in politics but never stood for parliament,<sup>78</sup> was a major supporter and financier of the Narracoorte Presbyterian Church<sup>79</sup> and regularly laid foundation stones.<sup>80</sup> He bred top quality racehorses, sheep and cattle. John Robertson's racehorses 'distinguished themselves on the race track', his cattle won prizes at South-East and Apsley shows. His sheep were 'equal to anything in the district'.<sup>81</sup> He sheared about 100,000 sheep per year and had 'considerable holdings of cattle and horses'.<sup>82</sup> His annual income from sheep alone was estimated at £20,000.<sup>83</sup>

He had been 'so continuously resident that to speak of Narracoorte was to speak of Struan House and its owner' who through 'patient industry, tact, and thrift' had succeeded in 'amassing one of the largest estates in the colony'.<sup>84</sup> He was a leading flock master and the generous laird of Struan House.<sup>85</sup> <sup>86</sup> He was respected as an upright honourable gentleman, and many friends regretted his death.<sup>87</sup>



#### J.S. Robertson denied dummying

An 1881 case heard in the Naracoorte Courthouse involved John Struan Robertson, who was charged with acting as an agent for John Robertson of Struan House when purchasing land.<sup>111</sup> John Struan Robertson presented evidence that he had not dummyed as he lived on his selection in the two roomed cottage that he had contracted for £130.<sup>112</sup> His obituary in the Naracoorte Herald provides an alternative account, stating that he had been a long term resident of Struan House and was buried in the Robertson Private Cemetery.<sup>113</sup>

#### Fair and reasonable demands

In 1884 the South East pastoralists contracted to sell land for the Adelaide to Mount Gambier railway line at a lower rate than was acceptable to other South Australian landholders. This cooperative approach facilitated political approval. Their 'fair and reasonable' demands in negotiating a sale price for land for the railway was a significant factor in passing this bill in preference to the 'exorbitant' demands for compensation for the loss of farming land for the Adelaide Hills railway lines.<sup>121 122</sup>

to reacquire land.<sup>104</sup>

In 1878 John Robertson had successfully exchanged with the government Section 300 Hundred of Robertson for Section 56 Hundred of Joanna.<sup>105</sup> After his death several dummying cases were brought by the Commissioner of Lands charging individuals with fraudulent purchases of land. These cases reflected the change in the Colonial Government's approach to land ownership and land usage for economic prosperity and social management.<sup>106</sup>

By the early 1880s it was obvious that dummying had circumvented the Strangways Act and allowed large pastoralists to maintain if not increase their holdings. Large freehold estates over 5,000 acres remained concentrated in the hands of 31 South East pastoralists.<sup>107</sup>

#### Inheritance

Many historic accounts assume that Struan House was directly bequeathed to John Robertson's second son Alexander. There were in fact several transactions before he eventually became sole owner.

John Robertson bequeathed his extensive estate to be divided amongst sons John, Alexander, William and James. It was managed by the executors until youngest son James turned 21.<sup>114</sup> The executors assigned the property in 1887, excluding Sections 9 and 10. William mortgaged his share to his brothers. John ran Elderslie, James ran Wratenbullie and Alexander ran Struan.<sup>115</sup> Following William's death in 1904, Sections 9 and 10 were conveyed to the remaining three brothers and William's executor (and brother-in-law) Robert Vincent and then to John and Alexander. It was not until 18th May 1916 that John Robertson junior sold his share of the property to Alexander who became the sole owner of Struan station and its homestead Struan House.<sup>116</sup>

As was common practice, John Robertson's wife Susan and his daughters were well provided for but they were apparently not bequeathed any of the business or property. Eldest daughter Jane for example was of independent income when she married Shiels.<sup>117</sup>

#### Railways

The South East pastoralists lobbied the colonial parliament throughout the 1870s for railways. At that time South East produce was sent to Melbourne via the Victorian railway line from Casterton, only 30 miles from the border.<sup>118</sup> The introduction of the Kingston to Naracoorte Railway in 1875 and the Naracoorte to Bordertown line in 1879 provided limited assistance to John Robertson's business.<sup>119</sup>

John Robertson did not live to see the train pass Struan House on the new line from Adelaide to Mount Gambier. The Mount Gambier and Naracoorte Railway Act was passed in 1884.<sup>120</sup>

The Executors for the late John Robertson's Estate, John Robertson junior, A. McEdward and William Shiels, M.P.,<sup>123</sup> made sound business decisions that maintained Struan's assets in a better position compared with other large landholdings in the district.<sup>124</sup> They continued the high standards established by John Robertson. The Executors purchased quality animals for breeding and continued to win prizes for their stock.<sup>125 126</sup> Top priced Alderney cattle bought at a Melbourne auction were a valuable addition to the Struan House dairy for high yields milk and

Patrick Gleeson employed at Struan by the Robertson Brothers c1900. NTSA Naracoorte 013-01930

Struan House continued as a family residence into the 20th Century. The Pender brothers, grandsons of John and Susan, and their dogs at the back gate of Struan House, on the 28 July 1902. Mature trees frame the view of the servants wing. The picket gates are hung from massive white painted red gum posts. NTSA Naracoorte 013-01922

Stockman Charlie Dillon in front of the substantial stone stables behind Struan House (since demolished). Circa 1937. NTSA Naracoorte 010-00482



#### Struan timber sale

The Executors contracted for the sale of timber for the southern end of the Adelaide to Mount Gambier railway.<sup>128</sup> Concurrently John Riddoch of Yallum Park contracted with Mr Matheson of Hotspur Saw Mills to cut and remove 60,000 red gums to be shipped from Beachport for the Murray Bridge end.<sup>129</sup>

The Executors negotiated a £6000 contract with the Millar Brothers for the rights to cut as many red gum trees as they required for sleepers.<sup>130</sup> This injected major capital into John Robertson's Estate while clearing a large amount of Struan land at no cost. The Border Watch hoped that the timber sales marked 'the beginning of what will be an important industry' in the district that has 'an abundance of valuable timber'.<sup>131</sup>

Two steam sawmills on Struan<sup>132</sup> commenced in November 1885,<sup>133</sup> ran for 18 months and cut 90,000 sleepers.<sup>134</sup> A clause in the Millar Brothers' contract ensured that all leftover timber, such as second quality sleepers and off-cuts, remained on the Struan property for use in fences and other improvements.<sup>135</sup> Tenders were sought in October 1884 for stacking suitable for burning the heads of 8,000 red gum trees that were to be cut by Millar Brothers.<sup>136</sup>

In February 1886 a few months prior to their closure there were about 120 men employed at these two mills.<sup>137</sup> An estimated 32,000 tons of sawn off-cuts, scantlings and 'condemned sleepers' were on the estate, which it is claimed could have fetched at least £1 per ton for firewood in Melbourne or Adelaide.<sup>138</sup> These reserves were diminished when a bushfire on the Christmas Day following the closure of the mills destroyed half a mile of waste timber.<sup>139</sup>

#### Struan House dog man

Staff member James 'Jimmy' Dagleish earned the title 'Dog Man' for exerting control over the many dogs that enjoyed the comforts of Struan House. It is Naracoorte folklore that he could have every dog within earshot sit and stay, even after he left the room, with one crack of his whip.<sup>160</sup> Scotsman Dagleish had migrated to Victoria in 1851.<sup>161</sup> He worked on various pastoral stations before arriving at Struan in 1875 where he was employed until 1899 when he 'passed in his cheque to the Great Architect of the Universe'.<sup>162 163</sup>

#### Struan duck shoots

Bagging the abundance of native ducks was a frequent sport at Struan. Shooters assembled at Struan House and were provided with traps before they headed to the Bool Lagoon, Warrattenbullie or Elderslie swamps. Lunch was provided from the Struan House kitchen. Outings which continued well into the twentieth Century often bagged 180-200 ducks.<sup>186</sup> Bool Lagoon would later become a game reserve and is now a Conservation Park.

#### Unexpected deaths

Mr William Smith, Struan station sheep manager,<sup>169</sup> died on 14 July 1901 'under sudden circumstances' following chest pains after tea at Struan House. Smith was born in Invernesshire, Scotland, in 1840. After arriving with his mother and siblings in 1853, Smith was sheep manager at Warrattenbullie and Struan for all but three years.<sup>170 171</sup>

The sudden death of Mr Handyside M. P. at Struan House shocked the household. He appeared in good health before retiring for the evening. The next morning Mr William Robertson went to Handyside's bedroom about 7 am to rouse him but found him in a very sound sleep. Before leaving the house William mentioned to the family that Handyside was so sound asleep he couldn't wake him. Mr Pender, May Robertson's husband, then went to Handyside's room to see if anything serious was the matter and found him dead.<sup>172</sup>

#### Sunny Struan House

Around 1900 May Vivienne visited the South East by train and wrote of the 'many fine sheep stations, three of which, notably Struan, Elderslie and Warratenbulli, owned by Messers. Robertson, have large areas of land, which carry vast flocks of sheep.' May commented that they 'also own very handsome houses on their estates', and offered many attractions for guests fortunate to see Robertson station life. She observed sheep proof fences 'everywhere to keep the sheep in and the rabbits and wild dogs out' and that squatters had 'spent thousands and thousands of pounds on fences to protect the golden fleece'.<sup>173</sup>



Female staff members at Struan in May and July 1902. These photographs taken by Brien Theup outside the Struan House gardens are of the rarely mentioned domestic staff behind the scenes at Struan House in the early 20th Century. These fit and strong women were frequently required to deliver large quantities of food from the downstairs kitchen to the upstairs dining room. NTSA Naracoorte 013-01931, 013-01926

Housekeeper Miss Eliza Kennedy, 'Spinster, late of Struan House', died intestate at Struan House on 18th September 1919. Those entitled to claim a share of her hard earned wages from Struan House were invited to apply in October 1920.<sup>221</sup> NTSA Naracoorte 013-01929



#### Struan Christmas cake

The unnamed Struan House cook responsible for acclaimed Robertson hospitality was especially busy at Christmas. In 1888 not only did she prepare the Christmas menu for the extended Robertson family and a ready supply of refreshments for the regular stream of visitors expected to drop in unexpectedly. She also prepared treats for the Christmas visit of twenty local schoolchildren to Struan House.

In addition she cooked for the annual St Andrew's Church cake fair at the Naracoorte Institute Hall. Miss Robertson and Mrs Riordan sold the cakes including the highly desirable 'Struan Christmas Cakes' that 'attracted general attention and praise'. They were so popular that some were 'ordered beforehand, some went across the border into Victoria and great was the regret of many who failed to secure one.'<sup>155</sup>

butter and benefited the district's dairy herds.<sup>127</sup> The executors made easy profits from the sale of standing timber for the railway.

#### Women of Struan House

Struan House with its grand proportions was a family residence in a strongly patriarchal society. The public historical records provide sparse details of the women who lived and worked there.<sup>140</sup> Although Mrs Susan Robertson, five daughters and many female domestic staff lived at Struan House their activities were rarely reported. Exceptions included May Robertson's 1877 high school results,<sup>141</sup> and Jeannie, Annie and Leslie's society weddings.<sup>142</sup> The exceptional quality of Robertson sisters' embroidery was not publicly acknowledged for another fifty years.<sup>143</sup>

Second daughter May Robertson matriculated for Melbourne University in January 1877 when less than half the 340 candidates matriculated and only 20 were women.<sup>144</sup> This confirms the Robertson family's stronger connection with Melbourne rather than Adelaide.<sup>145</sup>

The marriages of sisters Jane, Annie and Leslie Robertson were at Struan House and all officiated by celebrant Rev R. A. Caldwell from Mt. Gambier. Their sister May was married in the Australian Church.<sup>146</sup>

While the generous hospitality of John Robertson and Struan House was frequently acknowledged there were only sparse references to the identities of the housekeeper and her staff who frequently produced abundant refreshments at short notice. A delightful example of Struan House hospitality, on one of the rare occasions attributed to the Robertson women, occurred before Christmas in 1888. Mrs Susan Robertson and Miss Robertson invited the 20 pupils from the local Robertson School to visit Struan House. 'They were given treats, inspected the garden and the mansion, took in the view from the tower, and took home gifts of fruit and a Jubilee half crown'.<sup>153</sup>

Mrs Susan Robertson's substantial responsibilities and achievements in managing the household at Struan were rarely mentioned especially when her husband was alive. It appears that she did not inherit any share of the pastoral property.

#### Federation Drought

Between 1895 and 1903 economic conditions for pastoralists deteriorated markedly. Three closely following el Niño events led to an Australia-wide drought, sometimes called the Federation drought. The accompanying heatwaves, dust storms and bushfires had dramatic impacts on the environment and economy. There were massive losses and bankruptcies in the pastoral industry.<sup>156</sup> Naracoorte was not exempt.<sup>157</sup> Profitability for pastoralists never returned to the level enjoyed during the early years at Struan House.<sup>158</sup> Most of the large pastoral estates in the Naracoorte District were broken up and sold. While the social status of the pastoralists remained their political influence declined and 'the era of pastoral expansion and economic supremacy was over'.<sup>159</sup>



Leslie Robertson's wedding dress, 1896. The dress was altered for two further weddings in later generations of the Robertson family. NTSA Struan Collection Habitable Places 2015

The Struan House high society wedding of Miss Jane 'Jeannie' Robertson to Mr William Shiels, MP for Normanby, was a social event on par with the grand Struan House housewarming. It concluded with a grand ball where an additional 200 local guests danced until sunrise. The occasion was 'one of the most brilliant events that has taken place in the South East.'<sup>147</sup> The guest list reflected the connections of the Robertson and Shiels family with gentry from the South East, country Victoria and Melbourne forming 'a group of wealth and beauty which in a country locality was rarely to be met with'.<sup>148</sup>

The bridal party and the guests' attire reflected the financial and social standing of the Robertson family and William Shiels. The bride's gown was made in 'cream duchess satin, with a rich train of chrysanthemum brocade, and the front was elegantly draped in Brussels lace flounces, with ostrich tips'. Jeannie wore a diamond tiara, the gift of the bridegroom, and the remaining portion of a complete suite, the gift of her brothers and sisters. The bridesmaids wore pale blue, pink, and cream merveilleux, richly ornamented with Edelweiss lace, and they each wore 'diamond and pearl brooches', gifts of the bridegroom.<sup>149 150</sup>



Rare examples of the activities and skill of the women of Struan House are the works embroidered by John and Susan Robertson's daughters. A tapestry fender stool was the work of Mrs Shiels, nee Jeanie Robertson. The two chairs upholstered with exquisite tapestry were made by Mrs Pender (nee May Robertson) and Mrs Vincent (nee Leslie Robertson) prior to her 1896 marriage.

The latter is the prie dieu chair now in the NTSA history room at Struan House.<sup>151</sup> It was described by much travelled, European visitor Mrs Kurtz as 'one of the finest pieces of tapestry' she had ever seen.<sup>152</sup> Habitable Places 2015

The Wedding Breakfast menu is held in the NTSA History Room, Struan House. The excellent wedding breakfast was attributed to Mrs Robertson the 'kindly hostess of Struan House'.<sup>294</sup>



#### Mrs John Robertson's funeral

Over 300 mourners from all over the South East and western Victoria gathered at Struan House for the funeral on 30th June 1906. The service commenced in the large entrance hall of Struan House that was 'crowded to excess.' In the centre lay the late Mrs Robertson in a zinc lined oak coffin covered in floral tributes.<sup>181</sup> Mrs Robertson was buried in the Robertson family cemetery beside her husband John, and near their son William and son-in-law William Shiels.<sup>182</sup>

Her estate, bequeathed to 'the testatrix's relatives' did not exceed £14,100 in South Australia, and £12,673 in Victoria.<sup>183</sup>

The oldest employees on the Struan Estate were the pallbearers. The sons of the deceased, other relatives and their old friends followed immediately behind the hearse, and after which came the general body of mourners. Awaiting the funeral procession at the Struan House cemetery was a large group of women from the Naracoorte district who held Mrs Robertson in high esteem. Reverends Neville, McGowan and Clark completed the funeral at the cemetery.<sup>184</sup>

#### Alexander Robertson Squire of Struan

Struan House was the site of many unexpected deaths including loyal 'servant' James Dalgleish in 1899,<sup>164</sup> the late John Robertson's nephew William Smith in 1901,<sup>165</sup> visitor Handyside M.P.,<sup>166</sup> son William Robertson in 1904,<sup>167</sup> and sister-in-law Mrs Ellis in 1914.<sup>168</sup>

In 1904 the Executors requested an exchange of their freehold Sections 184, 39, and Part of 38, Hundred of Joanna, for Crown Land Section 177, in the Hundred of Robertson, which abutted the Struan garden and stables and was logistically advantageous to the station.<sup>174</sup> The land the Executors wished to relinquish was promoted as being of superior quality and was 43 acres larger than the government holding they requested. The government valued each parcel. The exchange they considered advantageous both financially, being £109 in the government's favour, and in the interests of closer settlement.<sup>175</sup> The land section acquired by the Executors ran 'right up to Struan House'. The land swap involved the loss of a relatively small acreage but strategically prevented new 'closer settlement' neighbours on the Struan House doorstep.<sup>176</sup>

Mrs Susan Robertson, widow of the late John Robertson and mother of four sons John, Alexander, William (dec.) and James and five daughters Jane (Jeanie) [Mrs Shiels], May [Mrs Pender], Annie [Mrs Anderson], Leslie [Mrs Vincent] and Elizabeth, died on May 27, 1906 at Struan House.<sup>177</sup> She was highly esteemed 'on all sides' evidenced by the mourners and floral tributes at her funeral<sup>178 179</sup> that came from all sectors of society including the domestics from Struan House and Moyhall.<sup>180</sup>

In the early 20th Century Struan's reputation for high quality sheep, cattle and thoroughbred horse breeding continued. Struan House continued as the family residence for the extended Robertson clan. In 1906 the Struan Merino flock started by John Robertson with Tasmanian imports was supplemented with rams from the Eli Elwah station in the Riverina.<sup>185</sup>

The unfenced public roads through the Robertson's holdings made it difficult for others to move stock without encroaching on the Robertson's private property. In 1909 the Robertson Brothers issued a 'Travelling Stock Notice' advising that 'All Persons travelling stock through Struan House and Warrattenbullie Estates without giving proper notice' would be prosecuted.' They required written notice to be delivered to Struan House.<sup>187</sup>

In 1910 Premier Peake announced that the Government had been offered for purchase a portion of the Struan Estate for closer settlement.<sup>188</sup> Other large pastoral properties in the district had already been sold to the government including 24,440 acres of the Narracoorte Estate, 26,727 acres of the Kybybolite station, 26,700 acres of Binnum station, 38,039 acres of the Hynam station.<sup>189</sup>

In 1911 the Robertson brothers achieved top market prices for sheep that were 'a credit to their breeders' and for 'very nice horses with bone and breeding'.<sup>196</sup>

In 1912 Mr and Mrs Pender (nee May Robertson) offered the customary Struan House afternoon tea to the visiting Anglican Bishop of Adelaide, Dr. Thomas.<sup>197</sup>

Struan House was not immune from World War 1. In 1915 Mrs

### What do you want?

#### Laird of Struan, Alexander

Robertson's instantly recognisable, gruff greeting 'what do you want?' was his legendary offer of generous hospitality available whenever the Struan Gates were open, as they almost always were.<sup>210</sup>

#### At once

Another glimpse into Alexander Robertson's manner is conveyed by the following snippet. In August 1918 he advertised for 24 blade shearers to shear 41,000 sheep at Warrattenbullie Station. Applications to Struan House were required 'at once'.<sup>209</sup>

#### Alexander's word

It was reported that, after Alexander Robertson took over Struan, all that was necessary in business dealings was his promise which 'was more binding than any written agreement could be'.<sup>211</sup>

#### No gaol term

In March 1927 an employee Kenneth McDonald under the influence of alcohol broke into the 'Struan House cellar' in the basement of the Second House and stole alcohol.<sup>212</sup> Mr Robertson spoke at the hearing. He requested a lesser charge of unlawful possession for McDonald to avoid a gaol term, paid the £16 fine from McDonald's outstanding wages and recommended McDonald return home to Victoria to deal with his alcohol problems.<sup>213</sup>

#### Rabbit raid

Rabbit plagues continued into the 20th Century. In 1915 a 'party of 21 guns' invited by Alexander Robertson had another afternoon among the rabbits on the Struan estate. 'They dispatched 829 bunnies and four foxes. The outing proved enjoyable, the sport being good'.<sup>204</sup>

Alexander Robertson's regular invitations for community inspections at Struan were a precursor to the later Struan Research Centre Field Days. In 1933 120 members of the Coonawarra and Penola Bureaus visited Struan House. The men inspected the research trials, while the women inspected the mansion and its antiques.<sup>219</sup> The day concluded with an impromptu debate on private versus public research. These popular events appear to have ignited the campaign of the Naracoorte community for a research centre on the Struan Estate that continued for many years after Alexander died.<sup>220</sup>

The detail shows Alexander seated on the top step with his dogs surrounded by the men. The women were to his right. Les Hill Collection Mt Gambier Library 12F61



### Something of a surprise

With improved pastoral conditions following the Federation Drought, no further offers of land from the large landholders in the district were expected. 'It was something of a surprise, therefore, when [some of] Struan, one of the oldest places in the country, was submitted for re-purchase'.<sup>190</sup> The portion offered was 19,558 acres of rich soiled, well watered land on the Hynam side running adjacent to the railway line, that contained 'the best agricultural land on the estate'.<sup>191</sup> The government purchased the land with a £100 deposit and paid the balance of £78,408 in full on 31st January 1911, then promptly subdivided it in time for 1911 harvest.<sup>192</sup>

The Kybybolite Experimental Farm provided valuable advice regarding waterlogged soil to the new farmers on the repurchased Struan portions.<sup>193</sup>

#### Loss to Naracoorte show

It was lamented that sheep exhibition at the Naracoorte Show was 'not what it used to be' before the large Naracoorte stations were sold for closer settlement and sheep breeding was given less attention.<sup>194</sup>

The closer settlement of the large pastoral properties in the Naracoorte district in the late 19th and early 20th Century was evaluated as 'a lesson' in progress for the South East. The large pastoral holdings were 'small and land-locked and unprogressive'. Following the subdivision of the six large estates Narracoorte, Hynam, Kybybolite, Binnun, Morambro, and part of Struan, Naracoorte became 'a large and prosperous town — as prosperous as any town could be under present-day conditions'.<sup>195</sup>

#### Tragedy

On the day of her death Mrs Alexander Robertson was unwell during the morning and did not eat lunch. Employee Mr Bailey, shocked to find her body lying on the ground near the Struan House front steps, informed other staff members who examined her body and confirmed that she was deceased. Her head had been badly injured in the fall and her body appeared to have struck a cornice on Struan House. 'It was believed that Mrs Robertson had gone upstairs to the tower balcony, which she sometimes did and becoming giddy, fell.' Coroner Petherick considered an inquest unnecessary.<sup>225</sup>

Jeannie Shiels returned to Struan House with a four year old Belgian girl disabled during German occupation.<sup>198</sup> Struan House's gardener John Dillon was advised by telegram that his 20 year old son Private N.M.H. Dillon of the 32nd battalion was missing in action after sailing to Egypt the previous November.<sup>199</sup> In 1917 John Robertson's grandson Clive Robertson left Struan House and went to Melbourne to enlist for WW1.<sup>200</sup> Struan House residents alongside other South East residents donated to war fundraising efforts.<sup>201</sup> Between December 1917 and July 1918 a knitting circle at Struan House donated 103 pairs of socks, 4 scarves 15 face washers, and one cardigan to the Naracoorte Red Cross Circle's war effort.<sup>202</sup> There was also a group at Struan House for the War Savings Group of the Naracoorte Branch of the League of Loyal Women.<sup>203</sup>

The funeral of John and Susan Robertson's eldest son John on 19th April 1917 again saw the formal entrance hall at Struan House used to accommodate a large number who had come to the 'simple but impressive' funeral service conducted by Reverend R.W. McLean of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Naracoorte.<sup>205</sup> John Robertson junior bequeathed Warrattenbullie Station, to his brother Alexander Robertson.<sup>206</sup> After World War 1 Elderslie station was sold to the government for use as a soldiers settlement.<sup>207</sup> Ownership of Struan was consolidated by Alexander during this period.

Alexander Robertson established a wide reputation as a practical farmer / researcher who offered his knowledge on grasses, food crops and fodder crops to the Naracoorte district, the South East community and as far afield as Western Australia, Melbourne, Sydney and Tasmania.<sup>214 215</sup> His passion for improving the quality and availability of fodder for his stock was demonstrated in numerous trial paddocks<sup>216</sup> with 'plots of grasses and fodder plants' adjacent Struan House that were 'well worth inspecting'.<sup>217</sup> He tested varieties suitability for the district in the irrigated and fertilised 4 acre laundry paddock and in the Struan House garden. Plants trialled included clover, Rhodes grasses, silver beet, giant kangaroo rape, Clydesdale oats, and Western Wolth rye grass.<sup>218</sup>

Alexander Robertson's marriage to Frances Gertrude Fraser was registered in the District of Adelaide in early 1927.<sup>222</sup> He was in his mid 60s. She was in her mid 30s. Prior to her marriage Mrs Robertson had been a domestic employee at Struan House.<sup>223</sup> Francis died on the 29th November that same year after falling from the Struan House tower. She was buried in the private Robertson cemetery adjacent Struan House with her mother and sister present.<sup>224</sup>

Alexander Robertson sold Warrantanbullie station in 1927 as 4031 acres to T H Fraser for closer settlement allotments, and 18,000 acres to pastoralists Lamb and Company in 1931.<sup>226</sup> He then purchased Wirringulla Station, built an 8 stand shearing shed and contracted out the shearing.<sup>227</sup> Alexander Robertson's landholding surrounding Struan House was then 11,500 acres of plains and undulating country with 14,000 Merino sheep, several hundred cattle and a number of horses.<sup>228</sup>

The Great Depression was 'not quite so acute in the South East as elsewhere'<sup>235</sup> but Struan House fed 60 visitors per week.<sup>236</sup> Alexander Robertson's generosity was applied broadly 'to most charitable bodies and movements for the district's welfare'.<sup>230 231 232 233 234</sup> He regularly

'A visitor's caricature of Alexander Robertson, the popular Squire of Struan'. Border Watch 19 November 1935

Alexander Robertson's kennel of dogs accompanied him at Struan House and everywhere he went. At the racetrack 'Sam, the obese, blue-roan Cocker Spaniel was as well known as his master.'<sup>239</sup> In his later years Alexander was 'the dog man' who arrived for his weekly whisky at the Naracoorte Hotel.<sup>240</sup> Visitors at Struan House were met by several dogs including water dogs, sheep dogs, Irish terriers and Mr Robertson's favorite Aberdeen terrier Geordie who had 'cost Mr Robertson a lot of money'.<sup>241</sup> After Alexander's death it was noted that his dogs were distressed. 'Those dogs looked pathetic as the cortege was about to leave Struan House on Sunday for the private cemetery. They searched in vain among the crowd of mourners for the master they loved so well.'<sup>242</sup>



#### Naracoorte adopts 'science'

By the 1930's South East farmers adopted major research recommendations including top-dressing with superphosphate, planting subterranean clover and grasses such as phalaris and Wimmera rye and introducing 'fat lamb' production despite critics arguing that it wouldn't succeed so far from the market.<sup>243</sup> The Naracoorte community understood well before Struan Research Centre that adopting research recommendations improved profitability for fat lambs, wool, dairy cattle, and beef and could help farmers 'make a comfortable living off 500 acres of red gum land or 250 acres of black land.'<sup>244</sup>

#### Intensive grazing

Alexander Robertson's grazing methodology preceeded the 1987 New Zealand patented Technograzing™ system that was trialed at the Struan Research Centre in the early 21st Century for increased pasture utilisation under irrigation and dry land conditions.<sup>271</sup> This technique is widely adopted across New Zealand, Australia and South America.<sup>272</sup>

#### Time is up

Divestment of the Struan Estate continued. In 1934 Alexander Robertson admitted that 'the day for an individual holding large tracts of land suitable for closer settlement is passed. I would like to retain Struan House with about 1,000 acres where I could carry out my experiments and conduct a stud farm for sheep, horses, and cattle. The rest of the property I would be willing to sell to be subdivided into blocks suitable for closer settlement.'<sup>229</sup>

#### Struan racehorse breeding

Struan bred successful racehorses for Melbourne, Adelaide and country racetracks. Alexander Robertson frequently advertised for mares to have 'top quality runs' with thoroughbred stallions in the paddock adjacent Struan House.<sup>260</sup>

The arrival of the motorcar set back the horse breeding industry but an unexpected 1930s increase in demand for horses surprised South East breeders.<sup>262</sup> There was a scarcity of quality thoroughbred racehorses for purchase until Alexander Robertson offered for sale seven progeny of King Ingoda, the 1922 Melbourne Cup winner and 1923 Adelaide Cup winner.<sup>263</sup> In 1934, Alexander Robertson, who had 'more experience in horse breeding' than most men in Australia', experimented with cross breeding the Arab horse that had great 'staying power', 'courage' and 'calmness' to replenish the stock of high quality South East horses.<sup>264</sup>

#### Struan House Race Prizes

In 1929 Alexander Robertson donated a 20 guinea 'tea and coffee service' as trophy for the winner of the inaugural 2 mile 'Struan House Hurdle Race'.<sup>265</sup>

In 1930 300 people at the Naracoorte picnic race meeting saw the running of the 'Struan House Hunters Handicap.' The prize was 'a gold-mounted whip from an anonymous donor.' No prize for guessing his identity.<sup>266</sup>

#### 'Struan Bridge' could collapse

Alexander Robertson had a racehorse named 'Struan Bridge'. Judging by the published nominations, Struan Bridge had a big day at the Penola races in February 1924. It was nominated in the starters' list for the 2 mile 'Hurdle Race', the 1¼ mile 'Struan Handicap', the 2 mile 'Handicap Brush Steeplechase' and the 6 furlong 'Trial Stakes'.<sup>268</sup>

donated academic and sports prizes to Naracoorte Primary and High Schools and donated a Morris chair to the Primary School's fundraising that raised £12 14 shillings.<sup>237</sup> A Naracoorte District High School deputation made a surprise early morning visit to Struan House in 1935 to thank Mr Robertson for his longstanding support.<sup>238</sup>

Struan under Alexander Robertson retained its reputation with a 'select stud' of Merino sheep that achieved high prices at Melbourne markets.<sup>245</sup> Around 1930 Alexander changed the lambing time from May to spring to reduce lamb mortality rates, hasten the lambs' development and to improve the 'weight of the ewe fleeces'.<sup>246</sup> Alexander's trials with Corriedale sheep were precursor to later Struan Research Centre trials with that breed.<sup>247</sup>

The quality of cattle bred by Alexander Robertson on his Struan property was widely acknowledged. His herd of mixed cattle including 'the nucleus of a stud herd of Shorthorns'<sup>252</sup> frequently were judged the best at the local shows and achieved premium market prices.<sup>253 254</sup> In 1932 an Adelaide agent for Elder, Smith, & Co. wrote to Alexander that his family 'had not tasted such beef for years' and the bullocks' excellent condition resulted from Mr Robertson's fine pastures and personal supervision.<sup>255</sup> Alexander Robertson's 'well finished' bullocks from pastures adjacent Struan House that commanded 'very spirited bidding' at the Adelaide market were the precursor to Struan Agricultural Centre's research into 'finishing' cattle with the qualities required for specialised global customer markets.<sup>256</sup>

At the 1935 Kalangadoo Show Alexander Robertson exhibited 17 varieties of his best grasses and clover imported from various countries for his experimental work at Struan and won first prize ahead of some very disappointed students from Kalangadoo School.<sup>251</sup> His pasture and fodder trials were precursor to the trials at Struan Research Centre.

Alexander Robertson was patron or vice-president of many local sporting bodies. He strongly supported Naracoorte, South East and western Victoria country horse racing.<sup>257 258</sup> He was a dedicated and highly regarded breeder of quality trotting and thoroughbred racehorses.<sup>259</sup>

Alexander Robertson did not stock the Struan pastures as heavily as his father John. Struan was 'not nearly stocked to its capacity.'<sup>267</sup> By 1930 Alexander Robertson had mastered the benefits of 'systematically grazing small paddocks' to achieve 'great fertility and quick return.' The intensive grazing in the paddocks around Struan House transformed the 'waste lands of the South-East' into a 'most promising part of South Australia'.<sup>270</sup> Trials of 'intensive' or concentrated grazing in the paddocks adjacent to Struan House<sup>268</sup> revealed significantly greater carrying capacity when sheep were grazed on 'under stocked' paddocks of phalaris tuberosa and strawberry clover.<sup>269</sup>

Alexander Robertson died at Struan House on the 10th June 1938.<sup>273</sup> G.P. Laidlaw and R.T. Vincent were Trustees for his Estate.<sup>274</sup> Alexander Robertson's will included a bequest of £50 to towards alterations to the Naracoorte Town Hall.<sup>275</sup>

Between five and six thousand people passed through Struan House in a couple of days to inspect the mansion, the valuable antique furniture, farm stock and equipment and attend the auction sales on Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 4th December 1946. The goods were set out and numbered in a catalogue that sold for an enterprising 6d. Proceeds raised from refreshment sales 'on the first day' went to Naracoorte Hospital.<sup>278 279</sup>

The Struan Farm equipment and stock were auctioned on the Tuesday. The 10,000 fine wool Merino sheep in good condition and a small number of cattle and station horses sold for excellent prices following strong competition.<sup>280</sup> On Wednesday about 3,000 people arrived in 650 motor cars for the auction of the renowned Struan House contents.<sup>281</sup> Successful bidders including the Robertson family came from the South East, western Victoria, Adelaide and Melbourne.<sup>282</sup>

The Struan station plant sold for 'good prices'. A 'Farmall' tractor quickly reached the fixed price of £250 after 143 auction buyers raised their hands. Mr H. E. Prosser, won the tractor in the ballot that followed.<sup>283</sup> Photo David Hood

The Drawing Room was 'tastefully decorated' with a collection of art treasures and many 'exquisite pieces of furniture, and a sprinkling of beautiful handicraft. Five matching pieces of French inlaid brass, comprising two cabinets and three tables, the largest of which cost £350'. Pastoral Review circa 1929

**IMPORTANT AUCTION SALE**

at~

**Struan House, Naracoorte**  
South Australia

Tuesday - 3rd December, 1946  
Wednesday, 4th December, 1946

Under Instructions from the Trustees of  
the late ALEXANDER ROBERTSON

Auctioneers in conjunction:

**Leonard Joel Pty. Ltd.**  
MELBOURNE

**Goldsbrough, Mort & Co. Ltd.**  
ADELAIDE and Branches



#### Claude de Lorraine 'Landscape'

Auction Item 256 was described as Claude de Lorraine<sup>284</sup> 53" x 37" 'Landscape' in a carved gilt frame from the dining room at Struan House<sup>285</sup>. The 17th Century painting was expected to be the highlight of the auction. The estimated value was £1,000<sup>286</sup> but the painting was one of the very few items passed in<sup>287</sup> after not receiving a bid despite the auctioneer offering to start the bidding at £300.<sup>288</sup>

The subject of the painting is not known. However it was likely to be a perfect complement for WT Gore's Italianate villa. 'The Picturesque Aesthetic [that] emerged in the later 18th Century uniting the Sublime and the Beautiful had its roots in the paintings of Claude Lorraine that in Britain and Australia, linked art, literature and landscape with architecture.'<sup>289</sup> Claude de Lorraine's paintings were held in major galleries such as the Paris Louve, the 'Grand Continental' and major private collections.<sup>290</sup>

On October 4th 1947 the painting was auctioned by Melbourne's Leonard Joel Pty. Ltd. in the elite company of paintings by early 20th Century Australian landscape artists such as Streeton, Heysen, McInnes, Power, and McCubbin.<sup>291</sup> The present whereabouts of the artwork is unknown.

#### Struan Merino stud

The 'Australian Merino is not a single homogenous breed' but 'a variety of Merino strains each adapted through successful breeding to their climatic conditions'. John Robertson 'by skilful breeding and selection' was one of the pioneering South East breeders who contributed to 'the foundation of the Australian Merino'.<sup>248</sup>

Alexander Robertson maintained Struan's high reputation for Merino sheep and worked up a select stud including top quality breeding rams.<sup>249</sup> The Merino flock was established on 'scientific lines', and was considered 'one of the finest in the State'.<sup>250</sup>

#### Closer settlement

The pastoralists like John Robertson were essential for successful later closer settlement that would not have been possible without their determination and influence. They fought against 'the wet isolation of the region' to establish transport, postal, banking and stock services necessary for the later smaller farm holdings.<sup>293</sup>

#### Disposal of the Estate

Following the end of World War II the South Australian government eventually purchased Struan House on the 14th May 1946 after years of extensive lobbying from the South East.<sup>276</sup> The government then auctioned 64 mostly Shorthorn Struan cattle giving farmers 'the opportunity of acquiring some of the best breed cattle in the South East.'<sup>277</sup> The subsequent auction of Struan stock, equipment and house contents in December 1946 drew extraordinary interest across South Australia and Victoria.

The local paper lamented that the sale of the well-known Struan Estate and all its stock, plant and furnishings severed one of the strongest links with 'the pioneering history of the South-East.'<sup>292</sup> This understandable sentiment overlooked the fact that Struan House was standing tall in its picturesque setting as a potent symbol of the colonial and 20th Century pastoral history of the region.

WT Gore design architect Struan House and prominent figure in the establishment of the South East built environment . SLSA B3013

Many of the early buildings in this photo were 'a credit to Mr. Gore, the architect' including shops for Mr Jones and Messers. Fiddler and Webb.<sup>6</sup> Gore's family home stood on the site of the current Naracoorte / Lucindale Council Chambers. NTSA Naracoorte 010-00007



### Howzat Mr Gore?

WT Gore must have been extremely energetic. In addition to a busy professional career he held many voluntary community positions. He was inaugural Honorary Secretary for the Pastoral Association,<sup>16</sup> Australia's first Coursing Club at Naracoorte,<sup>17</sup> and the Naracoorte Highland Games.<sup>18</sup>

Lack of Scottish heritage was no impediment. Gore was the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of the Caledonian Association and Steward of the Naracoorte Highland Games Sports Day.<sup>19</sup> He introduced music nights with highland dancing to the Merino Inn in early Kincaig.<sup>20</sup>

Equally, exclusive allegiance to a religious denomination appeared not to concern him. In 1863 he was on the fundraising bazaar committee for the Mt. Gambier Presbyterian Church<sup>21</sup> and in 1868 was on the committee to select a resident Church of England clergyman in Naracoorte.<sup>22</sup>

He undertook the responsible position of umpire for the highly competitive Mount Gambier Cricket Club in 1862 when it played against archrival Penola. Despite being on a Monday about 300 attended including many 'leading and influential residents.'<sup>23</sup>

Gore was occasionally on the wrong side of the bench and the bar. One alleged crime was on 'John Robertson's run' where Gore was observed driving the Adelaide mail coach and was charged with ill-treating mail horses by driving them with sore necks.<sup>24</sup> Another case alleging that Gore had deserted his licensed public house was dismissed.<sup>25</sup>

## 2.6 The Architects

### Mr W T Gore

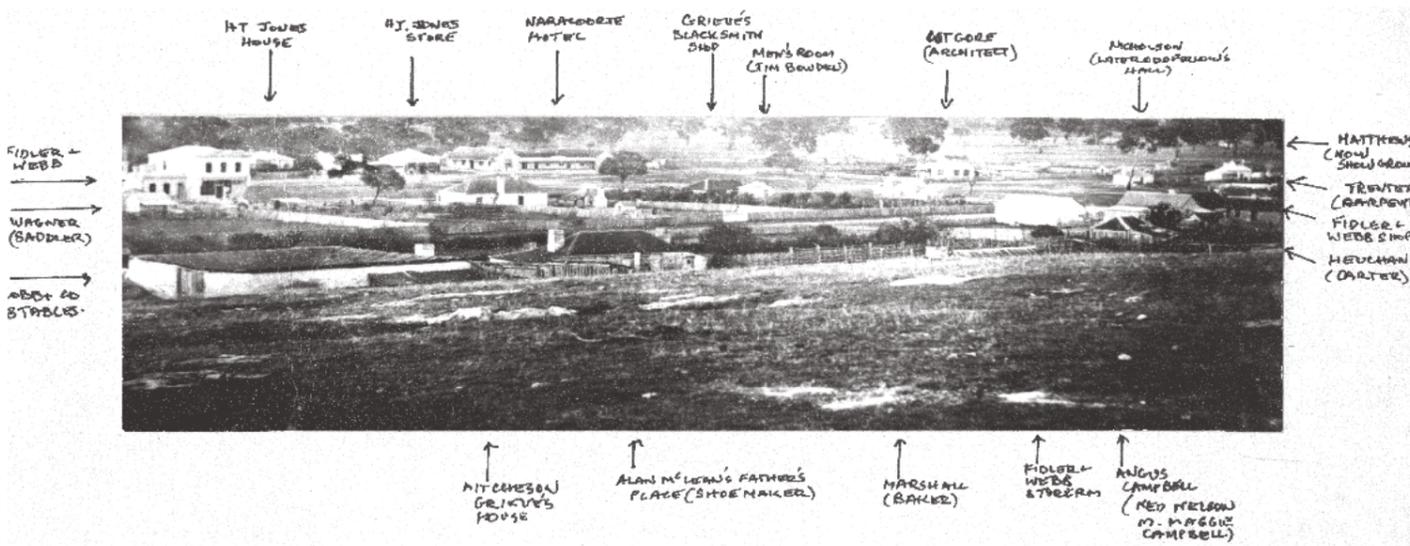
Struan House was designed by 'the South East's most important architect' Mr William Thomas Gore.<sup>1</sup> He had highly successful architectural practices at Naracoorte from 1858 to 1868 and at Temple Court, Melbourne from 1869 to circa 1880.

Born in Ireland in 1822,<sup>2</sup> WT Gore, aged 32, arrived in Naracoorte in 1856. Nothing is known of Gore's education, background or training. The settlement, then known as Kincaig, had only a handful of buildings including a police station, MacIntosh's Merino Inn and Store and Grieve's blacksmith shop.<sup>3</sup> Between 1859 and 1863 Gore alternated annually as the Merino Inn licensee with Mr C. McKinnon.<sup>4</sup> He married Mary Hill (1840, Cornwall – 1918, Melbourne) on the 16th September 1857 at her father's Naracoorte home. They had 4 children, Louisa, George, Edward and Helen.<sup>5</sup> Gore built a substantial family home in Naracoorte on the site of the Naracoorte / Lucindale Council offices.

WT Gore possibly began in Naracoorte as a 'carpenter' for contractors Henry Smith and Thomas Agar.<sup>7</sup> His first architectural commission was the 1858 Kincaig Presbyterian Church.<sup>8</sup> Gore soon became a leader in the close knit, cooperative pioneer communities of Naracoorte and Mount Gambier. By all accounts he was dynamic, enterprising and community minded. His architecture added character to the establishment of the South East with high quality buildings in Naracoorte, Mt. Gambier, Penola, Robe, and on many pastoral landholdings. Gore became well known for his commitment to architecture, communications, education, health and sport across the South East. His high social standing was reflected in his numerous community responsibilities that included jury foreman,<sup>9</sup> cricket umpire,<sup>10</sup> steward at the Naracoorte Highland Games Sports Day,<sup>11</sup> and superior set designer for Mt. Gambier's Dramatic Society.<sup>12 13</sup> He was a founding member of the Loyal Mosquito Plains Lodge of Oddfellows along with Henry Smith and Thomas Campbell.<sup>14</sup>

Pastoralist John Robertson and architect WT Gore were well acquainted through numerous social, professional, recreational and community development activities. Gore would have been well aware of his client's accommodation needs and propensity for lavish hospitality. He had designed the Gate Hotel, Warrattenbullie Woolshed and Warrattenbullie Shearers Quarters for John Robertson before he prepared the design for Struan House. It is also probable that WT Gore designed John Robertson's Second House.<sup>15</sup>

During the 1860s WT Gore undertook architectural commissions, small land developments, money lending, and was claimed by both Mount Gambier and Naracoorte as their resident.<sup>26</sup> He was elected jury foreman from a group of Mount Gambier's 'well known residents' at a coronial inquest in 1862<sup>27</sup> despite no official council records of Gore being a resident or a ratepayer.<sup>28</sup> In 1863 Naracoorte claimed architectural designs were by 'our townsman, Mr WT Gore' when praising the design of Henry Jones' new cottage 'one of the neatest and most convenient cottages in the colony'.<sup>29</sup>



St Andrews Church in 1858 was one of W T Gore's earliest architectural designs for Kincaig. When later outgrown by the Presbyterian Church community it was used as a Sunday School. Naracoorte NTSA 010-00883

Pictured in the W T Gore designed Presbyterian Manse Mt Gambier (1862) with his wife is Reverend Robert Caldwell who officiated at three weddings at Struan House for John Robertson's daughters.<sup>31</sup> SLSA B19044

W T Gore's improvements to Crouch's store in Mt Gambier included the decorative parapet, cornice, brackets and shopfront windows that invited customers to view the goods for sale. SLSA B19739



#### Thoroughly accomplished architect

Mr W T Gore, was 'a thoroughly accomplished architect', who 'knew the business from bottom to top'. He was 'an institution' in the district, and was prominent in the development of Naracoorte. Gore and others succeeded 'in the rough and tumble' of building the social foundations of Naracoorte.<sup>36</sup>

#### W T Gore, social engineer

Mechanics Institutes were based on an early 20th Century Scottish model for providing 'adult education to the working classes'.<sup>49</sup> It was hoped the Gore designed Robe Institute would advance Robe and the amusement room would 'keep men out of the public house' while comforting 'the wives and mothers who when asked 'Where is your husband or son,' would be able to reply, 'At the Institute'.'<sup>50</sup>

#### Glencoe woolshed opening

A grand opening ball for 200 was held on 19th November 1863 at Glencoe Woolshed to thank Architect Mr W T Gore, the contractors Messrs Cole and Hale and their employees for the woolshed that 'for position, convenience, and durability, was second to none in the colony. Two sheep were shorn in the presence of the guests, and the woolshed was declared open. Then the dancing began.'<sup>44</sup>

W T Gore's reputation as an architect grew though the 1860s when he designed many residential, pastoral, commercial, ecclesiastical and educational buildings throughout the South East. By 1862 Gore was recognised for designing the elegant Mount Gambier Hotel, the Presbyterian Manse, Mount Gambier for Reverend Caldwell and the alterations that transformed Mr Crouch's shop, the first two storey one in Mount Gambier.<sup>30</sup>

In 1868 prominent residents of Naracoorte including Henry Smith and Thomas Agar placed an advertisement in the Border Watch addressed to W T Gore requesting he convene a public meeting for a new Town Hall.<sup>32</sup> Prior to the establishment of a town council W T Gore appeared equivalent to the Town Clerk.<sup>33</sup>

On 16 December 1868 the South Australian Advertiser referred to W T Gore as the South East's District Architect whose buildings in Naracoorte and throughout the South East were 'well-looking structures' with 'tasteful fronts and satisfactory proportions' that spoke of his architectural skills.<sup>34</sup> By early 1869 he had designed substantial South East buildings including pastoral homesteads such as Moyhall (1865), Crower (1866), Hynam (1866), and Cairnbank (1868), and also Mechanics Institutes, banks, churches, parsonages, shops and stables.<sup>35</sup>

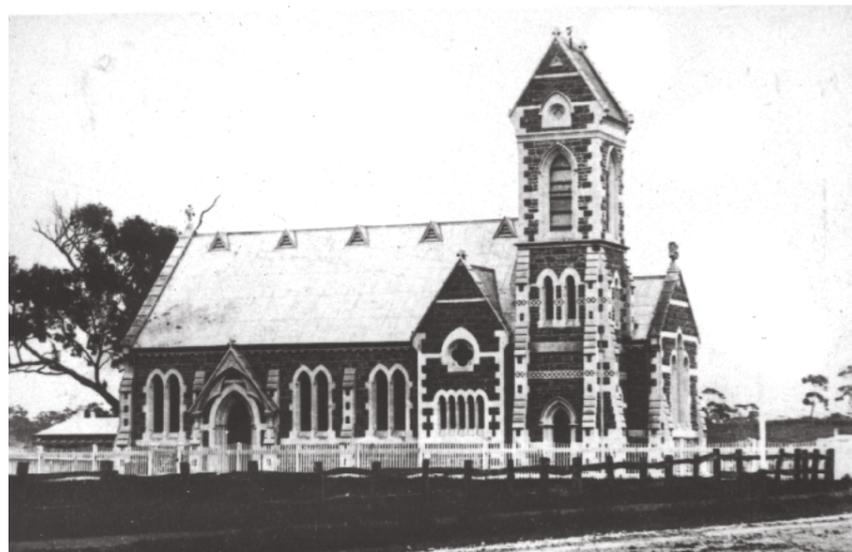
There are 'good reasons' to attribute W T Gore as the designer of several large T-shaped stone woolsheds for successful South East pastoralists.<sup>39</sup> Gore's understanding of the shearing process and the spatial requirements of a shearing shed were influenced by his interactions with John Robertson and other South East pastoralists from the mid 1850s. W T Gore was the design and 'supervising' architect for the Leake brothers' state heritage listed Glencoe Woolshed (1863) made from dolomite, limestone and blackwood.<sup>40</sup> The 'commodious handsome, imposing' Glencoe Woolshed, 160 feet long by 60 feet wide was 'superior', 'modern' and perhaps 'unequalled in the Colonies for convenience, superior workmanship, and perfect arrangement'.<sup>41</sup>

Glencoe Woolshed, designed early in W T Gore's architectural career, remains amongst his most well known works and a fitting memorial for the great mid-19th Century pastoral wealth of the South East of Colonial South Australia.<sup>42</sup> A review of national woolsheds including W T Gore's woolsheds may verify whether Gore's designs are of national importance as suspected by architect Andrew Klenke.<sup>43</sup>

W T Gore was committed to quality educational facilities for South East communities. He designed the Mount Gambier, Robe and Penola Institutes, was a committee member of the Naracoorte Mechanics Institute and a life member of the Robe Institute.<sup>45</sup> In 1868, Mr W T Gore gifted the plans for the Mount Gambier Institute 'without any expense' to the very appreciative cash strapped Institute Committee.<sup>46 47</sup>

From 1865 W T Gore combined his architectural profession with the role of a Licensed Surveyor in South Australia.<sup>51</sup> He assisted the 'Assistant Surveyor' to survey the Kincaig to Naracoorte road.<sup>52</sup> Gore was also associated with the Mount Gambier Local Roads Board.<sup>53</sup> He was involved in early Mt. Gambier land development. In 1863 W T Gore advertised for sale blocks of land in the optimistically named subdivision of 'Nymphsvale'.<sup>54</sup> By the late 1860s he was advertising 'money at current rates' in the South East.<sup>55</sup>

The Border Watch wrote in 1864 that if W T Gore's plans for Christ Church, Mt. Gambier are followed, it would result in 'one of the handsomest buildings between Adelaide and Melbourne.'<sup>37</sup> On the church's Jubilee the parish was 'heartily congratulated on its choice of architect W T Gore'.<sup>38</sup> SLSA B22320



The photograph of the Mt. Gambier Institute (1868) revealed W T Gore's plans gifted to the Institute Committee included design details such as Corinthian columns, a decorative cast iron crest on the roof and elegant Institute signage. Stonemason John Goss and architect George Pannell were amongst Institute Committee members who approved Gore's design. SLSA B10193



Robe Institute  
Habitable Places 2015

State heritage listed National Bank  
Penola. SLSA B15210



Kingston - Kadnrite Railway

Architect W T Gore, contractor Henry Smith and Naracoorte residents attended an 1868 public meeting for the proposed new railway line from Kingston to Kadnrite. W T Gore chipped in 'it would be a fine thing to have a railway from Kingston to Kadnrite; that from the immense importance of Kadnrite they might expect a proportionate amount of traffic on the line. The inhabitants of that sweet little oasis in the desert when it became inhabited—would no doubt be much benefited by it: but still it would be wise of the Government to delay the matter until Kadnrite had a population. Good roads to still more important spots would be more beneficial.' Gore proposed a motion for cheap but extensive lime roads, Henry Smith seconded it and the meeting passed it unanimously.<sup>56</sup>

Naracoorte farewells W T Gore

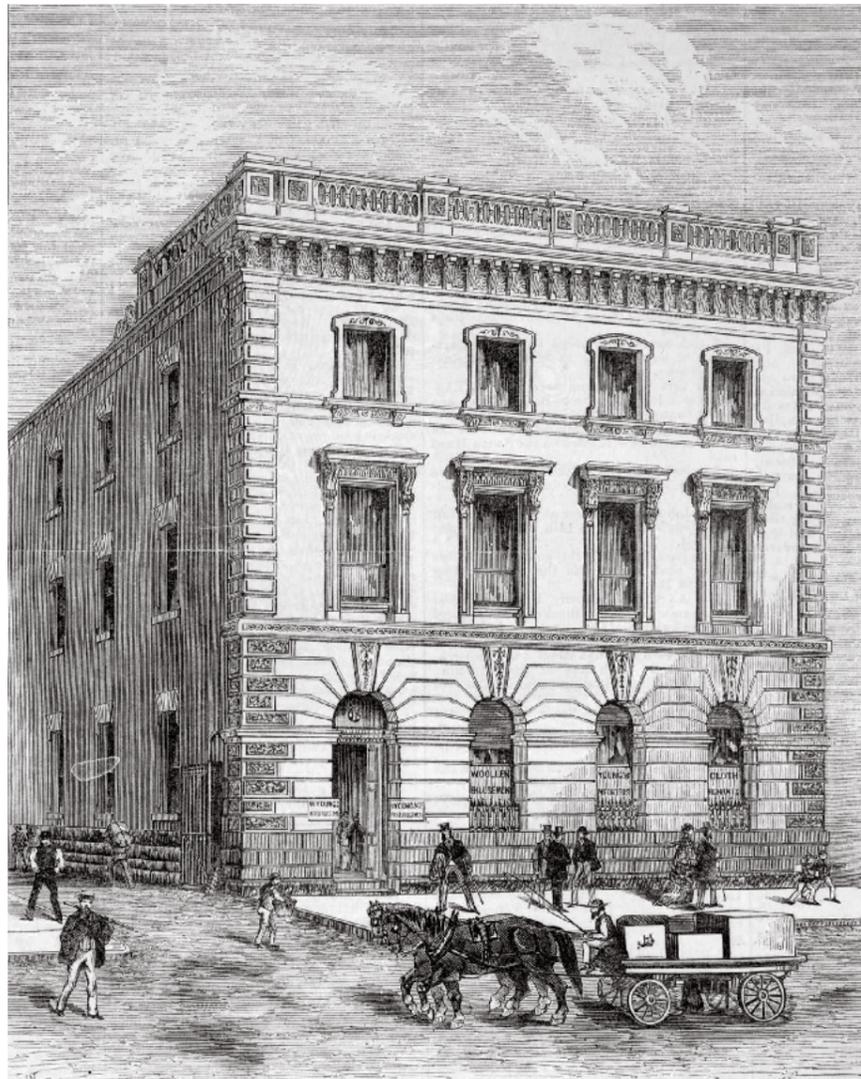
On the eve of his departure for Melbourne in January 1869, 30 Naracoorte 'gentlemen' took W T Gore to 'a complementary dinner' at the Naracoorte Hotel. Gore was acknowledged for his contribution to the social and economic development of the town as had 'done much to make it a thriving township'. His departure was a social and commercial loss for Naracoorte. As an architect of 'thorough business habits' Gore had created employment for many.

Gore said he hoped to revisit the district, that he would not lose interest in the place and that 'if the people of the South East worked unanimously, burying their petty jealousies, much good would result.'<sup>59</sup>

State heritage buildings

W T Gore's buildings designed from his Naracoorte base included many State heritage listed buildings such as Alexander Mitchell's Mount Gambier Hotel (1861), the National Bank Penola (1867), the ground floor of the Mount Gambier Mechanics Institute (1867), the Robe Mechanics Institute (1868), the Penola Mechanics Institute (1868), the first Presbyterian Church at Kincaig (1858) now a Sunday school, the Naracoorte Church of England parsonage (1863) and the Mt. Gambier Christ Church (1865). Gore also designed and tendered the State Heritage Victoria listed Gringegalgona homestead.<sup>61</sup>

W.Young & Co's Warehouse (1870) in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne was an impressive biscuit factory designed by W T Gore. 'The style of architecture is Italian, freely treated, with just enough ornament to give effect to the whole without in any way detracting from it as a place of business.'<sup>193</sup> SLV IAN16/07/72/15



Mt. Gambier Hotel (1862) WT Gore's youngest daughter was named after Helen Mitchell, wife of Alexander Mitchell owner of the Mt. Gambier Hotel that Gore designed early in his career. SLSA PRG280\_1\_1\_85



The South East newspapers considered W T Gore the 'King of Naracoorte'.<sup>57</sup> His departure to Melbourne in 1869 was a loss to the South East where he was 'so well known' for his 'architectural ability and taste' and his many public buildings that were a 'permanent testimony to his skill'.<sup>58</sup>

The financial success of W T Gore's Naracoorte architectural practice and his social aspirations were reflected in his home furnishings auctioned in December 1868 before he moved to Melbourne. They included a Handsome Walnut Couch, an inlaid French Walnut Occasional Table, a Handsomely Carved Ladies' Reading Table, a Very Fine Piano, by a first-class London maker, selected by the celebrated musician the late Geo. Loder, and a 'nearly new splendid buggy.' It is possible that the 'Water-colour Drawings' offered for sale were Gore's own works and might still be found in the south east.<sup>60</sup>

Only months after the Gore family's relocation to Wallgrove Villa, South Yarra, youngest daughter 1 year old Helen died at home on the 10th April 1869.<sup>62</sup> The move to Melbourne was professionally successful for W T Gore who accepted architectural commissions for a variety of building types including numerous substantial commercial, hotel, residential, and ecclesiastic projects from Temple Court, Melbourne from 1860 to mid 1876. The enthusiasm surrounding the grand opening of Guest and Co.'s substantial stone, 3 storey Italianate biscuit factory in William Street built 'under the direction and from the plans of Mr W T Gore, C. E.' provided an early boost to Gore's profile in Melbourne.<sup>63</sup>

In 1870 Gore tendered a variety of projects from Temple Court. These included St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Penola, Alexander Cameron's Royal Oak Hotel, Penola, a large residence and office building in the Victorian western district, a Melbourne rice mill shed, a Romsey chicory kiln, and a stable and coach house for Mr Kirby of Toorak. Kirby later commissioned Gore to design a mansion in East Melbourne that is now used as a professional medical specialist association's rooms.<sup>64</sup> Advertisements for additional staff in 1872 and 1873 indicated that W T Gore soon had a thriving Melbourne architectural practice.<sup>65 66</sup>

In 1874 W T Gore prepared a design for the Economic Museum of Botany in the South Australian Botanic Gardens. However when government funds became available for construction in 1879, the South Australian Architect-in-chief Mr E. J. Woods had changed Gore's Romanesque exterior to the 'as-built' Greek Revival style.<sup>71</sup>

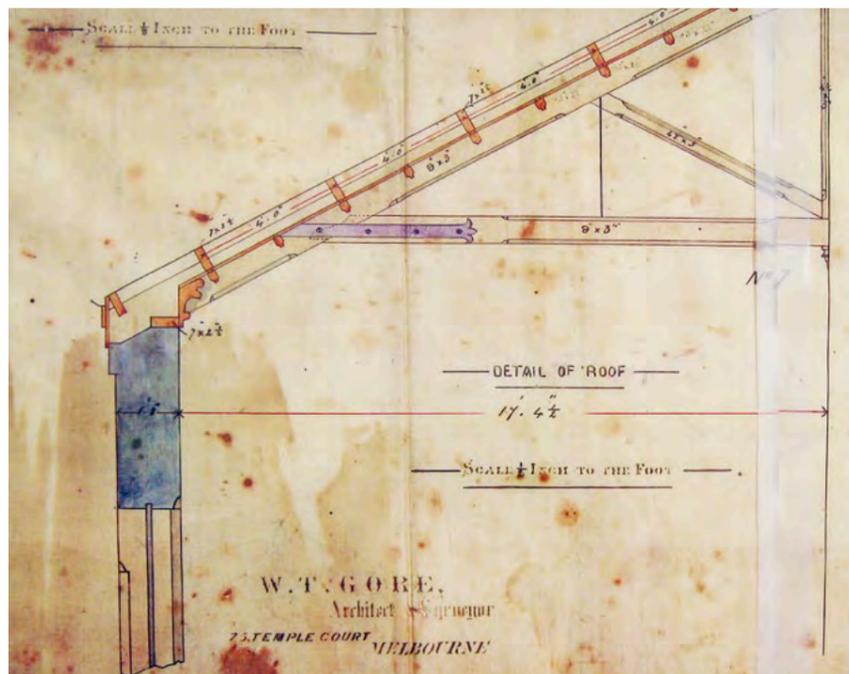
Gore designed the mansion The Elms at Emerald Hill that was tendered in January 1875.<sup>72</sup> In 1874 and again in 1875, he was acknowledged by his peers as a leading Melbourne architect when elected to the Council of the Victorian Institute of Architects.<sup>73</sup>

W T Gore was an artist across many mediums. His pencilled architectural designs were praised as 'very finely finished specimens of pictorial art.'<sup>74 75</sup> In 1988 the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra accepted the donation of a series of six of W T Gore's stained glass designs in watercolour about one hundred and thirteen years after they were painted.<sup>76</sup>

This detail from W T Gore's original architectural drawing is now on display in St Andrews Presbyterian Church Penola (1870). It is signed by Gore and financier John Riddoch, and witnessed by superintending architect George Pannell.

This substantial project was precursor to the Gore Pannell combination for Struan House. Original held by St Andrews Presbyterian Church Penola.

The State Library of Victoria holds W T Gore's watercolour paintings of the Binnum Binnum Homestead.<sup>80</sup> They demonstrate W T Gore's drafting and perspective skills. Gore's architectural plans were highly praised by those who considered themselves 'fortunate' to see them.<sup>81</sup> Very few of his architectural drawings have been found except for his 1874 Romanesque concept design of the Adelaide's Museum of Economic Botany and St Andrews Church Penola.<sup>82 83</sup> SLVH10701 and SLVH10702



No relation

An advertisement placed by Dr. Robert Peel, Retired Surgeon of Mount Gambier, cautioned the public that 'W T Gore is no relation or connection of mine, and has NO AUTHORITY to USE my NAME, in anyway'.<sup>96</sup>

W T Gore was an occasional inventor. He applied for patents for improved sheep wash soaks. It is possible that he was involved in the design of the new Warrattenbullie pre-shearing 'hot water wash' that 'worked like clockwork' with the dirty, 'black' sheep entering the soak at one end and emerging 'white as snow' at the other end after being 'jetted' with hot water.<sup>84</sup> In October 1869 W T Gore and fellow inventors Milliar and Wickliffe applied for a Victorian patent for the invention of a sheep wash with 'improvements in the construction of soaks for washing sheep'.<sup>85</sup> In 1871 William Thomas Gore, and Henry Dale Edwards were granted a NSW patent for their invention that allowed 'Improvements in the method of constructing soaks or dips for washing or dipping sheep'.<sup>86</sup>

W T Gore also invested in a number of speculative prospecting ventures.<sup>87 88 89 90</sup> One 1870 investment to extract gold used Carpenter's recently patented invention 'the Separator'.<sup>91</sup> This research did not unearth whether Gore ever struck gold.

Only a handful of post-1876 mentions of W T Gore in the public record have been uncovered. There is an unsubstantiated reference to him practising in Adelaide after business slowed in Melbourne,<sup>92</sup> two references for architectural services in Mt. Gambier,<sup>194 195</sup> and another on his eldest son's death in 1915.<sup>93</sup>

The response to W T Gore's 1879 complimentary plans for an extension to the Mt. Gambier Church of England suggested that Gore had not forgotten Mt. Gambier but perhaps some in Mt. Gambier had forgotten him. In 1865 Gore's plans for the original church received high praise for the 'good taste' of both the architect and the committee.<sup>197</sup> His architectural design provided for future extension 'without destroying its proportions'.<sup>199</sup> However in 1879 the committee disapproved of Gore's extension plans considering the proposal would be 'deteriorating the beauty of the inside of the Church'.<sup>198</sup>

In 1880 Gore assisted municipal architect J. S. Jenkins from Richmond to prepare sketch plans for various municipal buildings including council chambers for the Mt. Gambier Corporation. The plans 'had carefully in view in the design, that when the building is completed, it will harmonise with the Institute and the adjoining buildings'.<sup>196</sup>

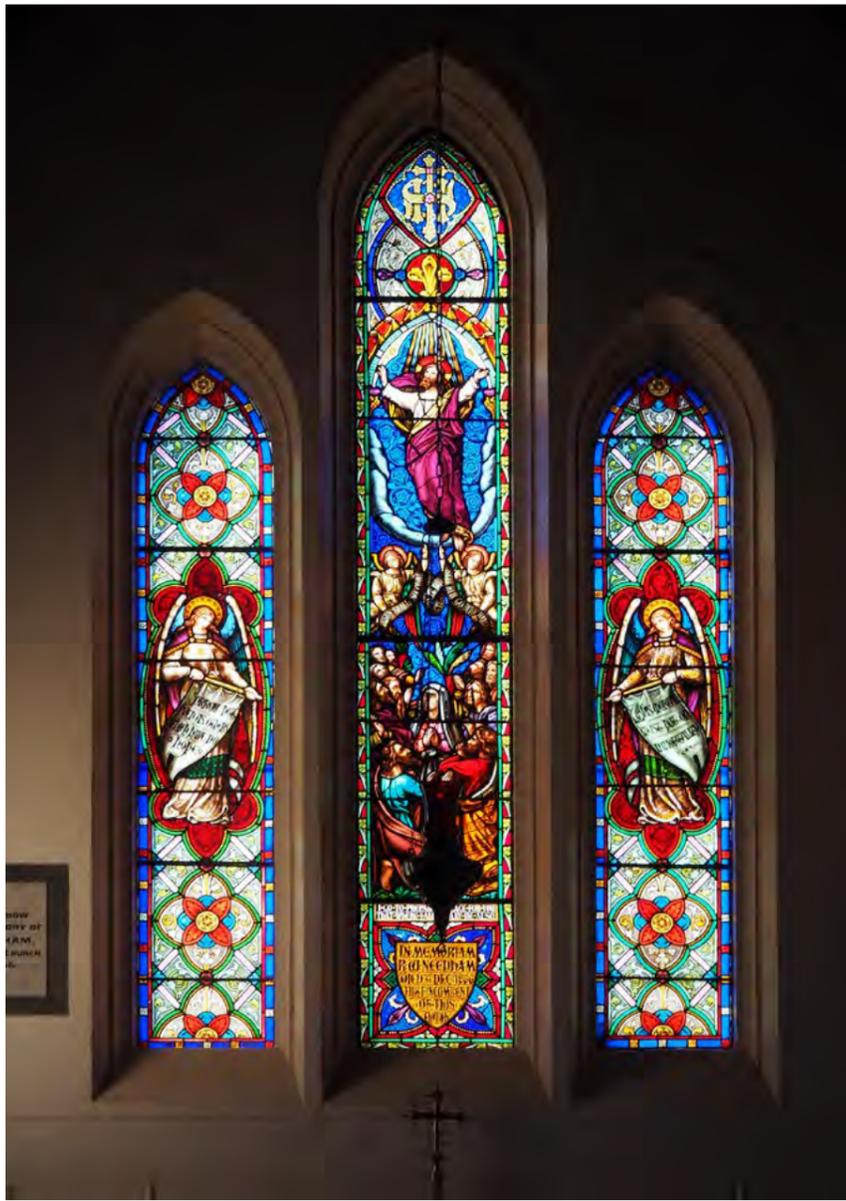
No record of W T Gore's death, funeral, or obituary outlining his considerable life's work has been found. It is almost inexplicable that someone with his stature for the role played in Colonial South Australian and Victorian architecture could disappear without trace or the almost obligatory newspaper obituary. A listing on 'Missing Friends' in September 1880 reinforces the mystery surrounding W T Gore's ultimate fate.<sup>200</sup>

W T Gore was a man of great skill, energy, vision and generosity whose considerable architectural achievements and contributions to the quality of the built environment in the South East were acknowledged then more than now. He died sometime between 1880 and 1908.<sup>94</sup> W T Gore's numerous state heritage listed buildings stand as a proud legacy of his pioneering achievements. Struan House is tall amongst them. W T Gore emerged as a highly respected architect and community leader after modest beginnings in Naracoorte, South Australia.<sup>95</sup>

Needham Memorial Window  
This outstanding example of W T Gore's stained glass design is the Needham Memorial Window in his Mt. Gambier's Christ Church. The large 3 panelled stained glass windows were made by glass artists Ferguson, Urie and Lyon, of Melbourne.

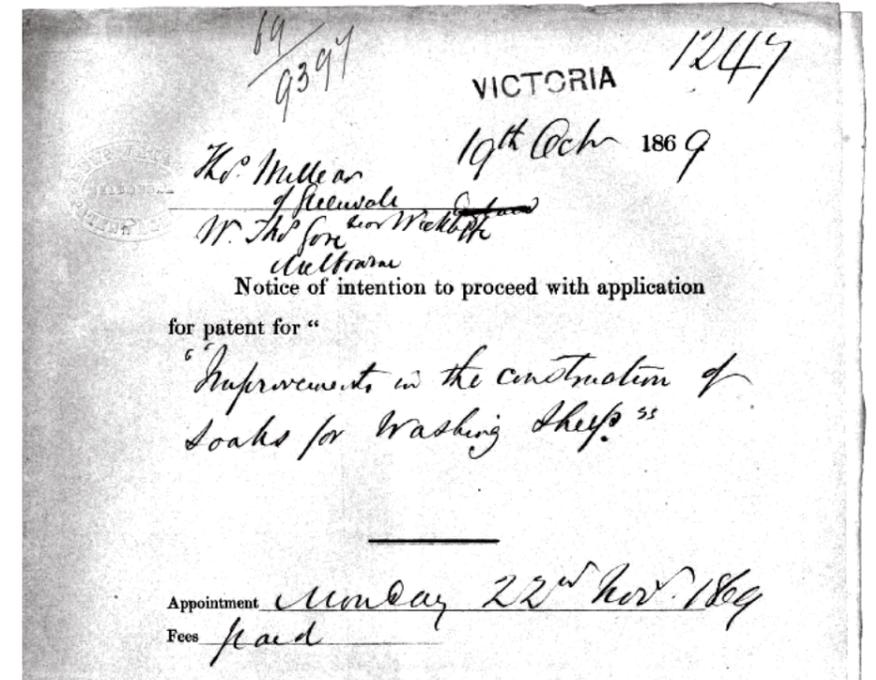
In Gore's 'Ascension of Christ' the saviour 'is a glorious conception and stands out from the background with a relieve almost stereoscopic. The purple drapery of this figure is one of the most magnificent pieces of colouring we have ever seen'.<sup>77 78 79</sup> Habitable Places 2015

Christ Church, Mt. Gambier (1865) designed by W T Gore. Habitable Places 2015



W T Gore probably working in Australia c.1875 (Design for coloured glass door surround for Oxford cottage) c.1875 watercolour, pen and ink, black pencil image 16.2 x 12.8 cm sheet 25.4 x 14.9 cm'. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Gift of Diana Cameron 1988. The artist's signature is below the fanlight. NGA 93043

In 1869 W T Gore, Civil Engineer, Millear and Witcliffe applied for a Victorian patent for their invention for 'Improvements in the construction of Soaks for washing sheep'. NAA 13150 1247



Civic

- 1862 Port MacDonnell Schoolhouse, clerk of works.<sup>97</sup>
- 1866 Naracoorte Court House, Police Station and Post Office, clerk of works.<sup>98</sup>
- 1868 Robe Institute.<sup>99</sup>
- 1869 Mount Gambier Institute.<sup>100</sup>
- 1869 Penola Institute.<sup>101</sup>
- 1874 Design for the Museum of Economic Botany, Adelaide Botanic Gardens.<sup>102</sup>
- 1876 Geelong Recreation Club.<sup>103</sup>

Residences

- 1861 'The Second House ' for John Robertson.<sup>104</sup>
- 1861 Kybybolite House.<sup>105</sup>
- 1866 Moyhall homestead for William Robertson, nephew of John Robertson.<sup>106</sup>
- 1866 Crower homestead for JW and M McInnes.<sup>107</sup>
- 1866 Hynam homestead for Adam Smith.<sup>108</sup>
- 1868 Cairnbank homestead for John Hensley.<sup>109</sup>
- 1869 Villa Extensions, Toorak, Melbourne.<sup>110</sup>
- 1870 Coachhouse & Stables, Williams Road, Toorak, for Mr A. Kirkby, Esq.<sup>111</sup>
- 1870 Large 19 roomed Western District residence and offices.<sup>112</sup>
- 1871 2 Houses, East Melbourne, for Mixner and Campbell.<sup>113</sup>
- 1871 Villa, Strand, Williamston, Melbourne for Guest & Co. William Street.<sup>114</sup>
- 1871 House, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.<sup>115</sup>
- 1871 Villa Residence, Oorong Road, Armadale.<sup>116</sup>
- 1872 Brick Cottage, Kew.<sup>117</sup>
- 1872-73 254 Albert Street East Melbourne for Mr Kirby.<sup>118</sup>
- 1872 Villa, Mount Macedon.<sup>119</sup>
- 1873 4 Houses, Melbourne.<sup>120</sup>
- 1873 Residence. Balaclava.<sup>121</sup>
- 1873 Gringegalga Homestead, Western Victoria, for Duncan Robertson.<sup>122</sup>
- 1873 Office and Residence at Tahara, near Coleraine.<sup>123</sup>
- 1873 Struan House for John Robertson of Robertson Plains.<sup>124</sup>
- 1873 House for A. Johnson Esq. of Tahara.<sup>125</sup>
- 1873 Cottage South Yarra.<sup>126</sup>
- 1974 House, North Melbourne.<sup>127</sup>
- 1874 2 houses St Kilda Melbourne.<sup>128</sup>
- 1874 5 Cottages, Melbourne.<sup>129</sup>
- 1875 Villa Residence, Prahan.<sup>130</sup>
- 1875 Large Residence, Toorak, Melbourne.<sup>131</sup>
- 1875 The Elms, 29 St Vincent Place, Emerald Hill.<sup>132</sup>

Woolsheds

- 1862 Katnook Woolshed, for John Riddoch.<sup>133</sup>
- 1863 Glencoe Woolshed for the Leake Brothers.<sup>134</sup>
- 1863 Stone Woolshed for Thomas Tilley's South Avenue station.<sup>135</sup>
- 1866 Warrattenbullie woolshed for John Robertson.<sup>136</sup>
- 1868 Glen Roy Woolshed for Ronald McDonald.<sup>137</sup>

Commercial

- 1862 Mr Crouch's Store 1856 alterations: rendered frontage and decorative shop front window.<sup>138</sup>
- 1863 Mr Jones shop and residence.<sup>139</sup>
- 1865 Mt. Gambier Hotel stables<sup>140</sup>
- 1867 National Bank of Australasia, Penola, offices, residence and stables.<sup>141</sup>
- 1867 National Bank of Australasia, Mt. Gambier banking chamber & sundry alterations.<sup>142</sup>
- 1867 Fidler and Webb's Naracoorte store.<sup>143</sup>
- 1870 Shed, Melbourne Rice Mills.<sup>144</sup>
- 1870 Kiln, Romesey Chickory Works.<sup>145</sup>
- 1870 3 storey Biscuit Factory, Melbourne for Guest and Co.<sup>146</sup>
- 1871 Extensive warehouse alterations, Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.<sup>147</sup>
- 1872 Warehouse, Elizabeth Street, Melbourne for Messers. W. Young & Co.<sup>148</sup>
- 1873 Stables, Alma Road, Saint Kilda, Melbourne, for Mr John Wagner.<sup>149</sup>
- 1873 Iron Store, for Stephenson and Elliot, King Street, Melbourne.<sup>150</sup>
- 1876 Shops alterations, Richmond, Melbourne.<sup>151</sup>

Ecclesiastic

- 1858 1st St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Kincaig.<sup>152</sup>
- 1862 Presbyterian Manse, Mt. Gambier.<sup>153</sup>
- 1863 Church of England Parsonage Naracoorte/Kincaig.<sup>154</sup>
- 1864 Church of England Parsonage, Mt. Gambier.<sup>155</sup>
- 1865 Christ Church, Bay Road, Mount Gambier.<sup>156</sup>
- 1870 St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Penola.<sup>157</sup>
- 1873 Presbyterian Church and Manse, Carlton.<sup>158</sup>
- 1874 St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Naracoorte.<sup>159</sup>
- 1875 Church, Mount Macedon alterations.<sup>160</sup>

Hotels

- 1861-62 Alexander Mitchell's Mt. Gambier Hotel.<sup>161</sup>
- 1868 Mail Gate Hotel, Robertson's Plains, for John Robertson.<sup>162</sup>
- 1873 Royal Oak Hotel, Penola for Alexander Cameron.<sup>163</sup>
- 1875 South Yarra Hotel.<sup>164</sup>
- 1875 Hotel at Mount Macedon.<sup>165</sup>
- 1875 Alterations and extensions to Vine Hotel, Richmond.<sup>166</sup>

Crower, (1866) typical of Gore's two storey Georgian pastoral houses. Habitable Places 2015

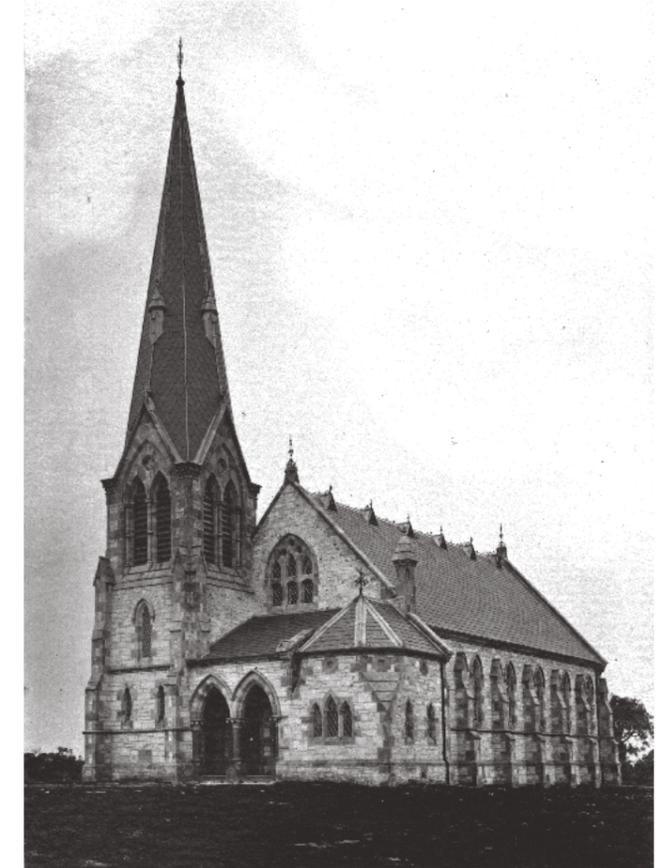
Glencoe Woolshed (1863) Habitable Places 2005

Both the Institute (1869) and St Andrews Church (1870) in Penola were designed by 'the well known pencil of Mr Gore' who had already added many excellent buildings to the Penola township.<sup>48</sup> Photo circa 1906 after the church tower was completed.<sup>47</sup> SLSA B12085

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Naracoorte (1874). In 1873 W T Gore gifted plans for the State Heritage listed St Andrews (1874). True to his expressed sentiment at the Naracoorte farewell dinner his generous gift demonstrated he had maintained interest in Naracoorte.<sup>68</sup> It was also perhaps a token of appreciation for his clients, leading members of the Naracoorte's Presbyterian community, William Robertson (Moyhall) and John Robertson

who had supported his early architectural practice.<sup>69</sup> The 'unique' and 'chaste' plans not only did 'credit to that gentleman's artistic skill', but if followed, 'will prove to be the drawings of a building second to none in the colonies for elegance of design and finish, combined with the very necessary and indeed indispensable, adjuncts of roominess and accommodation'.<sup>70</sup> SLSA B21766\_186

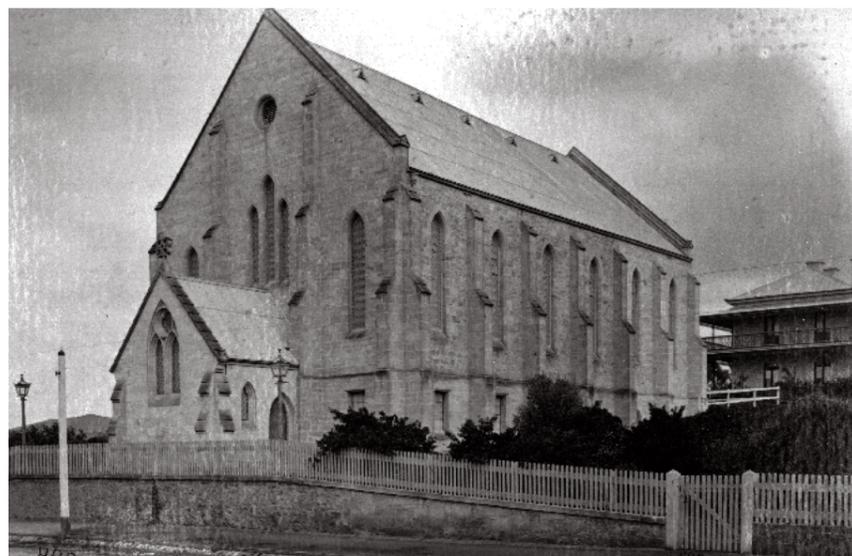
Gore designed the Royal Oak Hotel Penola (1873) for Alexander Cameron. The stonemasonry was by Joseph Hosking. SLSA B15212



The 1861 Wesleyan Church at Mount Gambier was praised for the quality of Pannell's architecture. At the time the Wesleyans were given 'great credit for taking such a high standard of ecclesiastical architecture'.<sup>174</sup> SLSA B21766\_56

The first St Andrews Church in Mt Gambier, 1860 designed by G. Pannell, left. Manse 1862 designed by W T Gore, right. SLSA B3383

St. Andrews Church, Mt. Gambier 1871 designed by G. Pannell. SLSA B13427



## Mr George Pannell

Mr George Pannell (1817-1877) was the clerk of works for Struan House, engaged by Robertson to supervise construction and to realise the design intent of the architect W T Gore .

Pannell was born in East Budley, Salterton, Devonshire, England.<sup>168</sup> He and his wife Ann (nee Shallis) arrived in South Australia in 1850 aboard the 'Sea Queen'. Ann died soon after. In 1853 he married Mary Ann Ekers. They lived in North Adelaide. He worked as a builder and was a devout member of the Wesleyan Church.<sup>169</sup> In 1859 Pannell won the contract to erect the telegraph line from Mt. Gambier to Penola, with the lowest tender price of £497, and brought his family to the South East.<sup>170</sup> Soon after he built the early Penola Telegraph Office and residence.<sup>171</sup> Amongst his earliest Mount Gambier designs was the first St Andrews Presbyterian Church commissioned in late 1859. It was later demolished after the community outgrew it.<sup>172</sup>

As a Mount Gambier resident, Pannell simultaneously gained experience for Colonial Public Works and private projects. In 1862 Pannell advertised as an architect, and in 1863 as architect, surveyor and 'valuator'. In 1863 he was elected a councillor for Mount Gambier's first council.<sup>173</sup>

Pannell, along with colleague W T Gore, was responsible for some of the earliest stone buildings in the South East where he gained the necessary experience for his role as clerk of works on Struan House. Pannell was architect for many State heritage listed buildings including the early section of the Telegraph Office in Penola (1860),<sup>175</sup> the Wesleyan Church and Manse in Mt Gambier (1862, 1868),<sup>176</sup> the now demolished Penola Police Station and Barracks (1868)<sup>177</sup>, the second St Andrews Presbyterian Church in Mount Gambier (1871)<sup>178</sup>, Samuel Webb's 2 storey residence at 87 Gray Street, Mount Gambier (now residential care facility Lambert Lodge),<sup>179</sup> and Caleb Fidler's two storey house now 'Pine Hall'.<sup>180</sup>

Pannell administered a number of building contracts as clerk of works or 'superintendent architect' before John Robertson's 1873-75 'Stone House'.<sup>182</sup> He administered the contract for repairs to the Mt. Gambier Gaol. He was clerk of works on the 1869 Mt. Gambier Hospital.<sup>183</sup> Perhaps more importantly, Pannell was the 'Superintendent Architect' engaged in 1870 to ensure that St Andrews Church Penola<sup>184</sup> fulfilled W T Gore's design intent although the tower and a new front were not added until 1906.<sup>185</sup>

Pannell retired from the Public Works Department in 1871 to focus on private architectural practice.<sup>186</sup> He advertised as an Architect at Commercial Road Mount Gambier and described himself as 'late of the Public Works Department' offering architectural services for Plans, Estimates and Specifications.<sup>187</sup> In late 1873 when John Robertson advertised tenders for contractors for Struan House, W T Gore was in Melbourne leaving an opportunity for Pannell to be clerk of works.

Following construction of Struan House, Pannell was the architect for the Yahl Wesleyan Church circa 1876 with Struan House stonemason John Goss the contractor.<sup>188</sup>

Mr George Pannell signed off on the completion of the Mt. Gambier Gaol repairs in 1866: 'Everything finished at the Gaol. Contractors want it taken of their hands please instruct me Geo. Pannell'.

His final certificate is even more terse: 'Mt Gambier Gaol repairs Completion of'

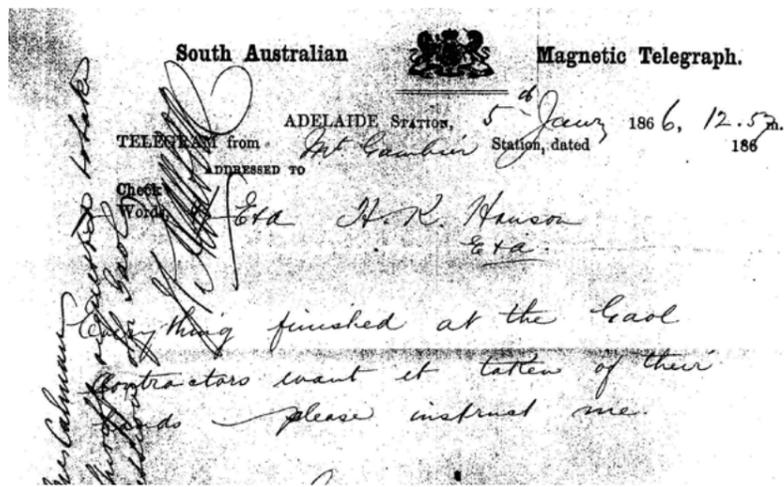
This correspondence was transmitted via the telegraph line that Pannell had personally been contracted to construct from Mt. Gambier to Penola in 1860 and via the Penola Telegraph Station that he had built soon after.<sup>181</sup> City of Mt. Gambier Archives<sup>192</sup>

Gore's specification for St Andrews Church Penola for which Pannell was the clerk of works provide insights into the contractual arrangements and Pannell's likely role in the construction of Struan House:

'Specification of works required to be done in building and furnishing complete a portion of the Church in Penola in strict conformity with the plans, General Conditions of Contract and the following particulars [the specification] which shall not be departed from in any way, without the written authority of the Building Committee or their Architect.

The whole of the work is to be executed under the direction of the Building Committee, who will appoint an officer to superintend the same and all works must be done to his satisfaction'

Original held by St Andrews Presbyterian Church Penola.



Received Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 1866

G. Pannell

Mt Gambier Gaol repairs  
Completion of -

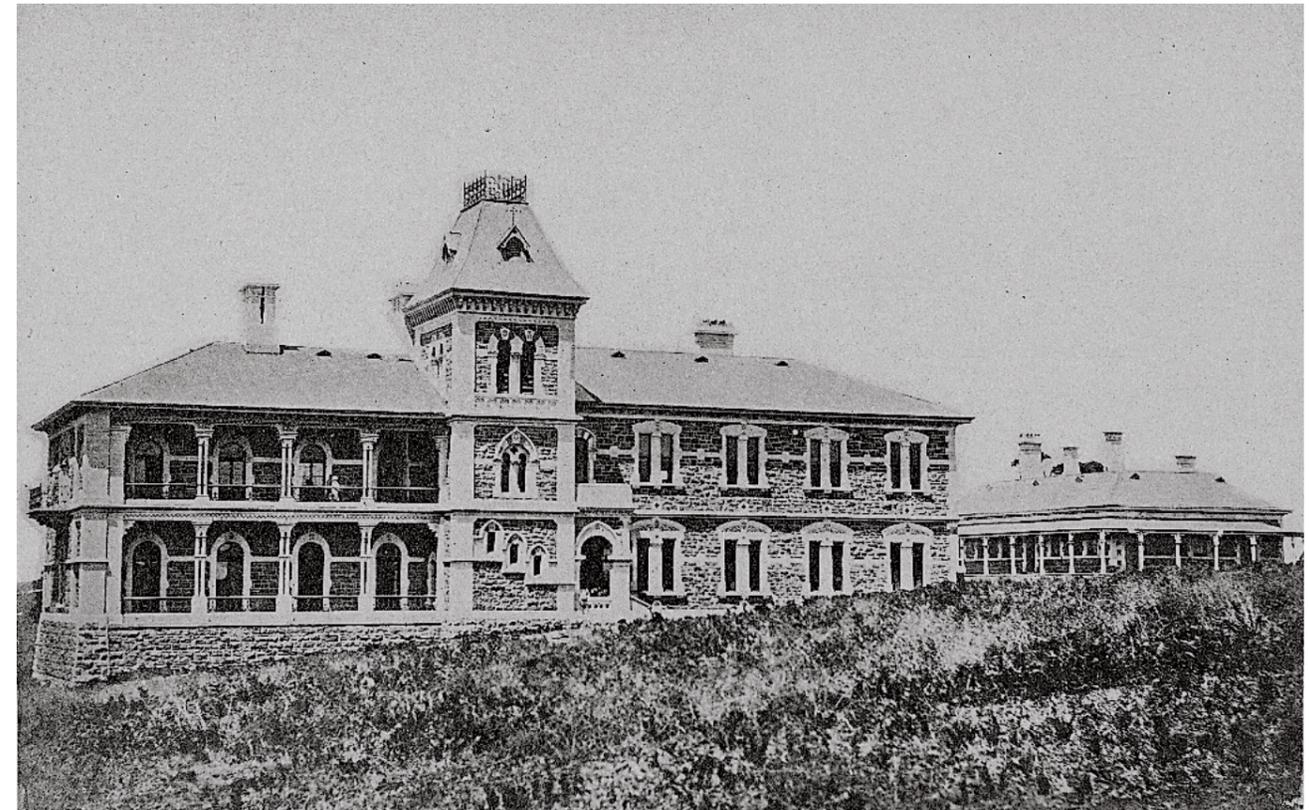
*Specification of works required to be done in building and furnishing complete a portion of the Church at Penola for the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church there, in strict conformity with the accompanying Plans, General Conditions of Contract and the following Particulars which are not to be departed from in any way, without the written authority of the Building Committee or their Architect*

*The whole of the work is to be executed under the direction of the Building Committee who will appoint an Officer to superintend the same and all works must be done to his satisfaction*

Pannell was clerk of works for the Italianate Mount Gambier hospital (1869) now demolished. Like Struan House it had a dominant tower and informal massing, colonnaded verandah and arched and paired window openings. It was a landmark, erected on the edge of the Valley Lake crater overlooking the township. Joseph H. Nixon SLSA B11414

Pannell died about two years after the completion of Struan House. He collapsed on the job as clerk of works for the Wehl Street South Public School and died a few days later on the 19th June 1877 at 'Woodlands', the home he designed for his family.<sup>189</sup> Pannell's funeral service was held in the Oddfellows Hall which was 'full to overflowing'. He is buried in the Lake Terrace Cemetery.<sup>190</sup>

Many of the buildings that George Pannell was responsible for as design architect or clerk of works are now State Heritage listed places. He made a valuable contribution to the quality of the early Colonial built environment in the South East. Struan House is a worthy example of George Pannell's 'expertise in his chosen profession'.<sup>191</sup>



The Struan Business Ledger covers many aspects of the Robertsons' life at Struan House. For example, it provides the names of male and female employees and details their wages based on an annual salary. Male farm workers earned £50, the Struan House cook earned £40 and Struan House domestic servants earned £30 per annum. Other payments in the Struan Ledger reflected piece work where payment occurred after completion of the job such as fencing or stock delivery.

The account for Henry Smith records payments due by contracts and expenses including plasterer Campbell and stonemason Hosking. N.T.S.A History Room Struan House, Habitable Places 2014

#### Community leader

On June 10, 1866 Henry Smith was initiated as a founding member of the Loyal Mosquito Plains Lodge of Oddfellows, a mutual society in the absence of any government safety nets.<sup>20</sup> The inaugural meeting and initiations were in Smith and Agar's Commercial Hotel. Smith and Agar were made trustees of the Oddfellows alongside T. Campbell, later the plasterer for Struan House. Ten days later the Oddfellows Dinner and Ball was held with W T Gore as Chairman and Brothers Henry Smith and H. Trenter as Vice Chairmen.<sup>21</sup> In 1907 the late Henry Smith, past Grand Master of the Naracoorte Oddfellows, had a lengthy funeral cortage that included 70 members of the Loyal Mosquito Plains Lodge Oddfellows in full funeral regalia marching in front of the hearse.<sup>22</sup> Smith's obituary reported he was 'the last' Oddfellows founder to pass away. From this we can presume that W T Gore was by then deceased.<sup>23</sup>

24

Henry Smith  
1866

May 16	Cash	10 7	By Contracts	58 52	10 7
	J. Campbell	96 7			
	Hookings	5 10			
	Beef etc	311 11 82			
	Balances	165 13 03			
		58 52		10 7	
May 13	Beef	1 7 1			
14	Cheque	22 0			
16	Beef	1 10			
18		7 32			
19		2 3 9			
20		1 3			
21		1 18 44			
22		7 32			
23		1 11 103			
24	Sugar	6 9			
25	Beef	5 5			
26		2 10 10			
27		2 6 02			
28	Sheep	1 6			
29	Cheque	150			
30	Beef	1 14 2			
31		2 3 62			
1 Aug 3	Beef	14 9 3			
5	Sea	5			
7	Beef	14 2			
9	Cheque	200			
11	Beef	1 22 7			
14	Sugar	2 18 1			
21	Sea & Sugar	7 3			
24	Beef	1 13			
25		2 13 10			
26	146 lbs Beef	2 10			
27	136	1 8 4			
28	1116	1 10 5			
29	Cheque	200			
30	344 lbs Beef	3 21 8			
31	195	2 7 2			
1 Oct 11	2 Sheep	16			
16	2	16			
	Balance	6 21 8 2 1/2			

Total

Mr Henry Smith, contractor for Struan House, was widely respected for his integrity, generosity, community spirit and breadth of skills.<sup>1</sup> 'He spoke his mind fearlessly' and 'his word was his bond.'<sup>2</sup> Smith was a Freemason Grand Master,<sup>3</sup> a founding member of the Primitive Methodist Church, the Pastoral & Agricultural Society, the Naracoorte Agricultural Bureau,<sup>4</sup> the Naracoorte Oddfellows,<sup>5</sup> and a prize winning Merino sheep breeder and horticulturalist.<sup>6</sup> Struan House passageway. Habitable Places 2015

Mr and Mrs Henry Smith, parents of nine children.<sup>11</sup> Photo David Hood



## 2.7 The Builders

### Mr Henry Smith

Mr Henry Smith, building contractor for Struan House was a prominent figure who 'shared in the vicissitudes and hardships'<sup>7</sup> endured in the establishment of Naracoorte. He was a skilful contractor, successful in business, a community leader, and an elected District Councillor for 10 years.<sup>8</sup> Smith contributed to the establishment of Naracoorte as one of the largest contractors for buildings in the township and surrounding rural districts. He constructed residential, commercial, civic and pastoral buildings, including the woolsheds at Binnun, Kybybolite, Cannawigra, Warrattenbullie and Boneyeo as well as roads, fencing, and bridges.<sup>9</sup> Smith's valuable contract advice was 'often sought and willingly given' for buildings and roads.<sup>10</sup>

Henry Smith, (16 March 1630 – 28 May 1907) was born in Gobberston, Lincolnshire. He served a 6 year apprenticeship as a wheelwright and carpenter.<sup>12</sup> He along with his wife Ann and young son Henry arrived on the 'Emigrant' at Port Adelaide on the 24th October 1854.<sup>13</sup> His first building contract in the Colony was for Mr Ormerod's family home 'Moorakyne' at Robe.<sup>14</sup> Ormerod's credentials made him an excellent first South East pastoralist client for Mr Smith.<sup>15</sup>

In April 1855 Smith moved his family to Kincairg<sup>16</sup> where he supplemented building work with a carpentry shop and varied contracts such as a large Binnun Station fencing project.<sup>17</sup> In 1855, Smith entered into partnership with Mr Thomas Agar, recently arrived in Kincairg via Portland from Northhamptonshire.<sup>18</sup> Smith and Agar were amongst the original selectors of land in the Hundred of Narracoorte under the Strangway's Act.<sup>19</sup>

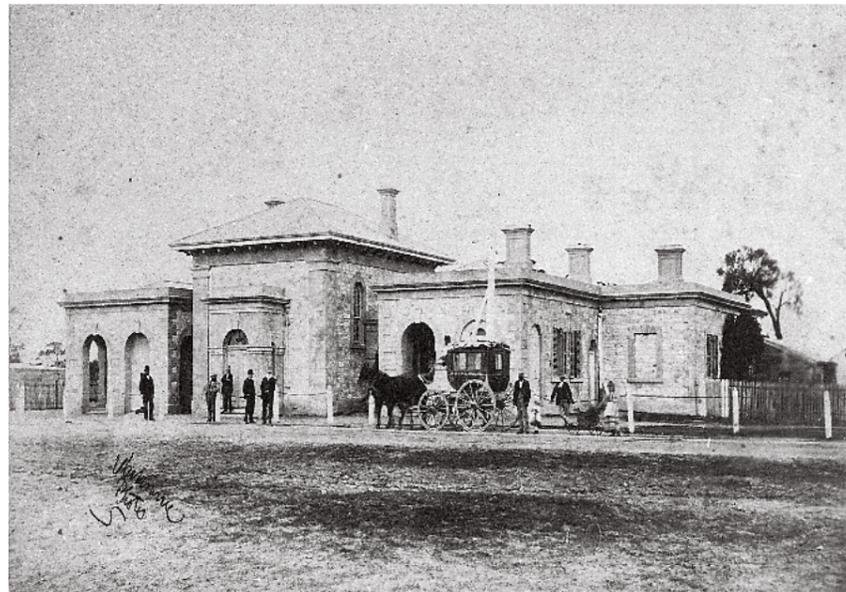
Smith and Agar erected both the first and replacement Bushmen's Arms now known as the Commercial Hotel. In common with Gore, they were each for a period registered public house landlords.<sup>24</sup> They built the controversially located early Naracoorte Courthouse, Police Station, and Post Office (1865) with W T Gore as clerk of works.<sup>25</sup> The 'local gentry partnership' Smith and Agar<sup>26</sup> were contractors for many buildings designed by W T Gore including pastoral homesteads Moyhall (1865), Crower (1866) and Cairnbank (1858), John Robertson's Gate Hotel (1868), Warrattenbullie Woolshed and Shearers Quarters (1866) and Mr Jones's store (1863).<sup>27</sup> In 1866 the partnership also built Simpson's three storey stone flour mill in Naracoorte, now the Sheeps Back Museum.<sup>28</sup>

The Smith and Agar partnership dissolved in 1871 by mutual agreement. Henry Smith continued contracting.<sup>33</sup> The partnership was no longer active when Henry Smith was awarded the contracts for Gringegalgon and Struan House as is incorrectly reported in some sources.<sup>34</sup>

Henry Smith bequeathed a legacy of fine buildings including Struan House and Gringegalgon that display the quality of his building and management skills, made all the more impressive in the pioneer context of limited infrastructure and building support services.

Henry Smith and WT Gore made news in Adelaide when the Commissioner of Crown Lands inspected the new Courthouse, Police Station and Post Office building in 1865. Expecting to see the building from his Kincaid hotel, he was astonished to find it half a mile away,<sup>29</sup> not on the location he had selected, but 'on the wrong side of the creek and a long way from businesses'.<sup>30</sup> The location error was 'exacerbated by being on low lying land'.<sup>31</sup>

Although the building was praised for reflecting the highest credit on contractors Smith and Agar and the Clerk of the Works WT Gore, the Adelaide press judged it 'absurd to build a Court-House and more especially a Telegraph Office where nobody lives.'<sup>32</sup> SLSA B10018



In 1873 Smith managed the building contract for Victorian Heritage listed Gringegalga homestead near Balmoral, an Italianate mansion designed by WT Gore for John Robertson's brother Duncan. Although Gore tendered Gringegalga in late October 1868 construction did not commence until January 1873 when the foundation stone was laid.<sup>35</sup> Late November of that same year Smith was awarded John Robertson's contract for the larger mansion Struan House at Robertson's Plains and soon after began the demolition of the Second House outbuildings.<sup>36</sup> Louise Byrne & Mary-Rose Dean<sup>37</sup>

Struan House (1873-5) a 'credit to the local talent' of Henry Smith and his subcontractors that would suit 'the needs and tastes of a gentleman of fortune'.<sup>92</sup> Habitable Places 2014



Mr John Goss was a respected South East stonemason, a Mt. Gambier Institute trustee for 30 years, a Councillor for the south-west ward for 5 years, an Oddfellows member for 66 years, a Templar, a Methodist Church trustee and Sunday school teacher for 17 years. He was active in politics and a supporter of adult suffrage. SLSA B 17002.



### Mr John Goss

Mr John Goss (15 July 1824 – 13 October 1919) of Sidmouth, Devonshire, England began a cabinetmaker's apprenticeship when he was eight years of age stirring the gluepot 60 hrs a week. Two years later he began a stonemason apprenticeship under his father Stephen. Goss, his wife Elizabeth (nee Gooding) and their two children emigrated from England aboard the barque 'Cheapside' on July 1849 and arrived at Port Adelaide over three months later.<sup>38</sup>

Goss had an unsettled start to life in the colonies with several short-term jobs, including one as a stonemason in Melbourne, and two fruitless trips to the goldfields. However his fortunes changed after he went to Naracoorte in 1859 and built Dr. Gunning's house. In 1861, he relocated his family to Mt. Gambier. His wife with whom he had 6 children died in 1868. The following year he married Miss Catherine Gray. He lived in Mt. Gambier for 52 years.<sup>39</sup>

Prior to Goss, Lambert and Hosking accepting Henry Smith's masonry sub-contract for Struan House, 'well known stone mason' Goss<sup>40</sup> gained considerable experience in Mount Gambier with architect WT Gore including being contractor for the Church of England Stables (1864) and Rectory (1865).<sup>41</sup> He was stonemason for the first stage of the Mount Gambier Institute (1865) as a subcontractor for contractors Avey and Hall.<sup>42</sup> Goss was also stonemason for the WT Gore designed Moyhall homestead (1866)<sup>43</sup> as a subcontractor of Smith and Agar.<sup>44</sup> Goss was also a contractor for the Mt. Gambier Goal (1865) along with William Allison and Mr Potter.<sup>45</sup>

After the Struan House masonry work was completed, Goss gained many valuable contracts. He was 'contractor for the whole, including internal fittings'<sup>46</sup> for the Yahl Wesleyan Church designed by George Pannell. He was contractor for Kalangadoo House.<sup>47</sup> In 1882 Goss and fellow Struan House stonemason Joseph Lambert won the contract for the £3000 Cape Banks Lighthouse also including a store and two lighthouse keepers' cottages.<sup>48</sup> Goss and Lambert 's partnership was dissolved on 16 April 1883.<sup>49</sup>

John Goss's many heritage listed buildings including Struan House are 'testimony' to the quality of his stonemasonry, his business skills and his commitment to the early colony.<sup>50</sup> Some have stood strong for over 150 years.

### Mr Joseph Lambert

Few records were found for stonemason Joseph Lambert who was in partnership with Goss and Hosking for the Struan House stone masonry. Twenty three years after Struan House was built, a court-case alleged that when erecting Struan House, Lambert had erroneously been paid £500 when the house was 'one string high' and that, disputing the error he 'did not proceed with the building'.<sup>51</sup> Lambert stated that he was subcontracting with Messrs. Goss and Hosking, so that 'whatever there was right or wrong in connection with it they were equally responsible with myself and I think they will each freely acknowledge that if I robbed Mr Smith of £500 they also had a hand in it; but again it seems strange that I am singled out as the rogue'. Mr Lambert presented a written statement from Henry Smith that read 'I never said to anyone

Mr Campbell's elaborate plastering skills are evident in the variety of beautiful plaster patterns gracing the exterior tower at Struan House. Habitable Places 2014

Campbell's interior plastering includes the decorative plaster patterns in the Entry cornice of Struan House Room 1. Habitable Places 2014



at anytime that I had overpaid you by mistake £500. I never said one word to any one that would lead them to suppose that you did anything dishonourable in connection with the Struan House contract.' The charge was dropped.<sup>52</sup>

#### Mr Hosking

Mr Joseph Hosking (1831- 1907) born near Saltash, Cornwall in 1831 followed his father as a stonemason. In September 1854, Hosking and his wife left England on the 'Standard' for Port Adelaide, and arrived in December 1854. He worked for five years in Adelaide, then in 1859 left for Robe. During the next eight years he carried on his trade at Narracoorte and throughout the upper South East 'building a large number of station residences'.<sup>53</sup> In the late 1860s or early 1870s he moved his family to Mount Gambier where he lived the rest of his life. Mr and Mrs Hosking had 11 children.<sup>54,55</sup> He was a founding member of the first Sons of Temperance Order established in the Colony in 1869, and a trustee of the Methodist church.<sup>56</sup>

Hosking was contractor or subcontractor for many important South East buildings including John Robertson's Second House,<sup>57, 58</sup> Struan House, Kybybolite house, Hynam House<sup>59</sup> and the Royal Oak Hotel in Penola.<sup>60</sup> He built the Commercial Bank at Naracoorte, the new lighthouse and cottages at Port MacDonnell, the Beachport Post Office, the first Mount Gambier Railway Station (demolished), Mount Gambler Hall of Commerce (demolished) and many private residences.<sup>61</sup>

Struan House and the numerous heritage listed buildings Hosking worked on in the South East are a monument to his stone masonry skills and contribution to the establishment of the South East.<sup>62</sup>

#### Mr William Robbie

Painter Mr William Robbie was responsible for the beautiful and complex decorative painting of Struan House<sup>63</sup> He migrated from Scotland with his wife and 3 children in 1866, and settled in the South East of South Australia.<sup>64</sup> He was a highly regarded painter and pioneer community member.

Robbie's painting 'from memory' of the first coursing event at the Moyhall house warming suggests that he was socialising with John Robertson and W T Gore as early as the mid 1860s.<sup>65</sup> In 1868 Robbie resided at Naracoorte's Commercial Hotel while 'tasteful decorating' its 'long room' for the Naracoorte Institute fundraiser. That same year he was on Mr Hughes' Naracoorte election committee alongside John Robertson, Henry Smith, and W T Gore.<sup>66</sup> He moved to Penola in the late 1860s, painting houses, community banners and theatrical scenery.<sup>67</sup>

Before painting Struan House, Robbie painted Duncan Robertson's Italianate villa Gringegalgon in 1873 where his extant signature is scratched into a plaster column.<sup>68</sup> Black considers that Robbie's 'faux marbling decorative scheme' at Gringegalgon is 'testimony to the artistry and skills of Victorian interior decorators, and to the value placed on aesthetic finishes, such as marbling and wood graining, to Victorian interior taste'.<sup>69</sup> Robbie's Gringegalgon is one of 'the most extensive surviving schemes in Victoria' where 'survival of these schemes on any scale is rare'.<sup>70</sup>

Examples of Mr W. Robbie's painting scheme at Struan House: Robertson Coat of Arms east wall over the fireplace in Room 4, top. Gold leaf scroll exposed by Artlab, south wall Room 4, centre. Photos Habitable Places 2014

Telegram to Mr Robbie from J.S.Robertson, Struan House book keeper, in March 1889, summoning him to return to Struan to complete a painting project.<sup>84</sup> SLSA BRG61



Telegram  
To Mr Robbie  
Painter  
Mt. Gambier  
  
Your work here at a standard  
Home up at once  
8.3.89.  
J.S. Robertson  
Struan House  
Naracoorte

#### House, sign and coach painter

In 1876 Robbie advertised his new business in Mt Gambier provided a range of painting and wallpaper supplies, cement and a new highly skilled Melbourne employee in the 'Carriage Painting Department'. Also for sale were 'Enamelled Slate Mantlepieces' similar to those installed at Struan House. Robbie offered estimates and tenders for contracts in the South East and western districts of Victoria.<sup>72</sup> In 1878 Robbie advertised his services as a 'house, sign and coach painter', and 'paperhanger, glazier, gilder, and grainer'.<sup>73</sup>

#### Graceful Naracoorte Institute

Robbie was committed to the pioneer communities of Naracoorte, Penola and Mount Gambier. He often donated the painting of rooms, backdrops and processional banners for community and fundraising events.<sup>85</sup> He briefly returned to Naracoorte in 1878 to build and decorate the Naracoorte Town Hall stage.<sup>86</sup> In 1892, 'Mount Gambier townsman' Mr William Robbie again returned to Naracoorte and 'excelled himself' in painting the 'magnificent' new drop scene that 'graced the stage' of the Naracoorte Institute Hall' and would have been 'a credit to any scenic artist'.<sup>87</sup>

Soon after completing the painting of Struan House Robbie relocated his family to Mount Gambier where they resided in 'a substantial store and residence with a one chain frontage to Commercial Street'.<sup>71</sup>

Robbie's cash flow struggled. In May 1877 the Mount Gambier local court accepted that Robbie could pay an outstanding £3 debt after being paid for 'the border of a banner' he was painting.<sup>74</sup> His position was boosted in December 1878 when his £144 tender was accepted by the Architect in Chief's Department to 'clean and paint internally' the Kingston Post Office.<sup>75</sup>

His finances deteriorated again in December 1879 when the estate of William Robbie of Mount Gambier was assigned.<sup>76</sup> Mount Gambier trustees Grundy and Vaudry tendered Robbie's whole 'stock in trade' including paper hanging, paints, oils, colours, glass, and pictures.<sup>77</sup>

In 1886 Robbie survived an accident on Commercial Street, Mount Gambier where a runaway buggy knocked him off his horse, and rendered him unconscious with 2 broken ribs and internal injuries.<sup>78</sup> In 1887 Robbie showed local residents his oil painting of the Blue Lake for the Adelaide Exhibition.<sup>79</sup> The 'very well executed landscape' 'in colour and general contour' gave a 'truthful idea of the landscape'.<sup>80</sup> An image of a signed 1887 oil painting by Robbie of a Mount Gambier butcher shop is in the State Library of South Australia collection.<sup>81</sup> In 1889 Mr Robbie unsuccessfully stood for Mayor of Mount Gambier.<sup>82</sup> He was last recorded as a Mount Gambier resident in 1892 at George Street.<sup>83</sup>

Mr Robbie assisted many pioneer South East institutions and community projects in 'defraying' expenses by painting rooms and 'elaborate' scenic backdrops.<sup>88</sup> Mr Robbie was highly respected for his decorative painting schemes at Struan House and Gringegalgon.

#### Mr Thomas Campbell

Thomas Campbell was the subcontractor whose plasterwork embellishes the interior and exterior of Struan House. His plastering at Struan House was described as 'first-class' with 'all the plaster ornaments' including 'cornices and centre-pieces being made on the ground'.<sup>89</sup> After decorating Struan House Campbell's commissions included the 1878 contract for the Naracoorte Public School.<sup>90</sup>

Campbell was on many committees with Henry Smith and W T Gore.<sup>91</sup> He was on an early Naracoorte Council with Henry Smith and Thomas Agar in 1872.<sup>92</sup>

#### Unknown Struan House laborers

Most who laboured for the contractor and subcontractors of Struan House are now unknown. One exception was an Irish stonemason Mr Charles Carlin (18/11/1854 - 11/6/1942) whose obituary recalled him working on many prominent buildings in the South East. It specifically referred to Struan House as one of the principal buildings Carlin worked on.<sup>93</sup>

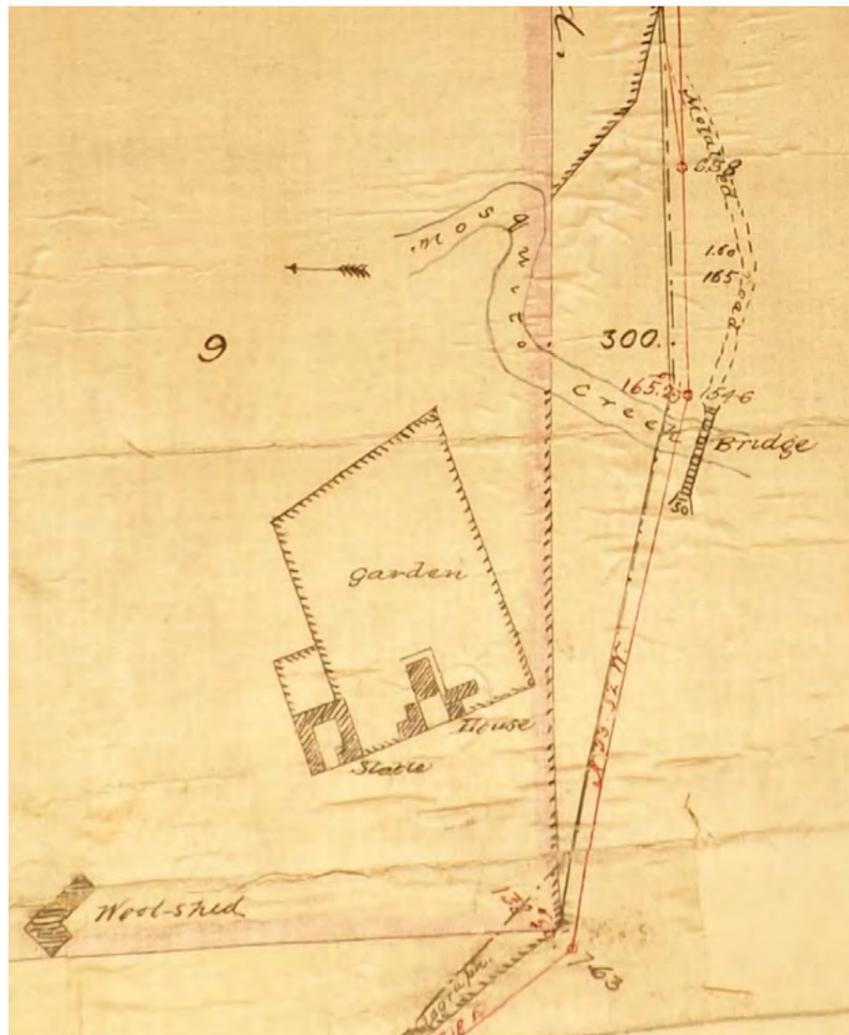
Jim Kealy with bullock team circa 1886 at the Naracoorte hotel. Prior to the railways in the South East, stock could only be transported by droving. Bullock teams were used for heavy haulage in preference to horses to transport wool to shipping ports. During the wool season, bullock drays loaded with wool clips often 'travelled in groups of eight or ten,' so that, especially in the Naracoorte district, they could 'double-bank, at the boggy points'.<sup>2</sup> NTSA Naracoorte 010-00010



Mail coach at the Naracoorte Hotel, date unknown. Les Hill Collection MtGPL MT12F42



The survey drawing shows the new bridge on leasehold land close to Robertson's Second House. The boundary of the purchased land, lot 9 on which the homestead stands, is tinted. A memo on the drawing reads: 'Pegs are put in on the ground along the centre of the new line, corresponding with the Red Line on Plan - no portion of the fence must be within 1/2 chain of the line of pegs -' Hd Robertson Diagram Book p9B detail



#### Perils at Robertson's Bridge

In 1861 the mailman on horseback sustained severe injuries when thrown violently from his horse that tripped and fell while crossing John Robertson's private bridge. The mailman recovered after a few days rest at John Robertson's home station. 'Mr Robertson kindly forwarded the mails on the occasion'.<sup>16</sup>

In 1862 Father Tenison-Woods wrote about crossing Robertson's flooding bridge: 'it is not pleasant to be carried down a muddy creek in your clothes, while your horse, after nearly killing you in his struggles, gets away with the saddle and bridle to a part of the stream where very likely he cannot be reached'.<sup>17</sup>

In 1863, Finlay Munro and three fellow John Robertson work mates went for an 'after supper swim' in Mosquito Creek, just beside the bridge. Munro drowned almost immediately. He had never learnt to swim, but 'thought he could if he tried'. The coroner found death by 'accidental drowning'. Munro's fiancée had tried to dissuade him from swimming after a premonitory dream when his head was cut in two. Munro had laughed and dismissed her warning saying 'there was no fear'.<sup>18</sup>

#### Unseemly situation makes news

Railways provided business opportunities and cheaper transport of stock and goods. They challenged established travel patterns and social distinctions. The Robertsons took personal advantage with a train trip in 1888 to the Mt. Gambier Races. However when the Robertson brothers and some ladies got on at Struan siding, the full train had passengers standing on the outer platforms so 'the men of the party had to share the same fate'.<sup>6</sup>

#### Nine mile dash

Following WW1, Naracoorte locals missed the spectacle of 'the Struan buggy with Tom Artland in the drivers seat and Alec Robertson behind, pull up in the main street with steaming horses almost always attempting 'to break the nine mile record from Struan House to the town'.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.8 Transport for Struan Sheep Station

Struan House is associated with the development of transportation in the south east. In the early 1860s the Robertson's pastoral business was hampered by the lack of infrastructure for transporting stock and produce. Unmade tracks and John Robertson's inadequate private bridges across Mosquito Creek highlighted the lack of government expenditure for South East infrastructure. Many South East residents were disgruntled by the minimal communications with the government in Adelaide and the lack of government spending in rural areas.<sup>3</sup> The Princeland movement originating from Portland encouraged them to accede to a new colony to be named 'Princeland' and join with western Victorian residents to improve services and infrastructure.<sup>4</sup>

However in 1862, 250 influential South East residents petitioned South Australia's Governor Daly to reject the proposal.<sup>5</sup> The eventual arrival of the railways in the 1880s provided improved access to Adelaide and Victorian markets and movement of stock and supplies. Following WW1 Alexander Robertson swapped the Struan horse drawn buggy for his luxury black automobile. Like Struan House itself, the Robertson family carriage, proclaimed John Robertson's heritage and new found wealth. 'The body of the carriage was almost circular, with seats at the sides so that the occupants faced inwards. One entered from the rear, and on the panel of the door was the [Robertson] family coat of arms.' 'The coachman and footman sat on a very high seat in front'.<sup>44</sup>

Problems with the road and railway infrastructure for the Naracoorte (and Mt. Gambier) to Adelaide route continued for many decades into the 20th Century<sup>43</sup> and saw the 'continued drifting of trade to Victoria'.<sup>45</sup> Closer settlement was considered the answer as a larger population, more drainage works and increased primary production would justify increased government spending on roads and railways. While the locals were lamenting limited transport options in the late 1930s in stark contrast the occasional small plane landed at Struan House.<sup>46</sup>

#### Mosquito Creek bridges

There was no infrastructure when the Robertson brothers established their first homestead overlooking Mosquito Creek. The creek provided the Robertson brothers with permanent water but it presented ongoing logistical challenges. The creek bisected the sheep run and would have restricted access for much of the year. The Robertsons built the first bridges to transport stock, supplies and personnel in the 1840s. They were upstream of the first homestead and sheep wash. One crossed the main channel. A second bridge crossing an overflow channel is also shown on a survey plan from around 1848.<sup>10</sup> Newspaper reports from the period refer only to 'Robertson's Bridge' but this plan documentary evidence that there were two separate spans. As the crossing was on the route from Narracoorte to Penola, these private bridges were used by all travellers.

They would appear to have been low level timber bridges constructed without sound approaches, safe decking or footings. The frequent flooding in the early 1860s caused recurring 'down time' for the bridge when it was almost impossible to cross Mosquito Creek to maintain communications between Mt. Gambier and Adelaide.<sup>11 12</sup> Coinciding

Mr HB Ballard's photograph of Mosquito Creek Government Bridge circa 1879 shows an understrutted timber girder bridge with stone abutments and central timber piers. SLSA B21766\_176



The trees have grown since this 1936 description of the Struan Bridge landscape viewed when the creek was flowing gently: 'this spot is always beautiful... to the right is the private cemetery of the Robertson family, and to those interested in conifer, some wonderful specimens are to be found there. Ahead, on the same side, stands Struan homesteads, present and past, the first large and majestic the other homely and comfortable, with slate roof that speaks of former days. Stately gums and many beautiful trees grow in profusion without spoiling the view of the buildings. Mosquito Creek flows clear and quietly by through green reedy banks, a haven of peace and beauty.'<sup>42</sup> NTSA Naracoorte 010-00767



#### A hazardous job

Work at Struan with horse and cart or bullock and dray was a high risk occupation regardless of the skills and mental state of the driver. John Robertson's 'industrious and highly esteemed' outstation employee George Reinhardt was killed when the cart that he was driving 'tripped and threw him under a wheel'.<sup>47</sup>

In 1882 an inebriated Donald McDonald fell under the dray and sustained fatal injuries when driving 2 tons of fencing from Naracoorte to Struan House. Although he was accompanied by another bullock dray on route to Warrattenbullie station unfortunately this second driver was also drunk and was subsequently charged with obstructing police efforts to get McDonald to hospital.<sup>48</sup>

#### Opening Robertson's Bridge

Mr and Mrs Robertson drove to the middle of the new bridge in its bush setting in a carriage led by a magnificent pair of greys. Mrs Robertson officially opened the bridge by breaking a bottle of champagne. District Engineer W R Coultard was congratulated on his excellent design of the bridge then W T Gore toasted the health of John Robertson, 'one of the oldest and most respected settlers in the district'.

Gore praised the naming of Robertson's Bridge as a most deserving compliment to that gentleman 'whose name would continue down the generations as evidence of his application and steadiness of purpose in the great work of colonisation'. He recounted John Robertson's early impression that he 'never expected to see a bridge across the Mosquito Creek.'

Robertson's Bridge was 'for the service of the travelling public' and equally important for John Robertson and other pastoralists to transport stock and services.<sup>20</sup> In true Robertson tradition the ceremony was followed by selected guests retiring to the Second House for 'an elegant banquet'.<sup>2</sup>

#### Heroic John Robertson

In 1872 a temporary bridge was used while a new bridge was constructed. Foodwaters had washed away 'the ground between the road and the temporary structure' and 'a chasm of three or four feet wide had been made between the bridge and the road, rendering it impossible to cross without danger'.<sup>22</sup>

The mailman guided the coach horses one at a time across the temporary structure. The passengers also walked across. Her Majesty's mail coach was left behind.

The heroic John Robertson formed up a bullock dray and using a series of chains managed to get the mail coach across the hazardous, flooding Mosquito Creek. It was 'no easy matter doing this, as the rush of water was considerable' and while the rescue was happening 'a great part of the bridge was carried away'.<sup>23</sup>

The 1865 stone abutments still support the current steel girder Struan Bridge.

The wrought iron cleats from the original timber struts remain. Photos Habitable Places 2014



In 1938 Mr R. T. Vincent, one of Alexander Robertson's Executors, highlighted improved transportation when he flew from to Struan. He left Essendon at 2 p.m. and was in Naracoorte for business at 4.30 p.m. following afternoon tea at Struan House.<sup>7</sup>

This would have been one of only two such Klemm Eagle planes, either VH-UTI (as photographed) or VH - USI the only models flying in southern Australia at that time. SA Aviation Museum<sup>49</sup>

Road travel over long distances remained slow, so private aviation promised significant benefits.

The Riddoch Highway concrete girder bridge over Mosquito Creek was constructed in 1980. It forms part of a national highway network that allows fast, safe and convenient travel. Road travel has superceded private aviation in the closely settled South East. Habitable Places 2014.



#### The mighty current

Flood damage, temporary structures and repairs continued to be recorded through the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>24</sup> In May 1890 Councillor John Robertson Jr. called the Naracoorte Council's attention to the decaying stone abutments of Struan Bridge and a number of felled trees on the banks of Mosquito Creek that had the potential to float down and damage the bridge.<sup>25</sup> Shortly afterwards Struan Bridge was reconstructed with Crown Lands funding.<sup>26</sup>

#### 1906 record floods

In 1906 following weeks of record heavy rain, floodwaters washed away the northern approach.<sup>27 28</sup> The flood level was the highest Alexander Robertson had ever seen: the 'mighty current' at Struan Bridge was '6 chains wide' and went 'within a foot of the top of the bridge'.<sup>29</sup> On 23rd July the floodwaters submerged several Struan outbuildings and the lower garden.<sup>30</sup> A section of the picket fence facing the creek was washed away.<sup>31 32 33</sup> The railway line was under water for miles and one of the Struan railway bridge concrete pillars gave way.<sup>34</sup>

The floodwater gauged at Struan Bridge during the 1906 flood was 6,500 cubic feet per second (185 cubic metres per second). By 1920 the Commissioner of Public Works had costed several flood mitigation schemes for Mosquito Creek and Bool Lagoon to prevent a repeat of the 1906 floods at Struan Bridge.<sup>35</sup> It appears none of these options were adopted.

#### 1935 - biggest flood since 1906

In 1935 Struan House again narrowly avoided damage in 'the biggest flood since the 1906 record when Mosquito Creek overflowed at the rear of Struan House' and turned the Bool Lagoon flats into a huge lake. Floodwaters from Victoria made the roads on the east of Struan estate impassible.<sup>36</sup>

with the Princeland movement, Father Tension-Woods lobbied the government for a replacement bridge, arguing it was outrageous that with all the government revenue from this district, 'Mr Robertson was obliged to put up this bridge at his own expense on a main road.'<sup>13 14</sup> In 1863 it was reported that the bridge was down for a fortnight isolating the Robertsons from Kincaig and Naracoorte.<sup>15</sup>

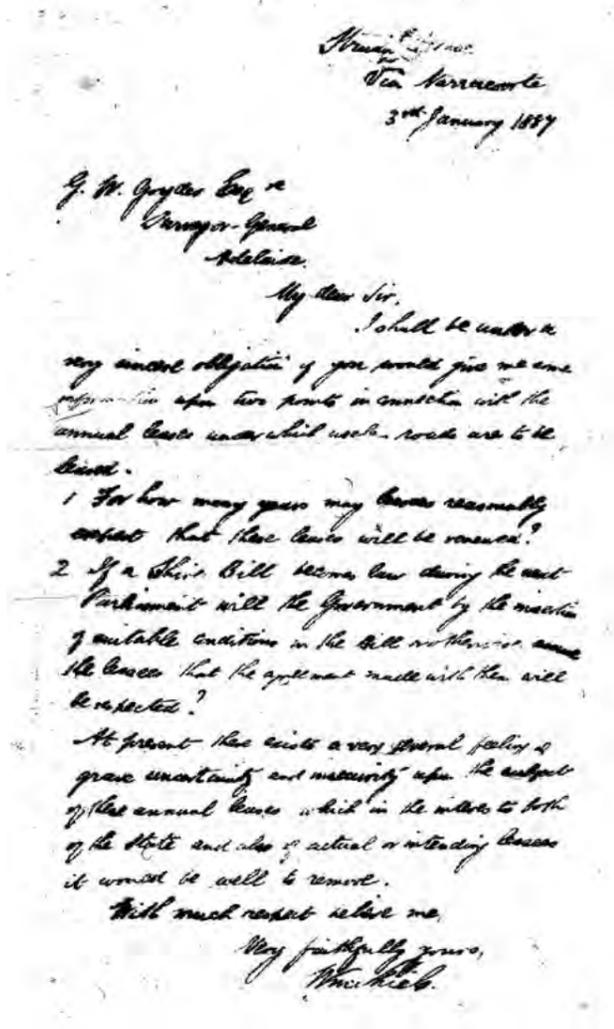
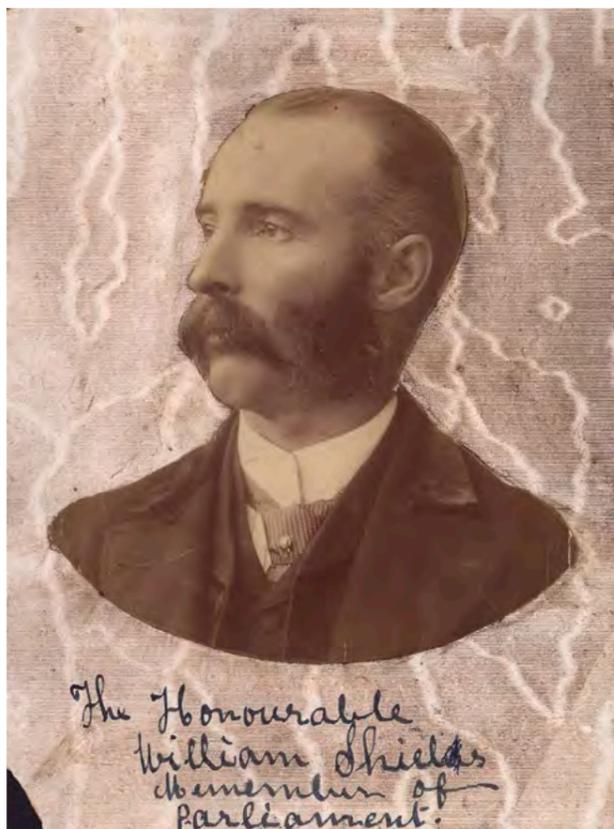
Eventually the lobbying was rewarded and the Colonial Government moved to construct a new bridge over Mosquito Creek. Tenders for a stonemason were called in late February 1865. Mrs Robertson officially opened the bridge 10 months later.<sup>19</sup> The Struan House road was realigned to approximately its current route and an earthen embankment was constructed at the northern approach. The new bridge was named Robertson's Bridge but later was known as Struan Bridge. The embankment and stone abutments of this bridge remain in use today. Although it was higher and more soundly constructed, the timber supports in the centre of the stream meant that then new bridge was still vulnerable to flood damage.

In 1938 the Highways Department planned to remove the sharp bend in the Naracoorte to Penola road near Struan House to improve safety for modern traffic. The initial proposal would have demolished the Struan Pioneer Cemetery<sup>37</sup> but kept the old Struan bridge.<sup>38</sup> By 1939 the proposal was for 'a deviation in the road near Struan House' and a new bridge on the eastern side of the present structure with the old bridge kept for a stock route.<sup>39</sup> By March 1939 the Highways Department had decided to replace the timber beams with steel girders, re-using the original stone abutments and wing walls on the same site.<sup>40</sup> A temporary bridge was provided while the new, current Struan Bridge was under construction in the spring of 1939.<sup>41</sup> A new concrete pier, concrete deck and balustrade were constructed, giving the bridge its current form. The main road, now Riddoch Highway, was re-routed to the west of Struan in 1980 and a precast concrete girder bridge was constructed. The old bridge is now in the control of the Naracoorte Lucindale Council.

The story of the Struan Bridges reflects the risks and challenges faced by the earliest pastoralists and the role of transport infrastructure in the development of the region. With technological change, road travel to Adelaide has contracted from four days to four hours. Heavy road haulage has over time supplanted both the bullock team and railway but the intimate association of Struan House with Mosquito Creek, the highway and the bridges remains important now as it did then.

In 1887 William Shiels, Member for Normanby, wrote to Surveyor General Goyder from Struan House in his role as Executor of John Robertson's estate. He appears to be representing a wider sentiment, rather than the interests of the estate regarding road leases. 'At the present there exists a very general feeling of grave uncertainty and insecurity upon the subject of the annual lease which in the interests both of the State and of actual or intending leasees it would be well to remove'. SLSA BRG61.

Illustration showing the Premier, Mr. Shiels, at Argyle-hall, Casterton, beginning a successful election campaign in 1892. The 'omnivorous reader' Shiels was renowned for his parliamentary speeches<sup>19</sup> 'filled with classical allusions'<sup>20</sup> and his 'uncharacteristically' eloquent budget speeches.<sup>21</sup> Note the large crowd of Shiels' supporters outside the hall. SLV IAN01/04/92/4<sup>22</sup>



**SHIELS-ROBERTSON**  
On the 6th May, at Struan House (near Narracoorte), by the Rev K. A. Caldwell, William Shiels, of Melbourne, to Jeannie, eldest daughter of the late John Robertson.<sup>13</sup>

Shiels and the community

William Shiels had 'a very close association with Struan House and the Robertson family' throughout his adult life.<sup>23</sup> Although he lived in Melbourne the Naracoorte community claimed Shiels as 'one of themselves'. They followed his political career 'with more than ordinary interest and they rejoiced with him, though perhaps unknown to him, in his successes and triumphs in public life.'<sup>24</sup> Although his divorce reform amendments were not immediately adopted by the SA parliament, Shiels' position encouraged debate in South Australia that 'showed an awareness of the connection between social problems with marital problems.'<sup>25 26</sup>

Struan House hospice

Witnessing William Shiels deteriorating health and night time attacks of agonising angina, was devastating for all the family and staff at Struan House in 1904. 'During the last few months of his life his condition was extremely distressing'. He was unable to move, and had to be wheeled from room to room. 'Frequently he suffered, especially at night, from paroxysms of great agony, which lasted several hours, each attack leaving him weaker and weaker.'<sup>52</sup>

**2.9 William Shiels and Struan House**

The Honorable Mr William Shiels (1848-1904), 16th Premier of Victoria,<sup>1</sup> was closely associated with John Robertson as tutor, friend, son-in-law and executor of his estate. He lived his final 9 months at Struan House where he died and was buried in the private Robertson cemetery.<sup>2</sup> Member of the Legislative Assembly Shiels was respected for many social and economic achievements throughout his political career. He succeeded against the odds to improve the legal rights of Colonial women. The Victorian 'Shiels *Divorce Act*' 1889 was his most significant legislative reform<sup>3</sup> It signalled a changed relationship between Colonial Australia and Britain.<sup>4</sup>

Seven year old William Shiels migrated from Ireland with his parents, arriving in Melbourne in late 1854. His father died just five weeks later. His mother married William Dickens in 1857. Shiels was educated at Scotch College and Melbourne University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Laws.<sup>5 6</sup>

Following graduation and in poor health, Shiels tutored John and Susan Robertson's children in the Second House.<sup>7</sup> The period between 1869 to 1873 'spent among the sheep stations on the border' playing cricket and horse riding was 'the happiest of his life'.<sup>8</sup> Shiels developed a close friendship with John Robertson.<sup>9</sup> In 1873 he was admitted to the Melbourne Bar and specialised in estate management in 'the border districts'. In 1880 Shiels was appointed one of the executors for the estate of the late John Robertson.<sup>10</sup> His financial acumen and legal expertise facilitated the success of the pastoral business including the lucrative 1884 timber contract with the Millar brothers for the railway sleepers.<sup>11</sup> From 1880 Shiels served as the Member for Normanby in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria. In 1885 William Shiels married Jane ('Jeannie') Robertson at Struan House.<sup>12</sup>

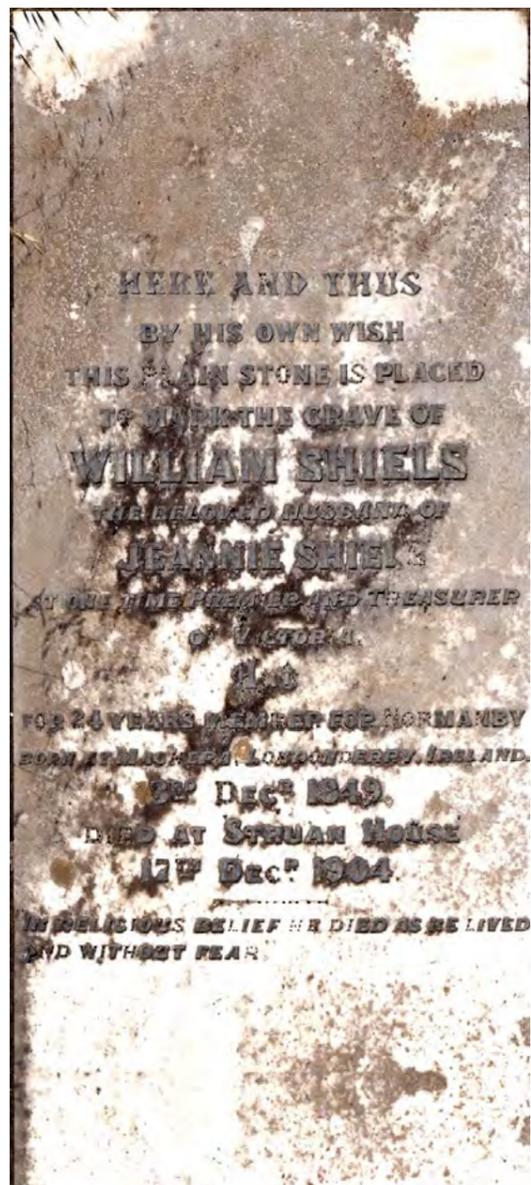
William Shiels was the 'assiduous administrator' of several key Victorian cabinet positions.<sup>14</sup> In 1890 he was Attorney-General and Minister of Railways. Shiels was Premier and Treasurer from February to April in 1892. He 'negotiated very strongly' for the colonial South Australian government to remain in the Federal Council<sup>15</sup> which was considered to be 'an undeniable, though informal, influence upon the federal cause'.<sup>16</sup> Shiels was again Treasurer from 1899. In this role in 1902 he transformed the almost insolvent Victorian economy and reshaped the dysfunctional Victorian civil service into a highly efficient model.<sup>17</sup> As Minister for Railways in 1903 he dramatically restructured the railways to become profitable for the first time in 25 years.<sup>18</sup>

In the Australian colonies, in contrast to Britain, there was a significantly greater degree of male mobility and desertion associated with 'gold rushes and mineral booms'.<sup>32</sup> Shiels made the social issues of women's rights in cases of desertion, adultery and divorce worthy of parliamentary and media debate in Colonial Australia.<sup>33</sup>

Shiels' amendments of the 'Victorian Divorce Act 1889'<sup>34</sup> passed both Victorian houses only after two years of strong opposition in the Parliament,<sup>35</sup> and from the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.<sup>36</sup> Shiels' amendments obtained the necessary Royal Assent in 1890 after he argued in person to the Imperial Government in London against

William Shiels is best known for gaining significant legal rights for women.<sup>27</sup> In 1883, the successful Shiels' 'Marriage and Matrimonial Causes Act Amendment', allowed for the first time divorced women to have custody of their children. In 1884, his 'liberal amendments to the Married Women's Property Act' were also passed.<sup>28, 29</sup> Shiels' 'greatest legislative achievement' was to obtain Royal Assent to an amendment to the 'Victorian Divorce Act 1889'.<sup>30</sup> Five major reforms gave women rights in the event of wilful desertion for 3 years, habitual drunkenness for 3 years, imprisonment for 3 years leaving women without material support etc., domestic violence and where the husband was 'guilty of adultery in conjugal residence or with aggravation, or of repeated adultery'. The Victorian reforms achieved by Shiels were the first in the Colonies to gain royal assent for changes to then prevailing British divorce laws.<sup>31</sup> SLV IAN01/03/92/17

From the words on Shiels' memorial it appears that burial at Struan House was his preferred option. However investigation of Shiels' transcribed last wishes revealed his first preference was for an autopsy to assist medical science followed by cremation.<sup>55</sup> If that was not possible he specified an inexpensive burial at Struan House.<sup>56</sup> In his last wishes Shiels hinted at his motivation for improving women's rights when he attributed his life's achievements to 'the life long sacrifice and devotion' of his mother'.<sup>57</sup> Habitable Places 2015



#### Last wishes

Victorian ex-Premier Shiels reportedly wrote his 'last wishes' on the back of a telegram a few days before he died.<sup>60</sup> The original handwritten version is not publicly available, but in 1970 Mr Geoffrey Serle, typed the following transcript from the original:<sup>58</sup> 'Last wishes - 7/9/96 3 a.m.

Believe have very frail hold on life. From sensations think change for the worse has set in during last 10 days. Am absolutely indifferent as to disposal of my body except so far as good may result to others. Therefore if either Dr Williams or Dr Springthorpe desires it, then I wish my wife to allow a post mortem examination of my remains for the advancement of medical knowledge. Then if cremation is practicable and inexpensive I wish it adopted. If it is not, let me be interred cheaply, plainly & without any display -- if my wife would like it and the cost be not great, the place of burial may be at Struan House S.A. I do not wish to fetter my family in respect to mourning although I think the practice is oppressive to the poor, and the colour utterly unsuitable for our climate -- Let a plain and cheap stone be placed at the head of my grave with some words such as these:-

Here, and in these words, by his own wish, this plain stone is set up to mark the grave of William Shiels who was born on the 3rd December 1848, in Ireland and on --- at --- died as he lived, & without fear.'

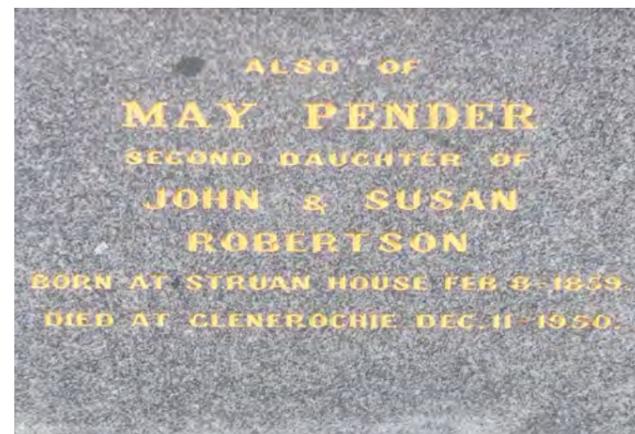
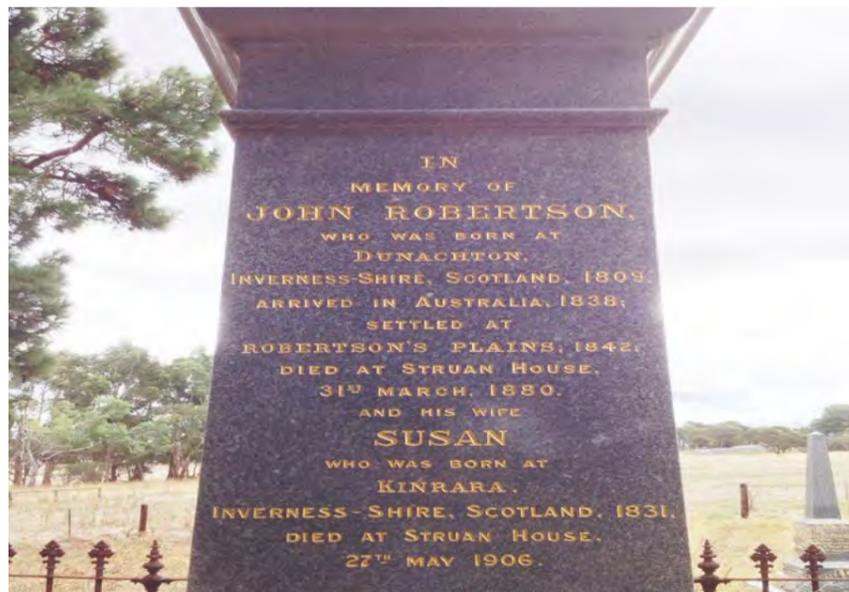
I contemplate the likelihood of death with perfect unconcern from the personal point of view, regretting only the grief & loss it will cause to those dear to me. But as far as my children are concerned, this regret is soothed by the conviction that their welfare is in the hands of one who will be to them as sensible and devoted mother as she has always been to me a loyal & loving wife -- All that I have been able to do in life is due to my mother's life-long sacrifices & devotion and for which I have not been able to make adequate return.'

This transcript of 'Last Wishes --- 7/9/96 3a.m.' dated 8 years earlier than his death requires verification from the original document that it was written in 1904.<sup>59</sup> SLV Shiels, William and Victoria Parliament. Letters 1970.

the suitability of British divorce laws that upheld 'uniformity of marital status and legitimacy of descent' throughout the empire.<sup>37 38 39</sup> In addition to achieving colonial divorce reforms at a faster pace than those in Britain<sup>40</sup> Shiels' case for royal assent<sup>41</sup> was considered a test case for the autonomy of colonial legislation generally.<sup>42 43 44</sup> It accelerated a sense of national identity and 'colonial independence' from the motherland.<sup>45</sup> Shiels legislative reforms marked a social change in the relationships between men and women in Australia.<sup>46</sup>

After suffering from frail health throughout his adult life Shiels was diagnosed with an aortic aneurysm in 1894. Despite this he continued his political career for a further 10 years during which his delivery of parliamentary speeches while seated, obviously physically struggling and 'really dangerously ill' made his contribution all the more 'impressive'.<sup>47</sup> Shiels retired from a 24 year political career due to failing health in March 1904 to convalesce at Struan House accompanied by his wife. He hoped to 'regain in the country the strength sufficient to enable' him 'to bear the strains of an election contest'.<sup>48</sup> However, he suffered a long and painful deteriorating illness prior to his death.<sup>49</sup> Shiels' prognosis became clear to all. Shiels reportedly wrote his last wishes 'in pencil on the back of a telegram'<sup>50</sup> when he realised he had a 'very frail hold on life'.<sup>51</sup>

William Shiels died at Struan House on the 17th December 1904 and was buried at the Struan private Robertson cemetery two days later. 200 people filled Struan House for his funeral.<sup>54</sup> His death and funeral at Struan House and his life achievements were reported in newspapers in the South East and across Australia.<sup>53</sup>



## 2.10 Cemeteries

### Robertson Private Cemetery

In common with many of the large pastoral holdings in the South East, a private cemetery was established at Struan. It was located across the creek from Struan House, in the northern eastern corner of the original freeholded Section 9. The cemetery was enclosed with a post and rail perimeter fence and wrought iron gate. It was planted with Moreton Bay Figs, Bunya, Radiata and Canary Island Pines.

Pastoralist John Robertson was the first person to be buried in 1880. The memorial to him and his immediate family dominates the cemetery. The last recorded burial was for Susan Clarke, great granddaughter of John and Susan Robertson in 1968. The Hundred of Robertson Diagram Book page 51 shows that a separate parcel was surveyed for the cemetery prior to the sale of the estate of Alexander Robertson<sup>1</sup>. Robertson descendants remain as Trustees.

By 2004 the Radiata and Canary Island Pines, by then possibly 125 years old, were senescent. They were removed leaving majestic Morton Bay Figs and the Bunya Pine as the dominant landscape feature. The wrought iron gate, which faced east towards the Struan House Road, was relocated to the southern boundary, facing across Mosquito Creek towards Struan House.

The following Robertson family members are buried in the private Robertson cemetery:<sup>7</sup>

- ROBERTSON, John, born Inverness Shire, Scotland 1808, died at Struan House, 31st March 1880.
- SMITH, Margaret, born Scotland, sister of John Robertson, died 8th April 1887, aged 84 years.
- ROBERTSON, Sarah, wife of James, born 6 November 1873, died 22nd April 1903.
- ROBERTSON, William, third son of John and Susan, born 4th April 1862, died 20th November 1904 (buried with Elizabeth).
- SHIELS, William, born Ireland 1848, died at Struan House, 17th December 1904.
- ROBERTSON, Susan, wife of John Robertson, born Kinrara, Inverness Shire, Scotland, 1831, died at Struan House, 27th May 1906.
- ELLIS, Anne, sister of Susan Robertson, died at Struan House, 3rd February 1914.
- ROBERTSON, John, eldest son of John and Susan, born 31st December 1855, died at Elderslie, 19th April 1917 (buried with Alexander).
- ROBERTSON, John Struan, nephew of John Robertson, born at Dunaghton, Scotland, 29th November 1842, died at Struan House 18th April 1925.
- ROBERTSON, Frances Gertrude, wife of Alexander, born 1893, died at Struan House 18th April 1927.
- ROBERTSON, Elizabeth, youngest daughter of John and Susan, born March 27 1870, died 16th August 1930.

John Robertson's memorial accords the name 'Robertson's Plains' for his 1842 settlement at Mosquito Creek.

Robertson Private Cemetery from the east. Photos Habitable Places 2004



#### Funeral Notices

Mr John Robertson 1880

'The friends of the late Mr John Robertson are respectfully invited to follow his remains to their last resting place near Struan House. The funeral will leave Struan House This Day (Saturday), 3rd April, at 2 o'clock p.m.'<sup>2</sup>

Mr John Robertson Jr. 1917

'The friends of the late Mr John Robertson, of Elderslie, are respectfully informed that his remains will be interred at Struan House cemetery on Saturday (to-morrow) afternoon, at 3.30 o'clock.'<sup>6</sup>

#### Funeral Reports

Mrs Susan Robertson 1906

The connections made during Mrs Susan Robertson's life at Struan House were reflected in the detailed list of the mourners who attended her funeral and donated floral tributes printed in the Naracoorte Herald in 1906. There was also a group of local women who 'held her in the highest esteem' waiting at the cemetery.<sup>3</sup>

Mrs J K Ellis 1914

Mrs J.K. Ellis, sister of the late Mrs John Robertson, was visiting from Melbourne with her niece Leslie Anderson (nee Robertson) and died at Struan House 'somewhat unexpectedly' from a throat infection in 1914.<sup>4</sup>

After the funeral obsequies in Struan House by Reverend R.W. McLean of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Naracoorte Mrs Ellis was buried in the Robertson private cemetery next to her sister and brother-in-law. The customary afternoon tea followed at Struan House.<sup>5</sup>

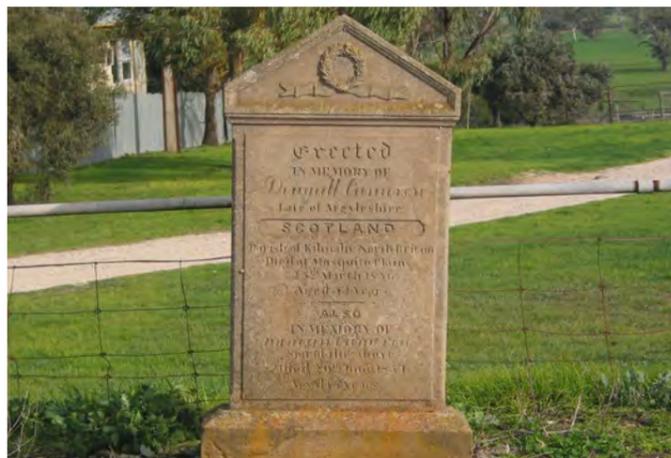
- ROBERTSON, Alexander, second son of John and Susan, born 16th September 1860, died at Struan House, 10th June 1938 (buried with John).
- PENDER, Leslie, son of Basil and May (nee Robertson), born 7th June 1893, died 18th August 1950.
- PENDER, May, second daughter of John and Susan Robertson, 8th February 1859, died at Glenerochie, 11th December 1950.
- ROBERTSON, James, youngest son of John and Susan, born 25th May 1868, died Barwon Heads, 7th November 1953.
- PENDER, Roy, son of Basil and May (nee Robertson), born 9th April 1892, died 12th September 1957.
- ROBERTSON, John Clive, only son of James and Sarah, born 6th April 1897, died 12th February 1958.
- CLARKE, Graeme Antony Rutter, born 23rd August 1929, died 7th January 1968.
- CLARKE, Susan May, daughter of Basil and May Pender, born 3rd March 1899, died 16th September 1968.

The roadside cemetery after restoration by the Naracoorte Council and the Struan Research Centre Social Club. Habitable Places 2008

This stone memorial is for Dougall Cameron, who came from Argyllshire, Scotland, and died at Struan in 1856, aged 52 and also for Duncan Cameron, aged 15 years, who died in 1854.<sup>8</sup> Habitable Places 2004

This memorial is for Mary and 'Norm' McIntyre. They came from the Scottish Isle of Mull, and arrived in Portland on 30th November 1853. Norman McIntyre was a shepherd for the Robertson brothers. The memorial is largely reconstructed. Habitable Places 2014

This memorial is unreadable except for 'Jane'. Hopefully future family histories will uncover whose 'wife or daughter' Jane was and when she died at Mosquito Plains. Habitable Places 2014



### Roadside Cemetery

A burial ground close to pastoral homesteads was common in the early period of settlement. This cemetery is located within the Road Reserve south east of Struan House. A burial place close to pastoral homesteads was common in the early period of settlement. The cemetery is believed to hold the graves of those worked for the Robertsons and their descendents. The known burials are:

- Dugald Cameron, born Argyllshire Scotland, died 25 th May 1856 aged 52.<sup>9</sup>
- Donald Cameron, son of Dugald Cameron, died 20th June 1854.<sup>10</sup>
- Mary McDonald died date unknown.<sup>11</sup>
- McDonald Ulva died 9th April 1863.<sup>12</sup>
- Jane: family name unreadable. She may be the person referred to in 1934 as 'the grave of an unknown child'.<sup>13</sup>
- E.B.N.'Norman' McIntyre died 2nd May 1880, buried with wife Mary (nee Haggett).<sup>14</sup>
- Mary McIntyre, wife of E.B.N.'Norman' McIntyre, no date.<sup>15</sup>

The remaining 5 persons buried at the pioneer cemetery are unknown:<sup>16</sup>

- Eleanor or Elinor Thurlow, wife of William Thurlow, who died 5th May 1894 may be buried at the Struan pioneer cemetery.<sup>17</sup>
- James Dalgleish, Kennel Manager at Struan House who died 31st May 1899 at Struan may be buried in the Struan pioneer cemetery.<sup>18</sup>

In 1936 the Highways Department proposed to 'relocate' the Struan pioneer cemetery to correct a sharp bend in the road.<sup>19</sup> At an on-site meeting in 1938 some argued in favour of relocating the cemetery.<sup>20</sup> The project overseer, JH McMutrie, argued it was only a burial ground not a dedicated cemetery. Councillor Hood said it was currently neglected and could be shifted. Councillor Stuart had 'heard that the family would not object'. In contrast, Councillor Major suggested that the road 'could be deviated while still leaving the cemetery untouched'.<sup>21</sup>

An alternative alignment was found and the cemetery was retained. By late 1939 the Highways Department had made 'a great improvement by reforming the road and cutting out dangerous corners'. The old cemetery 'which was in a bad state of repair has been renovated. The dead pine trees and old fence have been removed and all the 12 graves have been put in order. A tidy new fence was erected'.<sup>22</sup>

A separate title was created 1979, excising the cemetery by closing part of the road reserve.<sup>23</sup> Lot 371, only 54m2 in area, is vested in the Naracoorte Council. In 2008 the Struan Research Centre Social Club and the Council respectfully refenced and restored the roadside cemetery. Italian cypress trees, symbols of mourning that have had a strong association with cemeteries across cultures since classical antiquity, were planted.

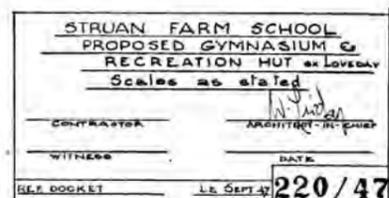
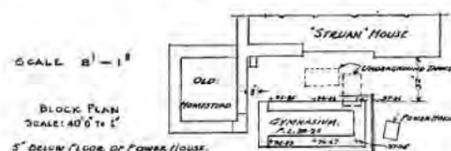
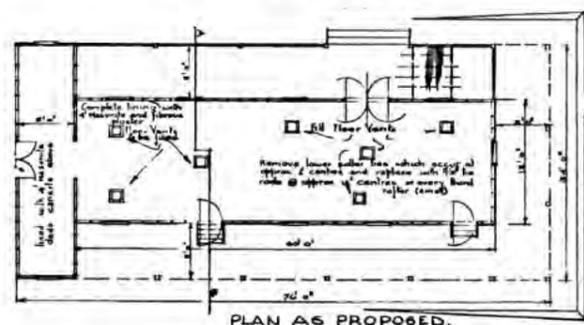
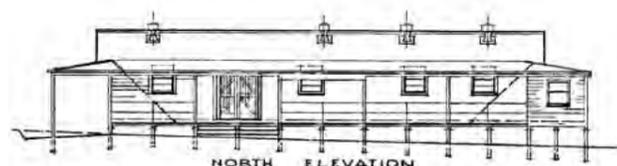
The two cemeteries associated with Struan House are important heritage places in their own right. Their contrasting character, landscape siting relative to the house and memorials illuminate the social distinction between the Robertson family and their workers.

In February 1848 a new orchard was being set out, but the buildings were in disrepair. The front verandah on The Second House was collapsing. The Bunya Pine in front of Struan House has since been removed. Struan House Archives

With the Farm School occupying Struan House the ground floor dining room usually had small tables each 'set with tablecloths and crockery' for four boys.<sup>38</sup> For Christmas celebrations the tables were decorated and joined together. SRSA GRG29/136\_449

The Robertson family's drawing room became a gymnasium.<sup>17</sup> Mr Robbies' gold leaf borders were intact. The ground colour to the walls appears to be a calomine or scumbled paint finish. Struan House Archives

In 1947 a building from the Loveday Internment Camp was moved to Struan. Intended as the Farm School Gymnasium and Recreation Hut, it was located behind Struan House, where the carpark now stands. Details from Dwg 220/47 DPTI Plan Room.



#### The Yanco colony model

The proposed model for Struan Farm School was 'Yanco colony', a farm of 2,000 acres for 200 boys that was 280 miles from Sydney. The Yanco model taught farm skills in a model dairy and a model piggery and integrated pupils with the local community in various sporting and farming activities. Yanco, based on 'self government' with 5 houses and 5 house captains, was proposed to be translated to the Struan Farm School property with the intention of building cottage homes and an administration centre when building materials became available. Struan House would then have become surplus to requirements.<sup>9</sup>

In 1947 Mr Lewis of the Children's Welfare Department promoted the Struan Farm School as being ahead of Tasmania and Victoria in its methodology for 'training State wards along occupational, technical and trade lines and potential variety of employment opportunities'. He explained to the Naracoorte community how Struan House would be occupied and how the Struan Farm School boys would participate in Naracoorte community sporting, religious and school activities.<sup>10</sup> The Naracoorte community formed a committee to make welcome the Struan Farm School boys and were invited to inspect books about the 'Yanco colony' and plans for the 'future development' of Struan Farm School.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.11 Struan Farm School

The passing of Alexander Robertson and eventual sale of the property marked the end of the first phase of Struan ownership. Struan House was probably the largest private homestead in the State when, along with its remaining 12,000 acres, it was offered for sale in January 1943.<sup>1</sup> The property included 'a large two storey building otherwise known as the grand Italianate villa Struan House, three cottages, and various farm buildings'.<sup>2</sup> In 1946 the Government purchased it for a farm school and also for agricultural research.

On 14th May 1946 Premier Playford announced an executive council decision to purchase the Struan property.<sup>3</sup> The Farm School would be established gradually at Struan House due to anticipated post war difficulties in converting it into a suitable home for boys with appropriate furnishing and additional bathrooms and toilets.<sup>4</sup>

The purchase from the Trustees of the Estate of the late Alexander Robertson was finalised on 4th December 1946. It included the two original sections: Section 9 on which Struan House stands but excluding the family cemetery and Section 10 excluding the railway property.<sup>5</sup> Around the same time the government purchased an additional 7,550 acres including 4,100 acres for war service land settlement, almost 1,000 extra acres for the Farm School, 1,200 acres for the Department of Agriculture and 820 acres for re-sale.<sup>6</sup>

Struan Farm School was under the governance of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board from May 1947 to 1966 and the Department of Social Welfare from 1966 until it closed in 1969.<sup>7</sup> It taught pastoral and farming skills to boys who were wards of the state, including those from the Edwardstown Industrial School and the Magill Reformatory, to prepare them for employment on farms experiencing post war labour shortages. 'Boys learned to use and maintain farm implements, engines, erect fences, do general handiwork, and were taught animal husbandry, growing crops, orchard work, vegetable growing, looking after sheep, general dairy work, topdressing pastures, cattle and poultry management, and pig husbandry.'<sup>8</sup>

Mr J. Davis was appointed 'superintendent and farm manager of the 'Struan Boys Colony' and began preparing the farm and garden.<sup>12</sup> An advertisement was placed in the Advertiser for 'cook (either male or female), general sheep and agricultural man, vegetable gardener, and handyman.'<sup>13</sup> The Farm School began in early 1947 with six students.<sup>14</sup> The dairy herd was established with five Guernsey stud dairy cows and a bull purchased from the Basham Brothers of Port Elliot. Struan Farm School went on to win the Guernsey categories at the Naracoorte Shows for many years.<sup>15</sup>

In July 1947 the South Australian government received tenders for 'remodelling, rebuilding, renovating and repairing parts of the huge old mansion house' to accommodate 40 to 50 individuals.<sup>18 19</sup> By mid 1848 the post war labour shortage had eased. Contractors were finally available to commence work, many months after the plans and specifications had been finalised. The Naracoorte Herald informed local residents of the contractors' progress: 'New chimneys are appearing, a new coke boiler is in the course of installation, walls are coming down and blocks of rooms

In 1948, the damaged slate roof on the north west of Struan House (lower right) was awaiting repairs before contractors became available. Leaks from the roof would have damaged the original lath and plaster ceilings. Few of the original first floor ceilings remain. Struan House Archives

Struan Farm School orchard ca 1950 with Struan House behind. There were recent additions to the orchard that had been re-planted in 1947.<sup>26</sup> NTSA Naracoorte 010-00855

Building contractors Doug and Jeff at the west elevation of Struan House in 1948. The new chimneys and verandah infill had been completed.<sup>39</sup> Struan House Archives



#### Struan Estate

The post war state government considered foster homes the best model of care for wards of the state but a shortage of foster parents saw ongoing institutional care. As a compromise policy it was proposed that when building materials became available Struan House would be replaced: 'cottage homes will replace the big house, and a central administration block will be built, with a hall where the boys can have meetings, concerts, and plays. A small school will also be built for boys between the ages of 10 and 14.'<sup>21</sup>

Reflecting the values of the period, a brave new masterplan for a township on Section 432 to be named Struan Estate was drafted in 1948. This section is located in the Hundred of Joanna, directly opposite Struan House on the eastern side of the Struan House Road. Seventy years earlier it was marked on a plan as Vegetable Garden.<sup>22</sup>

The masterplan included 69 allotments for detached cottages, two hostel sites, a site for a school, a hall, a bowling green, tennis courts and shops. An administration and laboratory building fronting a landscaped carriage circle reminiscent of Struan House was to stand at the estate entrance. Luckily the only part of the master plan that was implemented was the farm buildings fronting the Joanna Road. They remain on this site in 2015.<sup>23</sup>

Post war shortages of resources and building materials saved Struan House from demolition. The old building provided ample institutional style accommodation. In such an economic climate demolition to make way for the new cottage model of care was not feasible.<sup>24</sup>

#### Power supply

The Struan Farm School impacted on Naracoorte ratepayers. Council, responsible for electrical power supply and distribution, had to upgrade their transformer to meet the electrical demand from Struan House. In 1949 the Naracoorte Corporation budgeted to borrow £45,000 for the Electric Supply Department. A new £21,000, 960 horsepower generator was the major anticipated expense although an additional £8,000 was estimated to extend the high voltage mains to Struan, Caves and Hynam. The estimated cost for the new electrical plant and extensions to Struan Farm School were £500 and for the planned Animal Research Institute's 50 houses £600 and laboratories £25.<sup>25</sup>

In the downstairs drawing room the gold cornices, the Robertson family crest and the Carrara marble mantelpiece survived the initial adaptation to the Farm School.<sup>28</sup> SRSA GRG 29/136\_338

Boys Dormitory in an upstairs bedroom. By 1953 150 boys aged between 14 and 18 had been students of Struan Farm School.<sup>29</sup> The average stay was 8 months during which the boys received 'payments for their services and board and lodgings' from which they paid for 'their clothing, certain outings, and other things.'<sup>30</sup> SRSA GRG 29/136\_336

Struan House from main gate 1960s. The era of Struan House as an agricultural farm school ended in 1969 after low student numbers made it unviable. NTSA Naracoorte 010-00112



#### School report 1953

Premier Playford tabled a report to Parliament on progress at Struan Farm School. 'Since 1947, considerable improvements have been effected to the whole property by the staff and the boys, covering general maintenance work on the buildings, wind mills, troughs, fencing pastures, and such like. Additional bathing and toilet facilities have been provided and the building furnished throughout, at the time of occupation. New farm implements, Guernsey dairy herd, Hereford beef cattle, stud sheep and rams, and various farm engines have been purchased. A modern poultry house, petrol and oil store, a modern dairy, cattle yards, new wool and shearing shed, and a new laundry have been erected. Electric light plant has been established, pine plantation planted, considerable fencing renewed, water supplies improved, orchard replanted, and a large vegetable garden established. A sports oval has been provided, the homestead renovated and repaired, and pastures improved'.<sup>27</sup>

are being converted into bathrooms and lavatories, and drain pipes and new water pipes are finding their way through many of the walls, while the modernisation of the kitchen and necessary repairs to the slate roof are now rapidly rising on the priority list of urgent jobs still to be done.<sup>20</sup> The Naracoorte Council upgraded the power supply to the district, in part to service the Farm School.<sup>37</sup>

In December 1953, Premier Mr Thomas Playford's summarised the changes to Struan House for Farm School adaptation.<sup>31</sup> The number of students during the 1950s and 1960s fluctuated around 18 to 20. Numbers dropped in the late 1960s and the Farm School became unviable.<sup>32</sup> It was closed in 1969 but not before another vice-regal visit when Governor James Harrison and Lady Harrison lunched at Struan House with the students and staff.<sup>33</sup> Sadly there is little evidence of further building improvements and when the Farm School eventually closed Struan House was again in poor repair. Following the Farm School's closure, Struan House and estate was transferred to the Department of Agriculture.<sup>34</sup>

As a State-run childrens institution, Struan Farm School was named in the *Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry: Allegations of sexual abuse and death from criminal conduct, presented to the South Australian Parliament by the Hon. E.P. Mullighan QC, Commissioner*.<sup>35</sup> Occasionally old scholars of Struan Farm School have re-visited Struan House and been invited by the Struan Agriculture Centre to inspect the ground floor of Struan House.<sup>36</sup>

Struan House and Second House photographed on the opening of the Regional Headquarters at Struan House on 26 April 1974. MT Seeliger. Dept. of Agriculture 106070



A soils laboratory, complete with flume cupboard was squeezed into one of the front rooms in the Second House.<sup>71</sup> Habitable Places 2015

The commemoration plaque for the opening of the Department of Agriculture's regional headquarters is fixed into the portico. The goal of Regional Centres was to make the Department of Agriculture more accessible and of greater value to the community.<sup>64</sup> Habitable Places 2015



#### Soldier settlement

The post World War I soldier settlement schemes resulted in many under capitalised and under skilled ex-soldiers with landholdings that without support were too small to be viable. Many struggled or failed and the scheme was widely discredited.<sup>3</sup> The post World War II soldier settlements were more successful with more training, loans and viable holding sizes.<sup>4</sup>

#### Frustrated by government

In the mid 1940s the upper South East farmers expressed extreme frustration at the absence of a vet to offer professional advice on the longevity and fertility issues afflicting their animals and limited sustainable farm profits. They were annoyed by the lack of action from the state government who offered 'plenty of sympathy but no assistance'.<sup>19</sup> South East farmers considered it the government's duty to fund a quality research centre<sup>20</sup> and favoured Struan's central location and representative variety of South East soils. However some also expressed loyalty to Kybybolite Research Station and its clover trials<sup>21 22</sup> despite the noxious 'research' weeds.<sup>23 24</sup>

## 2.12 Struan Agricultural Centre

Struan Agricultural Centre formerly known as Struan Research Centre is under the governance of the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) for the purpose of conducting research for the benefit of rural industries.<sup>1</sup> It is based on strong, long-standing support from the South East community who were accustomed to Struan House being a centre for agricultural research.<sup>2</sup>

Struan Research Centre was part of post World War II government sponsored research across Australia that resulted in many improvements in pastures, breeding and production techniques and a reduction of pests and diseases.<sup>5</sup> It contributed to increased production per landholding and improved viability for smaller acreages.<sup>6</sup> Struan's goal was to address the specific problems experienced by South East farmers and was one of 7 public research centres announced in 1952 in South Australia. It focused on beef production, breeding and fodder issues and had 'a great influence across Australia'<sup>7</sup> when beef cattle were replacing or accompanying sheep on many Australian properties.<sup>8</sup>

Struan Research Centre pioneered a new regional service delivery model for South Australian Government departments. In 1974 the Department of Agriculture established a Regional Headquarters for the South East at Struan House. Initially each applied research project at Struan required specific government funding.<sup>9</sup> Over time, projects were increasingly modelled on public - private partnerships with local and interstate collaborators. The ambit and resources for operations at Struan Agricultural Centre has significantly decreased in the 21st Century.

As early as 1868 Penola M.P. Mr John Riddoch, requested that the Colonial Government establish an 'Experimental Farm' in the South East to improve farmers confidence in their management practices. Science would help overcome problems 'never seen at home such as total crop loss'.<sup>10</sup> In 1931 the Adelaide Mail reported that 'science' had assisted Naracoorte farmers increase profits through increased sheep holding capacity<sup>11</sup> following top dressing<sup>12</sup> to improve pastures.<sup>13</sup>

Alexander Robertson had been passionate about his private research and trials. He nurtured the interest of the local community in research at Struan from the early 20th Century and supported South East farmers to improve their fodder crops and grasses.<sup>14 15</sup> In 1931 local farmers read about Waite Research Institute's Professor Prescott and Mr Taylor's praise for Struan as 'a research institute in itself' for pasture improvement that benefited the whole district.<sup>16</sup>

Only months after Alexander Robertson's death in 1838 the upper South East community began lobbying the state government to establish an animal research centre at Struan.<sup>17</sup> Eight years later Premier Playford announced the purchase of the 8,000 acres of Struan property for use as a farm school and agricultural research centre.<sup>18</sup> Initially the farm school was established without any action on the research centre.

In August 1947 Chief Secretary Mr McEwin, proposed a the appointment of a director, a farm manager and a technical staff member for animal research at Struan.<sup>25</sup> The next day ex-servicemen trainees moved a building from the Keswick Barracks to the Struan Agricultural

Ron McNeil with Northern store heifers for transportation from Alice Springs to Struan & Turretfield Research Centres in May 1959.

Ron started at Struan Research Centre as a meat inspector in the 1950s. He travelled to the north of the state as a stock inspector in the early 60s, and was appointed Farm Manager in 1963.<sup>40</sup> Department of Agriculture 103751

Ron McNeil (left) and Bob Carrail, Senior Beef Officer Victoria at Unddolya Station in 1959. Department of Agriculture 103753

Mike Colic, Veterinary, Animal Health Division with calf, Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Program, Innamincka, 24 October 1967.

In the 1960s and 1970s Brucellosis and Tuberculosis was 'the major animal-health issue' in Australia.<sup>47</sup> Struan Research Centre played a crucial early role in the national Brucellosis and Tuberculosis eradication program. Cattle sent to Struan Research Centre were tested for the disease and destroyed if necessary.

Unaffected cattle were sent on to Gepps Cross market where they sold for higher prices than those animals from northern areas where there was no facility to test for Brucellosis and Tuberculosis.<sup>48</sup> Department of Agriculture 103723



### Finishing

In 1959 the cattle from the Kybybolite Research Centre were transferred to Struan. Beef cattle trials included supplementary feeding. The benefits of transferring cattle from the northern pastoral zone to the South East for 'finishing' were investigated.<sup>38</sup> This early Struan research contributed important information to the now accepted Australian industry practice of 'finishing' animals with specific market attributes.<sup>39</sup>

Research Station.<sup>26</sup> Within weeks the Director of Agriculture Mr Stafford advised that the intention was for an institute for study of animal production and health as at Kybybolite with all livestock run at Struan. It was hoped it would be well equipped and well-staffed.<sup>27</sup>

Premier Playford reported that the Government regarded the development of the South East as so important that in late 1947 the Minister of Agriculture Sir G. Jenkins sought 'leave to establish a regional research station at Struan. This locality has types of soil suitable for intense scientific work, the results of which may be of benefit to increasing food production.'<sup>28 29</sup> Three months later ex-soldier trainees prepared the first buildings for the Struan Research Centre including the Caretaker's Hut in the area known as the sheep yards.<sup>30</sup> However lack of building materials limited further progress on both the Farm School and the Research Centre.

In April 1948 Chief Secretary McEwin and Minister Jenkins inspected the conversion of Struan House from a family home to a boys live-in school.<sup>31</sup> Sir Jenkins stressed the importance of co-operation between the school and the research centre so that they could work together and share utilities.<sup>32</sup>

In 1949 Director of the South Australian Department of Agriculture Dr. A. Callaghan prescribed a change to the state's research governance. Pure or basic research would be the responsibility of the Waite Institute and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), while applied research based on solving defined field problems and advisory programs for farmers would be the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture at research centres such as Struan.<sup>33</sup> The Department of Agriculture proposed the construction of a new \$41,000 regional centre in Naracoorte rather than on the Struan Estate as favoured by the local community.<sup>34 35</sup> However it did not proceed due to the housing shortage.<sup>36</sup> In 1952 Callaghan announced 7 beef cattle research centres for South Australia including Struan that would specialise in 'finishing research'.<sup>37</sup>

In 1965 Struan Outstation became the Struan Research Centre specialising in beef research.<sup>41</sup> Early investigations conducted in cooperation with local private beef producers 'aimed at gaining the highest returns from a breeding herd'.<sup>42</sup> Despite Premier Playford's concern about the number of rural research centres,<sup>43</sup> new buildings were constructed at Struan for scientific officers' and the manager's residence.<sup>44</sup> By 1967 the Struan Research Centre had become overcrowded with 'severely overtaxed' staff in the offices and laboratory where for example five officers occupied an area 7 feet x 8 feet.<sup>45</sup> From 1967 to 1970 Ron Eliis managed Struan Research Centre with a continuing specialisation in cattle research.<sup>46</sup>

When Struan Farm School closed in 1969, Struan House and its 'remaining 1000 acres' were transferred to the Department of Agriculture.<sup>56</sup> In the early 1970s a Department of Agriculture review recommended the regionalisation of its structure, operation and services. The Director of Agriculture Marshall Irving supported Struan House becoming the Regional Headquarters for the South East Region.<sup>57</sup> Renovations for the 'run down' Struan House and its change of use adaptation took several years. In late 1973 the Naracoorte Department

## Research projects

Early research at Struan focused on developing farm productivity by assisting farmers to take advantage of rapid improvements in science and technology. Struan professional officers taught farmers to objectively measure their animals and record factors that directly impacted on growth and development. They also encouraged farmers to adapt to various global markets and consumer demands.

John Cooper has managed the development of Struan Farm over recent decades as the base for increasingly sophisticated agricultural research.



Struan Research Centre's Beef Cattle Advisors trained farmers in scientific research methods through evaluation of pure and cross breed cattle.<sup>49</sup> Mick Deland and Sam Inglis demonstrate weighing and tagging calves at birth so that farmers could keep life-long records alongside individual conditions on nutrition, weather, diseases and other factors. The cow on the right has been tagged at Struan using the freeze TVI branding system that can be identified from a distance. 28 March 1973. Department of Agriculture 106117



Ron Ellis' early projects at Struan included collaborative research with Queensland University<sup>50</sup> into muscular hypertrophy in Aberdeen Angus cross breeds. This animal has 'a deletion in the bovine myostatin gene causing the double muscled phenotype in cattle'<sup>51</sup> that resulted in 'high rates of birthing problems'.<sup>52</sup> 6th May 1968 Department of Agriculture 106155



A Freesian cross Hereford steer breed at Struan Research Centre prior to a carcass competition at Gepps Cross Market. It was part of Struan research that cross bred dairy cows with beef cattle with the goal of increasing milk production while maintaining the quantity and quality of beef produced with purebred beef cattle.<sup>53</sup>

The 1969 state beef carcass competition in Adelaide was organised by Struan Manager Ron McNeil and Struan Research Officers. They encouraged farmers to relate the meat, fat and bone in a carcass to its value for the butcher and the consumer.<sup>52</sup> 15th January 1969. Department of Agriculture 106121



In the early 1970s Struan conducted cross breeding trials including with newly imported breeds from Britain and France evaluating such qualities as good maternal traits, climate adaptation ability and desired carcass qualities.<sup>54,55</sup> circa 1972. Department of Agriculture 106147



Cross breeding at Struan Research Centre. Progeny from Hereford and Charolais cattle crossed with Jersey cattle. Sept 1970. Department of Agriculture 103671



Dr. Harold Chamberlain, Superintendent of Research Centres, (left) outside the Dairyman's Cottage during the Struan Research Centre Field Day in September 1970.<sup>59</sup> 1,050 people attended from South Australia and interstate.<sup>60</sup>

Department of Agriculture Director Mr Marshall Irving outlined that the applied research at Struan aimed at increasing farm profits would be in two broad areas of animal husbandry and pasture production. Animal husbandry would focus on beef cattle breeding, management, finishing and carcass evaluation and Corriedale sheep flock improvement, suitability of fine wool merinos and comparison of sheep versus cattle farming. Pasture production would focus on suitable species, fertilizer requirements, and grazing management.<sup>61</sup> Department of Agriculture 106165



Ron McNeil, Struan Farm Manager in 1970, administering cobalt to overcome cobalt deficiency using Struan Research Centre's innovative bally gun crush. The innovative Cobalt bullet became a regular management technique for protection against phalaris staggers on the plains.<sup>63</sup> Department of Agriculture 103701



Charolais large white cream crossed with a Hereford at Struan Research Centre. Struan was the first in Australia to import Charolais and Simmental semen for cross-breeding research. This research contributed to the development of a database for the across breed Breedplan EBVs that allow Australian beef cattle farmers to reliably predict the performance of an animal based on its genes.<sup>82</sup> Struan research collaborations with LAMBPLAN in Victoria and New South Wales have utilised genetics in selecting sires and ewes to improve profitability for lamb and wool.<sup>83</sup> November 1972 Department of Agriculture 106157



Harvesting the maize for the forage crop trials at Struan Research Centre in April 1974. Department of Agriculture 106088



Wayne Hawthorne of Struan Research Centre trialled irrigated sorghum crops on the heavy black soils of the Struan plains in 1978.<sup>77</sup> Department of Agriculture 106080



Director of Agriculture Marshall Irving and Struan Research Centre Manager Ron McNeil open the 1973 Struan Filed Day the year before the opening of the Department of Agriculture's Regional Headquarters at Struan House.<sup>76</sup> 27th March 1973 Department of Agriculture 106169

### Evidence based salinity management

Salinity is an issue of national concern and research is ‘particularly significant’ in the upper south east where 200,000 to 300,000 ha. of land are saline.<sup>97</sup> Various collaborative research projects involving Struan’s Jock McFarlane, Nick Edwards, Amanda Bonython and colleagues utilised the broad depth of knowledge from a variety of research professionals and primary producers across southern Australia.<sup>88,98</sup>

Evidence based management strategies were developed for farmers across Australia to ameliorate salinity in waterlogged or dry land and simultaneously achieve positive social and biodiversity outcomes.<sup>101</sup> Scientific salinity research provided borderline farms with opportunities for profitability and sustainability.<sup>102</sup>

### National Salinity classification

Struan Agriculture Centre researchers collaborated with leading researchers and primary producers across Australia to establish the first nation-wide saltland classification system.

This land capability system devised saltland classifications for individual properties, and established estimated productivities for 15 farming regions across Australia.<sup>99</sup>

### ‘Strategic grazing’

Struan salinity researchers have investigated improved land sustainability and profitability through management strategies such as ‘strategic grazing’, nitrogen fertiliser applications, and the use of Balansa clover. Research on ‘strategic grazing involved grazing from late summer/autumn through the break of the season and winter, but moving the animals to other areas of the farm in spring and early summer, to enable good growth and seed-set in the Balansa clover’.<sup>100</sup>

### Messina Project

The innovative, commercial project researched the suitability of Messina for waterlogged, saline pastures. It achieved synergy through the expertise of Struan Research Centre’s Amanda Bonython, and researchers from three departments at the University of Western Australia (including the CRC for Future Farm Industries), the Department of Agriculture and Food WA, and the University of Adelaide’s Waite campus.<sup>89</sup>

### Southern Crossbreeding

The 1990s Southern Crossbreeding and gene mapping herd project achieved collaborative synergy with researchers from Struan Agricultural Centre SARDI and the University of Adelaide. Belgian Blue, Limousin, South Devon, Hereford, Angus, Jersey and Wagyu cattle were ‘finished’ at Struan with individual food intake measured. Differences found include in fatty acid composition and muscle Vitamin E levels.<sup>87</sup>

### Merino EBVs

Merino evaluation at Struan has changed significantly since John Robertson bred Merinos using his experience to estimate breeding value based on the history of show prizes, market prices and a ‘good eye’. Modern genetics allowed breeders to pre-select and assess specific characteristics<sup>90</sup> such as Merino ‘wool production and quality’, wethers’ growth and meat quality traits and ewes’ maternal traits<sup>91</sup> using Estimated Breeding Values.

### Maternal Efficiency Project

The Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Beef Genetic Technologies’ ‘Maternal Efficiency Project (2010) was a collaborative project involving Struan Agricultural Centre, SARDI and researchers from Beef CRC agencies, Universities, government agencies between Western Australia and New South Wales, and private producers such as the Angas Society of Australia. The project informed beef producers ‘on the impacts of estimated breeding values (EBVs) for carcase fatness, carcase muscularity and feed efficiency on maternal efficiency, under varying nutrition environments.’<sup>92</sup>

### Opening of Struan Regional Headquarters

In true Struan House style, the event included a grand opening ball at the ‘majestic’, floodlit Struan House.<sup>65</sup> Guests entered through the Entry Hall and were greeted at the base of the grand, curved cedar staircase by the Director of Agriculture, Mr Marshall Irving, Mrs Irving and Chief Extension Officer Mr T Seelinger<sup>66</sup> and Mrs Seelinger. Then they proceeded to the ‘Robertson’s dining room’ for sherry and local cheese.<sup>67</sup> Guests, including local residents, were encouraged to inspect the mansion and the recent office alterations for Department of Agriculture officials. Refreshments were served throughout Struan House at tables and chairs in various rooms and on the wide verandahs.<sup>68</sup>

### Highly technical and sophisticated

The Minister for Primary Industry, Senator Wriedt opened the 1974 Field Day saying the Struan Research Centre work on cattle breeding was of ‘national importance through its impact on cattle farming across the Commonwealth’.<sup>74</sup> 300 cattle breeders learnt about the role of cattle hormones and artificial breeding in improved fertility and profitability. Officer in Charge Ron McNiel stated that the goal of improved breeding methods was ‘to increase beef cattle fertility from 70 per cent average per mated cow to produce one calf per mated cow per year.’ Even a modest 10% increase would add over \$2 million to the South East cattle industry.<sup>75</sup>

### A stable and dedicated workforce

Struan Agricultural Centre benefited from a stable, dedicated workforce. Mick Deland worked at Struan after graduation until his retirement 44 years later. To assist private beef producers Mick and his Struan colleagues developed artificial breeding techniques, established a Struan semen collection centre and introduced European breeds into Australia for evaluation and cross breeding trials.<sup>95</sup> From the 1990s, collaborative cross breeding trials used genetic information and EBVs to evaluate genetic and regional factors in market specifications and high growth and high muscle factors on maternal efficiency.<sup>96</sup>

of Agriculture relocated from 3 separate offices in Naracoorte to Struan House’s renovated ground floor.<sup>58</sup>

On the 26th April 1974 a new phase for the renovated Struan House began with its official opening as Regional Headquarters for the Department of Agriculture. Struan Agricultural Centre, based at Struan House, Second House and additional buildings behind Struan House accommodated management, administrative staff and research officers investigating pest control, seed production, animal health regulations, disease diagnosis and control, livestock husbandry, soil science and management and farm financial management.<sup>69</sup> The South East Region became fully operational in June 1977 with the appointment of the Chief Regional Officer and senior management staff. As well as Kybybolite and Struan Research Centres, District Offices were maintained at Keith, Naracoorte and Mt. Gambier. Staff were also located at Millicent and Kingston.<sup>70</sup>

Struan Agricultural Centre established research priorities through collaboration with South East stockowners<sup>73</sup> some of whom made stock available on private properties for Struan research projects.<sup>79</sup> Early cooperation with South East private producers expanded rapidly from 6 private participants in 1965 to 250 by 1970.<sup>80</sup> Research findings were available almost immediately to the South East farmers and were promoted through the popular annual Struan Field Days.

Research in the 1980s addressed issues specific for the South East in soils and plant nutrition, field crops and animal health.<sup>81</sup> Animal research at Struan utilised the new Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) developed by geneticists to assist farmers select breeding traits suitable for specific consumer markets.

Strong models of collaborative research developed between Struan Agricultural Centre and private producers, private associations, universities, CSIRO, Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs) and other government agencies across Australia. Collaborative research exploited the respective strengths and skills of participating agencies.<sup>84</sup> It is in sharp contrast to the discrete research model for universities and public research centres such as Struan that had been promoted by Callaghan in 1949.<sup>85</sup> A broad range of issues relevant to the South East have been studied including research on water turnover rates in cattle, trace element supplementation, phalaris poisoning of sheep and cattle, cattle crossbreeding, muscle development and crop improvement projects with commercial scale outcomes.<sup>86</sup>

The applied research at Struan Agricultural Centre has evolved to directly support not only regional primary producers but also state and national ones in ever-changing environmental conditions and global markets. Improvements in communication facilitated participation in collaborative research and reduced the tyranny of distance from other government research and private industry institutions.<sup>93</sup>

Struan Agricultural Centre has benefited throughout its history from a stable workforce of dedicated staff who contributed to high productivity levels, numerous professional publications and extensive community engagement and education. Staff numbers at Struan Agricultural Centre have reflected the change in government priorities and funding for agricultural research with numbers falling from a maximum of 46

The orchard was removed and replaced with irrigated lawns.

Signage for Primary Industries at Struan Agricultural Centre. Photos Habitable Places 2015.



research and administration officers and 15 graduates down to 9 full and part time staff in mid 2014.<sup>94</sup>

Struan Agricultural Centre has a strong history of applied research including collaboration with local primary producers and leading Australian public and private researchers. They have directly informed South East primary producers on research outcomes and technological advances that complement the intuitive skills of farmers like John Robertson. Struan Agricultural Centre has developed and extended Alexander Robertson's approach to objectively evaluate factors on the farm that contribute to sustainable profits.

#### Enthusiastic volunteers

Struan House was 'kindly lent' by Alexander Robertson<sup>5</sup> for the 1938 Queen competition. An advertisement was placed for 'ladies interested in a card evening.' The enthusiastic volunteers helped Struan House housekeeper Mrs Munro and her staff organise a 'card evening that developed into a grand ball for 300 people with the occasional card game' played upstairs.<sup>6</sup>

'Dancing took place in the drawing room, the floor of which had been polished to an excellent surface'. Mr Robertson said that the floor of this room being used for dancing was the original floor that had been down for 62 years.

The evening at Struan House was declared a memorable occasion marked by a tinge of regret that it 'might not occur again'.<sup>7</sup> This ball was probably the last occasion that family residence Struan House was used for a large community event.



Large numbers of South East farmers were informed about Struan Research Centre's Maize trial outcomes at the 1971 Struan Field Day.<sup>72</sup> Department of Agriculture 106168

Over one hundred and fifty attended Struan Field Day in 1973 to learn about the latest information on growing maize more profitably.<sup>73</sup> Department of Agriculture 106167

## 2.13 Community Use

Struan House has played an important community role since its construction. It was a fitting setting for high society Robertson family weddings which were celebrated with the South East pastoral gentry and Naracoorte locals. The hallways of Struan House were full to capacity for family funeral services that attracted mourners of all social classes from across the South East.

Mr John and Mrs Susan Robertson took obvious pleasure and established a tradition and reputation for including visitors, Naracoorte and South East locals in the enjoyment of their estate. Many generations have enjoyed its facilities for community, social, business, education, horticulture and recreational purposes.

Alexander Robertson welcomed the local community by combining horticultural field days and hunting events with generous hospitality. He made Struan House, and its staff and garden, available for many memorable fundraising occasions during his period of ownership from 1916-1938.<sup>12</sup> In 1935 the social columns of the Adelaide News recorded the guest list of South East gentry at the Struan House 'Queen competition' scouts and guides fundraiser.<sup>3</sup> Struan House was rearranged for the occasion to provide room for 400 guests who danced or played bridge. Supper served in the dining hall included the 'ultra modern cocktail sausage' and the traditional English roast beef.<sup>4</sup>

Family residence Struan House was regularly used as a polling place for local, colonial, state and federal elections. Originally this use was consistent with employees and owners of outback stations not being disenfranchised by distance from a polling booth. In 1917 Struan House was a polling booth for the South Ward elections of the Naracoorte District Council. One of the vacancies had resulted from the recent 'lamented death' of John Robertson Jr.<sup>8</sup>

While secret ballots are a hallmark of Australian democracy, the principle was sometimes subverted as in the 1918 results for a successful Council proposition to install electric lights in Naracoorte revealed not one 'yes' vote from Struan House voters.<sup>9</sup> In 1922 it was the only private address in Naracoorte or Penola that was used as a polling booth.<sup>10</sup> During the Farm School days Struan House was open on several occasions from 8am to 8pm as a polling booth for the South Australian House of Assembly elections<sup>11</sup>.

Residents and dignitaries from across the region were invited to Struan House to join in the 1976 grand opening celebrations for the Department of Agriculture Regional Headquarters. Bookings were made through the Naracoorte Herald's office at \$14 per double.<sup>12</sup> Struan has served an important role as a community facility for Research Centre field days, and community conferences, board meetings and professional development.<sup>13</sup>

Struan House has long been known as a community landmark and meeting point.<sup>14</sup> Colonial land selections cited sections according to their distance from Struan House.<sup>15</sup> In November 2008 following recent completion of its \$2million upgrade Struan House was promoted as a prominent South East landmark and opened for community inspection.<sup>16</sup> The 2009 Struan PIRSA Social Club, respectful of Struan

The 1935 Queens Competition highlighted the social position of Alexander Robertson and Struan House. Important guests were listed in the ‘News’ social pages. ‘Among those present were Mr and Mrs Anderson, Mr and Mrs ‘E.’ J. Banks. Mr and Mrs: B. Banks. Mr and Mrs T. Barclay, Mr and Mrs B. Barclay. Mr and Mrs Denis Baylis, Mr and Mrs J. W. Bourne, Mr and Mrs R. P. Boucaut, Mr D. Boucaut, Mr G. Boucaut, Messrs. W. C., L. A., K. P., and W. R. Boucaut, Mr and Mrs R. N. Bristow Smith, Mr and Mrs W. J. Burford, Mr and Mrs G. Burford, Mr and Mrs J. R. Butterworth, Mr and Mrs E. Butler, Dr. and Mrs Bourke, Mr and Mrs D. Cameron, Mr and Mrs K. Catchlove, Mr and Mrs J. R. Campbell, Mr and Mrs D. Chapple, Mr and Mrs H. M. Clezy, Mr and Mrs D. Clezy, Mr and Mrs J. H. Daniel, Mr and Mrs L. A. de Garis, Mr and Mrs A. C. de Garis, Misses de Garis, Mr and Mrs L. R. de Garis; Col D. Findlater, Mr and Mrs E. L. Findlater, Mr and Mrs W. Follett; Mr and Mrs F. H. Golds worthy, Mr and Mrs A. E. Goodchild, Mr and Mrs F. F. Grieve, Mr A. Grieve, Mr Noel Grieve, Mr and Mrs Hannaford, Dr. and Mrs Hamilton, Sisters Heitzman and Hood, Mr and Mrs J. Humphris, Mr and Mrs E. J. Kennedy, Mr and Mrs E. Kidman. Mr and Mrs S. J. Kidman, Mr and Mrs T. Kidman, Mr and Mrs A. Kidman, Mr and Mrs J. D. Kidman. Mr Bob and Miss May Kidman, Mr and Mrs A. K. Lawson, Mr and Mrs E. R. Lawson, Mr and Mrs R. J. Legoe, Mr and Mrs Learmonth, Miss E. Livingstone, Mr and Mrs J. C. Marshall, Mr and Mrs J. R. Marshall. Mr and D. J.

Magarey, Mr and Mrs D. Mehaffey, Mr and Mrs T. K. Moorhouse, Mr and Mrs D. A. Moffat, Mr and Mrs McColl, Dr. and Mrs H. K. Pavy, Mr and Mrs V. G. Petherick, Mr and Mrs Tester. Mr and Mrs Hoole, Mr and Mrs. J. R. and Miss Hood, Mr and Mrs Irving, Messrs. T. and A. Kelly, Mr R. Laidlaw, Sister M. Lewis, Mr and Mr Learmonth. Mr and Mrs W. B. Lemon., Mrs Lemon. sen., Mr and Mrs and Miss Lobban, Mr A. Mayo, Mr and Mrs D. May. Mr and Mrs M. H. Malone, Misses V. and M. Malone, C. A. Malone. Miss K. Malone, Mr A. R. Miles, Mr and I. L. Miles, Miss G. Miles, Misses H. and D. Castine, Mr and A. R. Campbell, Mr and G. C. Church. Mr and B. Chapman, Mr and R. J. Koch, Mr and Mrs Cook, Mr and Mrs Cockington, Miss Girrback, Mrs Gleeson, Mr Koch sen., Mr Koch Jun., Miss Koch, Mr and Mrs Fitts, Mr and Mrs J. A. Brown, Miss G. Brown, Mr V. Burke, Miss Brun, G. Butler, R. W. Brown, Ian Balnaves, Mr and Barry, Mr and B. Chapman.<sup>24</sup>

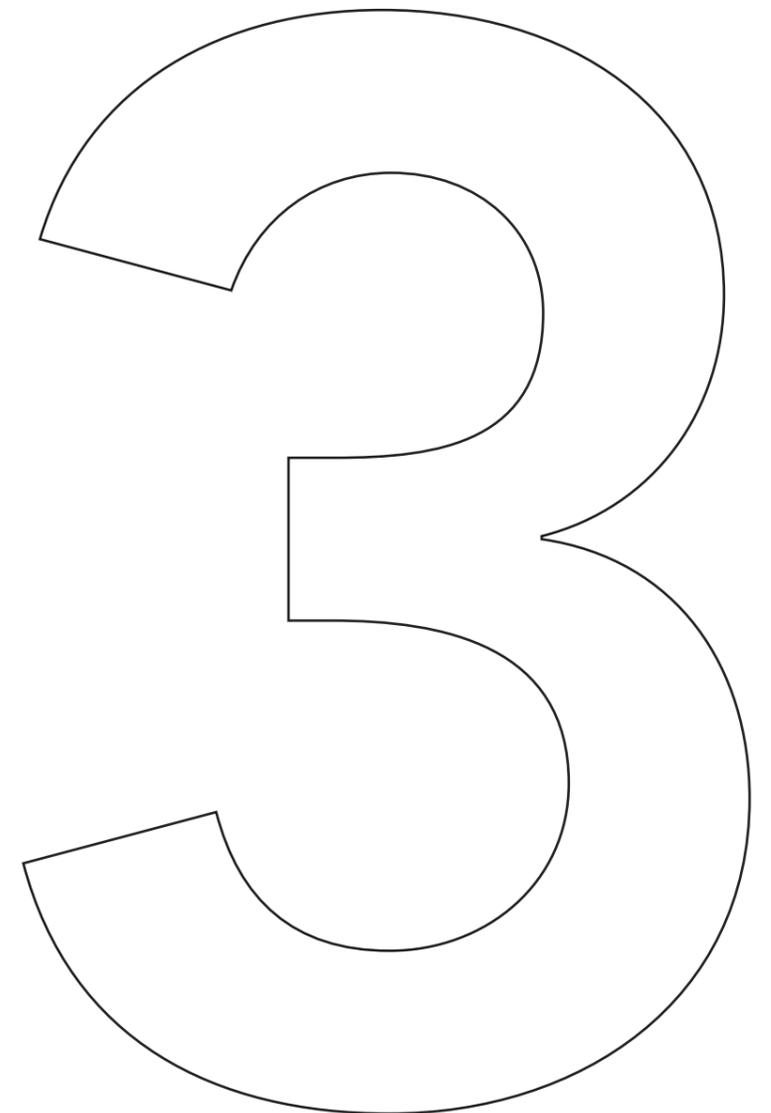
House traditions arranged ‘A Grand Affair,’ a Celtic musical evening alluding to John Robertson’s heritage of grand balls and traditional Scottish songs.<sup>17</sup> In 2013, as part of Open House Worldwide, ‘iconic’ Struan House was promoted across South Australia. NTSA Naracoorte members offered guided ‘history’ tours of Struan House and the private Robertson cemetery.<sup>18</sup>

Tourist operators have promoted Struan House as a tourist attraction with impressive architectural qualities.<sup>19</sup> Visitors have usually been permitted access by prior arrangement to the ground floor reception rooms when PIRSA staff are present.

Some visitors including Robertson descendents or those with a family or personal association with Struan have donated or lent historic furniture, objects and records. The Naracoorte NTSA have curated a valuable historic collection accessed for this CMP, which is on display in the hallways, formal rooms and a corner room. It is available to the community by arrangement with PIRSA staff.

The Struan House garden has been much photographed by photography clubs and enthusiasts and is used by theatre clubs and for weddings. Until 2012 there were about two community functions per week at Struan House<sup>20</sup> but more recently have been less frequent.<sup>21</sup> The interior is not presently available for private wedding ceremonies, receptions or functions.<sup>22</sup> Weekend functions inside Struan House are not possible as PIRSA staff are not available.<sup>23</sup>

- 3 Physical Evidence
- 3.1 Building Development
- 3.2 Landscape
- 3.3 Analysis of Physical Evidence



### Struan House stone

The face stonework of Struan is of similar stone but in a different style to the Second House. It consists of dressed ashlars with narrow ruled joints painted black with random coursing. Contemporary accounts refer to the external dressings, architraves, mouldings and brackets as carved sandstone. These are now all painted. A heavy build-up of lime wash under the acrylic paint substantially conceals the surface texture. Brasse considered some of the dressings to be coralline limestone, but this would have had a lighter rather than a darker tone.<sup>6</sup> The 2002 Dilapidation Report refers to the dressings as rendered.

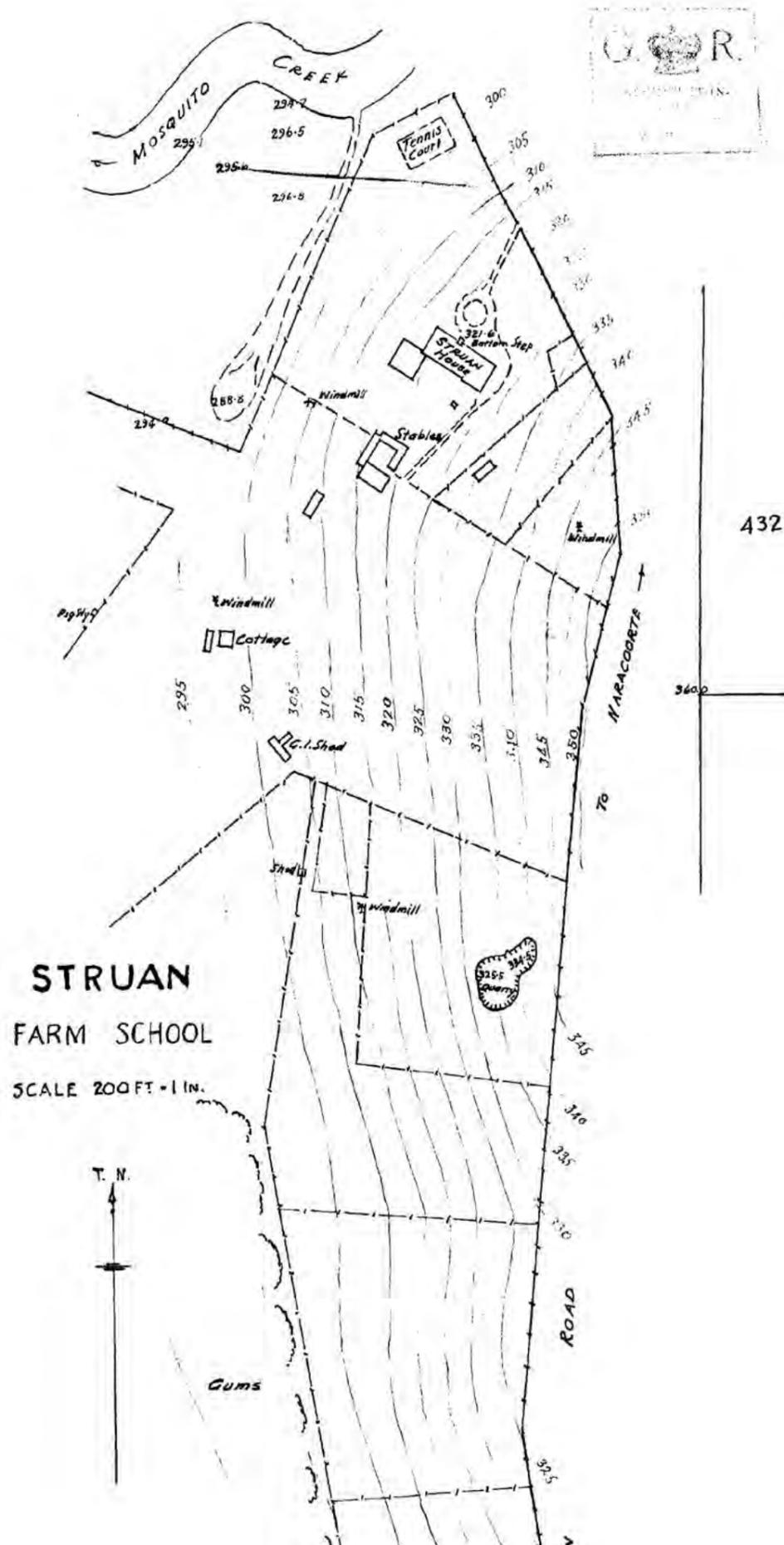
Early photographs show that the trimmings were of a dark tone and were distinctly mottled in contrast to the face stonework. Chips and unpainted corners of the window trimmings reveal cream coloured stone ashlar similar to the Second House stonework. But the lintels are clearly rendered. However close examination of damaged mouldings at the foot of the tower shows the basic form built up in lime render. This appears to be finished with a thin coat containing Portland cement, however this may not be original fabric.

Based on the photographic and physical evidence the trims are a combination of face stonework and render, painted or finished to provide a stone effect. The decorative elements may be a combination of castings or run-in-situ mouldings, but are not carved stone.

### Stone rubble supply

The construction of the new house required the demolition of the two rear wings of the Second House. Any stone salvaged from these buildings would have been used in the new building. Alternative sources for the large tonnages of rubble stone required would be local quarries in the range, or purchased stone.

A stone quarry is marked on a levels survey for the Farm School dated 1948. It lay some 350m due south of Struan House. From the contours and spot levels the quarry was about 3 metres deep. This is one possible site for the stone quarry for the buildings. Alternatively this may have been a borrow pit for road metal or for railway purposes, not connected to Struan House. No evidence of this quarry was observed in 2014. DPTI Plan Room 219-TR-1948



### Robertsons Cave

Local people believe that the stone for Struan House was quarried from Robertsons Cave, located in the East Naracoorte Range about 4km east of the house near the Joanna Road.<sup>1</sup> There is clear evidence of stone blocks being sawn from one chamber of the cave<sup>2</sup> but no documentary evidence directly linking this to the Second or Struan House. Brasse considered that the working would have been too small to supply the quantity of stone required for dressings.<sup>3</sup>

## 3.1 Building Development

### Second House construction

The Second House is a simple Colonial Georgian homestead, almost square in plan, consisting of four large rooms and a central passage surrounded on three sides by an elevated timber verandah. It has three half cellar rooms across the front which were accessed externally. Stone steps (now rendered) provide access to the front verandah. Walls are limestone rubble faced with dressed ashlar in a chalky local stone with ribbon pointing. Below floor level and under the verandah, the stonework is coursed rubble with ruled black painted joints.

Robust chamfered hardwood verandah posts support a traditional verandah beam on flat, decorated with a scalloped timber trim. Verandah beams on flat with morticed post connections are a marker of traditional hardwood framing used in Australia up until the mid 19th Century. The hipped roof and verandahs, framed with close spaced rafters of pit sawn red gum were originally clad with slate.

Two paired external doors fit to circular arched openings. A central arch of matching proportions in the passage remains, but the joinery and trims are missing. The large double hung six pane window sashes have a simple stone sill and keystone. The two robust plain stone chimneys are of coursed dressed rubble within the roof space. Floors are of pit sawn hardwood boards and joists. Remaining original ceilings are lath and plaster, square set in the smaller front rooms and with small coved Victorian cornices in the large rooms. Two modest acanthus leaf cast plaster ceiling roses remain. One marble and one timber fireplace remain.

### Struan House construction

Struan stands as a two storey house in the rural landscape with a four level tower as its focal point.<sup>5</sup> It has the informal massing and other design features characteristic of the Victorian Italianate style.

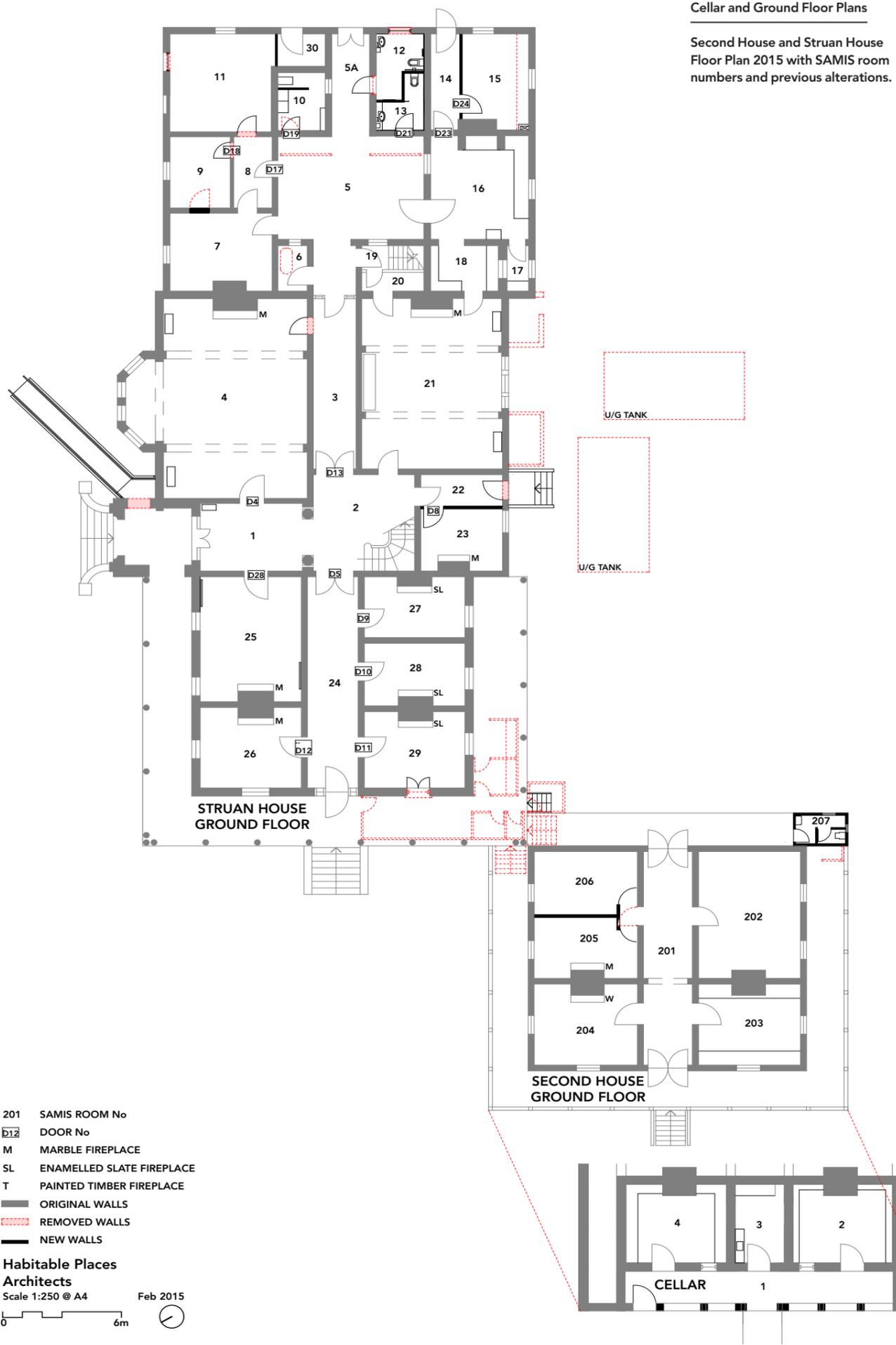
The western wing, accommodating bedrooms, is articulated externally by a striped verandah supported on iron columns with cast lacework frieze and brackets. The four level tower projects forward of the facade, and is capped by a low pitched roof with corbelled eaves. The central mass containing the three large reception rooms have a larger footprint. A bay window projects from the front room but the hipped roof has been deliberately separated from the tower. The lower servants quarters forming the eastern wing, single story at the front, complete the facade composition. The fenestration of each element is symmetrical, with studied rhythms of single, paired or triple openings.

### Roofing

The house roof was clad with imported slate, while the concave verandahs were corrugated iron. The small flat roofs were clad with patent raised seam roofing, now replaced. The tower and ridges were trimmed with wrought iron finials, but only the tower finial remains. The corners of the galvanised ogee gutters were originally trimmed with acroteria.

Cellar and Ground Floor Plans

Second House and Struan House  
Floor Plan 2015 with SAMIS room  
numbers and previous alterations.



- 201 SAMIS ROOM No
- D12 DOOR No
- M MARBLE FIREPLACE
- SL ENAMELLED SLATE FIREPLACE
- T PAINTED TIMBER FIREPLACE
- ORIGINAL WALLS
- - - REMOVED WALLS
- NEW WALLS

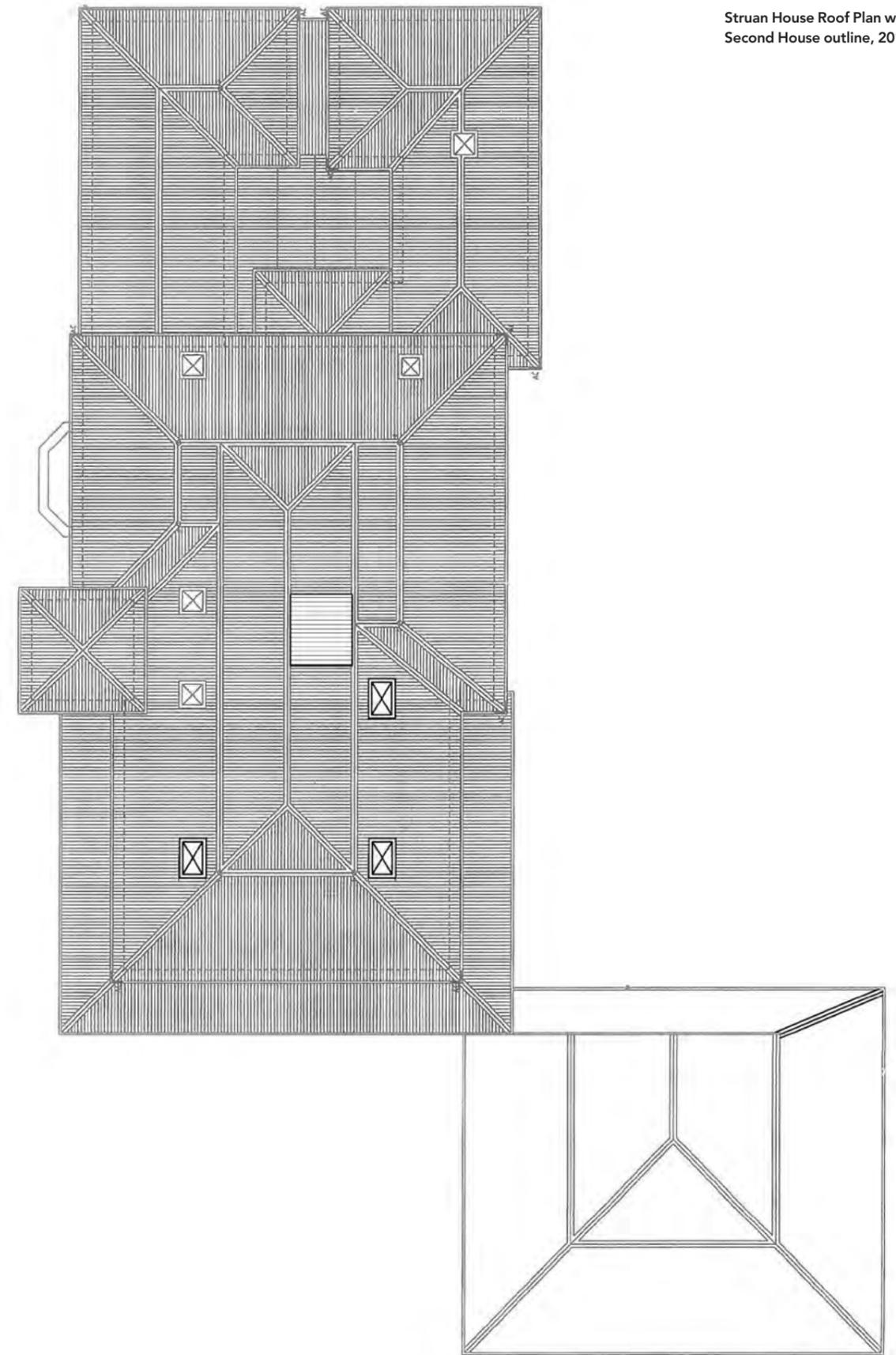
Habitable Places  
Architects  
Scale 1:250 @ A4 Feb 2015

First Floor Plan

Struan House First Floor Plan with  
Second House Roof Plan 2015.

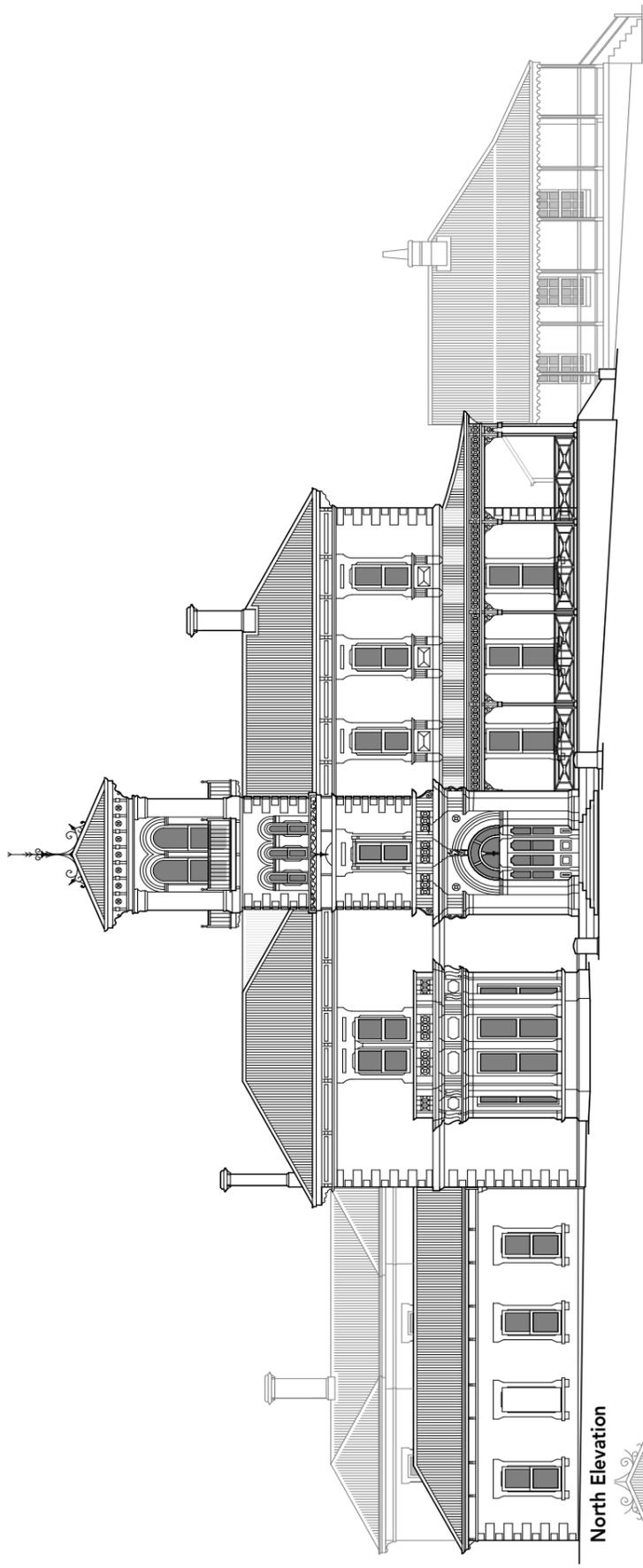


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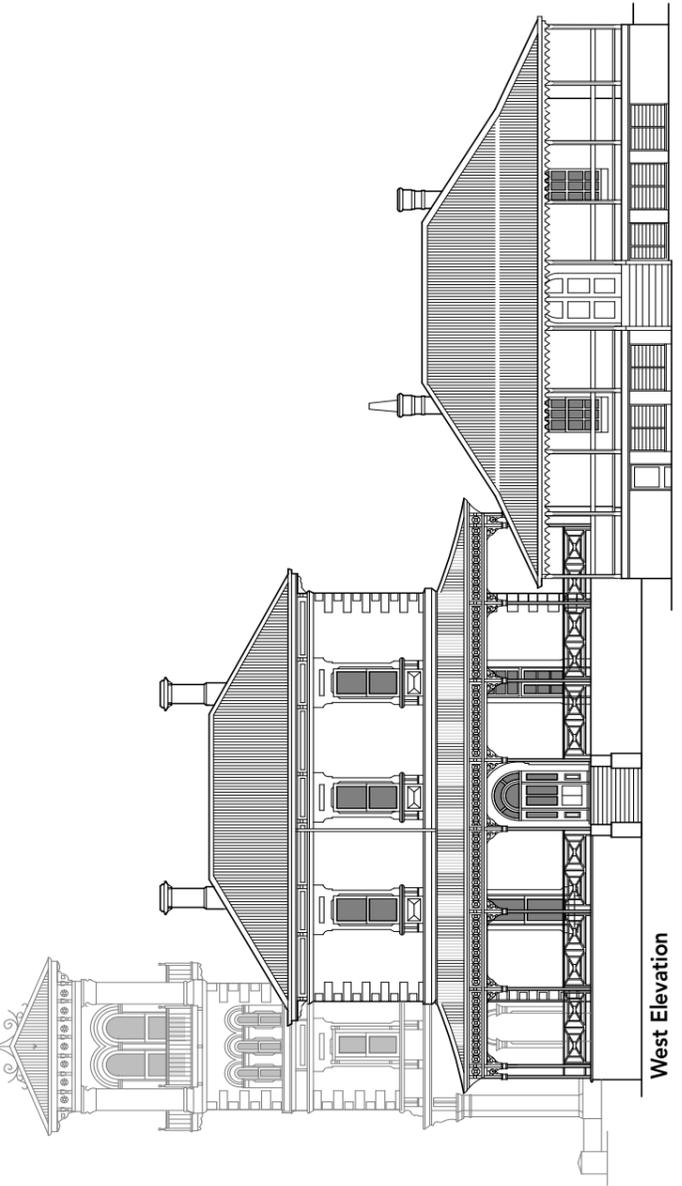


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Architects  
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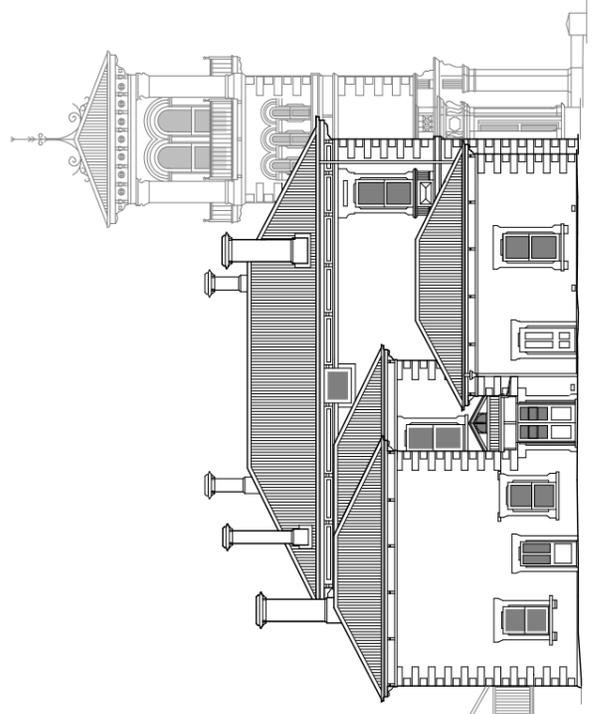
North Elevation



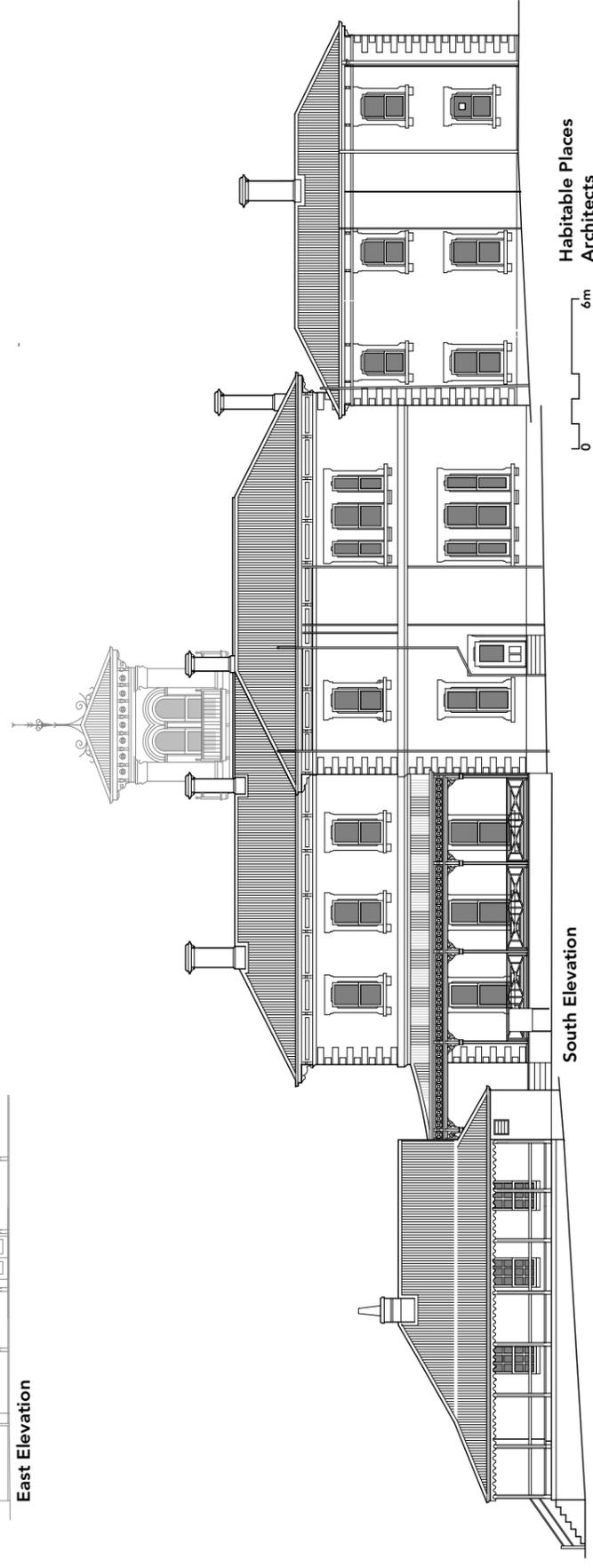
West Elevation

Habitable Places  
Architects  
Scale 1:250 @ A4  
Feb 2015

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East Elevation



South Elevation

Habitable Places  
Architects  
Scale 1:250 @ A4  
Feb 2015

DRAFT

Stonework specification

Gore's specification for the stonework at Struan House would have been similar to that for St Andrews Church, Penola. This has been confirmed by close inspection of both buildings. The specification includes:

**'Excavator**  
Dig trenches of sufficient size for the various footings and to general depth of 2 feet 6 inches below the Present surface of the ground remove all earth taken from the excavations, deposit and spread near the building or clean away as may be directed, the whole site of the church to be excavated and levelled so as to leave a clear space of 12 inches between the ground and the underside of the floor.

**Foundations**  
To be constructed with large flat-bedded stones roughly dressed, strongly bonded and laid in mortar and grouted, when completed the earth to be well rammed against the foundations. Build dwarf wall to carry the floor throughout the dwarf walls not to exceed 6 feet centre to centre...

**Mason**  
The exact form of walls etc to be very carefully set out by the Contractor subject to the direction of the Inspector for the Committee.

**Stone**  
The stone generally unless where otherwise specified is to be of the very best quality of sound flat-bedded building stone, uniform in color and equal in every respect to a sample which the contractor must deposit with the Committee before signing the Contract. The masonry throughout to be built in the various forms and of the dimensions shown or figured on the drawings, the stone to be thoroughly well bonded, bedded and jointed in mortar, every stone well hammered down to a true bearing, flushed in with mortar and grouted at every rise of 2 feet, the walling throughout to be constructed in the strongest manner all stones being laid on their flat-bed and the whole uniformly solid and compact

**Mortar**  
The whole of the mortar to be used in the works to be composed of fresh burnt lime and good sharp clean sand in the Proportions of One of lime and Two of sand to be thoroughly mixed and worked before being used and measures must be provided for mixing in the above proportions

**Walls**  
To be built in the very best rubble masonry the face to lie in square and random coursed with the heads and joints properly squared and set horizontally and vertically true the face neatly and uniformly hammer dressed... Point and finish with a neat ---- black cole joint— There must be at least one good through stone of uniform thickness in every six feet superficial, the inside of walls to be well flushed up, all arches to be turned completely through the walls. Build in under the floor 20 Cast iron air-bricks 6" x 3"

**Cut stone dressing etc**  
All door and window jambs, heads, sills, mullions, labels, buttresses, caps, weathering, chimney stack, the bottom plinth and dressings throughout coloured yellow in the elevations are to be of the very best fine lime stone from the quarries at \_\_\_\_\_ to be cut in large scanting and set with close joints in fine mortar...

— The quoins are to be of selected stone of same description as the walls to average 18" long and to range with the fronts[?] of walls no quoins to exceed 12" in height, all the angles to have tooled margins 2" wide (see sketch) the jambs of windows etc to be neatly tooled and chamfered, the arches, dressings, mullions, copings and the like to have strong slate plugs run in with cement...

**Steps**  
To all doors put 1 1/2 round nosing Willunga slate steps with cut stone risers two to each opening...  
— The cut stone to be pointed as directed by the Clerk of the Works, no joint to exceed 3/16 of an inch, to be neatly Key jointed...  
— All arches are to be turned on proper centres which are not to be struck til directed by the Clerk of Works  
— Strong and sufficient scaffolding to be erected on both sides of the walls  
— Thoroughly and efficiently complete the masonry in every Particular<sup>7</sup>

Gore's specification and sketch for the stonework margins for St Andrews Church Penola

Tooled margins are still visible on a few of the dressings at Struan, and they precisely reflect the detail specified by W T Gore for St Andrews Church. Habitable Places 2015

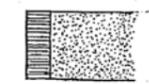
Walls

To be built in the very best rubble masonry the face to lie in square and random coursed with the heads and joints properly squared and set horizontally and vertically true the face neatly and uniformly hammer dressed the joints to cut with the chipping Point and finish with a neat smooth black cole joint— There must be at least one good through stone of uniform thickness in every six feet superficial, the inside of walls to be well flushed up, all arches to be turned completely through the walls Build in under the floor 20 Cast-iron air bricks 6" x 3"

Cut stone dressings &c

All door and window jambs, heads, sills, mullions, labels, buttresses, caps, weathering, chimney stack, the bottom plinth and dressings throughout coloured yellow in the elevations are to be of the very best fine lime stone from the quarries at \_\_\_\_\_ to be cut in large scanting and set with close joints in fine mortar, the strings &c shown by a red tint on elevations to be of best bright red rubbed bricks set with close joint and neatly pointed

— The quoins are to be of selected stone of same description as the walls to average 18" long and to range with the fronts of walls no quoins to exceed 12" in height, all the angles to have tooled margins 2" wide (see sketch)



Cast iron frieze, Struan House verandah. Quadrant corner brackets contrast with the geometric filligree of the frieze. A third pattern fills the space between pairs of columns. The cast iron brackets and frieze are a typical Victorian pattern.

Cast zinc column capitals, Struan House. The sharper arrisses set these apart from the more common cast iron. The zinc capital was cast by Angus McLean.

The column shaft is cast iron, probably a replacement dating from 1990s. The bases are cast zinc, and have been affected by the magnesite topping of Farm School verandah infill, since removed. Photos Habitable Places 2015



#### McLeans Patent Columns

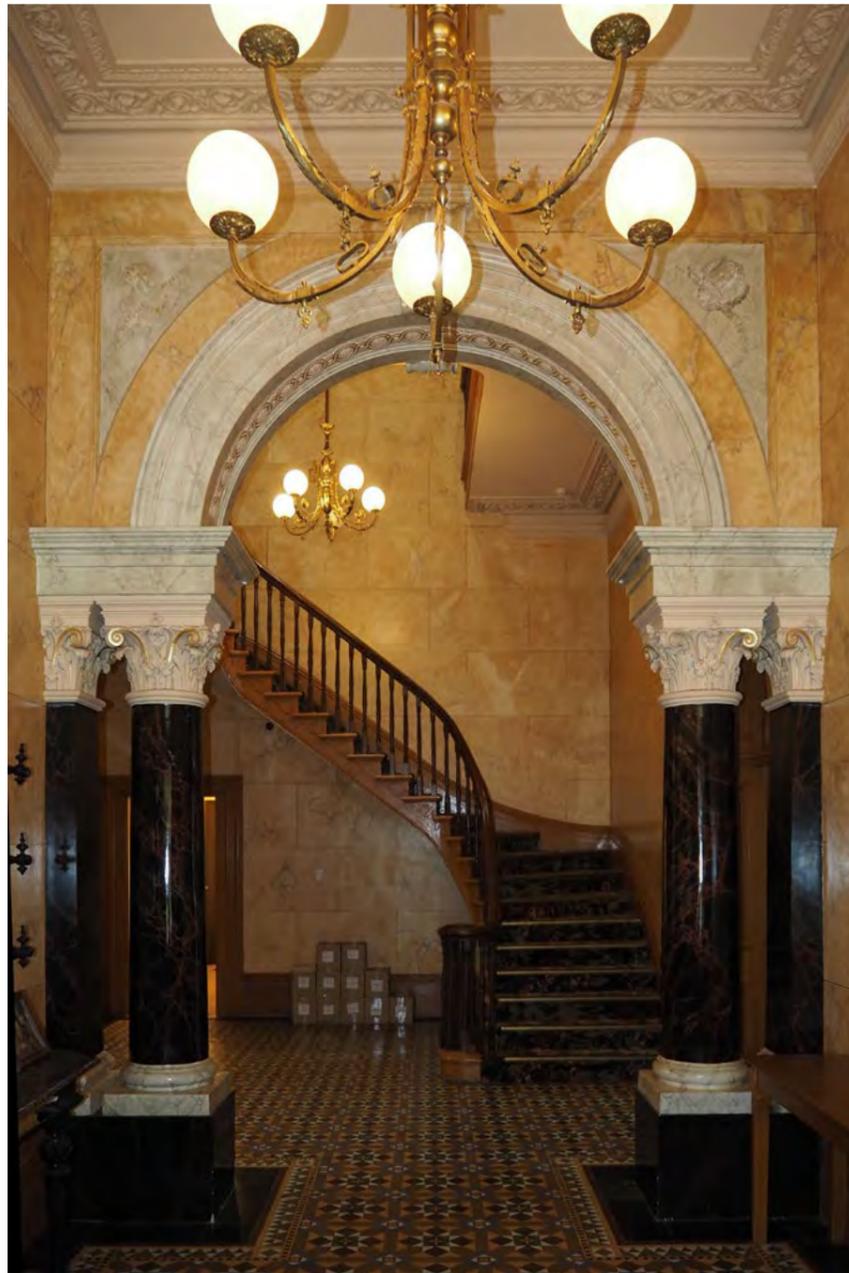
Miles Lewis describes a new type of column that was used at Struan House, as 'cheaper and lighter than cast iron. It was patented in 1873 by Angus McLean, a [Melbourne] patternmaker in the ironfounding industry, and later a founder in his own right. His column had the appearance of a regular cast iron verandah or balcony column, but in fact used much less iron and was lighter and cheaper. It consisted of an outer casing of galvanized sheet iron, with a core in the form of an iron pipe, angle [or] T iron, the spaces being filled with cement and clean sharp sand as a concrete; the capitals and bases are of cast zinc. The composition was said, rather remarkably, to be two of parts cement to one of sand. The columns were not put forward as inferior substitutes for cast iron but said to present the appearance of being made of solid iron, while they exhibit a degree of smoothness and polish which is quite unattainable in cast iron columns, even though they cost 30% less'.<sup>9</sup>

#### Verandahs

The elegant verandah to the bedroom wing of Struan House was built on the foundations of an earlier outbuilding to the Second House. It had a suspended timber floor and timber nosings that have since been replaced with slate. Columns were reported at the time of construction to be McLeans Patent Columns.<sup>8</sup> The base and capital mouldings are distinctly finer than equivalent iron castings and have been confirmed to be cast zinc, characteristic of McLeans Foundry. However physical investigation shows the columns are now cast iron. Few McLeans columns remain in service having been replaced with cast iron. Corrosion of the sheet metal cladding and / or iron core would have spalled the concrete and disrupted the sheet metal. They would have been difficult or impossible to repair. It is likely that the columns at Struan House are not original.

Entry Hallway Struan House. The bravura interior decorative scheme has been skillfully reconstructed. Habitable Places 2014

Tessellated floor remain to the ground floor entrance rooms and thresholds. Habitable Places 2014



#### Timber Specification

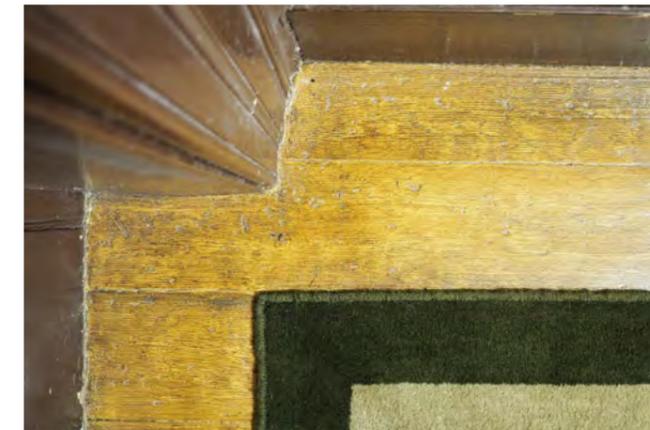
Gore's specifications for flooring and doors are likely to mirror those for St Andrews Church:

##### 'Floor

To be 1 1/8x6 best prepared red T&G flooring throughout on red gum joist 5x3 spaced 16" apart on plates 5x3 bedded on set offs and on dwarf walls...the flooring nailed with 2 1/2 wrought brads at intersection of each joist, two heading joints are not to be made together on same joist the whole cleaned off with a regular surface should the joints open more than 1/16 of an inch in 12 months the floor to be taken up and relaid at the expense of the Contractor

##### Doors

to the main entrances 1 1/2" framed doors with 7/8" wrought and beaded panels put on in narrow widths, the inside to have lock rail... the whole neatly chamfered and hung folding with three 4 inch wrought iron butts to 5 1/2 x 3 rebated and wrought and beaded frames two nine inch tower bolts to each door and 8in No 60 best patent rim locks with black china furniture<sup>10</sup>



On either side and back and front of the arch in the Entry Room 1 there are family crests, consisting of a bas relief moulding, hand painted with banners picked out in lead pencil. It consists of a dexter arm coupled in pale holding a regal crown.<sup>11</sup>

The decorative wood grain paint finish to the floors has been reconstructed in the ground floor hallways.

The same 'best patent rim locks' specified for St Andrews remain in working order at Struan House. The brass roundel to this lock in Room 3 reads No 60 Jas Carpenter Patentee. The cast iron retains its original black paint finish. Photos Habitable Places 2014

Painted timber mantel in Room 204 of the Second House with its 'turning bar' intact. Habitable Places 2014



'Malachite' enamelled slate fireplace in Room 29 of Struan House. Habitable Places 2014

The mottled grey marble fireplace in the former Library of Struan House Room 23 is of a similar design to the earlier marble fireplace in Room 205 of the Second House, but is even more robust and masculine in character. Habitable Places 2014



#### Timber fireplaces

The secondary rooms in the Second House and the smaller bedrooms in Struan House had timber fire surrounds with slate hearths.

Gore's specification for St Andrews Church makes reference to a turning bar for a fireplace: '—To fire place in vestry put 2 ½" x 3/8" turning bar brick sides back and hearth also 1½ slate front hearth, carefully gather in the flue and well parget same finish stack above in neat cut stone as shown'<sup>14</sup>

The one remaining timber fire surround in the Second House retains an original wrought iron turning bar and Willunga slate front hearth which match this description. The function of the pivot or turning bar is obvious: a kettle could be conveniently swivelled over the coals, to brew a cup of tea without recourse to the kitchen. It is an uncommon feature to find in a formal homestead: perhaps a nostalgic feature carried over from the First House.

#### Enamelled slate fireplaces

Six enamelled slate fireplaces remain in Struan House. The choice of fireplace for each room reflects deliberate consideration of the room function and importance. Marble was used in the formal rooms, and most of the front and corner rooms. Enamelled slate in various shades of imitation stone was used in the remaining rooms downstairs and the corner rooms upstairs. The smaller upstairs bedrooms now have timber fireplaces, although some of these are not original. It is not known whether these were originally timber or slate.

In the Second House the remaining two fireplaces tell a slightly different story. The front room (room 204) has a timber fireplace. It has no cast iron grate. Instead there is a pivoting wrought iron pot arm. The fireplace in what was one of the two reception rooms (room 205) has a robust marble fireplace and cast iron grate, similar in style to that used a decade later in the Library (room 23) in Struan House.

Enamelled slate fireplaces were manufactured in Britain from the 1840s, as a cheaper substitute for marble. It is likely that G E Magnus of Pimlico Slate Works manufactured those at Struan House using slate from Valentia Island, County Kerry.<sup>12 13</sup> Enamelled slate fireplaces were not manufactured in Australia until 1867.<sup>14</sup> From the 1880s marble became cost competitive and fewer slate fireplaces were used.

The enamelled finish was applied by rubbing in a filler and grinding the slate surface with pumice to a fine finish. Three coats of enamel were applied to provide the base colour. One patented recipe refers to turpentine, the required base colour and a drying varnish, essentially an enamel paint. Marbling was a well established technique. Quick drying varnish containing ground pigments was floated on water with which it did not mix. The surface was stirred to create the desired marble pattern and the slate piece was lowered onto the scum to lift the pattern from the water surface. The pieces were then fired at 180-320°C for 48 hours to fuse the finish to the stone and to create the enamelled surface.<sup>15</sup> Finally the surfaces were highly polished by hand. The brilliant polished finish was claimed to be superior to marble, and to be more durable and resistant to chipping.<sup>16</sup>

Mr Robbie advertised enamelled slate fireplaces, along with his painting skills, in the Border Watch in 1876. These would have been a high value item for a painter to purchase and hold in the hope of a local sale. Perhaps he had imported these on speculation, a poor business decision that may have contributed to his bankruptcy.<sup>17</sup>

Each of the six slate fireplaces at Struan has a unique colour and pattern. Contemporary Australian advertisements for enamelled slate fireplaces list various colours, including Light St Ann's, Dark St Ann's, Black, Italian Brown, Rouge, Malachite and Serpentine.<sup>18</sup>



In the first floor Dining Room (room 64) the original run plaster mouldings were retained when the newer pressed metal ceiling was installed, a somewhat incongruous combination. Habitable Places 2015

The profile of the original plaster cornice can be seen in the window architrave at the eastern end of the first floor hallway ceiling, (room 202) providing physical evidence for the lath and plaster ceilings. Habitable Places 2015

In the Struan House Entry Hall the original marbled paint finish and the Robertson crests were intact when the Farm School commenced in 1947 but plaster showed through where the column plinths had been chipped. Strong overhead light from the stairwell skylight enhances the textured wall finish and the curve of the banister, capturing Gore's architectural intent for the grand interior. SRSA GRG29/136\_picture\_335



### Plastering

Gore's specification for plastering as St Andrews Church reads as follows:

'The best hair mortar only to be used throughout and in same proportions as stated for masonry,  
 — Render, flote and rough stucco the inside walls... in imitation of ashlar work to finish with a regular surface, free from scratches etc, and of uniform color, the whole neatly jointed, the jambs soffits etc of openings Plastered as above  
 — Neatly stop in with cement fillet round all door frames...  
 — Lath lay flote and set white the ceilings and render flote and set white the walls...'<sup>20</sup>

### Interiors

Struan demonstrates a clarity of planning for internal function, privacy and circulation. Guest bedrooms are to the right. The formal rooms are in the centre. The private bedrooms are upstairs. The servants quarters to the east are disposed around a courtyard, now covered. The building envelope expands around the central corridor, providing optimum room widths for each activity, as well as the stepped facade and articulated massing that is characteristic of the style.

A detailed room by room description, prior to completion of the building, is provided in Appendix B. Notable interior elements to the Entry (Rooms 1 & 2) are the curving staircase, tessellated floor, faux marble wall finish and wood grained joinery hand painted to imitate oak. All formal reception rooms (Rooms 4, 21, 25 & 217) have unique hand carved marble fireplaces. Enamelled slate fireplaces were used in secondary rooms, each with a unique colour and pattern. The smaller rooms may have had timber fireplaces.

The three formal reception rooms had elaborate decorative paint schemes. Walls were divided into panels with borders trimmed with gold leaf. The decorative schemes in the entry, stairwell and two large downstairs rooms have been re-constructed but a similar scheme originally extended to the long passageways. The bedrooms all had oak wood grained joinery, but it is not known whether the bedroom walls had decorative paint schemes.

Timber floors throughout were Baltic pine finished with oak wood graining to the passages but are concealed elsewhere. The floors to the porch, entry and stair room were tessellated.

### Ceilings

Ceilings were lath and plaster, richly decorated with beams, corbels and roses in the formal rooms, with the details picked out in pastel colours. Lath and plaster ceilings would have extended throughout. Many of the first floor ceilings are now pressed metal, a product not available when the house was built. Brasse noted that Wunderlich pressed zinc ceilings were available from 1887, and steel after 1897.<sup>19</sup> Visible surface corrosion indicates that the ceilings are pressed sheet iron, not zinc and therefore post-date 1897. The pressed metal was installed within a few decades of construction, suggesting that water damage had caused the original lath and plaster ceilings to fail. Perhaps the slate roof leaked, the box gutter was undersized or its concealed outlet blocked and overflowed. Alternatively failure or overflow of the 'large cistern' in the roof space could have damaged the ceilings beyond repair. Subsequent first floor ceilings were replaced with cement or fibrous sheet with timber battens. Ongoing failure of the lath and plaster ceilings is consistent with photos showing the poor condition of the slate roof by the mid 20th Century.

The verandah was infilled in 1949 to form a sunroom for the manager's apartment. The double hung sash to Room 11 was still in place when the photo was taken, but was later removed to install French doors. The timber balustrades and the slate nosings to the stone steps were still in place. The subjects are recorded as Mrs Davis, Bill & Jock. Struan House Archives



Farm School graffiti to the verandah stonework of the Second House. Habitable Places 2014

Farm School graffiti in Struan House Room 27 that was used as a boys dormitory. Serious damage to the enamelled slate decorative finish has been inflicted in trying to erase the graffiti, but the marble pattern can still be made out. Habitable Places 2014



### Farm School alterations

Alterations to Struan House for the change of use to Farm School are detailed in two historic plans dated from 1949. These drawings also show how the rooms were used during this period.<sup>21</sup>

A manager's apartment was formed in the bedroom wing on the ground floor. The window to room 29 was cut down and a pair of doors were installed. The corner of the main verandah was enclosed to form a sunroom, bathroom and kitchenette, using asbestos cement sheet and louvres. Two additional bathrooms with magnesite flooring were later added to the back verandah, appearing in plans from 1970. The verandah infill blocked the verandah access between the two houses. The connecting steps were removed. The original staff wing was retained with only minor changes for staff bedrooms, sitting, sewing, kitchen and dining rooms.

Uncharacteristic corrosion (white zinc) is evident only on the verandah column bases adjacent to the Second House, where the bathroom has since been removed. Elsewhere the zinc castings are in excellent condition. Magnesite, a form of concrete topping containing magnesium oxychloride was a popular product from the 1920s to 1970s. It was specified in 1949 as the floor topping in wet areas in Struan House. However, over time in the presence of dampness, chloride salts leach into and corrode adjacent building fabric. While the magnesite in this location has since been removed, its damaging effects continue. It is not known whether magnesite remains within other wet areas of Struan House.

On the first floor, six rooms including the formal reception room (Room 217) were used as boys dormitories. Graffiti scratched into one enamelled slate fireplace and the stonework of the Second House remains as evidence of this period.

A screen wall was erected around the top of the stairwell void. No photos or details of this have been found. Room 216, behind the stairway, was converted into a lavatory and shower block, with terrazzo floors and partitions that remain today.

In this period, the slate roof cladding was replaced with galvanised iron. The chimney stacks were taken down and rebuilt from Mt Gambier limestone, with plain rendered caps.

Two large rectangular underground tanks are shown in a services drawing from 1949. It is likely that these are original potable water tanks constructed in 1875. There is no surface evidence of these tanks, which may have been backfilled when the carpark was constructed.

The kitchen garden was overgrown in 1948 when the Farm School was being established. The kitchen chimney, visible far right was raised higher than the original when it was reconstructed for the Farm School. Struan House Archives

Careful analysis of this undated photo shows that the slate roofs to the external roof panels were not replaced immediately. The stone chimneys, new in 1948, have substantially weathered and the external slate roofs, in very poor condition were still in place. The stark tonal contrast between the rear elevation stonework and the cement rendered window trims and quoins is striking. In comparison, little tonal contrast is visible on the north-west elevation. SRSA GRG29/136\_353

The slate roof to the concealed valleys of Struan House was stripped in 1948 and short sheet galvanised iron was installed. Shards of slate remain in the roof spaces of both buildings. Timber was in short supply after WWII and the redundant battens were stripped and salvaged. Materials were hoisted on ropes from the tower balcony. The workers are Malcolm Tiley, Jock, Stan, Ray Rule, Bill and Murray. Struan House Archives



By 1968, TV was a necessity, and the roof provided an obvious mounting point for the aerial. A slow decline in the building integrity is evident. The balconies have been removed from the tower: presumably they had become unsafe through lack of maintenance. The painting of the rendered trims has commenced. The tower and bay window are completely painted, and some ground floor face stonework had been rendered and painted. However the remaining window trims and corner quoins remained unpainted. The verandah balustrade had been replaced with pipe rails and chain mesh.

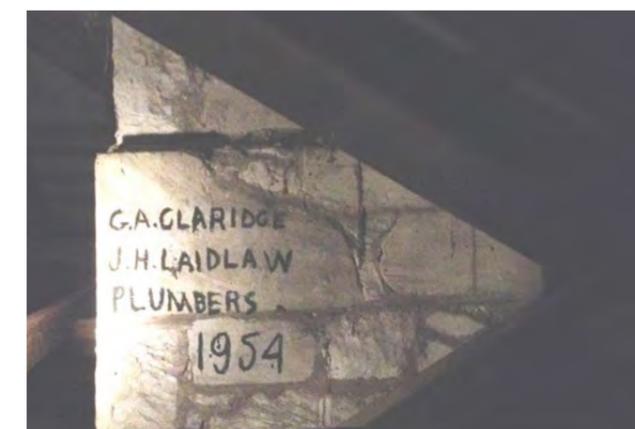
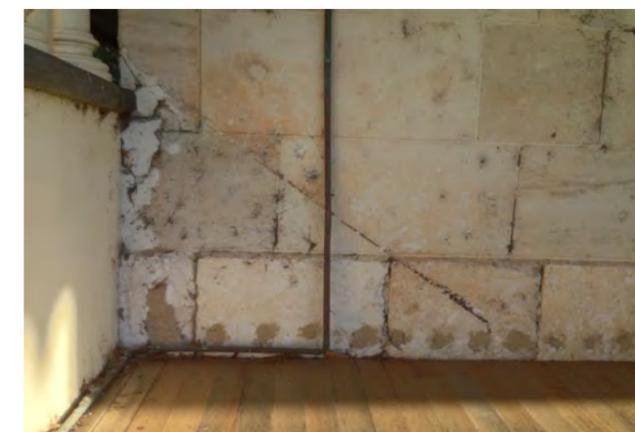
John T Collins (1907–2001) was an honorary photographer for the Victorian National Trust in Victoria from 1950 to 1988. His collection of almost 20,000 black-and-white negatives is in the State Library of Victoria. It provides an excellent record of the agricultural and pastoral industries of 19th-century Victoria.<sup>55</sup> State Library of Victoria H98.252/2170.

Two sets of steps are shown in early drawings connecting the side verandah of the Second House with the western corner of the main Struan House verandah. These steps integrated the awkward junction and provided direct access between the two buildings. It is likely they were part of the original design. They are no longer extant. The steps were made redundant by the construction of a bathroom on the corner of the main verandah. They are shown in an elegant hand drawn floor plan from 1969 (Refer DPTI Plan Room 2893-AR-1969) that appears to be a clean tracing of the earlier drawing, rather than based on a measured survey.

It is likely that the stairs were removed in 1949. They do not appear in the 1970 construction plans.

There is physical evidence of these stairs. A diagonal brown over-paint line on the face stonework pinpoints the alignment of the stair stringer. Habitable Places 2014

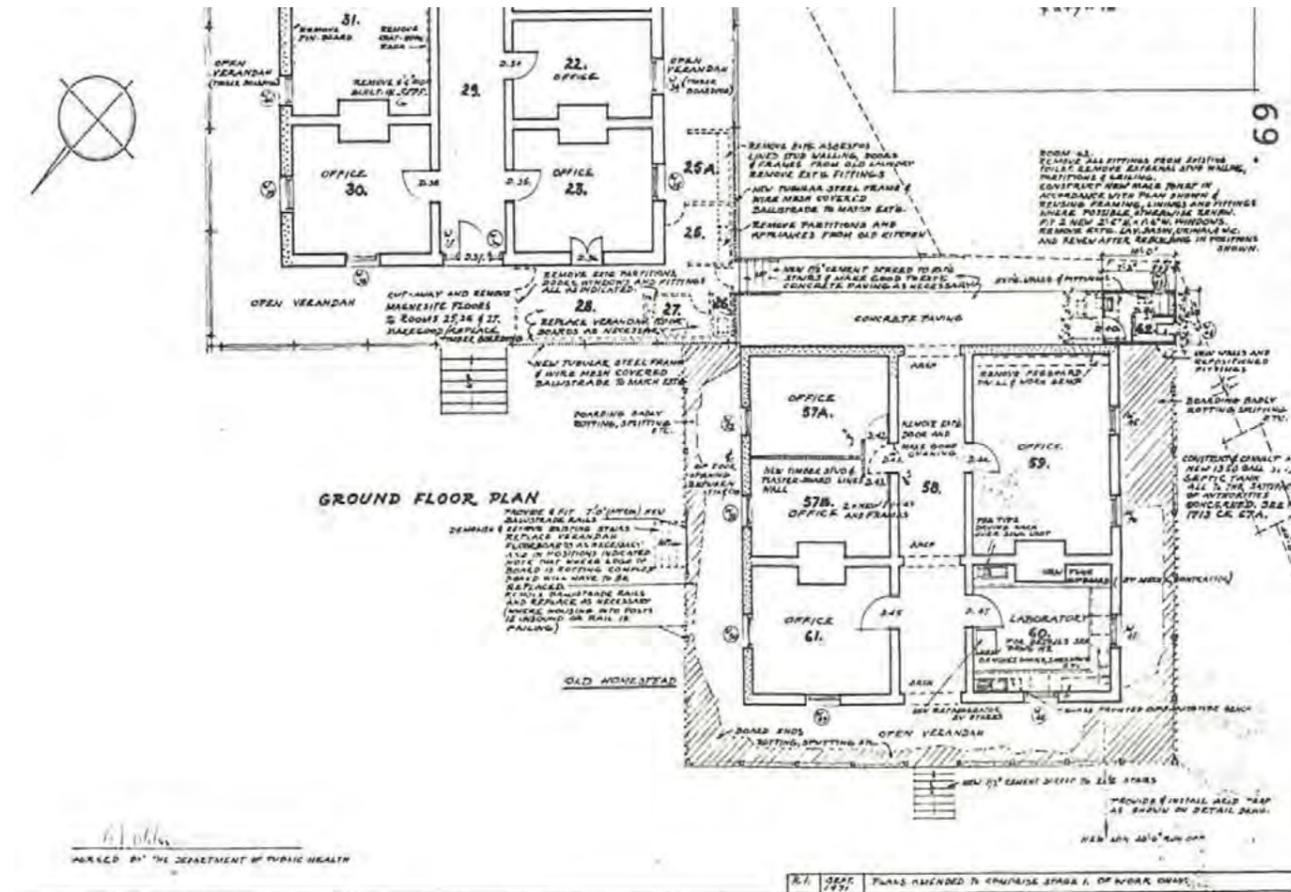
Graffiti on the chimney within the roof space of the Second House emphatically records that roof plumbers were on site in 1954. This is a likely date for reroofing of that building. Habitable Places 2014



The straight verandah and blunt chimneys installed for the Farm School remained after the verandah infill was removed. Pipe rail and chain mesh had replaced the timber balustrade. The verandah stonework and steps had been cement rendered and painted. J. Collins 1983 SLV H98.252/2176



Detail 1970 Renovation Floor Plans  
3079-AR-1970 DPTI Plan Room



### 1970-74 Research Station Alterations

Minor changes to the two houses were undertaken for the change of use from Farm School to research centre. In the Second House, a soils laboratory was installed into a front corner room (Room 203). One of the larger rear rooms (Room 206) was partitioned.<sup>22</sup> These changes, which remain in place, are largely reversible.

Only two fire surrounds remain in the Second House, one marble and one timber. However it is not known when the other fire surrounds were removed. Brasse suggested that the marble mantelpiece now in Room 4 of Struan House, which had won a prize at the 1867 Melbourne Exhibition may, along with the arched doorways, have been installed in the Second House before being moved to Struan House.<sup>23</sup> We found no substantiating documentation for this possibility. The drawings noted decay in the verandah flooring and balustrades, which were repaired.<sup>24</sup> A set of steps was removed from the north eastern verandah. The main stone steps were topped with a cement screed.

In Struan House the alterations were restricted to the ground floor. The changes removed many of the Farm School fittings, but had little impact on original fabric. The current layout of the interior dates from this period. The verandah infill sunroom and washrooms were removed. A second doorway was installed into the Conference Room. A passage was formed within the original Library (Room 23) and a new external doorway and steps were constructed to provide direct connection from a new carpark behind the building.

Minor alterations to the servant's wing reflect changing expectations and new technologies. A partition was installed in the old scullery to form a separate PABX room and a passage (Rooms 14 & 15). There is physical evidence of original paint finishes on the northern wall of this passage, where a cupboard unit was noted to be removed in 1970. New toilets were installed. A new pump house was added to the rear elevation. This has since been removed.

Some external walls and most of the servants quarters are noted as having 'salt damp treated by others'. The method of treatment is not specified.<sup>25</sup>

### 1976 Basement to Second House

Drawings prepared by Bruce Harry and Associates in 1976 shown the fit-out of the three basement rooms of the Second House for store rooms and a photography dark room. The space under the verandah was infilled with cedar louvres. Steps, a door and drainage to the basement were installed. Coved concrete floors installed throughout have contributed to the severe rising damp in the basement walls.<sup>26</sup>

External floodlights were installed to highlight views of the Struan House from the driveway, but also from the relocated Naracoorte - Penola Road (now Riddoch Highway). This infrastructure is extant but not operational.<sup>27</sup>

### 1987 Lothar Brasse Conservation Management Plan

The 1987 Conservation Management Plan provides the first systematic record of the changes to the buildings, and records their condition at that time. A fine set of external elevation measured drawings were prepared.<sup>28</sup>

The original colours and the border flower motif in room was revealed by paint removal in 1990. All 17 faces of the cornice moulding were spot checked. 1990 Paint Analysis - Lothar Brasse and Helen Wiedenhofer Figure 9

Record of the stencil and colours determined by paint removal. 1990 Paint Analysis - Lothar Brasse and Helen Wiedenhofer Pages 19, 20

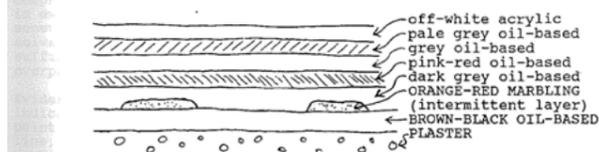
Typical results of the paint investigation.<sup>32</sup> 1990 Paint Analysis - Lothar Brasse Helen Wiedenhofer P2 Sketch



1. Room 1 - Entrance Hall

The column on the eastern side of the entrance hall was examined and tested with a number of solvent systems. Contemporary photographic evidence suggests that the original finish on this column is a dark-coloured painted marbling.

Paint layering on the column appears to be as follows:



The overall recommendations were that the exterior of Struan House should be reconstructed to the 1870s - 1880s period and that the decorative interiors of the significant spaces should also be reconstructed.

Recommendations for smoke separation between the two storeys and structural reinforcement were considered by Brasse to substantially threaten the significance and integrity of the main staircase. Alternatives were proposed and discussed.

Brasse recommended that the original external steps connecting the verandahs of the Second and Struan House should be reconstructed. This has not yet been done. He also recommended that the verandah and chimney tops be reconstructed and that the galvanised roofing be replaced with slate grey colorbond. This has subsequently occurred. Dampness was clearly a serious concern. He recommended that site drainage be improved and the cement render be removed or replaced with sacrificial lime renders.<sup>29</sup>

Brasse prepared an external colour schedule based on paint scraping in 1989. (Refer Appendix C). In March 1990 he and Helen Weidenhofer investigated the interior decorative paint scheme to establish suitable methods for removal of overpainting. Subsequently a team of five conservators removed overpainting from selected sample areas to expose and record the original patterns and colours. Chemical and manual (scalpel) methods were used. It was concluded that 'apart from the physical eminence and architectural qualities exuded by Struan, the internal paint finishes uncovered suggests that here too lies a masterpiece of applied bravura finishes; all illusory and deceptive, and all aiming at imitating granite and marble. The work carried out by a Mr Robbie of Penola was done with a high degree of skill and artistry. The best images of the diversity and range of bravura finishes appear in the entrance foyer, but the skills are evident throughout, especially in the more remote, upper level bedroom fireplace surrounds.'<sup>30</sup>

Sufficient evidence was revealed to establish the original pattern and colours, which were recorded. Paint analysis revealed that original oil based decorative paint and marbling had in some cases been overpainted with up to four coats of oil-based and several coats of acrylic paint. Both the chemical and manual paint removal caused unacceptable damage to the original pattern and colours including the gilt borders.

Brasse recommended that the exposed sample areas be protected and retained for future interpretation. Elsewhere the original decorative scheme should be reconstructed over the white overpaint, based on the physical evidence revealed by the investigations.<sup>31</sup>

It appears that not all of the original decorative painting was overpainted. The crest high above the marble fireplace in Room 4 appears to have been spared from painting during the Farm School period. This is confirmed by documentary reports.

As research for this CMP has revealed, the enamelled slate fire surround were in fact imported pre-finished rather than being painted in-situ by Mr Robbie. Nevertheless they remain an outstanding collection of Victorian decorative paintwork. It appears that the enamelled slate fireplaces were never overpainted. Brasse commented on them as decorative paintwork. They were not included in the scope of work for later decorative paint finish reconstruction.

#### 1990-91 Restoration

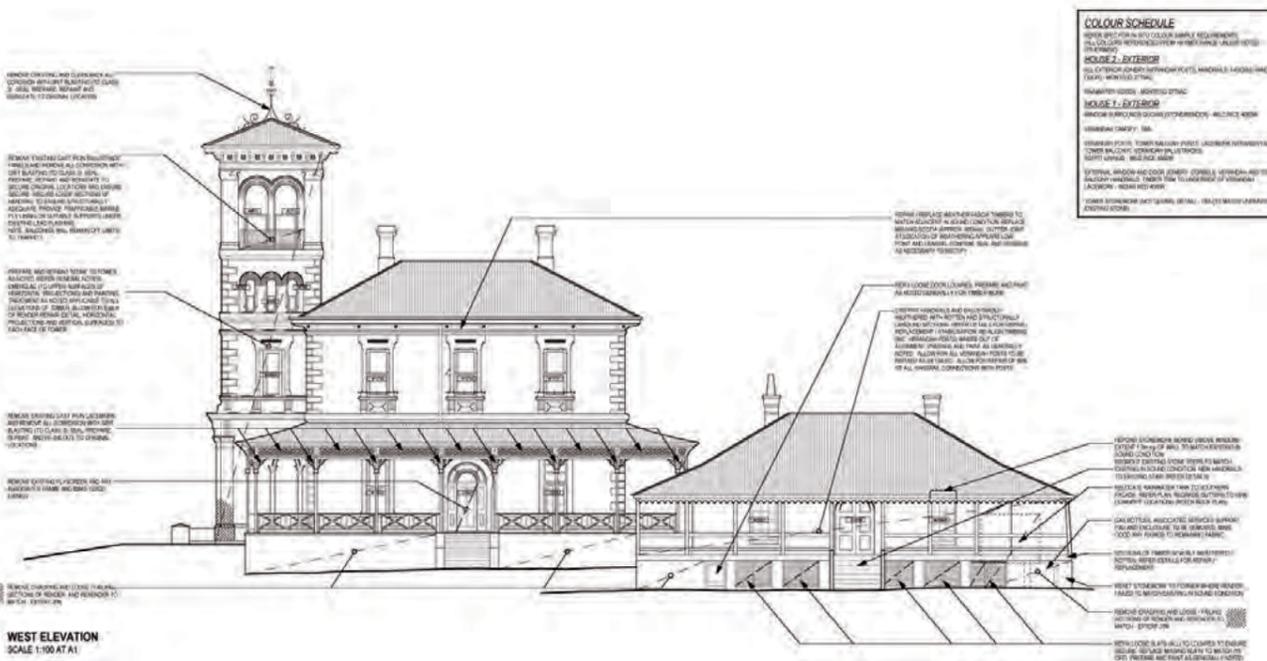
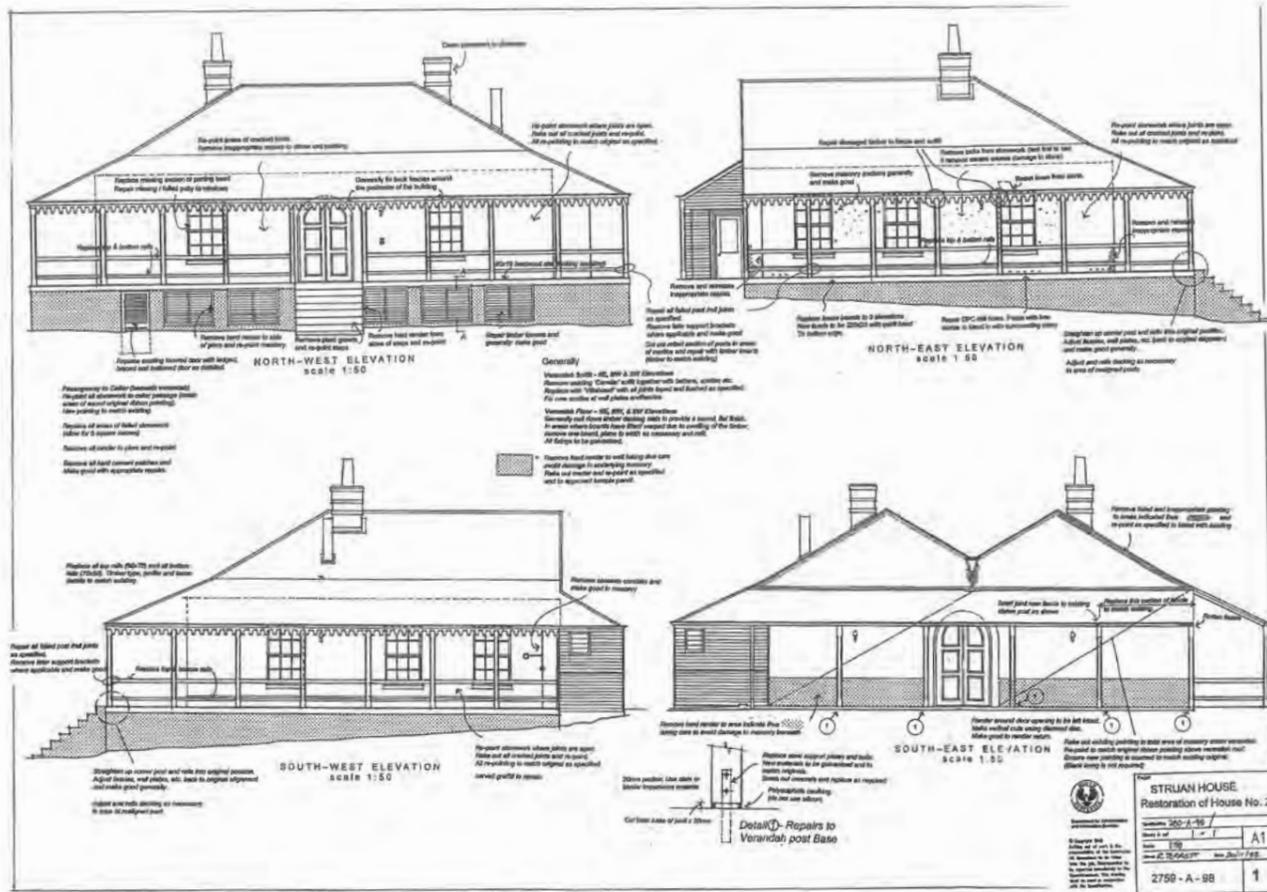
No documentation of the exterior restoration works following on from the 1987 CMP has been located. A budget of \$350,000 was reported in 1988-89.<sup>33</sup> There is an unfixed aluminium plaque in the NTSA Struan Heritage Room (Room 206) recording that this conservation work received a Royal Institute of Architects Award of Merit in 1991. The following scope of work has been inferred from the CMP and the subsequent Dilapidation Survey.

- Re-roofing with slate grey colorbond. However the acroteria were not reconstructed as recommended in the CMP.
- Reconstruction of the balconies to the tower. It is assumed that the cast iron railings had previously be salvaged and stored on site and were restored when the balconies were reconstructed.
- Reconstruction of the verandahs. The original bulbosed , hardwood edge plates, noted by Brasse to be in poor repair<sup>34</sup> were replaced with new Mintaro slate verandah nosings. New jarrah verandah flooring was installed. Other original slate within Struan House is from the Willunga slate quarries but the slate nosing to the verandah is Mintaro. The timber verandah balustrades were reconstructed to the original pattern, using western red cedar and oregon. The concave verandah roofing was reconstructed, however the stripes do not match the width of the original. The original sheet metal and concrete McLeans verandah columns are no longer extant. It appears that they were replaced with specially cast iron columns with matching taper at this time. However, the McLeans cast zinc base and capital mouldings do remain. It appears that these, along with the cast iron lacework were salvaged and reinstalled to the new iron columns.
- A sumped air-drain was constructed part-way along the south-east and north-east elevations to intercept surface / subsurface water, to address dampness in the eastern wing.
- Salt damp treatments may have been done, but were ineffectual.

#### 1997-2002 Repairs and Reconstruction

DAIS Heritage Unit undertook Stabilisation of the ceiling plaster as a minor works project in 1997. A Dilapidation Survey was undertaken by the SA Department of Construction in 1998 and a report was compiled in 2002.<sup>35</sup> From this report it is apparent that elements of the previous reconstruction work had failed, did not follow the CMP recommendations and did not follow established conservation practices. The following substantial repairs and reconstruction were documented in 2002, however not all of this work was completed.

- Removal of hard cement renders and repointing with soft lime mortar.
- Replacement of fretted face stonework.
- Repairs to tessellated entrance porch floor.
- Connecting stormwater for underground disposal. This was not done and remains a risk to the buildings.
- Removal of paint from the tower and all rendered trims. This was not done. The tower and trims are all finished with an acrylic paint.
- Re-bed dislodged slate verandah nosings which had apparently



Second House Elevations for 1998 conservation work. DPTI Plan Room 2759-A-98 Sheet 1

Elevation drawings for 2006 exterior conservation work. DPTI Plan Room 3345-A-2006 Sheet 8 Elevations

- already dislodged. This was not done: the verandah nosings remain dislodged and un-fixed.
- Take down, grit blast and reinstate decorative cast iron frieze to verandahs.
- Re-set the granite steps. If this was done, there has been some subsequent movement. Alternatively no work may have been done.
- Removal of intrusive external services including overhead rainwater tanks.
- Repair of eaves.
- Lath and plaster ceiling repairs due to falling damp.
- Remove malthoid and replace balcony flashings with lead. The malthoid must have failed, although only 8 years old.
- Re-run plaster arched architraves to tower windows. This work was not done.

Further reports on internal repairs and restoration, as well as air-conditioning and earthquake strengthening, and the main stairway were recommended.

### 2007 Internal Restoration

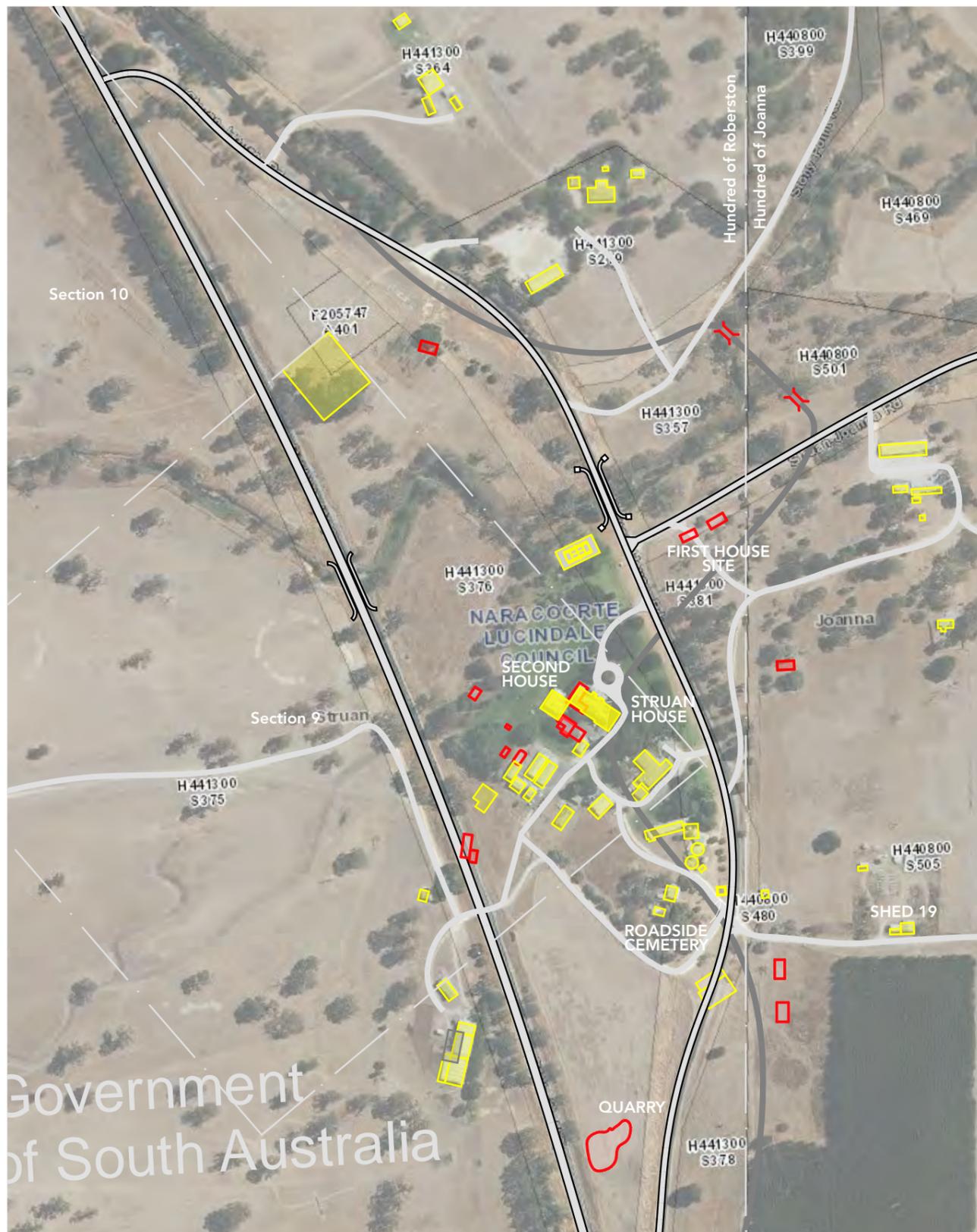
Air conditioning and electrical services upgrade works were undertaken at Struan in 2006, documented by Danvers Schulz Holland Architects.<sup>36</sup> The cost of work was announced as about \$2 million.<sup>37</sup> At the Second House, the visually intrusive rainwater tank was relocated from the western corner to the southern side of the building. However the gutter was not effectively regraded, and the corner downpipe did not discharge clear of the building, so this corner of the verandah has suffered ongoing water damage. The overflow from the relocated rainwater tank also runs towards rather than away from the building.

At Struan House, the decorative cast iron finials, tower balcony railings and verandah lacework were taken down, grit blasted and reinstalled. The lead flashings to the balcony decks were re-laid. External rendered trims were repaired and the exterior trims and woodwork was repainted. A disabled access ramp was installed to the front entry. A disabled accessible toilet was installed.

The main staircase was strengthened by inserting concealed steelwork through the abutting walls. The marble fireplaces were carefully cleaned. Some new fireplace surrounds (presumably timber) and some new fireplace inserts were installed. Lath and plaster ceilings were stabilised by epoxy injection. A small area of pressed metal ceiling was repaired above the stairs (Room 201). Peeling paint calomine painted ceilings were stabilised and overpainted.

The seismic upgrade undertaken with this project required widespread opening up of the structural fabric. Floor boards were lifted to enable first floor joists to be bolted to the walls, without disturbing decorative ceilings. Roof trusses were bolted down. Tie down bolts were installed to chimneys.

A new chemical damp proof course was installed above the previously installed viscourse DPC. Physical evidence of two salt damp treatments are visible on the southern wall.



- EXTANT SITE FEATURES
- DEMOLISHED SITE FEATURES
- 2015 TRACKS & ROADS
- AERIAL PHOTO 1978

Habitable Places Architects  
 Scale 1:5,000 @ A4 Feb 2015

0 100m

Location Plan showing Struan in relation to historical and current development within its setting.

Split system air conditioners were installed. Floor mounted console units were installed in joinery cabinets within the highly significant spaces. New electrical and fire detection systems were installed.

The decorative interior paint scheme was reconstructed in the ground floor entrance and reception (Rooms 1, 2, 4 & 21). The decorative motifs and coats of arms revealed by Artlab were protected. The general pattern of gilded borders dividing each wall into panels, and decorative corner motifs, was reconstructed over a new acrylic paint base. Joinery and floors were oak wood-grained using enamel paints in the above rooms and the ground floor corridors (Rooms 3 & 24). In Reception (Room 25), the base colour to the woodwork was applied but the wood-graining remains incomplete.

New carpets were commissioned and installed for the reception rooms, corridor runners and stair runner.

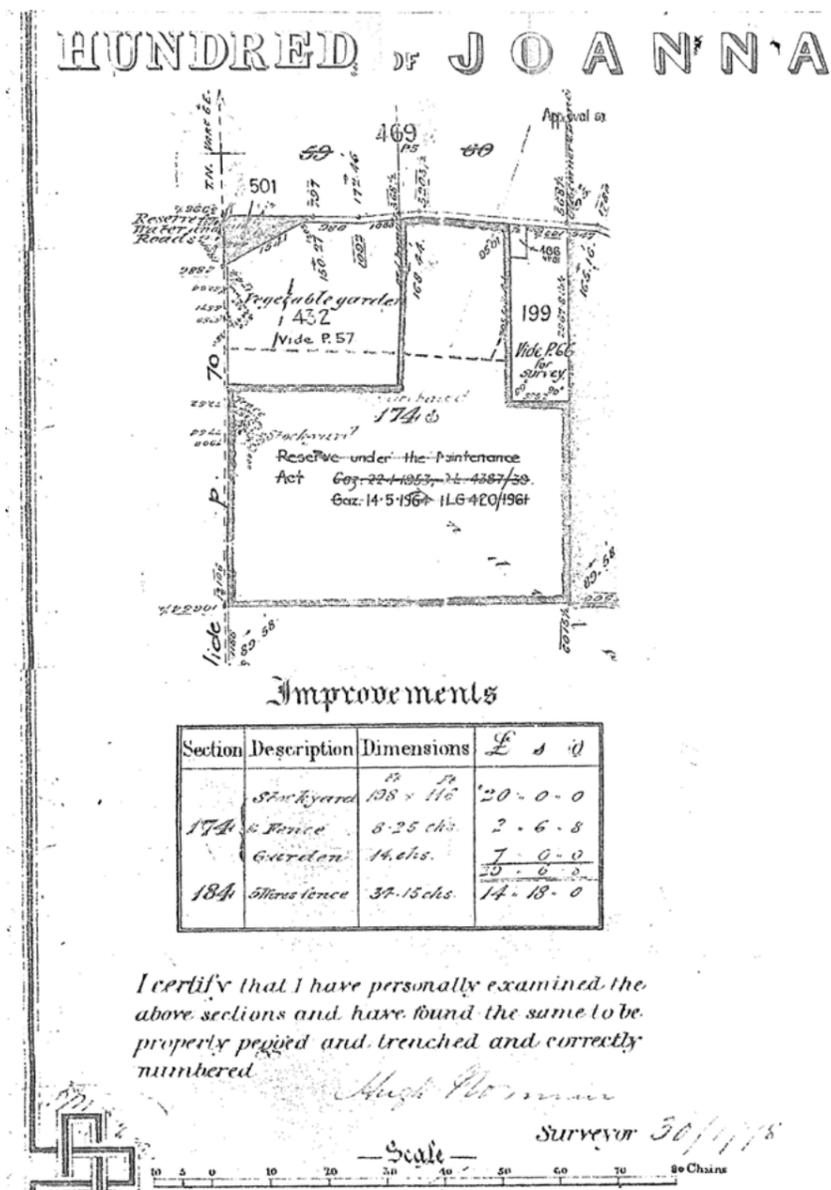
#### 2010 Fire Services

Independent fire water tanks, a booster pump and fire hydrants were installed in 2010 to provide protection of Struan House in case of a bushfire or building fire. There are extinguishers but no hose reels within the heritage buildings.

#### 2014 Internet Services

Instant electronic communications are a hallmark of modern society. In recent years, slow internet services, typical of regional Australia, were a constraint to research, staff and conferences at Struan. This was successfully overcome in 2014 by installing equipment to upgrade the mobile phone coverage to provide fast internet services, in preference to installation of communications cabling and hubs throughout the buildings.<sup>38</sup> This is the current chapter in the story of communication at Struan, which commenced with the Royal Mail in 1845 and the Magnetic Telegraph in 1863.

Details from 1878 Hd Joanna  
Diagram Book p23 showing the  
vegetable garden in Section 432  
and a stockyard in Section 174. The  
fences and the garden, also listed  
in the valuation table, are likely to  
have been associated with the first  
homestead.



#### Strategic location

The Robertson brothers selected this site for their first homestead in 1842, for its strategic location, and for its natural resources. It proved three decades later to be a fine site for a mansion, and the landscape setting remains equally important today.

Julian Tennison-Woods observed the district in 1858. 'The series of caves was in the midst of a swampy, sandy country, plentifully covered with stringy bark'. The caves internal beauty was 'at a strange variance with the wildness of the scenery around. His lengthy article was printed in the 'S.A. Register' and in the absence of local newspapers appeared as far away as in the Illawarra Mercury.<sup>40</sup>

Goyders 1863 valuation of the pastoral lease was largely based on his observation of soil types, topography and indigenous vegetation associations.

#### Mr Brewster's qualifications

BREWSTER, Robert, Born December 7th 1840 in Scotland, died March 26th 1881 in Penola, SA. Mr Brewster was well qualified to supply the plants needed to establish an impressive new garden at Struan House. At the 1869 Penola Agricultural Show he was the only gardener able to produce floral exhibits so early in the season. Brewster won a special Society's silver medal for the best potatoes grown within 20 kilometres of Penola, exhibited oranges from Yallum, and won the Society's silver medal for the 'Class 1 crop of root vegetables for fodder'. He won the best vegetable prizes for cauliflower, cabbage, turnip, cos lettuce and celery, best collection of salads and the best 'general collection of vegetables', the best cut flowers and the best floral bouquet.<sup>41</sup>

## 3.2 Landscape

### Pre-European landscape

The topography and modified indigenous vegetation associations remain as the backdrop to Struan House. Mosquito Creek discharging onto the floodplain is still marked by mature and regenerating red gums. Indigenous reeds and rushes flank the channel. The stringy bark forest of the Naracoorte Range has been pushed back, but can still be seen along the Joanna Road and around Naracoorte Caves. There is still an expansive vista across the inter-dune flats towards Moyhall and Bool Lagoon.

### Earliest gardens

From the scant historical evidence, the First House was surrounded by working buildings. Part of the site which lies in the Hundred of Joanna, was noted in a land survey in 1872 as a 'vegetable garden'.<sup>39</sup> There is no visible evidence in the vicinity of buildings, gardens or exotic plants that might relate to the first settlement.

With the construction of the Second House, a large fenced productive garden stretching down to the edge of the flood plain was established. Evidence for the productivity of this garden is confirmed by the accounts of John Robertson's generosity to travellers. It is probable that these gardens and orchards supplied fresh fruit and vegetables not only to the household at Struan, but also to contractors and workers including the Warrattenbullie shearers. Interestingly, the 'beef account' for Henry Smith in the Struan Ledger includes numerous entries for the supply of beef, tea & sugar, flour and sheep. It appears that there was no charge for fresh milk and vegetables, supplies that surely would have been provided.

### Mr Brewsters garden

In 1876 Mr Brewster was paid £310 for establishing the Struan House garden including forming walks, laying out beds, and for supplying shrubs, specimen trees, and fruit trees at Struan House.<sup>42</sup> The newly established garden appears in the early photographs of Struan House.

In the mid to late 1860s Mr Robert Brewster was a well known gardener in the South East. He had a nursery in Penola and was the gardener for John Riddoch at Yallum Park. He was both horticultural exhibitor and judge at the local Penola shows.<sup>43</sup>

The carriage drive from the front gate approached the house obliquely, consistent with Picturesque landscape design principles. There was an obligatory carriage circle, marked with a Norfolk Island Pine. Access to the stables and service areas was to the side, past the kitchen door and servants wing. The park-like outer garden, forming the vista from Robertson's Bridge, consisted of large canopy trees. The formal garden of ornamental shrubs and feature trees was fenced. This is the layout of the garden that remains today, although the structural details of gates, picket fences and arbors no longer exist.

The layout of Mr Brewster's garden design at Yallum Park shares many features with Struan, including the oblique approach of the driveway, the carriage circle, the connection to the service yards at the rear and the selection of exotic trees. These can be considered as typical of the Picturesque landscape settings for Victorian Italianate villas consisting of 'their gardens, the surrounding parks and, most importantly the broader landscape beyond the homestead's gate.'<sup>45</sup>

The grand circular garden at Gringegalgona (right) for John Robertson's brother Duncan stands in stark contrast and is possibly unique. It was described as 'Mr Robertson's station situated on the [Wando] creek, in one of the delightful vallies of the Paradise of Victoria. It was truly a Claude sense of tranquil beauty. There was no stern ruggedness to astonish and alarm, but the soothing influence of softened shades of hills reclining on each other in sleeping sisterhood.'<sup>46</sup> Google Maps 2014



#### No stint on quantity

Looking back in 1935 the Naracoorte Herald expressed a view that Mr Brewster's motivation was more financial gain than garden design. 'Mr R. Brewster kept a large nursery at Penola, and was a keen floriculturist. He planted the trees that surround Struan House, and as he was receiving one shilling per tree he did not stint the quantity'.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps the Herald's harsh comments reflected their journalist's ignorance as to the all-inclusive nature of Brewster's contract for the Struan House garden.

#### Homestead garden in 1934

In 1934 Struan House still had a homestead garden with elements resembling the best of the Adelaide gentry gardens. It was full of fruit, vegetables and ornamental trees including possibly the largest Norfolk Island pine in the district. The poultry yards were well stocked with fowls, turkeys, geese and ducks including a dozen Sussex fowls.<sup>47</sup>

#### Struan House garden in 1947

Brewster's vision for the Struan House garden was still visible 77 years later when it was described as part of the collection of Struan treasures. The garden although 'overgrown with weeds, is full of lovely ornamental trees, shrubs, vines and unpruned fruit trees. At the bottom of the garden I came across a huge cherry plum and also a very fine oak. At the rear of the house there was, I think, the largest pepper tree I have seen. The Norfolk Island pine growing in the centre of the lawn was shading Struan House.'<sup>48</sup>

#### Farm School and Research Centre

The arbors, fences and neglected kitchen garden to the west of Struan House were cleared and replanted with orchards and productive gardens for the Farm School. The tennis court on the river flat near the front gate was possibly established during this period. Some additional tree plantings, such as the Kurrajongs, a popular post-war ornamental and the English Elms by the tennis court may date from this period. They were also planted around the farm buildings behind Struan House.

With the establishment of the Research Centre, the kitchen garden and orchard were simplified to mown lawn that is now irrigated. The labour intensive formal garden beds are no longer extant, but some ornamental shrubs and small trees remain. The formal garden is now dominated by mature, exotic trees. During the 1980's Australian native trees were planted toward the bottom of the garden and to the south of the farm building. These are now obscuring important views between the house and the broader landscape.

This image taken from the Struan House tower in December 1947 captures the Picturesque essence of the landscape setting of Struan: the view from the tower framed by an exotic conifer, over the fenced kitchen garden to the park-like landscape and meandering creek. Struan House Archives



A large Bunya Pine between the carriage drive and the bedroom wing was by 1948 obscuring views of the building. Struan House Archives

View of Struan from north west, prior to construction of the Riddoch Highway. The Bunya Pine was concealing the tower. SRSA GRG29/136\_343



View from orchard at the beginning of the Research Station. The spreading tree to the right appears to be an oak. The Bunya pine has been removed. Struan House Archives

Struan House from Riddoch Highway today. While the tower is now exposed, recent planting at the bottom of the garden screens the view. Habitable Places 2014



Mr Brewster's trees

The following mature trees were identified on site in January 2015. Except where noted otherwise, they are likely to be the originals planted by Mr Brewster. The soil profile exposed in the roadside cutting opposite the entrance gate indicates the growing conditions for the garden. Photos Habitable Places



Norfolk Island Pine *Araucaria heterophylla*. This landmark tree is the focus of the formal carriage circle, dominating the building and garden. It appears in the earliest photos of Struan House. There is extensive dieback to the upper canopy, typical of parrot damage.



Pepper Tree *Schinus molle*. This spreading specimen with a massive bole south of the Second House was already notable when observed in 1947. Pepper trees were commonly planted over outhouses. The watershoots should be removed to reveal the bole.



Irish Strawberry *Arbutus unedo*. A very old tree in the front garden on the western side of the carriage circle. This species is typical of SE pastoral homesteads such as Katnook at Coonawarra.



Bunya Pine *Araucaria bidwillii*. At least three original mature Bunya Pines remain: in the front garden, to the east of the house and at rear. These native Australian conifers with their distinctive rounded canopy were popular 19th Century specimen trees.



Hoop Pine *Araucaria cunninghamii*. One tree is to the north of the driveway. Another is adjacent to the SE corner of the servants wing.



Live Oak *Quercus robur*. There is a large spreading specimen in the front garden to the east of the carriage drive.



Italian Cypress, Pencil Pine *Cupressus sempervirens*. The group of three fastigate cypresses to the left of the carriage circle are not particularly old. This species has been replanted at the Roadside Cemetery.



Monterey Cypress *Cupressus macrocarpa*. A mature specimen is framing the driveway.



English Elm *Ulmus procera*. This would be a fast growing tree in deep soils close to the creek. The group of three English Elms near the tennis court and at the glasshouse may have been planted by the Farm School.



Moreton Bay Fig *Ficus macrophylla*. Four large fig trees with moderate buttresses frame the eastern end of Struan House. The shallow terra rossa soil over limestone will have limited their growth compared with other massive specimens in the South East, eg at Carew Park Homestead, Cannawigara. They were also planted at the Robertson Family Cemetery.



Pyramid Tree *Lagunaria patersonia*. Another popular Victorian species. Three are interspersed with and dominated by the Moreton Bay Figs. They also occur within the outbuildings behind the house.



Kurrajong *Brachichiton populneus*. Two small trees inside the Struan House Road boundary. A third one near the glasshouse. Likely to be from the Farm School period.



Cypress *Cupressus sp.* A medium cypress west of the Second House, does not appear in 1948 photos.



Bay Tree *Lauris nobilis*. This shrub is located just outside the kitchen door, at the eastern end of Struan House. It is highly significant as the only remaining original kitchen garden plant.

Robertson Family Cemetery from north. Habitable Places 2014

New location for cemetery gate. Habitable Places 2014

Examples of the Struan fence post at the cemetery provide evidence of the picket fence that previously enclosed the house garden. Habitable Places 2014

The roadside cemetery has been refenced, and new Italian cypress trees have been planted. The locations of additional unmarked graves are still evident in the ground surface, and these have been carefully preserved. Habitable Places 2008



This sawn hardwood post marks a historic fenceline. Habitable Places 2004



### Struan House Gates

Two wrought iron gates, removed from the main entrance to Struan House remain on site. Struan Farm Manager John Cooper pointed out they were in the back of an open galvanised iron shed located 350m SE of the house (BLAMS asset number SH19). As the shed is not secured and away from casual surveillance, these historic gates are highly vulnerable to theft.

The original massive red gum gate posts were replaced with the present octagonal treated pine pillars when the iron gates were removed.<sup>49</sup>

One is a driveway gate, the other is a hand gate. Overall the gates are less elaborate and less decorative than the two gates that remain at the Robertson Family Cemetery.

### Robertson Family Cemetery Gates

The cast iron gates were originally located on the eastern edge of the cemetery enclosure, hung from white painted timber posts.

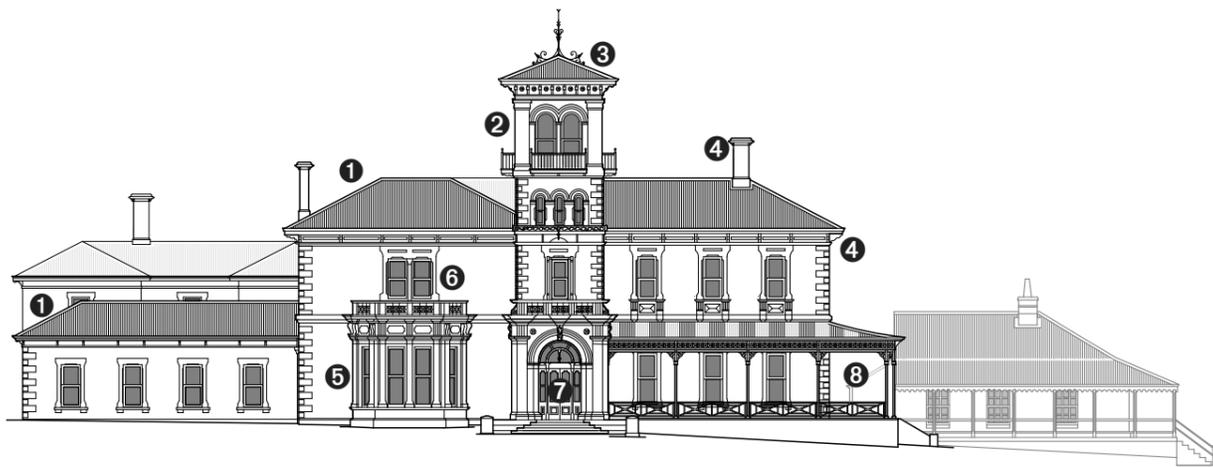
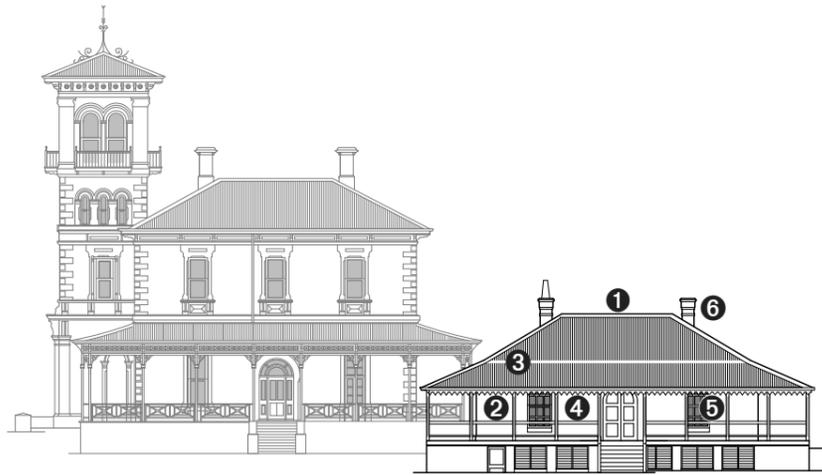
The gates were relocated in 2005 by Robin Weston on behalf of David Miles, a Robertson descendent and Trustee for the cemetery. They are now situated on the southern edge of the cemetery, framed by two Moreton Bay Fig trees, facing towards Struan House across Mosquito Creek.

At least one original hardwood posts remains, propped up in the buttresses of a Moreton Bay Fig tree. This is highly significant as physical evidence of the original picket fence that surrounded Struan. The post has a shaped cap and two mortices which were for the triangular rails. The cap has subsequently been bored for the pipe railing.

### Roadside Cemetery

By 2004 only three monuments were standing in the Roadside Cemetery. A hardwood fence was erected by the Struan Social Club and Naracoorte Council in June 2008 to enclose the cemetery and replaced a pipe railing fence. Italian cypresses were planted. The hand gate, a typical wrought iron SA Railways design, has no historic association with the place. To mark this restoration the Struan Social Club and Naracoorte Council also erected two new monuments.

In 2004 a substantial strainer post remained standing at the property boundary to the south of the buildings. It was still standing in 2008.



#### Style Analysis

The Struan House complex represents two prevalent architectural styles that were popular for pastoral homesteads in the mid 19th Century.<sup>53</sup>

The Victorian Georgian style markers evident in Robertson's Second House include:

- 1 Symmetrical facade, simple rectangular plan and hipped roof form.
- 2 Dressed ashlar walling without quoins or trims.
- 3 Broken back roof over an encircling verandah with simple chamfered timber posts.
- 4 Decorative timber verandah valence.
- 5 Small pane double hung sash windows.
- 6 Simple chimney.

Some of the Victorian Italianate style markers evident in Gore's design for Struan House include:

- 1 Asymmetrical massing to principal elevation and hipped roofs.
- 2 Prominent tower with classical motifs executed in stucco.
- 3 Pyramidal tower roof
- 4 Bracketed eaves, bracketed chimney cornices.
- 5 Faceted bay window.
- 6 Grouped window openings, double hung full pane sashes.
- 7 Round arch and loggia.
- 8 The Victorian Filigree verandahs.

The Struan return verandahs represent an extension and embellishment of the Australian verandah tradition. Its use was common on buildings of many styles, including towered Italianate residential villas. The slender columns reflected classical motifs, here using cast zinc Corinthian capitals, cast iron brackets and valence.

### 3.3 Analysis of Physical Evidence

The Italianate style was an architectural fashion that began in England with the Picturesque movement of the 1840s.<sup>50</sup> Struan House represents a colonial Australian interpretation of the style, adapted to the site and local materials by W T. Gore.

Pattern books that inspired and informed architects and their clients in the Italianate style were available in Britain, the United States and Australia, although no surviving colonial copies have been found in Australia.<sup>51</sup> This is likely how Gore and the Robertsons would have become familiar with the latest architectural fashions. They would also have been familiar with the contemporary Victorian Italianate villas being constructed in western Victoria and Melbourne.

Hubbard, in his thesis *Towering Over All The Italianate Villa in the Australian Landscape*, identified the characteristic Italianate design features of Struan House. It is set on a rise on a broad acreage, it has a landscape setting of exotic plantings, and it had a self-sufficient garden. It provided a sense of retreat from the harsh reality experienced by the majority of colonial Australians. These villas, including Struan stand as an extravagant display of prosperity, lifestyle and social position. Maintaining and integrating the earlier homestead as part of Struan House complex was not only sentimental but it also served to reinforce lineage and the right to property ownership.<sup>52</sup>

The Italianate Struan House was designed with two primary facades, responding to the landscape setting and the pre-existing Georgian Second House. The main facade of Struan was faced north east, at a right angle to the aspect of the Second House. The reasons for this major design departure are not documented, but it resolved at least three issues: the address to the road, the pre-existing productive garden and the architectural resolution of Georgian and Italianate design styles.

#### Landscape Design

When the Second House was constructed, there were no formal roads. The bridges over Mosquito Creek were well upstream. The Second House was oriented along the contour, a simple and practical siting decision that determined its north western aspect. By the time Struan was being designed the Government Bridge and its associated road alignment were well established. The north eastern aspect placed the bridge and approaching visitors into the frame of view from the new house. From the bridge and road it provided a vista over rising land surmounted by the new house.

The Second House already had an established garden extending down to the edge of the creek floodplain. This was a productive garden not a formal landscape. Orchards still exist directly in front of other early pastoral properties in the South East, for example Woolmit (1851) near Mt Benson. However an orchard would not conform to the expectations of a suitable landscape setting for an Italianate villa. Gore's design solution of orienting the new front to the north east spared the orchard. The setback from the road provided sufficient area to establish a carriage drive and formal garden setting to the new house. The separately fenced orchard projecting forward of the facade appears in the earliest photos

of Struan House. The dividing picket fence, which originally did not even include a connecting gate was later reinforced with an arbor. The picket fence and arbor are long gone, and the productive garden is now replaced with sweeping lawn, but the underlying landscape structure remains visible today.

#### Architectural Design

As a result of the decision to re-orient the new house towards the road, the length of the facade crosses the contours, and this became an architectural design determinant. The floor level of the new building was set at ground level at the eastern servants wing. This provided an opportunity for a gentle flight of steps rising to the formal entrance under the tower. As the slope falls away, the verandah was used to encircle the bedroom wing, providing elevated views over the garden to the landscape beyond. The verandah articulates the height of the bedroom wing and provides a sheltered transitional space between the interior and the landscape.

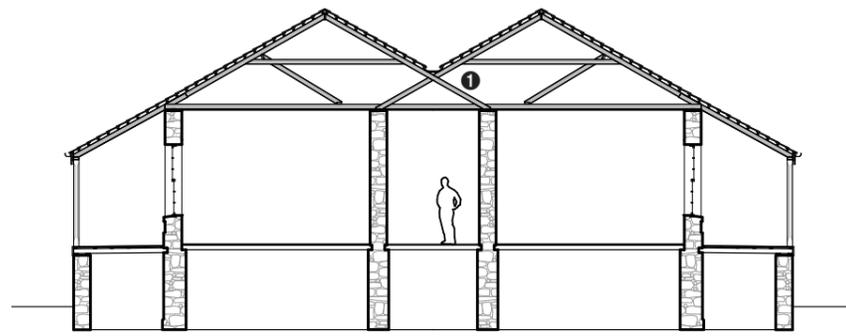
A third reason for the change of aspect was the design of the pre-existing Second House, with its symmetrical Georgian facade. The design challenge was to balance the existing building and the new Italianate pile. A design methodology for adjacent buildings of differing styles was not addressed by 19th Century pattern books, which considered building styles in isolation. Gore skilfully resolved this design challenge for the adjacent facade of Struan House by respecting and continuing the design principles of the Second House. While it is larger in scale, height and bulk, it presents similar symmetry, proportions, fenestration pattern and relationship to the ground plane. In both buildings stone steps rise to the verandah and lead directly to a central circular arched doorway. The newer building has the same simple hipped roof topped by symmetrical chimneys. The careful composition and balance of this facade, unifying and contrasting the new and old buildings now presents the principal aspect of Struan from the Riddoch Highway.

The junction between the verandahs of the two buildings presented a practical design challenge because of the change of levels. There is physical and documentary evidence that timber stairs provided a direct access between the two levels although the disparate verandah roofs are in abrupt juxtaposition. The steps have been removed.

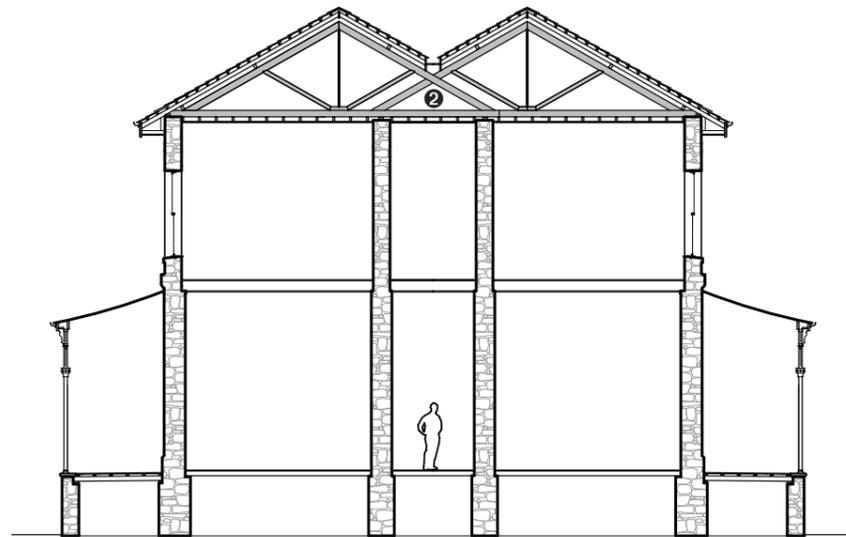
Viewed in isolation, the symmetrical western façade of Struan House, closely resembles Gore's Crower homestead (refer page 67) which is Georgian in style, fenestration and proportion.

The Second House roof framing is constructed with common rafters in the roof well which extend over the passage to bear on the wall on the far side of the passage. The opposing rafters (1) cross above the centre of the passage, supporting the box gutter raised above ceiling level.

At Struan House, Gore used roof trusses, but again they overlapped above the corridor (2) raising the box gutter above ceiling level, and achieving specific roof proportions. Habitable Places 2015



Second House



Struan House  
Habitable Places 2015



Construction Faults

The roof framing of the Second House has some substantial construction faults that reveal much about how and by whom it was built.

The roof framing timbers are pit-sawn red gum. A single size of timber 125 x 50 mm has been used throughout, typical of early Colonial rural framing. The joints are simply fixed with wrought iron spikes. There are no housed joints. The struts and braces are random. Across the front, an underpurlin has been installed, but it is not properly strutted off internal walls. Collar ties which are meant to connect opposing rafters, have been installed but they are cut short, so they provide no structural function. The underpurlins stop short of the hip rafters, where they are most needed. Lacking critical midspan support, the undersized and probably unseasoned hip rafters would have deflected immediately. This would have been evident on close inspection soon after construction.

Furthermore the underpurlins along each side are strutted off the ceiling joists instead of from the load bearing walls. This is another serious and untradesmanlike construction fault.

Design Similarities — Second House and Struan

There is no documentary evidence for the designer for the Second House although Gore is known to have been undertaking other architectural work for the Robertsons in this period. Comparison of the floor plans, facade design and roof framing of the two houses provides strong circumstantial evidence that W T Gore also designed the Second House.

Floor Plans

The floor plan of the Second House and the western wing of Struan House are virtually identical. Both have a symmetrical layout and identical room and corridor sizes. The buildings are the same width. The new bedroom wing effectively replicated the four room homestead over two levels, with the exception that three of the large rooms were subdivided to provide additional small bedrooms. The new building provided four additional corner rooms that have windows in both external walls, giving them exceptionally good daylighting. If these had been John and Susan Robertson's favourite rooms in the Second House, Gore ensured that those in their new mansion were even better. All four corner rooms in Struan House have marble or enamelled slate fireplaces. They also have 4.8m ceilings, compared to the timber fireplaces and 3.6m ceilings in the Second House.

Gore's specification for St Andrews Church, complete with sketch roof tie down detail, is likely to closely reflect the roof construction at Struan House:

#### 'Roof

To be framed in the most substantial manner agreeable with the drawings, with timbers of the scantling shown or figured — thereon all plates and purlins to be in long lengths scarfed together, the principals to be framed, morticed tenoned and bolted together as shown with neat wrought iron shap[es] 2 1/4 x 1/2 bolted on both sides of this 1" queen rods 1/2 heel bolts etc...

—Fix to the eaves 1 1/2 wrought fascia with fillet for spouting

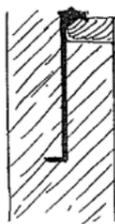
—Fasten the wall plates every six feet with 2" x 1/4" wrought iron clamps built 3 feet into walls as on margin<sup>54</sup>

Roof To be framed in the most substantial manner agreeable with the drawings, with timbers of the scantling

shown or figured — thereon all plates and purlins to be in long lengths scarfed together, the principals to be framed, morticed tenoned and bolted together as shown with neat wrought-iron straps 2 1/4 x 1/2 bolted on both sides of this 1" queen rods 1/2 heel bolts etc. Fix handsome deal insulating at interstices of roof with walls. Line the underside of purlins throughout with 3/4 wrought and beaded deal boarding put on diagonally after which the insolated ribs shown on drawing are to be fixed

—Fix to the eaves 1 1/2 wrought fascia with fillet for spouting

—Fasten the wall plates every six feet with 2" x 1/4" iron clamps built 3 feet into walls as on margin



#### Second House Roof

The roof form and framing of the Second House have two uncommon features that suggest clear architectural design intent. The unique roof framing system increased the span of the roof and raised the ridge height compared with conventional framing. It also increased the visual mass and proportion of the roof relative to the walls and verandah. This improved the scale and proportions of the building form. It gives the single story building a strong presence in the landscape. This roof form is unlikely to have been conceived by a builder.

The other notable design feature of the Second House is the truncated double gable to the rear / east elevation. The roofing extends over the stone gables but terminates plainly without barge or verges. The roof form was clearly designed to allow for future extension of the building into the courtyard to the east.

The floor plan also indicates that the building was designed to be extended. The ground floor plan has only four main rooms, two of which were large reception rooms. Its accommodation is incomplete for a substantial homestead and especially for a family of eleven. Two now demolished wings extended from the rear corners. These demolished wings most likely housed the separate kitchen, storage and servants rooms, which are lacking in the main house. They appear to have been sited to leave an open courtyard that would be suitable for future extension of the main house. In other Georgian houses in the South East known to be designed by Gore, including Crower and Cairnbank, the single story service wings kitchen are located in the same relative position. In both cases they accommodate a large kitchen and a large store room over a cellar and partially enclose a courtyard.

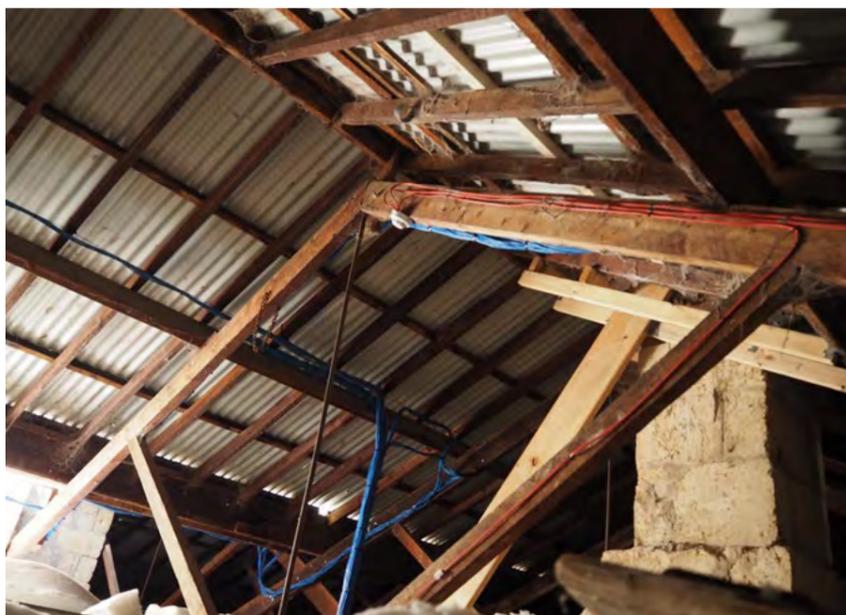
The plain rubble construction of the rear wall contrasts with the ashlar stonework of the other three facades. It has no windows. This is also consistent with the intention for this in the future to be a plastered interior wall.

In contrast to the evident architectural design intent for the roof proportions, the construction of the roof framing of the Second House is rudimentary, reflecting unskilled execution. This would have been observed and noted by Gore.

The building contractor for the Second House was probably stonemason Joseph Hosking. The workmanship shortcomings suggests that no detailed construction drawings were available to interpret the design intentions, that no skilled or experienced carpenter was employed to set out and supervise the roof framing and that no architect or clerk of works was engaged during construction.

In contrast, an uncommon roof framing system and the clear design intent revealed by the physical evidence in the Second House reflects the hand of a skilled architect. The use of round-headed arches in the corridor is also unusual for a Georgian interior. This motif is a strong feature in the corridors of Struan House, designed by Gore only a decade or so later.

Roof framing at Struan House.  
The tie rod trusses support  
underpurlins with close spaced  
rafters above. The overlapping  
trusses and raised box gutter are  
visible at lower centre. Habitable  
Places 2014



### Struan House Roof Framing

W T Gore designed the hipped roof forms for Struan House to achieve the informal massing that is characteristic of the Victorian Italianate style. Despite the grander building scope and scale, the main roof span is identical to that of the Second House. However for the new building Gore designed roof trusses instead of rafters to achieve the require roof spans. Trusses reflect a higher standard of construction. The Oregon tie rod roof trusses are well detailed and constructed. They support underpurlins that in turn support the common rafters, a much more sophisticated structural design solution than in the Second House. The roof trusses would have been pre-assembled and hoisted into position.

For the narrower western wing, a double span roof with concealed well and box gutter was used. To maintain a constant ridge height and appropriate roof proportions, Gore used the identical roof form displayed by the Second House. The roof trusses were overlapped above the corridor, again raising the box gutter above ceiling level. The eastern wing accommodating the reception rooms required a greater roof span. Gore extended the central well into this section and provided small flat roofs in order to maintain a constant ridge height.

The ceiling heights to the single and double storey servants wings are lower. These roofs abut the main building below the main roof eaves. Gore used simple single span trussed roofs but maintained the same construction standard to these wings. The service courtyard originally had verandahs on each side but has since been fully roofed.

### Conclusion

Based on the physical evidence, the common floor plan, the matching elevations and common roofing features it is reasonable to conclude that WT Gore designed the earlier Second House. His subsequent design for Struan House skilfully integrated the new and existing buildings, paying respect to restrained Georgina design principles for the western elevation and achieving a seamless transition to a well developed Italianate sensibility for the new eastern façade.

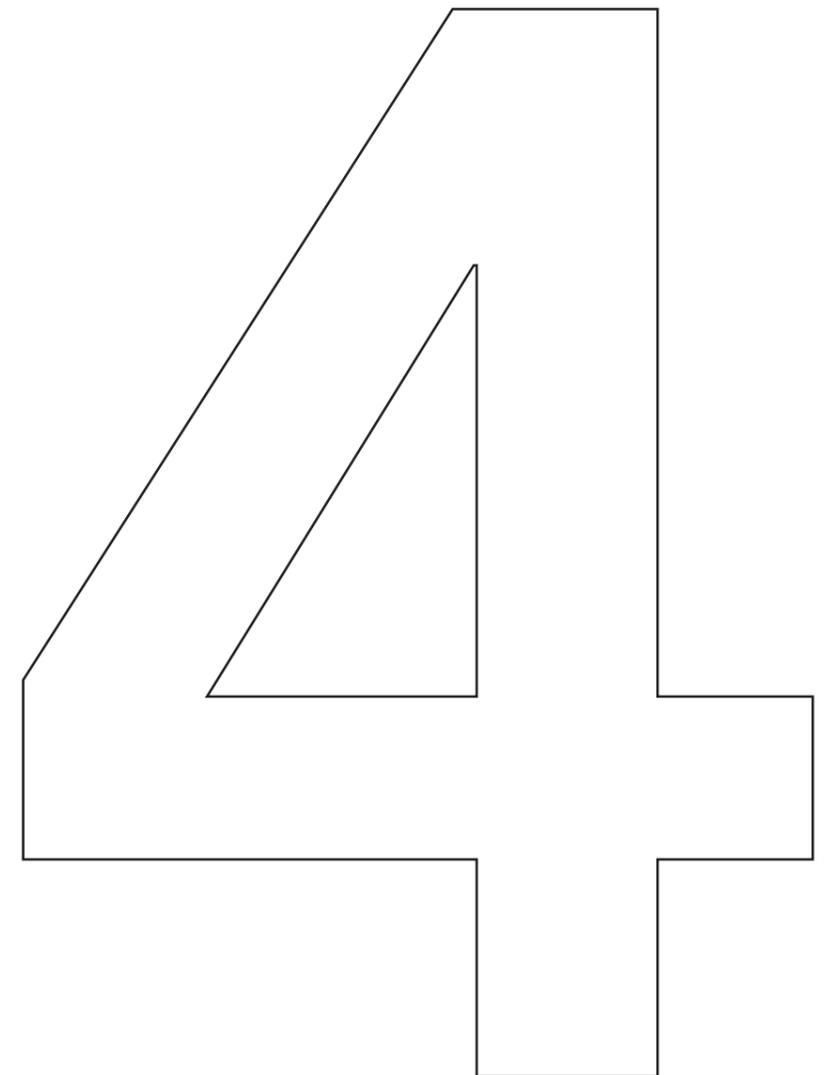
We can be certain that, before commencing the new design, Gore would have inspected the existing building. To draft the new plans, he would have either prepared a measured plan, or most likely traced the original plans. Gore would have been aware of the workmanship faults that remain evident today, and careful to ensure that they were not repeated. We can speculate that this knowledge may have influenced Gore and Robertson in the selection of Henry Smith, a master carpenter and builder, rather than a mason, as the preferred builder for Struan House, and the appointment of an independent clerk of works to control the quality of the workmanship.

**4 Significance**

**4.1 Basis for Assessment**

**4.2 Assessment against State Heritage Criteria**

**4.3 Statement of Cultural Significance**



The Burra Charter provides guidance for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance (cultural heritage places). It is based on the knowledge and experience of Australia ICOMOS members. It was established in 1979 and last revised in 2013.

Conservation is an integral part of the management of places of cultural significance and is an ongoing responsibility.

The Charter sets a standard of practice for those who provide advice, make decisions about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance, including owners, managers and custodians. The Charter can be applied to all types of places of cultural significance including natural, Indigenous and historic places with cultural values.

Places of cultural significance enrich people's lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to community and landscape, to the past and to lived experiences. They are historical records which are important expressions of Australian identity and experience.

Places of cultural significance reflect the diversity of our communities, telling us about who we are and the past that has formed us and the Australian landscape. They are irreplaceable and precious.

These places of cultural significance must be conserved for present and future generations in accordance with the principle of inter-generational equity.

The Burra Charter advocates a cautious approach to change: do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it usable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so that its cultural significance is retained.

## 4.1 Basis for Assessment

This assessment of significance evaluates the heritage value of Second House and Struan House to past, present and future generations. The Burra Charter is the standard adopted by the heritage profession in Australia for assessment and management of heritage places.

The following definition for cultural significance, sometimes referred to as cultural heritage significance or heritage value, from the Burra Charter, is adopted:

*Cultural significance* means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the *place* itself, its *fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects*. *Places* may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.

Understanding of cultural significance can change with new information and as community values change.

The 1987 Struan Conservation Study by Lothar Brasse provided the starting point for this current statement of significance. The key concepts have been carried forward to this report and either adopted, amended or expanded in light of changes to the place and analysis of further documentary and physical evidence.

This section considers the significance of the place as a whole, and of the Second House and Struan House and their setting. The significance of specific elements of the building fabric is detailed in the Heritage Works Plans, Chapter 6.

## 4.2 Assessment against State Heritage Criteria

The SA Heritage Act 1993 stipulates a State heritage place must meet at least one of the specified criteria. The cultural significance of Struan is assessed against the criteria below.

The Burra Charter uses a different framework for the same values. It considers significance in terms of aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. These concepts have also been used in the assessment.

### **Criterion (a) It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.**

Struan encapsulates the pattern of pastoral settlement in the South East. Successful selection of as much of the best land for pastoral runs, resulted in the accumulation of unimaginable private income and wealth for some, in spite of hardships, remoteness and setbacks.

The extended Robertson family in western Victoria and the South East represents a pattern of emigration from specific clan regions in Scotland, congregating in regions of the Colonies and determining the character of new settlements, establishing mutual social and religious networks and creating employment, immigration and investment opportunities. In business and social affairs many pastoralists in the South East, including the Robertsons looked east to Victoria rather than north to Adelaide.

There was a distinct pattern of pastoral settlement in the South East. In the first phase, ambitious young settlers occupied the 'vacant' land and constructed a rough slab homestead, shepherd huts and brush fences. Where they were successful in securing a large lease, as at Mosquito Plains, there followed substantial capital acquisition and investment epitomised by the centralised shearing complex at Warrattonbullie and the Second Homestead when it was known as Robertsons Run. The third phase was the ostentatious display of status, and of the accumulated wealth and income demonstrated by Struan House.

On most of the South East runs the initial pastoralists did not survive the financial and natural challenges. The leases were sold and the second or third building phases were undertaken by the new owners. Struan was an exception to this pattern, probably due to the quality of the land and size of the estate John Robertson had managed to amass.

The waxing and waning of Struan Estate demonstrates conflicting interests of the large pastoralists and advocates for closer settlement. It delayed settlement in the district. Expansion and consolidation of the estate by purchase of special surveys and freehold sections, the use of dummieing to frustrate closer settlement, and the purchase of adjacent pastoral runs including Warrattenbullie in South Australia and the contiguous Elderslie in Victoria, provided security for capital investment in infrastructure. Struan also demonstrates the pattern of succession, with the native born sons in the second generation inheriting a part or full share of one of the pastoral runs. Due to its vast scale and good business management, Struan Estate was able to weather the Federation Drought better than many and the break up of the estate was relatively late. The

gradual divestment of the estate, by progressive voluntary sale for closer settlement led to a contraction of the property around Struan House and the final sale by the trustees to the Government on the death without heirs of Alexander Robertson.

The story of Struan is intrinsically linked to evolution of land transport in the region. Sited the edge of the Naracoorte Range and on the Mosquito Creek, it was and still is a strategic transport and communications route. Settlement, transport and communication in the South East has always been strongly determined by the distinctive topography of parallel ranges and flats. Before settlement and drainage the firm ground on the western side of the ranges provide the best line of going. The evolution in transport is reflected by the infrastructure that encircled Struan. The first bullock track, traversed by the Royal Mail on horseback passed the back door to the First House. The Robertsons' private wooden bridges were a limited improvement, paving the way for a coach service. The Government bridge and formed road made the creek crossing safer and more reliable as would the re-aligned Riddoch Highway in the mid 20th Century. Stock droving over leasehold land was replaced by road reserves, the railway and then by road transport. Aviation made a brief appearance, but has been superceded by the convenience of improved regional roads and modern cars.

Transport and infrastructure provided business opportunities for Struan Estate: the sale of red gum for railway sleepers and the establishment of the Gate Hotel to service the mail run. The telegraph route passing Struan House from 1863 reflected a revolution in communication. The nearby telecommunications cubicle and recent mobile phone internet services within the building demonstrate the latest disruptive new technologies.

The formal private Robertson Cemetery and the modest roadside cemetery for workers and their families reflect burial practices and social distinctions on early South East pastoral runs.

Struan reflects evolution of agricultural science in the State and region, beginning with the private importation of Merino's for flock improvement to meet specific local conditions. Improvement of native pastures enhanced productivity. Alexander Robertson's personal research encompassed fodder, crops, intensive sheep grazing and finishing of cattle which were shared via Agricultural Bureau field days.

### Struan Farm School

Struan demonstrates the post-war pattern of the adaptation of private mansions for institutional residential use. Struan Farm School was an experiment in social policy in South Australia: an alternative post-war social and educational model for care of wards of the state. The aims were rehabilitation, socialisation and skills training of boys to provide meaningful employment as rural workers. In line with the institutional approach, utilitarian attitudes to the building were demonstrated by the overpainting of the decorative scheme and re-roofing but the post-war shortage of building materials and labour limited the impact on integrity. Struan House survived an unrealised aspiration for a brave new world estate that would eschew the historic buildings.

In line with similar institutions, the legacy of past social practices and policies have been subjected to re-appraisal. Struan Farm School was included in the Children in State Care Inquiry of 2004-2008.

#### Research Centre

The establishment of the Research Centre resulted in extension and veterinary services and collaborative research with local landowners. It is associated with the final phases of closer settlement, a shift towards cattle production, the dramatic post war improvements in agricultural productivity across the region. Cooperative research projects have more recently expanded to national and international horizons, addressing national issues such as salinity and tailoring beef production to the demands of international markets.

Struan demonstrates the move towards regionalisation of government services in the 1970s, and the subsequent contraction of government research funding, services, staffing and capacity in the South East in recent decades.

#### Changing heritage values

The spiritual significance of the Roberston Family Cemetery was demonstrated by its vesting to descendants as trustees in the 1950s and its subsequent ongoing maintenance. In the same period, it was proposed that Struan House would be superseded by a new residential estate.

The State heritage listing of the two houses in 1981 following the SE Regional Heritage Survey represents the first phase of heritage protection in South Australia, marking a dramatic change in community values from its implied replacement with a new estate posited just three decades earlier. The emphasis in the 1980s was on heritage listing of architectural monuments, of which Struan is a leading example. These values prevailed and are reflected in the subsequent restoration programs focussed primarily on Struan House.

Informal protection of the roadside cemetery was achieved by its separation from the road reserve in 1979. Its subsequent conservation demonstrates community awareness of the important contribution to history from all social classes.

This CMP re-evaluates heritage values, balancing the established understanding of Struan House as an architectural monument with awareness of its social values, examining the relationship of the buildings to their curtilage and setting, and placing the site in a regional and historical context.

***Criterion (b) It has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.***

The two houses at Struan reflect the diversity of stone resources locally and in the region. The granite steps from Gringegalonga are marker of the Robertson's family associations with western Victoria. The Second House is a rare example of an early colonial homestead still in active use. Across the South East, many of the earliest homestead buildings have fallen into disuse.

The accomplished architectural design and the decorative paint scheme demonstrates the high level of professional and trade skill that were active in the South East in the 1870s. The deliberate selection and distribution of the elaborate marble, enamelled slate and wooden fireplaces demonstrates the use of imported building elements to mark social distinctions.

The aesthetic conception of Struan House from its Italianate tower and informal massing to its Picturesque setting, overlooking mature established gardens to the park-like setting and cemeteries beyond the farm gate is of uncommon quality. Its landscape prominence, its strategic location close to a busy road and its tradition of hospitality sets Struan apart from otherwise similar places, such as Yallum Park and Padthaway which are well set-back from secondary roads and arguably have less prominence in the consciousness of the community.

***Criterion (c) It may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history including its natural history.***

The relationship between the Second House and Struan House provides insight into the development, peak and downturn of the large pastoralist landholdings in the South East.

The contrasting scale, styles and construction techniques between the Second House and Struan House provide an insight into the rapid pace of change in taste and economic circumstances over the short period separating their design and construction.

Close comparative analysis of the construction, floor planning, and the stylistic relationship between the Georgian and the Italianate building phases provides a deeper understanding and re-evaluation of the considerable architectural and technical accomplishment of local architect WT Gore. The significance of Gore is confirmed by a review of his architectural output, which continues to make an outstanding contribution to the heritage of the State.

***Criterion (d) It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.***

Struan House represents the largest and most ostentatious of private Victorian villas in the South East. It symbolises John Robertson's successful colonial pastoral business. With the post WWII demolition of the Mt Gambier Hospital, Struan House is the only and an outstanding representative of a towered Italianate villa in the region. Along with Yallum Park, Struan House is one of only two iconic Italianate buildings in the South East.

***Criterion (e) It demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.***

Struan House, embellished with its tower and set in a park of exotic and indigenous trees, is an outstanding Colonial example of a Victorian Italianate villa. The landscape setting on Mosquito Creek reflects the

aspiration of the new rural gentry of 19th Century Colonial South Australia to boast a European style ‘villa in a landscape’, an image crystallised by Claude de Lorraine. The acquisition of a Claude de Lorraine oil painting to hang in Struan confirms that the design, siting and landscape design were deliberate and conscious aesthetic decisions by Gore and Robertson. The language chosen by Prince George (later King George V) reflected these values. He explicitly referred to the surrounds of Struan including the family cemetery as ‘the park’ and the journey to Penola as ‘open park-like scenery’.

The structural integrity of Struan House after 140 years despite numerous large gatherings, funeral crowds, earthquakes and periods of neglect is evidence of the technical capacity of W T Gore and the soundness of the construction by Henry Smith. The common roof form of the two houses is an uncommon or possibly unique architectural design solution. Gore adopted the latest innovations to introduce running hot water at Struan House.

**Criterion (f) It has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it**

Robertsons

Struan House has strong family associations for the Robertson descendants, exemplified by the return in recent decades of furniture and personal effects associated with their tenure. A direct ongoing association is maintained by the trustees of the Robertson Family Cemetery.

Struan House and the community

John Robertson from his earliest days at Mosquito Plains, at the Second House, the Gate Hotel and Struan House was renowned for his hospitality to the local community and South East gentry. This pattern continued throughout its occupation as the Robertson family homestead until the mid 20th Century. During the pastoral period Struan House and its staff and gardens were associated with weddings, funerals, parties, community fundraising, elections, field days, inspections, and hunting parties.

The local and regional community has had a continuous and strong association with all phases of Struan House through occupational, recreational, and social interactions. The sense of ownership by the local community encouraged the purchase of the estate by the Government. Struan Farm School had a committee of supporters from the local community. These values have been maintained through community events, from the opening of the first Regional Research Headquarters to the activities of the Struan Social Club. Repairs to the pioneer cemetery by the Research Centre staff and the Naracoorte Lucindale Council demonstrate local respect for the spiritual associations of the place. The Scottish cultural connections are reflected by grand Robertson style fundraising events.

The Naracoorte branch of the National Trust of South Australia maintains a history room at Struan House and shares knowledge of the history of Struan House and its adjacent cemeteries with residents from across South Australia.

**Criterion (g) It has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.**

John Robertson

Struan House represents the achievements of John Robertson one of the early Scottish immigrant ‘squatters’ who became wealthy Colonial pastoralists. John and brother William were the earliest Europeans to occupy the land on which Struan House stands. John Robertson at his death held the equal second largest land holding and the third largest number of sheep in the South East. Struan was the cornerstone of a pastoral enterprise that contributed to the modern Australian Merino through deliberate selection and breeding to increase the quantity, robustness and profitability of their yield for specific regional conditions.

John Robertson was instrumental in the establishment of horse racing in the South East and western Victoria. His son Alexander continued to breed thoroughbred racehorses at the Struan stables and remained a generous supporter of the industry. The Robertsons hosted at Struan many social occasions for hunting native birds and animals. These were major events on the South East social calendar. John Robertson and W T Gore were associated with the founding and design of the first Presbyterian Church in Naracoorte.

Struan House was associated with extensive hunting of native fauna, the exploitation of timber resources and the practise of extensive land clearing during pastoral occupation, activities that have irreversibly changed the landscape.

The ultimate social recognition of Struan was its inclusion in the first royal visit from two British princes. Other celebrated social occasions include visits from State Governors, Premiers, Judges, the Surveyor General, the Bishop of Adelaide and various South East gentry.

GW Goyder

Goyder, in his role as Surveyor General, visited the Robertsons at the Second House to value the leasehold land during his 1865 survey of the South East Pastoral Runs. He stayed overnight at Struan House in 1875 with Premier Boucaut’s party during an inspection of south east drainage.

W T Gore and Henry Smith

Architect W T Gore had a long and productive professional association with John Robertson designing the Warrattenbullie Shearing Shed and probably the Shearers Quarters, and was architect for the Second House, the Gate Hotel and finally Struan House. Gore also designed Moyhall homestead, for John Robertson’s nephew William, and Gringegalona, with its unique circular garden, for John Robertson’s brother Duncan. Gore designed the first Presbyterian Church, the Manse and gifted plans for the second St Andrews Presbyterian Church in Naracoorte, for which John Robertson was a major benefactor.

Struan House was the largest private residence constructed by local builder Henry Smith, who also built Gringegalona. Smith played a leading role in the construction of buildings and infrastructure in the upper South East.

### King George V

The 1881 Royal visit by the two young princes was an important social milestone for the Colonies. Their fleeting personal tour of Struan was an affirmation of the prestige and social status achieved by the Roberstons in 39 years on the site. Records of the Royal visit to Struan provides insights into prevailing social and aesthetic values.

### William Shiels

There is a special association between Struan House and William Shiels, son-in-law of John Robertson and Executor of the late John Robertson's Estate. Shiels had a lifelong association with Struan beginning at the Second House as tutor to the Robertson children. Over a political career that straddled difficult economic times, Shiels served as Member for Normanby, 16th Premier of Victoria, Attorney General, Treasurer and Minister for Railways.

However Shiels' greatest legacy was the successful reform of the Divorce Act in Victoria, for which he travelled to London. This achievement marked a new independence in the relationship of the Colonies to Britain in social policy and law, contributed to a national identity amongst the colonies and was an early impetus for Federation. Shiels led the way in social reform for women's rights in Australia. He died at Struan House in 1904 and is interred in the Family Cemetery.

### Alexander Robertson

Alexander Robertson maintained pastoral holding and the strong social connections with the local Naracoorte and broader South East community. He is also associated with agricultural research on fodder crops and grasses, animal breeding and intensive grazing.

### Research Centre

The Struan Agricultural Centre meets the criteria of an organisation important to the development of agriculture in the South East of South Australia. Its changing role over four decades has included innovative and collaborative private and public scientific agricultural research as detailed in Criterion (a).

## 4.3 Statement of Cultural Significance

**The Second House and Struan House, their curtilage and their setting are of exceptional cultural, aesthetic, historical and social significance.**

Struan is significant for its direct association with John Robertson, pastoral pioneer and his family between 1842 and 1946. Its grand scale as a towered Italianate villa with elaborate internal finishes was designed to reinforce and highlight the Robertsons material wealth, reflecting their passage from squatter to successful pastoralist.

The strategic location of Struan reflects the patterns of settlement, land tenure and development that underpin the contemporary character of the South East. Struan has had a long association with the development of transport and communication infrastructure in the region.

The Struan Farm School between 1946 and 1969 was an important social welfare experiment that marked Struan House's transition from private residence to institutional use.

Struan Agricultural Centre has played an important role as a regional headquarters. Associated firstly with closer settlement it has moved from collaborative local applied research through to national CRC programs and a focus on international markets.

William Shiels, 16th Premier of Victoria was instrumental in divorce law reform in Australia. He had a strong personal, spiritual and professional association with Second House and Struan House.

Struan House played an important social role within the South East, hosting princes, governors, politicians, priests, a bishop, pastoralists, farmers and townspeople. It remains important to the local community, expressed through a strong sense of ownership and ongoing care for the two historic cemeteries.

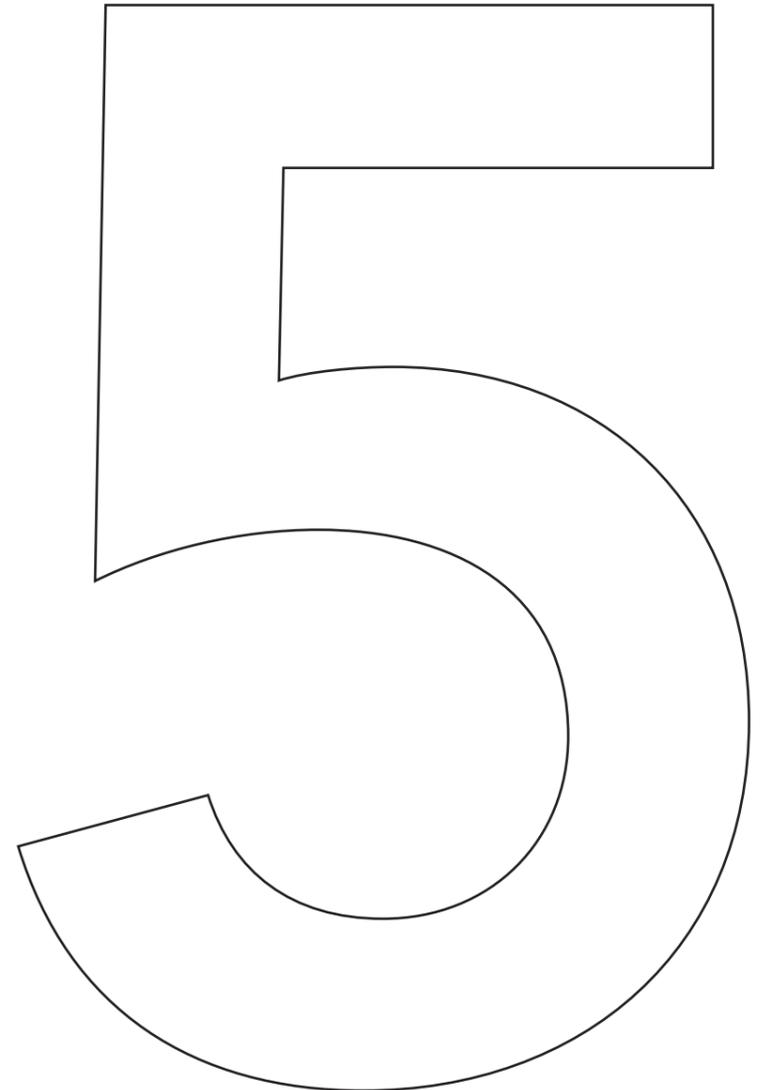
Struan House set new architectural standards that remain unmatched in its regional context. WT Gore's integrated architectural design for the Georgian Second House and the Italianate Struan House is a high point in an exceptional professional career, across the South East, western Victoria and Melbourne. His skills and experience, largely formed while living in Kincaig, are represented by a legacy of outstanding rural, commercial, ecclesiastical, institutional and residential heritage listed buildings.

The contributions of the builder Henry Smith, the clerk of works George Pannell, stonemasons John Goss and Joseph Hosking and the painter William Robbie demonstrates the accomplished building skills available in what was a remote region in the 1870s.

The aesthetic value of Struan is reinforced by the integrity and legibility of its immediate garden curtilage and its role as a landmark in a park-like landscape setting, reflecting the aspirations of the period as captured by the landscapes of Claude de Lorraine, one of which was acquired and hung in Struan House.

The State heritage listing and the previous conservation works demonstrate changing community attitudes towards heritage buildings.

- 5 Conservation Policies
- 5.1 Policy Principles
- 5.2 Second House Conservation Policies
- 5.3 Struan House Conservation Policies
- 5.4 Landscape and Setting Conservation Policies
- 5.5 Development Approval



The following Burra Charter definitions are used in the conservation policies and heritage action plans.

- *Place* means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. *Place* may have tangible and intangible dimensions.
- *Cultural significance* means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.
- *Fabric* means all the physical material of the place including elements, fixtures, contents and objects.
- *Conservation* means all the processes of looking after a place to retain its cultural significance.
- *Maintenance* means the continuous protective care of a place, and its setting. *Maintenance* is distinguished from repair which involves *restoration* or *reconstruction*.
- *Preservation* means maintaining a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.
- *Restoration* means returning a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing elements without the introduction of new material.
- *Reconstruction* means returning a place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material.
- *Adaptation* means changing a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.
- *Compatible* use is a use which respects the cultural significance of the place. A *compatible* use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.
- *Setting* means the immediate and extended environment of a *place* that contributes to its cultural significance and distinctive character.

## 5.1 Policy Principles

In accordance with the Burra Charter Process, the conservation policies in the following sections are based on an understanding of the cultural significance of the two houses at Struan and their common curtilage and setting. The conservation policies also consider factors affecting the future of the place including the owner's needs, resources, external constraints and its physical condition.

The guiding principles set out in the articles of the Burra Charter shall be applied to all work at Struan House. These principles are that:

*Conservation* is based on a respect for the existing *fabric, use, associations* and meanings. Conservation requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible.

Traditional techniques and materials are preferred for the conservation of significant *fabric*.

A heritage place should have a *compatible* use.

*Conservation* requires the retention of an appropriate *setting* for the heritage place. New construction, demolition, intrusions or other changes which would adversely affect the *setting* or relationships are not appropriate.

Contents, fixtures and objects which contribute to the cultural significance of a *place* should be retained at that *place*.

The amount of change to a place and its use should be guided by the cultural significance of the place and its appropriate interpretation. Changes which reduce *cultural significance* should be reversible.

Demolition of significant *fabric* of a *place* is generally not acceptable.

*Maintenance* is fundamental to conservation. It should be undertaken where *fabric* is of *cultural significance* and its maintenance is necessary to retain that *cultural significance*.

*Preservation* is appropriate where the existing fabric or its condition constitutes evidence of *cultural significance*, or where insufficient evidence is available to allow other conservation processes to be carried out.

*Reconstruction* is appropriate only where a place is incomplete through damage or alteration, and only where there is sufficient evidence to reproduce an earlier state of the *fabric*. *Reconstruction* should be identifiable on close inspection or through additional interpretation.

*Adaptation* is acceptable only where it has minimal impact on the *cultural significance* of the *place*. It should involve minimal change to significant *fabric*.

## 5.2 Second House Conservation Policies

These policies apply to the Second House. They should be read together with the policies for Struan House, the curtilage and the setting. Specific policies for the building fabric are provided in the heritage works plan at Chapter 6.2.

**1 The original *fabric* and the *setting* of the Second House should be actively conserved to retain its *cultural significance*.**

**2 Immediate action should be undertaken to address the identified risks to the building structure and *fabric*.**

Uncontrolled site water management is placing the building structure and fabric at immediate risk of termite attack, timber decay and stonework decay. The high priority measures in the heritage works plan address these immediate risks.

**3 Re-establishment of a sustainable *compatible use* for the Second House should be a high priority on the site.**

The building has recently been vacated, making it more vulnerable to undetected damage and gradual deterioration. Active use of the Second House is essential to its long term conservation. Until use is re-established the building should be regularly cleaned and maintained.

**4 Redundant partitions and fitout in the cellar and ground floor of the Second House should be removed. The interiors should be restored to their original form. *Adaptation* (changes to the fabric) to suit new or ongoing uses should respect the original layout, and be reversible.**

Compatible new or ongoing uses will require a good fit to the existing room sizes and layout. Dampness in the cellar will restrict the possible uses, however it is better to maintain a low level of use such as storage, than to make no use at all of this area.

**5 Access between the Second House and Struan House should be re-established by *reconstruction* of timber stairs connecting the two verandahs.**

**6 The exterior of the Second House should be actively *maintained*, including periodical inspections, repairs and re-painting.**

**7 The slate roof, the main verandah steps and the cellar exterior walls should be *restored* and *reconstructed*.**

The existing faded colorbond roof detracts from the heritage value and presentation of the building complex. Decay from rising damp in the cellar is a structural threat to the building.

**8 The important contribution of the Second House to the cultural significance of the site should be *interpreted*.**

## 5.3 Struan House Conservation Policies

These policies apply to Struan House. They should be read together with the policies for the Second House, the curtilage and the setting. Specific policies for the building fabric are provided in the heritage works plan at Chapter 6.3.

**1 The original *fabric* and the *setting* of Struan House should be actively conserved to retain its *cultural significance*.**

**2 The visual relationship with the Second House should be maintained and the access between the two buildings should be re-established.**

**3 The original exterior appearance of Struan House should be restored by *reconstruction* of the slate roof and missing finials and acroteria. The stonework should be *reconstructed* by replacement of decayed stone. All stone and rendered trimmings should be restored by careful paint removal and consolidation.**

**4 The Struan House verandah should be restored by removal of render, re-fixing of slate nosings.**

**5 The exterior timberwork of Struan House should be consolidated and actively *maintained* by regular painting.**

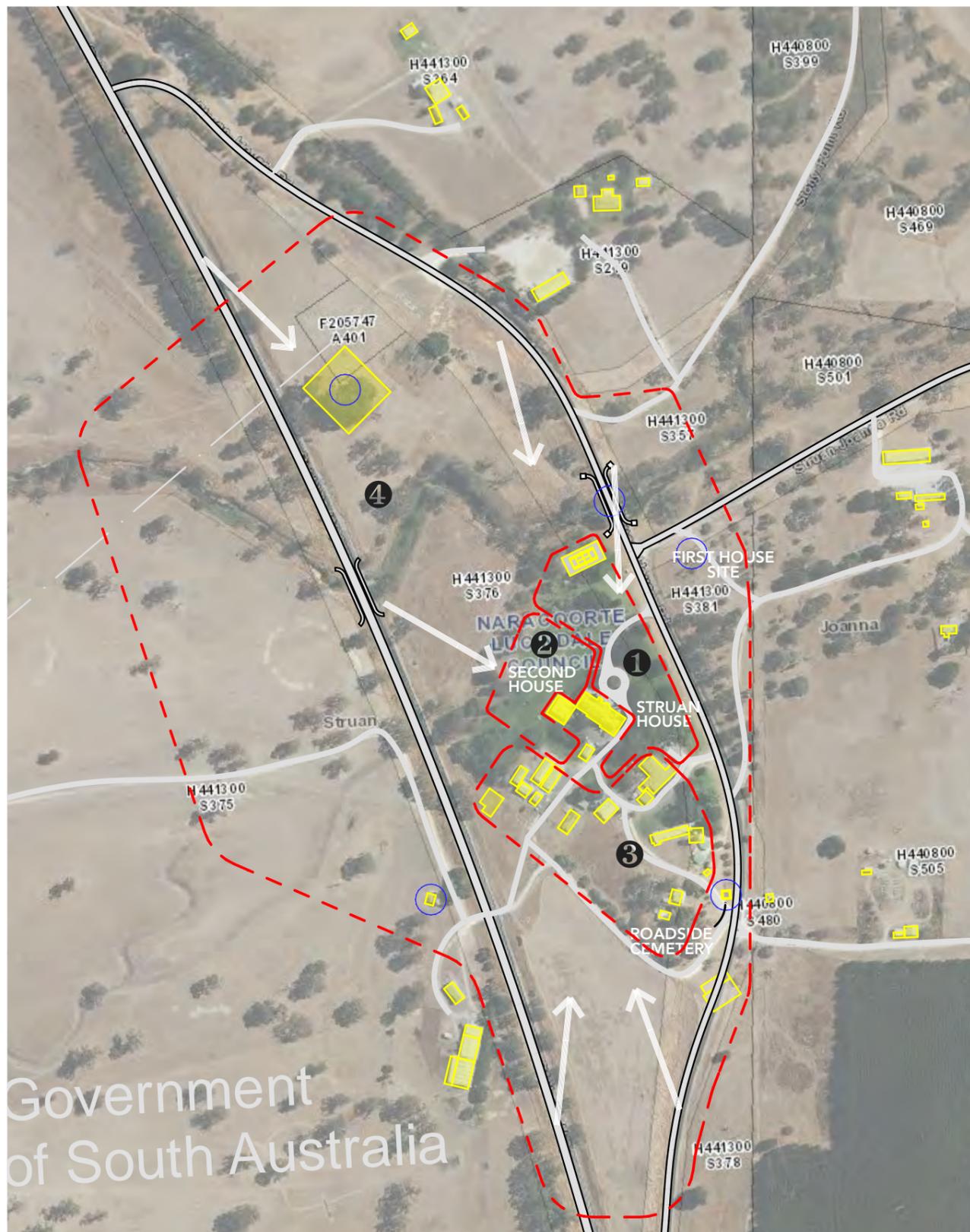
**6 The interior *reconstruction* of Struan House to the original decorative scheme should be continued in the ground floor corridors, reception and first floor dining room.**

**7 Active uses of all parts of Struan House should be maintained. Uses shall be *compatible* with the room sizes, layout and heritage character of the interior.**

**8 Increased public and community use should be made of Struan House and the gardens.**

The reception rooms were designed for and have always been used for large gatherings and events involving the local community. Community use and access is intrinsic to the heritage value. It is not appropriate to restrict use of these spaces to the building occupants. Impediments to community use should be investigated and removed.

**9 The Struan House historical collection should be maintained and should be available for controlled public access, to facilitate *interpretation* of the *cultural significance* of the place. The return of associated objects to the house should be facilitated, subject to an acquisition policy. Returned objects should be appropriately managed, displayed and interpreted.**



ASSOCIATED SITES  
 PRECINCTS  
 KEY VIEWS  
 AERIAL PHOTO LAND SERVICES GROUP  
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Policy Precincts

The curtilage and setting policies apply to the precincts shown opposite, as follows:

- 1 Formal Garden
- 2 Productive Garden
- 3 Utility Area
- 4 The Visual Setting

The Curtilage of Struan comprises the Garden (1), the Productive Garden (2) and the Utility Area (3).

5.3 Curtilage and Setting

These policies apply to the surrounds of Struan as marked on the plan opposite.

**1 The landscape character of the curtilage to Struan House and to the wider landscape that forms its Visual Setting shall be protected and maintained.** Changes to land uses which result in a change of landscape character, within the defined areas, such as a change to viticulture, forestry or establishment of windbrakes may not be appropriate.

**2 Views to Struan from public roads and the government bridge, and views from the building to the wider landscape should be restored and preserved by active landscape management.** Recently planted trees which block these views and which are not of heritage value should be removed. These occur to the north and north east of the buildings. Where trees are of heritage value, the canopy may be lifted to maintain the park-like character. New planting, including revegetation, should be selected and managed to maintain the desired structure of a ground layer and isolated tall canopy trees.

**3 The landscape distinction between the Formal Garden to the north, the former Productive Garden to the east, and the Utility Area of buildings behind Struan House should be maintained. There should be no new buildings or substantial structures within the two garden areas.** Low perennial shrubs should be confined to the formal garden area. The open lawn of the former productive garden maintains the desired landscape distinction with the formal garden.

**4 The exotic trees within the Formal Garden, the Productive Garden and the Utility Area which are part of the early planting and which reinforce the park-like landscape character should be actively maintained, and should be replaced with like species when they die or become senescent.**

**5 The driveway approach and carriage circle layout should be maintained as the primary entry to the site and buildings. The wrought iron gates should be restored and reinstated. Timber fencing should be reconstructed to mark the boundaries of the original gardens.** Full reconstruction of the picket fences may not be practical, but their location can be marked by hardwood posts based on physical evidence.

**6 New buildings should only be constructed within the Utility Area at the rear of Struan House. The placement of buildings should not block views of the rear of the building. The plan form, bulk, scale, height, materials and articulation of any new buildings on the site should not dominate the heritage buildings.**

#### Associated sites

Cottage ruin west of Riddoch Highway, associated with Struan House.

Government Bridge, under the care and control of the Naracoorte Lucindale Council, on the road reserve NE of Struan House. Photos Habitable Places 2015



#### 5.4 Associated sites

There are no statutory heritage controls (heritage listing) of the following associated sites at Struan. These sites nevertheless contribute to our understanding of Struan as a whole. Established conservation principles should be applied to any work affecting these sites out of respect and care for their heritage value.

**1 The landscape character of the Robertson Family Cemetery, as a fenced enclosure marked with large exotic trees within an open landscape should be *maintained*. Views between the cemetery and the road, and between the cemetery and Struan should be *maintained*.**

**2 The simple monuments of the roadside cemetery should be carefully conserved and the historic landscape character should be *preserved*.**

As with any heritage place, work within the cemeteries should be carefully considered and based on respect for the original fabric. The booklet Conservation Guidelines for Historic South Australian Graves and Cemeteries 2004 available from DEWNR provide a framework for the care of cemeteries and monuments. It considers existing plants, new planting, maintenance and fences. It provides advice on the care and cleaning of historic monuments, fences and railings. Generally the least intrusive cleaning methods should be used as inappropriate methods and materials can cause irreversible damage to historic fabric.

**3 The cottage ruin west of the Riddoch Highway, should be actively *preserved*, to retard deterioration. The associated exotic trees should be retained and protected.**

This ruin should be made safe with the minimum intervention. Ruined structures can be maintained with minimal attention to critical elements. Stonework can be capped to shed water. Loose materials can be secured. Demolition is not an appropriate option for making the remaining structure safe.

**4 The Government (Struan House Road) Bridge including the original stone abutments and wing walls should be actively *maintained* and its visual relationship to Struan House should be *restored*.**

The trees to the SW of the bridge should be removed to restore views to Struan House. Vegetation around the abutments should be managed to recover views of the historic structure.

**5 The First House Site should be retained as an open site, free of infrastructure, buildings or planting.**

The site should be interpreted with a roadside marker.

#### Development that requires heritage approval

The Schedules to the Development Act 1993 define the work that does and does not require Development Approval. However many of the exemptions that apply to other places do not apply to State Heritage places.

The following work requires Development Approval at Struan and on land adjacent to any State Heritage listed place:

- Land division, boundary realignments, easements.
- Leases.
- Changes of land use.
- Demolition or part demolition of structures, buildings or building fabric.
- Building work including alterations or additions to existing buildings.
- New buildings, structures, machinery or equipment.
- Structural repairs.
- The repair, restoration, reconstruction, re-roofing of State heritage buildings or structures.
- Painting of heritage buildings where they were previously unpainted, where the colours are changed or where the paint system is changed.
- Asbestos removal and remediation.
- Signage.
- Earthworks.
- Excavation or trenching on sites with archaeological potential.
- Fences.
- Roadworks.
- New site and building services including power, solar panels, water tanks.
- Tree removal or landscaping that affects the setting of the heritage buildings.
- Changes of land use such as plantations or vineyards that affect the setting of the buildings.

#### Work that does not require development approval

- Tree removal or pruning that does not affect the landscape setting or character of the place.
- Vegetation management.
- Routine cleaning and maintenance of buildings, including repainting with matching colours and paint systems.
- Routine maintenance of infrastructure.

#### Heritage Places Act 1993

This is an Act for the identification, recording and conservation of places and objects of non-Aboriginal heritage significance and to establish the South Australian Heritage Council.

The South Australian Heritage Register is established under the Heritage Places Act. Both heritage buildings at Struan are State heritage listed places on this register.

It is an offence under the act and penalties apply to a person who—

- Intentionally or recklessly damages a State Heritage Place; or
- Engages in conduct knowing that it will or might, or being recklessly indifferent as to whether it will or might, destroy or reduce the heritage significance of a State Heritage Place; or
- Destroys or reduces the heritage significance of a State Heritage Place.

A person who fails to take reasonable care of a State Heritage Place is guilty of an offence.

#### Potential archaeological sites

It is a requirement of the Heritage Places Act that:

(a) If an archaeological artefact such as the structural remains of buildings or structures or associated cultural deposits are encountered during excavation works, disturbance in the vicinity shall cease and the site should be cordoned off.

The SA Heritage Council shall be notified:

(b) Where it is known in advance (or there is reasonable cause to suspect) that significant archaeological artefacts may be encountered, a permit is required prior to commencing excavation works.

An assessment and archaeological impact statement should be prepared.

#### Indigenous sites and artefacts

It is a requirement of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 that:

(a) If Aboriginal sites, objects or remains are discovered during excavation works, disturbance in the vicinity shall cease and the site should be cordoned off.

The Heritage Branch of the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet shall be notified.

#### Site induction for contractors

When conservation or development work to a State Heritage Place occurs there is the potential to impact on the heritage values of the place.

To avoid accidental damage all volunteers and contractors should be made aware of the heritage value of the place and appropriate procedures and obligations:

- Contractors should have appropriate skills and experience working on heritage places.
- All permits and approvals shall be in place before commencing work. Workers should be aware of and comply with conditions of consent.
- Provide a brief explanation of why the place is important, and which parts of the fabric or site are of heritage value.
- Establish a procedure for review of variations to the scope of work, where the additional work is not included in the heritage approval.
- Protection measures for significant built fabric, trees or site features should be established prior to and for the duration of the works. -

## 5.6 Development Approval

All development affecting the State heritage listed places at Struan requires Development Plan Consent under the Development Act 1993. The change of use, demolition, removal, conversion, alteration or painting or addition to a State heritage place, or any other work that could materially affect the heritage value of the place is development and requires approval. Examples of works requiring development approval are listed opposite.

An application for development which *directly affects a State heritage place, or development that in the opinion of the Development Assessment Commission materially affects the context within which the State heritage place is situated* is required to be referred to the Minister for Heritage. The heritage impact is assessed by DEWNR Heritage Architects. The Development Assessment Commission must *have regard* to the response of the Minister for Heritage and to any recommended heritage conditions of approval.

Special provisions relate to assessment against the Building Rules for State heritage places. Where an inconsistency exists between the Building Rules and a Development Plan the relevant authority must modify the application of the Building Rules to avoid the inconsistency so as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that standards of building soundness, occupant safety and amenity are achieved in respect of the development that are as good as can reasonably be achieved in the circumstances.

Other approvals, permits or referrals may also be required depending on the nature of the work. Examples include building certification (building rules approval) and asbestos removal and disposal.

#### Documentation Required

Any Development Application for major construction work affecting or adjacent to the quarantine station should include a detailed heritage impact statement and where excavation is proposed, an archaeological impact statement.

Any Development Application for work affecting the fabric of a heritage place should clearly specify the scope of work, the extent of demolition / removal of fabric, and the colours, materials, finishes and workmanship for any repairs, reconstruction and new work. Direct consultation with DEWNR State Heritage Architects is recommended to facilitate the assessment and approval process.

The Development Application is lodged with the Development Assessment Commission. Work can only commence after Development Approval is granted, and is limited to the approved scope of work.

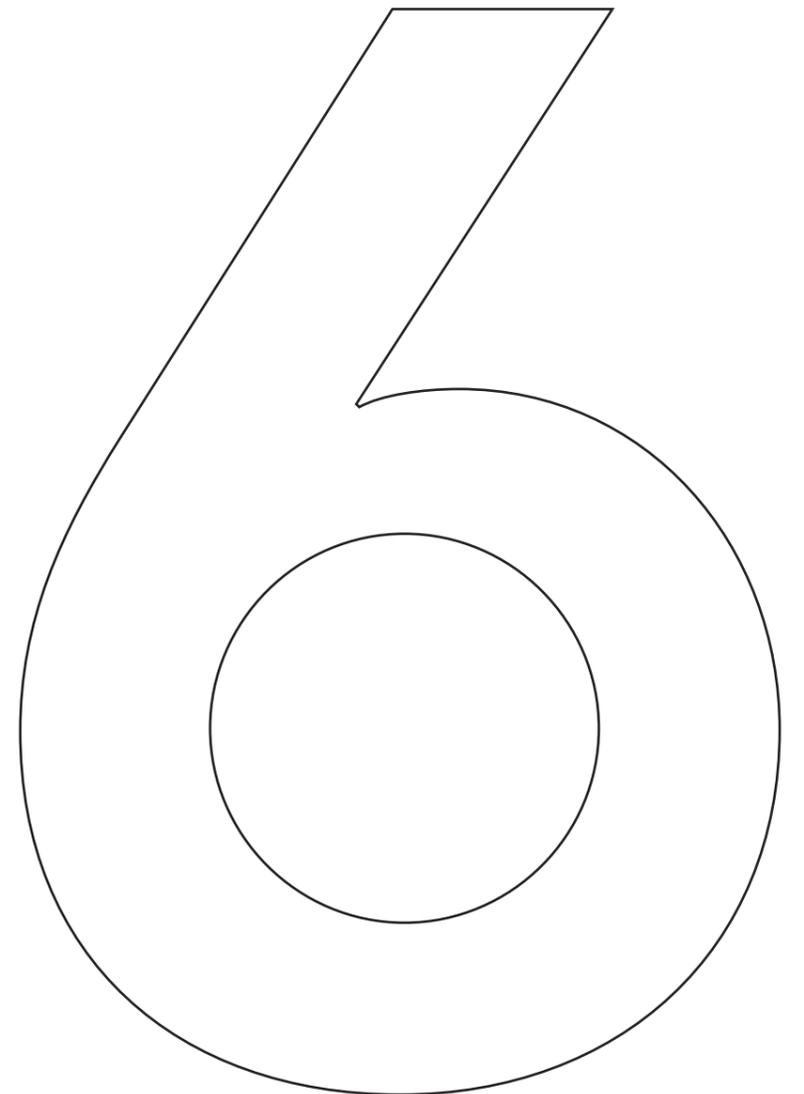
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6 Heritage Works Plans

6.1 Terminology

6.2 Second House HWP

6.3 Struan House HWP



Struan House side elevation.  
Habitable Places 2014



## 6.1 Terminology

The Heritage Works Plan for each building sets out the actions required to implement the Conservation Policies. The methodology applies the principles of the Burra Charter to decisions and recommendations for each building element. The decision to repair, replace or remove any historic fabric is based on an understanding of its heritage value in relation to the heritage value of the place as a whole.

For each element of the building or building material a conservation priority is assigned. This is followed by a description of the original construction. The integrity and dilapidation or condition of the fabric is assessed and noted. The relative heritage value of the element is assessed as either primary significant, significant or not significant. The recommended actions are concise guidelines to appropriate conservation methods and materials.

The action plan for specific elements may be used in support of a Development Application. However it does not provide sufficient detail for Building Rules Approval or for tendering and construction. Delivery of the conservation work may require further investigations by a specialist conservation consultant and the preparation of detailed technical specifications, drawings and schedules that quantify the scope of work prepared.

The following Burra Charter terms are used in the Heritage Works Plans:

- *Preservation* means maintaining a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.
- *Restoration* means returning a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing elements without the introduction of new material.
- *Reconstruction* means returning a place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material.
- *Adaptation* means changing a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.

**Walls**  
**Priority 3**

Description

Dressed ashlar local stone with a combed finish and narrow raised lime putty joints. Chisel faced chamfered plinth but no quoins. Segmented arches and flat lintels with keystones.

Coursed random rubble to east elevation, and verandah edge walls.

Integrity & Condition-

Majority of original face stonework and pointing are in excellent condition. Minor settlement cracking over openings. Graffiti. Moderate low level salt decay in cellar, plinth.

Verandah wall cement rendered: hard render cracked and drummy in places. Evidence of chemical injection DPC to some areas.

Heritage Value

Face stonework, graffiti and evidence of original timber steps is significant.

Actions

- *Retain* and conserve all original face stonework and pointing and evidence of original timber steps.
- *Repair* cracks above openings by stone wedging and repointing.
- *Remove* cement render below verandah level, *replace* decayed stones and *repoint* to match existing with soft lime mortar.



**Steps and under - verandah infill**  
**Priority 3**

Description

Original stone steps. May originally have had cut stone risers and treads, or hardwood treads or Willunga slate treads.

Mt Gambier limestone piers and western red cedar louvres and doors enclose the under-verandah space.

Integrity & Condition

Steps are cement rendered. Render is sound but there has been minor structural cracking. The condition of the stonework under the render cannot be determined.

Louvres and doors are badly weathered and are beyond repair. They are of thin scantling and a non-durable timber.

Heritage Value

Steps are of primary significance. Verandah infill is not significant.

Actions

- *Retain* as masonry steps. Open up the cement render locally to reveal physical evidence of the original construction and condition. Restore steps by revealing original materials or if required reconstruct stone, slate or timber treads.
- *Remove* the timber louvres, door and Mt Gambier stone piers. *Replace* with hardwood posts.
- *Secure* cellar room windows and openings. *Install* new painted timber doors and windows, with toughened safety glass glazing. *Design* doors and windows to permanent cross ventilation.



**Verandah decking**  
**Priority 1**

Description

Tounge and groove Jarrah decking on original pit sawn hardwood joists.

Integrity & Condition

Joists are original. Decking is not original. Decking has buckled locally on south edges due to insufficient expansion gaps, creating trip hazards. Expansion joint caulking has failed.

Heritage Value

Verandah is of primary significance.

Actions

- *Install* additional expansion joints. *Rake* out existing joints, *prime and caulk* with polysulphide.
- *Clean* surface and *apply* penetrating wood fungicide to decking.



**Verandah posts and fascias**  
**Priority 3**

Description

Sawn chamfered hardwood posts. Scalloped fascia trim to hwd beams.

Integrity & Condition

Posts, trims and beams original. Evidence of previous timber conservation - spliced repairs.

Paintwork has failed - chalking and adhesion failure. Decay to some exposed post bases where water is trapped by a bead of silicone sealant.

Heritage Value

Verandah is of primary significance.

Actions

- *Retain, conserve and consolidate* original timberwork.
- *Splice in* new post bases and fascia trim where decayed.
- *Strip back* and *repaint* timberwork with oil based enamel alkyd.



**Verandah soffit lining**  
**Priority 3**

Description

Cement sheet lining to underside of rafters.

Integrity & Condition

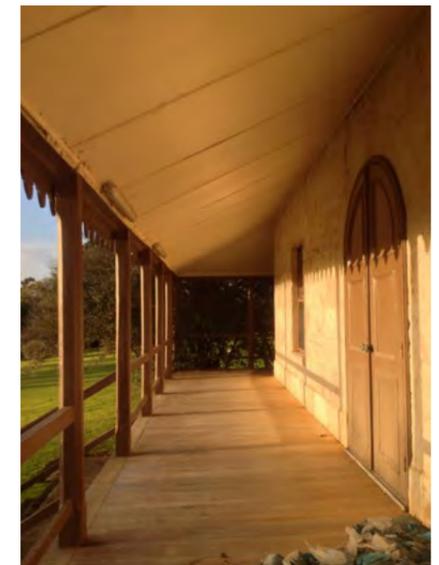
Not original fabric. The lining conceals the original framing and evidence of whether it was originally exposed or lined (eg with matchboard)

Heritage Value

Lining is not significant. It is intrusive and conceals original fabric.

Actions

- *Carefully remove* soffit linings and establish whether the verandahs were originally lined. *Determine* original construction details. *Make good* framing and close wall roof junction to prevent ingress of embers in case of bushfire.



Priority

- 1 Immediate Action
- 2 Action within 2 years
- 3 Action within 5 years
- 4 Cyclical Maintenance

Approvals

Development Approvals are required for all work affecting the fabric and setting of this building.

**Doors**  
Priority 3

Description  
Paired solid timber round head panelled joinery doors with rebated meeting stiles, paint finish.

Integrity & Condition  
Serviceable condition. Requires maintenance repainting.

Heritage Value  
Primary significant fabric.

- Actions
- *Retain* doors and door frames.
  - *Prepare and paint* with gloss oil based alkyd enamel. *Confirm* original colours by paint scraping.



**Windows**  
Priority 3

Description  
Timber framed counterweighted six pane double hung sliding sashes.

Integrity & Condition  
Windows are well protected by verandahs and are generally in good condition. Paintwork generally and facing west requires maintenance repainting.  
Original hand blown panes remain generally. One cracked pane in Room 202.

Heritage Value  
Primary significant fabric.

- Actions
- *Retain* all original windows, sashes and glazing. *Do not* replace the cracked pane.
  - *Check* and if damaged *replace* sash chords and *ease and adjust* sashes.
  - *Prepare and paint* with gloss oil based alkyd enamel. *Confirm* original colours by paint scraping.



**Roof**  
Priority 3

Description  
Original roof cladding was imported slate. Shards remain in the roof space.

Integrity & Condition  
Badly faded corrugated colorbond roof, tek screw fixed, colorbond OG profile gutters and PVC downpipes.  
Gutters are cocked up due to use of full length hi-tensile profile not adapting to the line of the verandah.

Heritage Value  
Roof form is of primary significance.  
Faded colorbond is not appropriate and detracts from the heritage value. Eaves gutter at front does not grade to outlet, causing overflowing and timber decay.

- Actions
- *Remove* colorbond roof cladding and battens. *Install* imported slate roof with lead and galvanised flashings. *Install* hardwood battens where exposed on verandahs. *Install* fire rated sarking to main roof.
  - *Install* chamfered hwd barge capping. *Install* stepped flashings to chimney.
  - *Install* Z600 re-folded galvanised OG gutters in short lengths with soldered joints. Regrade to downpipes.
  - *Re-design* roof drainage and *install* additional downpipes as required, galvanised and soldered.
  - *Remove* spreader from back verandah and *install* downpipe dropper from rainhead through verandah roof, across the back door, down the wall and under the verandah to watertable.



**Chimneys**  
Priority 4

Description  
Stone ashlar chimney stacks with stone string course and projecting cap.  
Square galvanised flue to flume cabinet.

Integrity & Condition  
Within roof space the shaft is unpainted face stonework in sound condition. Above roof the chimneys appear to be painted or limewashed.

Heritage Value  
Chimneys are primary significant fabric. Flume cabinet flue is intrusive with some visible weathering.

- Actions
- *Retain* chimneys. Ensure cap sheds water.
  - *Maintain* with limewash.



**Stormwater**  
Priority 1

Description  
Sealed carpark drains to a kerb and water table across the back of the building and a sump in NW corner.  
Galv RW tank is connected from roof by flying downpipes.

Condition  
Kerb and water table joints in poor condition. Carpark sump is blocked. RWT has failed. RWT overflow discharges to ground. Overflow ponds against the south wall of the verandah. SW downpipe discharges / ponds at base of wall. Insufficient downpipes.

Heritage Value  
The extreme dampness observed in the basement rooms caused by these faults is an immediate and serious threat to the structural integrity of the building.

- Actions
- *Re-seal* kerb and water table joints and *refurbish* sump and disposal system to carpark.
  - *Remove / replace* RWT and connect overflow to the sump.
  - *Connect* all downpipes to a new u/g stormwater system and direct to soakage pit(s) away from the building.



**Siteworks**  
**Priority 1**

Description  
Two large multi-stem cotoneaster shrubs adjacent to the NW corner of verandah.

Integrity & Condition  
Shrubs are healthy and vigorous but are overhanging gutters and preventing maintenance of the building.  
Ground surfaces grade towards the building (south side).

Heritage Value  
Not significant.  
Obscures views of the two buildings as a unified composition.

- Actions
- *Drill and fill* trees with aboricide and allow to die. *Remove* the shrubs and *grind* the stumps.
  - *Install* a 1.8m wide pathway of compacted screenings to the building perimeter. *Regrade* surfaces away from the footings.



**Termite management**  
**Priority 1**

Description  
No evidence of termite damage was observed, however the form of construction presents serious risk factors for termite attack. There is a lack of sub-floor ventilation, there is no damp proof course and there are concealed / inaccessible floors and sub-floor spaces.

Integrity & Condition  
Inadequate roof drainage results in overflowing gutters, stormwater ponds against the building and the basement is damp.

Heritage Value  
The structural integrity and heritage value of the building is at risk from undetected termite attack.

- Actions
- *Install* an in-ground perimeter termite baiting system.
  - *Establish* an ongoing termite inspection regime.
  - *Inspect* the roof space and floors for termite activity annually in addition to monitoring of the baiting system.



**Floors**  
**Priority 1**

Description  
First floor pit sawn hardwood boards on pit sawn hardwood joists visible from basement.  
Concrete floors in the basement. Includes spoon drain in Room 1 under the front verandah.

Integrity & Condition  
Timber flooring where visible appears serviceable. The high humidity and signs of severe dampness in the basement rooms points to a serious risk of structural damage due to decay and termite attack.  
The concrete floors and cement rendered skirtings are not original and have driven the dampness up the basement walls. Original basement floor construction is not known.

Heritage Value  
Original timber floors are of primary significance.  
Concrete floors are not significant.

- Actions
- *Install* cross ventilation under all suspended floors. *Improve* site drainage as detailed above.
  - *Clean, test and refurbish* spoon and stormwater drain.
  - *Retain* concrete floors.



**Basement walls**  
**Priority 2**

Description  
Base of walls is of cream coloured local stone random ashlar. Top of walls is a lighter chalkier stone with adzed surface matching the external stonework plinth. This has a raised possibly cement ribbon pointing coloured with charcoal, distinct from the pointing of the upper walls. Hardwood and stone lintels.  
Walls inside rooms lime-plastered and set.

Integrity & Condition  
Base stonework to Room 1 has moderate to severe salt decay, affecting quoins in particular.  
The lighter coloured stone is generally serviceable.  
Cement rich repair patches disfigure and contribute to the decay of stonework.

Heritage Value / Threats  
Original stonework is of primary significance.  
Decay of quoins is a serious threat to the structural integrity of the building.

- Actions
- *Cut out and replace* salt affected stones using matching local stone.
  - *Remove* cement rich patches and repoint sound stonework with sacrificial lime mortar.
  - *Install* chemical injection DPC to base of walls, except where there is soil behind.



**Basement wall & ceiling finishes**  
**Priority 3**

Description  
Evidence of original lath and plaster ceilings, no longer extant.  
Original soft lime plaster remains in some areas above hard plastered surfaces.

Integrity & Condition  
Original ceilings have been removed leaving the first floor framing visible.  
Wall finishes in poor condition. Flaking paint caused by original calomine paint and dampness. Fretting plaster caused by hard plastering, concrete floors, lack of DPC and poor site drainage.  
Rooms 2 and 4 may have originally had fireplaces but if so the openings have been bricked up.

Heritage Value  
Basement wall and ceiling finishes have little integrity and are of low significance.

- Actions
- *Reconstruction* of ceilings or fireplaces is not required.
  - *Remove* all poorly adhered paint and calomine where original plaster is sound.
  - *Strip* hard plaster and decayed plaster only. *Apply* sacrificial lime plaster. *Install* DPC and allow walls to dry. *Strip* sacrificial plaster and re-plaster with lime mortar. *Finish* with and regularly *repaint* with limewash.



**Basement fixtures**  
**Priority 1**

Description  
Timber shelving in Rooms 2 and 4. Darkroom fitout, sink and wall tile patch in Room 3.

Integrity & Condition  
Timber shelving is serviceable. Darkroom fitout is mouldy, damp and decaying.  
Some of the materials stored in these rooms appears to be abandoned. Rooms are not cleaned.

Heritage Value  
Fitout has no heritage significance but decaying joinery and unmanaged storage puts the building at risk.

- Actions
- *Strip out* darkroom fitout.
  - Ongoing use of these rooms for storage is appropriate, but only for goods and packaging not affected by dust and dampness. *Sort and dispose* of any unwanted goods.
  - Goods should only be stored on the racks, clear of the wall and well spaced to allow airflow and to prevent condensation. *Do not* store materials in cardboard or store on the floor.
  - *Regularly clean* these rooms.



**Ground floor walls and fitout**  
**Priority 3**

Description  
Solid plastered stone walls with timber skirtings. Walls finished with calsumine (Soft Green, Spruce Blue) now overpainted.  
Lightweight partition between Rooms 205 and 206.  
Laboratory fitout to Room 204 including flume cupboard.

Integrity & Condition  
Original wall finishes and skirtings generally intact and serviceable.  
Fretting and paint blistering due to rising damp Room 206 and falling damp in the back wall of corridor Room 201.  
Laboratory and offices appear to be abandoned.

Heritage Value  
Original wall finishes and skirtings are of primary significance.  
Partitions and lab fitout are not significant. They intrude and detract from the integrity and heritage value of the interior.

Actions

- *Retain* and protect the original wall finishes and skirtings.
- If or when the current room uses are no longer required, *remove* the partitions, lab fitout and flume cupd, make good and *restore* the integrity of Rooms 203, 205 & 206.
- Where paint has blistered, *apply a pulvise* to draw out salt, make good plaster and re-decorate.



**Ceilings**  
**Priority 3**

Description  
Lath and plaster ceilings. Victorian cornices and small acanthus leaf plaster ceiling roses in Rooms 202 and 205.  
Fibrous plaster ceiling to hallway Room 201.

Integrity & Condition  
Minor shrinkage cracking to lath and plaster ceilings. Partitions appear to have been scribed around the cornice in Room 205.

Heritage Value  
Original ceilings are of primary significance.  
Fibrous plaster ceiling is not significant.

Actions

- *Retain* and protect the original lath and plaster ceilings. *Inspect regularly* and promptly *investigate* any sign of moisture or cracking. *Rectify* leaks promptly.
- If damage occurs, *repair* cracks using adhesive injections methods.
- *Reconstruct* the missing elements of the damaged ceiling rose.
- *Investigate* original paint colours by scraping at cornices or roses to determine any original decorative paint scheme. If evidence is found, *reconstruct* the original colour scheme when re-decorating.



**Windows, doors and skirtings**  
**Priority 3**

Description  
Painted four panel Victorian style doors, architraves and lined reveals. No skirting blocks. Some original door hardware.  
Painted splayed window reveal linings, architraves and bulbous sillboard with horns.

Integrity & Condition  
Where remaining, the original joinery is in good condition. There is physical evidence that a timber architrave has been removed from the archway in the centre of the hallway, Room 201.

Heritage Value  
Original joinery of primary significance.

Actions

- *Retain* all original woodwork and hardware. *Replace* missing doors and skirtings to match.
- *Paint* woodwork with gloss alkyd oil based enamel.
- *Reconstruct* architraves and linings to the central arch in the hallway Room 201.



**Marble fireplace**  
**Priority 3**

Description  
Mid-Victorian marble fire surround with cast iron insert and Willunga slate front hearth to Room 205.

Integrity & Condition  
Marble and cast iron in good condition. Minor staining at base of marble where a blacking agent has been used on the slate. Slate surface appears sound but is fragile.  
Presumed matching fire surround from Room 202 is missing.

Heritage Value  
Fireplace of primary significance, the oldest remaining marble fireplace at Struan.

Actions

- *Retain* and *protect* the existing marble fireplace, fire surround and hearth in Room 204.
- *Do not* use the mantel for storage of heavy objects or any objects that could damage the surface. *Do not* fix adhesive tapes or labels to the surface.
- *Clean* the marble by dusting regularly. Clean only by wiping with a soft damp cloth. *Do not* use any chemical sealants or cleaners whatsoever.
- *Do not* seal the slate front hearth.
- *Open up* the chimney breast and inspect for evidence of the original mantel in Room 202.
- *Install* a reproduction marble fire surround, cast iron insert and slate hearth based on evidence or to match the existing in Room 205.



**Timber fireplace**  
**Priority 3**

Description  
Painted Mid-Victorian timber fire surround with brick lined hearth, wrought iron turning bar and Willunga slate front hearth to Room 204.

Integrity & Condition  
Timber and paintwork in good condition. Painted brick lining joints are fretted. Slate front hearth surface appears sound but is fragile.  
Presumed matching fire surround in soils laboratory Room 203 is missing.

Heritage Value  
Fireplace of primary significance, the oldest remaining timber fireplace at Struan. The wrought iron pivot is uncommon.

Actions

- *Retain* and *protect* the existing timber fireplace in Room 204.
- *Do not* use the mantel for storage of heavy objects or any objects that could damage the surface.
- *Repoint* with lime mortar and *paint* the brick hearth.
- *Do not* seal the slate front hearth.
- In the laboratory Room 203, if or when the fitout is removed, *open up* the chimney breast and *inspect* for evidence of the original mantel.
- *Install* a reproduction timber fire surround, cast iron insert and slate hearth based on evidence or to match the existing in Room 204.



**Roof framing**  
**Priority 3**

Description  
Conventional roof framing of pit sawn hardwood wall plates, common rafters, collar ties and ceiling joists, all 125 x50.

Integrity & Condition  
The roof timbers are sound. Original construction faults in the roof framing are described under Physical Evidence. Lacking proper midspan support there has been substantial deflection in the hip rafters.

Rafters cut for installation of the flume cupboard are unsupported.

Heritage Value  
Roof framing is of primary significance and has revealed important new information about the builders and architect.

Actions

- When re-roofing, *reinforce* the roof framing with additional underpurlins and struts to provide effective midspan support to the hip rafters. *Support* the hips in their current deflected position. *Do not* straighten.
- *Securely fix* (to structural engineers details) the stone gable end walls to the roof framing when re-roofing.



**Face stonework**  
**Priority 3**

Description

Dressed local limestone ashlars raised in 15" courses, bedded and pointed in lime mortar with fine ruled lines painted black. Faces chisel dressed. Generally unpainted except at tower.

Integrity & Condition

Damp proof course DPC has been inserted - underset with polyethelene to front - chemical injection to rear.

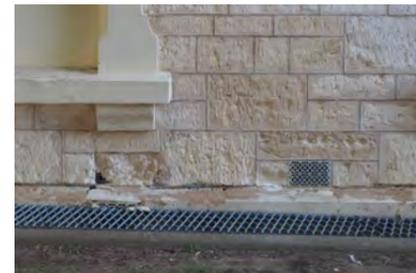
Majority of face stonework and pointing in sound condition. Stones above DPC that have previously been replaced or patched with lime mortar are sound. Localised surface fretting and decay in stones in first course above the DPC , probably due to residual salts.

Heritage Value

Face stonework of primary significance.

Actions

- *Retain and maintain* face stonework, pointing and lining. *Do not* paint or apply surface treatments.
- *Cut out and replace* decayed stones using matching stone from local sources, soft lime jointing and pointing mortar and painted lines to match existing.
- *Remove* paint to tower stonework and trims using chemical methods. *Make good and repoint.*



**Stonework trims**  
**Priority 3**

Description

Warm cream coloured dressed local stone with tooled margins to sills and quoins. Plinth, skirting, pilasters, columns, capitals, lintels, architraves, strings, frieze and cornices are rendered, either run in situ or precast on site. Final render coat may contain cement.

Integrity & Condition

Trims appear structurally sound, all painted with acrylic over limewash.

Plinth below DPC has sacrificial lime render which is fretting as intended. Salt laden debris has accumulated at footings.

Heritage Value

Trims are of primary significance. Architectural integrity is marred by painting.

Actions

- *Remove* paint from all trims using a chemical paint removal system, non-metallic hand scraping and low pressure washing. *Confirm* methodology with sample areas for approval. *Make good* with matching render and *repoint.*
- Strip render from plinth below DPC and re-render with sacrificial hydraulic lime render. *Reset* loose sub-floor vents.
- *Regularly remove and dispose of* salt laden debris from building perimeter.



**Granite steps**  
**Priority 3**

Description

Dressed granite curved wings, piers and treads sourced from Gringegalgona region in western Victoria. Hand tooled finish. Presumably on local stone foundations.

Integrity & Condition

Granite in very good condition except for minor surface face delamination in top tread. Granite had an attractive surface patina and weathered colour. Several treads have settled and drifted out of alignment.

Heritage Value

Primary significant fabric demonstrating the connection, through the Robertson clan, WT Gore and Henry Smith, between Struan and Gringegalgona.

Actions

- *Retain and protect* the steps insitu including the patina. Full reconstruction by replacement of the footing is not appropriate.
- *Reset and re-level* the dislodged treads, bedded and grouted using soft lime mortar.
- *Clean* using only fresh water. *Do not* saturate the footings, pressure clean or use any chemical treatments.



**Doors**  
**Priority 1**

Description

Painted timber joinery four panel and half glazed doors. Sidelights and fanlights to main entrances. Original brass or bronze hardware.

Willunga slate thresholds.

Integrity & Condition

Paintwork flaking and chalking - overdue for repainting. Minor weathering and localised decay to timberwork, particularly west facing.

Slate thresholds weathered but sound.

Heritage Value

Primary significant fabric.

Actions

- *Retain and actively maintain* all external doors, frames and thresholds.
- *Cut out decay, fungicide treat and epoxy fill or piece in* repairs to match original.
- *Paint* with alkyd oil base gloss enamel.
- *Remove* paint to bare wood only where adhesion has failed. *Retain and feather in* all sound original paint layers.
- *Establish and maintain* a regular program of maintenance painting.
- *Install* sympathetic new hardware only where required for life safety.
- *Retain and protect* fragile slate thresholds. *Do not* seal slate surfaces.



**Windows**  
**Priority 1**

Description

Single pane double hung box frame sliding sash windows with hardwood sills.

Integrity & Condition

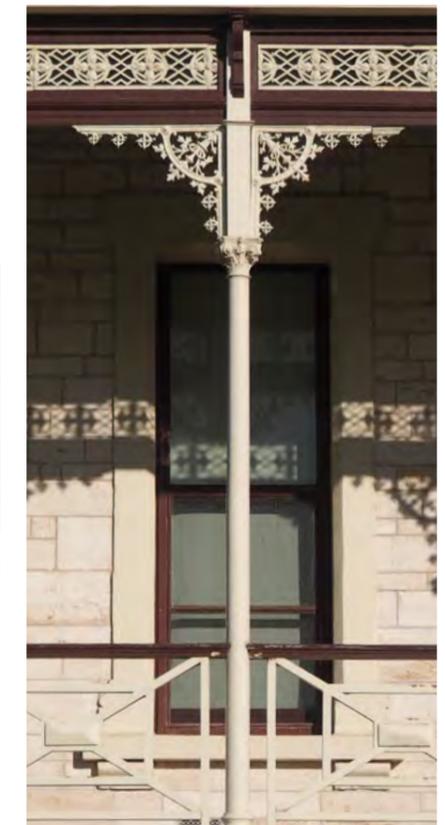
Paintwork flaking and chalking - overdue for repainting. Minor weathering and localised decay to timberwork, particularly west facing.

Heritage Value

Primary significant fabric.

Actions

- *Retain and actively maintain* all windows.
- *Cut out decay, fungicide treat and epoxy fill or piece in* repairs to match original.
- *Paint* with alkyd oil base gloss enamel.
- *Remove* paint to bare wood only where adhesion has failed. *Retain and feather in* all sound original paint layers.
- *Establish and maintain* a regular program of maintenance painting.
- *Retain* all original hardware.



**Verandah walls and steps**  
Priority 2

Description  
The walls supporting the return verandah may incorporate walls of the demolished service wing to the Second House.

The steps were constructed with bulbous Willunga slate risers. The slate would have delaminated due to salt attack where the edges were in contact with the stonework.

Integrity & Condition  
Minor structural cracking at corners. The walls have rotated and are leaning slightly outwards. Step treads have been removed. Walls and steps have been fully cement rendered and painted.

The hard cement render is drummy and cracked in places.

Heritage Value  
The walls are of primary significance as physical evidence of the original Second House layout. The steps are of primary significance.

- Actions
- *Remove* cement render below verandah level, *replace* decayed stones and *repoint* to match existing with soft lime mortar.
  - *Assess* structural cracking and *re-wedge joints* across cracks.
  - *Reconstruct* bulbous slate steps. *Seal* all slate edges and surfaces in contact with masonry.



**Verandah nosings and columns**  
Priority 2

Description  
Original verandah nosings were hardwood. Original columns were Maclean's patent with cast zinc base and capital mouldings.

Integrity & Condition  
Nosings replaced with Mintaro slate which is not pinned to the wall below. Three nosings are dislodged up to 50mm, column is out of plumb. A serious structural fault - the balustrade fixed to the columns cannot resist crowd loadings. The verandah roof will collapse if the column is pushed off the wall.

Salt decay in 'new' slate nosings. Columns replaced with cast iron.

Heritage Value  
The zinc column mouldings are of primary significance. The slate and cast iron fabric is not significant.

- Actions
- *Re-align* and *positively fix* slate nosings to wall below with non-ferrous pins.
  - *Install* DPC membrane below all slate nosings.
  - *Seal* edges of slate nosings where in direct contact with masonry.



**Verandah**  
Priority 2

Description  
Cast iron frieze in painted timber framing and moulding. Timber eaves bracket, timber lined eave, scotia and OG gutter. Narrow sheet galv deep profile concave roofing painted in narrow stripes.

Integrity & Condition  
Some timberwork is reconstructed. Roof and gutters reconstructed in colorbond. Decorative cast iron has been grit blasted and painted. Paint system has failed - rust is breaking through generally.

Reconstructed balustrade of WRC, not a durable timber, is beginning to decay at joints: a risk to users.

Heritage Value  
Cast iron and original timbers of primary significance.

- Actions
- *Take down, grit blast, repaint* cast iron with a high performance paint system.
  - *Re-install* cast iron and *make good* and paint timberwork.
  - *Repaint* concave verandah with narrow stripes based on photographic evidence.
  - *Paint* gutters.
  - *Reconstruct* failed balustrade with naturally durable hardwood, painted.



**Eaves**  
Priority 4

Description  
Painted timber boarded soffit lining with timber scroll brackets. Painted beaded timber fascias with scotias.

Integrity & Condition  
Paintwork and substrate appear to be sound.

Heritage Value  
Primary significant fabric.

- Actions
- *Prepare* and *paint* with alkyd oil base gloss enamel.
  - *Establish* and *maintain* a regular program of maintenance painting.



**Roof**  
Priority 3

Description  
Original roof cladding was imported slate. Shards remain in the roof space. Ridges were trimmed with wrought iron finials, gutters with acroteria.

Integrity & Condition  
Replacement roofing colorbond finish badly fading and chalky. Clear polycarbonate and fibreglass to roof lights. Flat roof clad with corrugated cladding too flat to drain. screw fixed, colorbond OG profile gutters and PVC downpipes. Debris in gutters.

Heritage Value  
Roof form is of primary significance. Faded colorbond is not appropriate and detracts from the heritage value.

- Actions
- *Remove* colorbond roof cladding and battens. *Install* imported slate roof to outer roof planes with lead and galvanised flashings. *Install* fire rated sarking to main roof.
  - *Install* stepped flashings to chimney.
  - *Review* roof drainage and *install* additional downpipes as required, galvanised and soldered.
  - *Install* reproduction finials and acroteria base on historic photo evidence.



**Downpipes**  
Priority 1

Description  
Painted metal and PVC downpipes connected to rainheads, discharging via spreaders onto lower roofs.

Integrity & Condition  
Ceiling damage occurring to rooms below spreaders. Downpipes spaced too far apart resulting in roof catchments that regular overflow the gutters.

Rainhead design (square folded top bead) unlikely to match original which probably had a rolled edge. Box gutter not inspected.

Heritage Value  
Effective roof drainage is critical to preservation of the building fabric. Leaf litter in gutters presents an additional bushfire hazard.

- Actions
- *Review* roof drainage from first principles, *redesign* to AS 3500.3.2. *Inspect* and *assess* box gutters. *Adjust* box gutters and *install* additional downpipes as required.
  - *Re-design* roof drainage to eliminate spreaders. *Connect* upper roof downpipes through eaves or verandahs directly into rainheads.
  - *Establish* style of original rainheads from physical evidence. *Install* new rainheads based on the evidence.
  - *Clean* gutters and downpipes at least annually, prior to fire danger season.



**Chimneys**  
Priority 4

Description  
Stone chimneys probably with rendered brackets and cap mouldings.

Integrity & Condition  
No original chimney stacks remain. All are Mt Gambier limestone, painted. Stacks have been earthquake strengthened with stainless steel plates and tie rods down the flue.

Heritage Value  
Form of chimneys is significant. Fabric is not of heritage value.

Actions  
• *Retain and periodically repaint* chimneys using flat exterior acrylic.



**Access ramp**  
Priority 4

Description  
Recent steel and hardwood disabled access ramp, leading to a new opening formed in the side of the portico.

Integrity & Condition  
Moderate weathering of hardwood decking. Sprung board presents a trip hazard.

Heritage Value  
No heritage significance.

Actions  
• *Refix* decking.  
• *Maintenance* paint steelwork before paint system fails.  
• *Plan* for future replacement of decking.



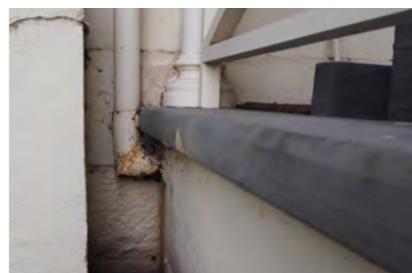
**Stormwater**  
Priority 1

Description  
Grated cut-off channel to north east walls. Verandah downpipes discharge at base of verandah walls.

Integrity & Condition  
Cut-off channel requires cleaning.  
Uncontrolled stormwater disposal at footings contributes to the structural risk to the verandah walls.  
Downpipe plumbed to a cast iron pipe that disappears under the verandah - discharge location is unknown.

Heritage Value  
No heritage significance but critical to structural integrity of verandah walls.

Actions  
• *Regularly* clean cut-off channel.  
• *Test and clean* all stormwater disposal systems.  
• *Install* new stormwater system with inspection openings connecting verandah downpipes to new or existing soakage trench or pit.



**Irrigation**  
Priority 3

Description  
Automatic irrigation system is installed to the lawns adjacent to the west and north walls.

Heritage Value / Threats  
Overspray and ground moisture at the footings during summer increases the risk of rising damp and salt damage to the stonework.  
The irrigation may be contributing to the risk of soil movement which is causing structural damage to the verandah footings.

Actions  
• *Adjust* irrigated lawn areas away from the building.  
• *Install* a garden bed and set back the lawn 1.8m from the northern wall of the verandah. *Grade* ground levels away from the building and finish with mulch. *Establish* low planting that does not require watering 1m away from the building.  
• *Install* a 1.8m wide pathway of compacted screenings adjacent to the strip drain and bay window along the northern facade. *Regrade* surfaces away from the footings.



**Termite management**  
Priority 1

Description  
No evidence of termite damage was observed, however the form of construction presents serious risk factors for termite attack. There is a lack of sub-floor ventilation and there are concealed / inaccessible floors and sub-floor spaces.

Heritage Value  
The structural integrity and heritage value of the building is at risk from undetected termite attack.

Actions  
• *Install* an in-ground perimeter termite baiting system.  
• *Establish* an ongoing termite inspection regime.  
• *Inspect* the roof space and floors for termite activity annually in addition to monitoring of the baiting system.

**Interior Walls**  
Priority 4

Description  
Internal walls are generally of stone, however some upper rooms have lath and plaster partitions where they span over a larger room on the ground floor.

Integrity and Condition  
Original room layout is substantially intact, with only minor alterations made in the servants wing.  
Minor rising damp affecting the plaster and paint in Rooms 12 and 13, ground floor toilets, caused by installation of concrete floors against walls with no damp proof course.

Heritage Value  
Primary heritage significance.

Actions  
• *Install* chemical injection damp proof course where concrete floors have been installed abutting stone walls, and redecorate.

**Floors timber**  
**Priority 4**

Description

Tounge and groove baltic pine flooring on hardwood joists. Decorative paint finish is exposed to view in hallways Rooms 3 and 24.

There was a highly polished timber floor in the drawing room Room 4.

Integrity & Condition

Where visible in hallways condition is sound. Fau oak wood grain finish has been reconstructed in the hallway.

Floors were lifted and reinstated to install A/C service pipework and earthquake strengthening. Floors are generally concealed by wall to wall carpets, probably on hardboard underlay.

The polished floor in Room 4 has been carpeted.

Heritage Value

Floors are of primary significance.

Actions

- *Retain* and *protect* original floors and the reproduction fau oak wood grain finish.

**Carpets**  
**Priority 4**

Description

Details of original carpets are not known. Were most likely loose carpets with the exposed timber borders oak grained, as in the hallways. Evidence for this is now concealed. 1930s photos show a narrow axminster style runner on the stairs and similar wall-to-wall carpet in Room 4. Linoleum was installed after 1946.

Integrity & Condition

Reproduction patterned carpets have been laid wall-to-wall in formal rooms Rooms 04, 21, 28, stairs Room 02 and first floor hallway Room 202.

A reproduction patterned carpet runner with borders has been installed in ground floor hallways Rooms 13 and 24.

Commercial wall-to-wall carpets have been installed in the offices.

Heritage Value

Reproduction carpets have no heritage significance but are sympathetic to the style present in the house in the 1930s.

Actions

- *Retain* the reproduction carpets.
- *Replace* carpets in offices with wall-to-wall broadloom on hardboard underlay. Provide a central square to each room with a contrasting border cut in around fireplaces and doorways, to reflect the original loose carpets.



**Floor tiles**  
**Priority 4**

Description

Tessellated stoneware tiles in geometric pattern extend from the loggia through the Entrance Room 1 to the Stairway Room 2. Three brown field colours contrast with white diamonds and blue and green highlights. Polished black stone or ceramic borders.

Integrity & Condition

Good condition. A few cracked tiles. Some wear to the softer dark brown squares tiles is evident in glancing light.

Heritage Value

Tiled floors are of primary significance.

Actions

- *Retain* and *protect* tile floors.
- *Clean* only with damp sponge and fresh water.
- *Do not* use chemical cleaners or polishes.
- *Do not* seal the tiles.



**Decorative finishes**  
**Priority 3**

Description

Elaborate fau marble decorative paint schemes to walls and plasterwork to entrance, stairway and ground floor passages Rooms 1, 2, 3 and 24. Paint details to plaster crests in Room 1.

Gilt panel borders, scrolls, plasterwork highlights, and clan crest to drawing room Room 4.

Fau oak wall finish and ropework panel borders to dining room Room 21.

Thistle pattern corners to borders in first floor dining room Room 217.

Integrity & Condition

All original decorative paintwork except the coat of arms in Room 4 was overpainted.

Samples of paint removal areas exposing original details remain in Rooms 1, 4, 21, 24 and 217.

Decorative scheme has been fully reconstructed in Rooms 1, 2, 4 and 21.

Decorative scheme remains overpainted in hallways Rooms 13, 24 and first floor dining room Room 217.

Heritage Value

Decorative paint schemes are of primary significance.

Actions

- *Undertake* further investigation to determine any decorative paint scheme in former sitting room Room 25 (present reception).
- *Reconstruct* the decorative paint scheme to hallways Rooms 13, 24, sitting room Room 25 and first floor dining room Room 217.



**Windows doors and skirtings**  
**Priority 3**

Description

Fau oak woodgrain painted second fix joinery throughout the main house, including four panel doors, deep skirtings and wide architrave mouldings.

Iron and brass patent rimlocks.

Integrity & Condition

Paintwork and joinery in good condition.

Decorative oak woodgrain finish has only been reconstructed to Rooms 1, 2, 4 and 25. Remains overpainted elsewhere.

Much original door hardware.

Heritage Value

Decorative woodgrain finishes are of primary significance.

Actions

- *Reconstruct* the oak woodgrained finishes to the hallways Rooms 13, 24, sitting room Room 25 and first floor dining room Room 217.
- *Retain* all original door hardware.



**Main staircase**  
**Priority 4**

Description

Cantilever timber staircase in three flights with winders. Elegant curved polished handrail with scroll at first newell post. Turned painted balusters. Oak woodgrained risers. Lath and plaster soffit.

Integrity & Condition

Good condition. Carefully concealed structural steelwork has been installed to conform with modern loading codes and to strengthen the balustrade.

Heritage Value

Primary significance for fabric and design.

Actions

- *Retain* and *protect* original roof light.
- *Retain* and *protect* staircase.



## Marble fireplaces Priority 4

### Description

Mid-Victorian marble fire surrounds with cast iron insert and slate or glazed tile front hearths.

Hand carved Carrara marble to Room 4, mottled and black marble to Room 21, grey marble to Room 23, Carrara marble to Room 25, veined black marble to Room 26, hand carved Carrara marble with columns to Room 217.

### Integrity & Condition

Marble, cast iron, tiles and slate in good condition.

### Heritage Value

All marble fireplaces are of primary significance. Fireplace to Rooms 4 and 217 are of exceptional significance.

### Actions

- *Retain* and *protect* all of the marble fire surrounds, grates, tile and slate hearths.
- *Do not* use the mantel for storage of heavy objects or any objects that could damage the surface. *Do not* fix adhesive tapes or labels to the surface.
- *Clean* the marble by dusting regularly. Clean only by wiping with a soft damp cloth. *Do not* use any chemical sealants or cleaners whatsoever.



## Enamelled slate fireplaces Priority 3

### Description

Simple slate fire surrounds with elaborate enamelled marbling finishes, cast iron grates and slate hearths.

Brown marbling to Room 27, black with white veins to Room 28, dark green to Room 29, malachite green to Room 204, rouge to Room 211, dark green with graffiti to Room 213. Timber fire surrounds elsewhere.

### Integrity & Condition

Good condition generally.

Finish has been worn through trying to remove graffiti in Room 213.

Fire surround to Room 203 has been removed and the opening is bricked up.

### Heritage Value

Original fabric has primary significance. The graffiti is significant physical evidence of the Farm School.

### Actions

- *Retain* and *protect* all of the timber and enamelled slate fire surrounds, grates and hearths.
- *Do not* fix adhesive tapes to surfaces.
- *Clean* by dusting regularly or wiping with a soft damp cloth. *Do not* use chemicals.
- *Open up and install* timber surround, cast iron insert and slate hearth to Room 203.



## Rear and tower stairs Priority 4

### Description

Simple painted timber stairs with quarter winders, turned newell posts and square balusters.

### Integrity & Condition

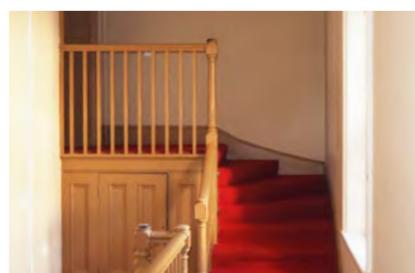
Good condition.

### Heritage Value

Significant.

### Actions

- *Retain* and *protect* original stairs.



## Ceilings lath and plaster Priority 1

### Description

Highly decorated coffered ceilings to Rooms 1, 4 and 21. Victorian coves and simple roses to remaining ground floor rooms.

Plain square set lath and plaster to servants wing.

### Integrity & Condition

Falling damp water damage to cornice paintwork Room 25.

Lath and plaster cracked, delaminating and falling in Rooms 8, 9 and 11.

### Heritage Value

All original lath and plaster is of primary significance.

### Actions

- *Retain* and protect all lath and plaster ceilings and run plaster cornices.
- *Stabilise* cracks and delaminated areas using adhesive injections methods.
- *Re-fix* laths or install metal lathing where plaster is missing, and make good in three coats flushed in to match existing.
- *Inspect ceilings regularly* and *promptly investigate* any sign of moisture or cracking. *Rectify* leaks promptly.
- *Rectify* leaking downpipe causing falling damp in Room 25.



## Ceilings pressed metal Priority 4

### Description

Pressed metal ceilings fitted to many first floor rooms after the original lath and plaster had failed. Steel or iron sheetmetal, probably not galvanised. Painted.

### Integrity & Condition

Rust patches showing through the paint system in some places. Original plaster cornices and roses have been retained.

### Heritage Value

Significant.

### Actions

- *Treat* rust from above and below, *prime* and *paint* ceiling.
- Where fabric is beyond repair, source matching pattern. If no matching pressed metal can be found, *prepare* a mould and *fabricate* replacement panels in a material suitable for paint finish.
- *Inspect ceilings regularly* and *promptly investigate* any sign of corrosion or paint damage. *Rectify* leaks promptly.



## Roof lights Priority 4

### Description

Glazed roof light with coloured (painted) glass border above the stairs.

Plain rooflights to store and box rooms Rooms 207 and 208.

### Integrity & Condition

Main stairwall roof light appears in serviceable condition.

Store and box room skylights have been roofed.

### Heritage Value

Original fabric is of primary significance.

### Actions

- *Retain* and *protect* original rooflights.
- *Reinstall* clear polycarbonate panel above store and box rooms, *make good* and *paint* skylight shaft.
- *Regularly clean* the top surface of the rooflights, using only vacuum or fresh water.



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## CHAPTER 2.7 THE BUILDERS

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**Appendices**

**Appendix A Certificate of Title**

**Appendix B The Border Watch September 8th, 1875**

**Appendix C Schedule of Exterior Paint Colours and Finishes**

**Appendix D Cost Estimates**

Appendix A  
Certificate of Title

SEARCH OF CROWN RECORD

\* VOLUME 5609 FOLIO 672 \*

COST : \$18.00 (GST exempt )  
REGION : EMAIL  
AGENT : PSEM BOX NO : 000  
SEARCHED ON : 01/02/2010 AT : 13:24:17  
CLIENT REF DTEI-ASSET SURVEY TG

PARENT TITLE : CR 5594/380  
AUTHORITY : RLG 8600706  
DATE OF ISSUE : 23/12/1998  
REGISTRATION : 1

OWNER

-----  
THE CROWN

CUSTODIAN

-----  
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, NATURAL RESOURCES AND REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT OF ADELAIDE SA 5000

DESCRIPTION OF LAND

-----  
SECTION 505  
HUNDRED OF JOANNA  
IN THE AREA NAMED JOANNA

SECTIONS 336, 375 AND 376  
HUNDRED OF ROBERTSON  
IN THE AREA NAMED STRUAN

ALLOTMENTS 1 AND 5 FILED PLAN 39614  
IN THE AREA NAMED STRUAN  
HUNDRED OF ROBERTSON

TOTAL AREA: 1110 HECTARES APPROXIMATE  
DIAGRAM BOOK PAGE 23 HUNDRED OF JOANNA  
DIAGRAM BOOK PAGE 51 HUNDRED OF ROBERTSON

EASEMENTS

-----  
SUBJECT TO THE EASEMENT OVER THE LAND MARKED EASEMENT ON DIAGRAM BOOK PAGE  
89 AS REGARDS SECTION 505 HUNDRED OF JOANNA TO THE ETSA CORPORATION (GG  
14.8.1986 PAGE 541)

SUBJECT TO EASEMENTS OVER THE LAND MARKED A AND E ON FP 39614 AS REGARDS  
ALLOTMENTS 1 AND 5 TO THE ETSA CORPORATION (GG 14.8.1986 PAGE 541 AND RLG  
8600706 RESPECTIVELY)

SCHEDULE OF INTERESTS

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LAND DEDICATED FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES PURSUANT TO THE CROWN LANDS ACT,  
1929 BY GAZETTE 14.8.1986

CONT.

REGION : EMAIL  
 AGENT : PSBM BOX NO : 000  
 SEARCHED ON : 01/02/2010 AT : 13:24:17

PARENT TITLE : CR 5594/380  
 AUTHORITY : RLG 8600706  
 DATE OF ISSUE : 23/12/1998  
 REGISTRATION : 1

NOTATIONS

DOCUMENTS AFFECTING THIS TITLE

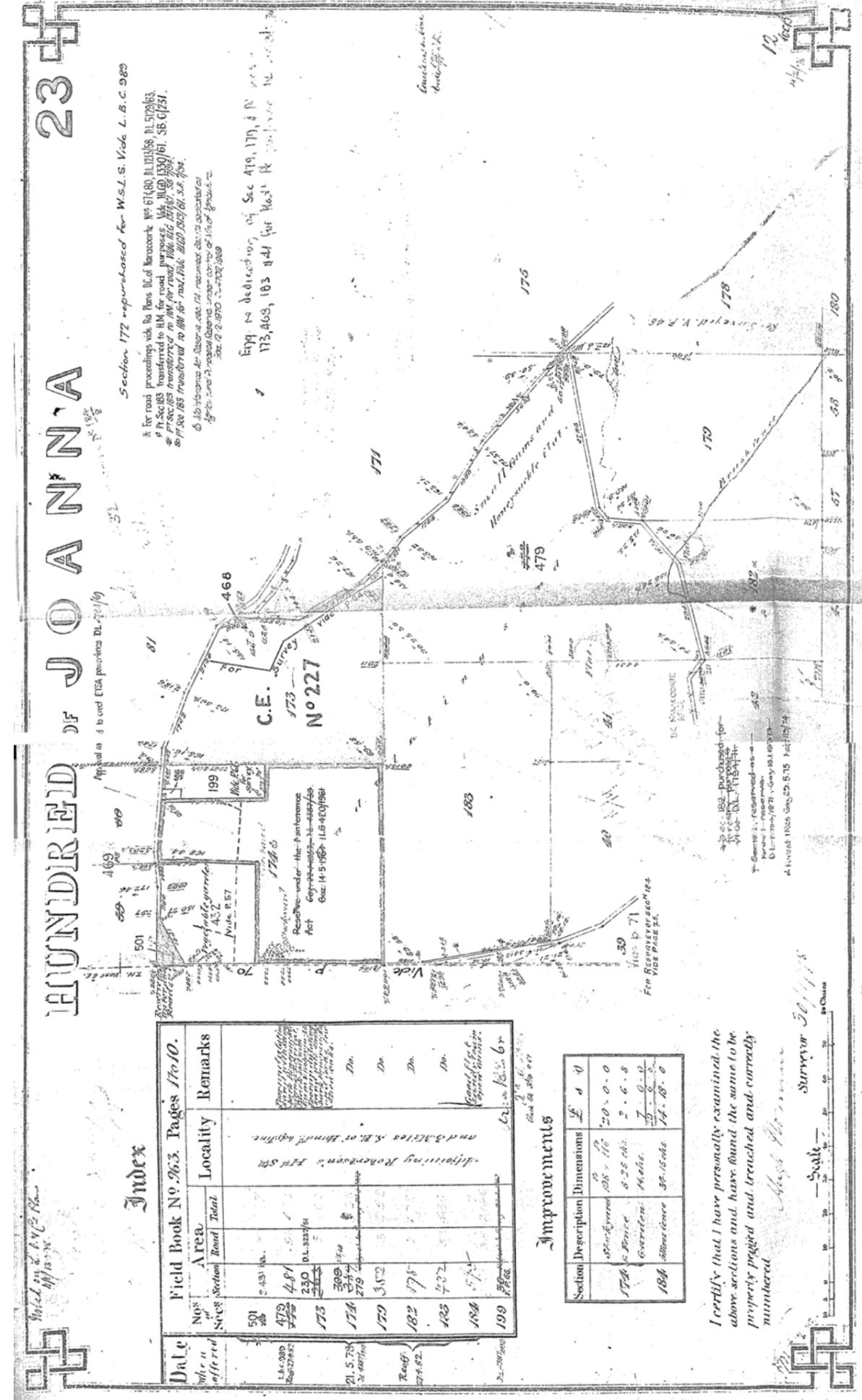
NIL

REGISTRAR-GENERAL'S NOTES

NIL

ADMINISTRATIVE INTERESTS AND CROWN NOTES

ON S.A. HERITAGE REGISTER VIDE GAZ 28/05/1981



Index

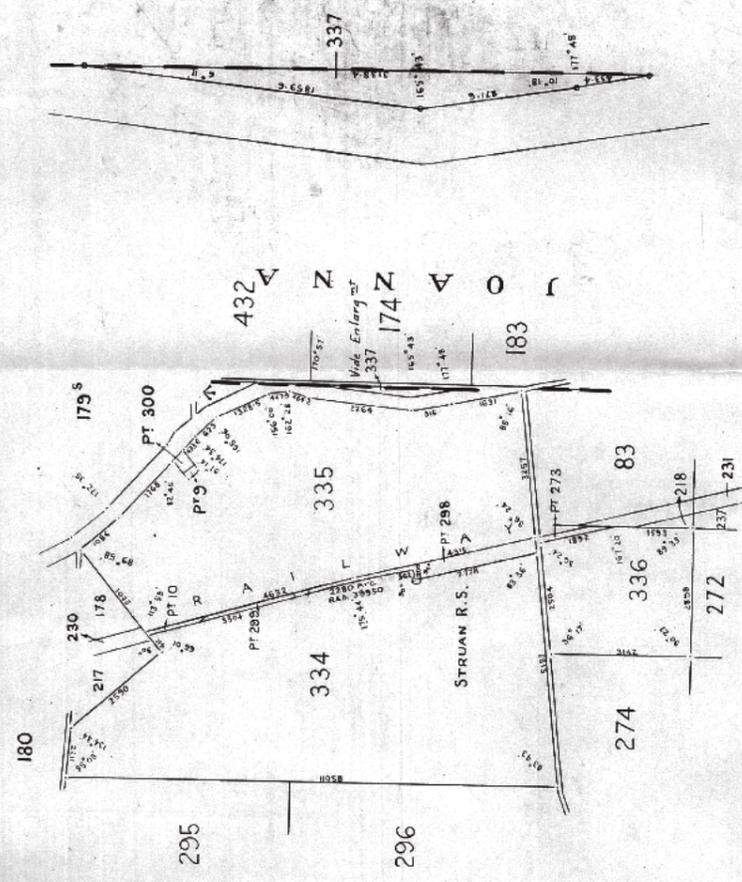
Date of issue	No. of Secs	Area	Road Total	Locality	Remarks
21.5.78	501	2.431 ha.			
21.5.78	479	4.81			
21.5.78	173	230	0.1.332/6		
21.5.78	174	309			
21.5.78	170	279			
21.5.78	182	178			
21.5.78	183	402			
21.5.78	184	171			
21.5.78	199	398			

Improvements

Section	Description	Dimensions	Area
173	20m x 10m	20 x 10	200.00
174	2.25m x 1.5m	2.25 x 1.5	3.375
184	37m x 1.5m	37 x 1.5	55.50

I certify that I have personally examined the above sections and have found the same to be properly pegged and trenched and correctly numbered.

Surveyor 30/1/98



334 ... 410 Ac. (Approx.) Plannimetered  
 335 ... 343 Ac. (Approx.) Plannimetered  
 336 ... 95 Ac. (Approx.)  
 337 ... 3 1/2 Ac.

DL 438/39.  
 CH. BK. 384. BSA.

Position of Permanent Marks shown thus  
 Metal Pins .. .. M.P.  
 .. .. A.P.  
 .. .. O.P.  
 .. .. O.P.W.O.T.  
 .. .. Old Markers  
 .. .. Observations Sites

I hereby certify  
 1. That I have personally surveyed the land comprised  
 in this map or plan and that this map or plan  
 is a correct and accurate statement thereof  
 2. That the survey carried out by me of the land  
 comprised in this map or plan is accurate.  
 Dated this .. .. day of .. .. 1875

Licensed Surveyor.  
 Licensed Surveyor.



Appendix B  
 The Border Watch, September 8th, 1875.

MR JOHN ROBERTSON'S NEW RESIDENCE

The exterior of the structure has an imposing, and withal a neat, pretty appearance. It faces the north-east. For the purposes of description, the building may be divided into two parts - the main block, which we will call the house, and the servants' apartments on the south-east of it. The house and a portion of the servants' division are two-storied. The tower, which is a prominent feature, rises in the centre of the house, and stands about 10 feet out from the walls. The main building is 94 feet long, and has a depth of 61 feet; the building altogether covering an area of about 120 feet by 61 feet. It is built of limestone, with sandstone dressings. On the south-west side of the tower, in which is the main entrance, there is a large bay window 18 feet high and 16 wide, including the stone work. To the north-west side there is a verandah, which extends round the north-west end of the house. This verandah is supported by McLean's patent columns, with ornamental metal work between the plates.

To the right of the tower there are two windows in the lower story and four in the upper, looking to the front or northeast. On the left there is the bay window already noticed in the lower story, and five in the upper one. All the lintels and window-sills are beautifully carved in sandstone. Surrounding the main entrance, which is arched, is ornamental mason-work consisting of bases, pilasters, trusses, caps and brackets.

The main entrance is reached by a flight of six steps. These steps are of granite, which was found on the Gringegulgona station, Victoria, the property of Mr Robertson's brother. It has a grey appearance and is considered by competent judges to be equal to Aberdeen. But before going further it will be necessary to premise that the building was not by any means completed on the occasion of our visit. The vestibule, entrance-hall, and staircase-hall were not plastered nor any floor laid down in them, and all the other rooms had still to undergo painting and embellishing.

The vestibule is 12 feet square. The floor is to be formed of tiles, which will be laid so as to form a pretty carpet pattern. Proceeding straight on the entrance-hall is next reached, which will be entered by a double-margined glass door, and its dimensions are 12 feet by 24 feet. This will be enriched with a cornice and centre-piece. On the entrance to the drawing room and sitting-room, which lead from the hall, there are to be enriched entablatures supported by pilasters and trusses. These ornamentations will add greatly to the beauty of the room.

On the south-west of the hall is the drawing-room. This is the principal room in the house, and is in every respect handsome and commodious. It is 35 feet in length and 24 feet wide, and is ornamented by beautifully enriched cornices, and has a fern-leaf and water-lily centre-piece.

But the object that will first attract the eye in this room is the exquisite marble mantelpiece, which is of Italian pure white marble, executed by Huxley and Parker of Melbourne. It took the prize in the Melbourne Exhibition of 1867. The carving on it is something out of the common, and a few words explanatory of the design may not be out of place. The shelf is supported by ornamental trusses, representing a group of flowers and fern leaves, with a parrot on the top of the flowers in the act of flying. The trusses are supported by two pilasters, which have vases of flowers carved on them. The arch of the mantel-piece is beautifully carved with a wreath of flowers. The carving on the keystone represents a bird's nest, with a iguano making for the eggs in it, all being surrounded with foliage. The bay-window, which has been already referred to as forming a prominent feature on the exterior, admits the light into this room. The panes are of polished plate glass, and there are two panes in each light, the panes being four feet by two feet six inches. The decorations of the room were not finished. All enrichments are to be

hatched up in gold and silver, and finished off in enamelled tints.

Off the entrance-hall to the right going in, is the sitting-room, which is 22 feet in length and 17 feet wide. It is lighted by two fine large windows, which have a north-east view. There is also a handsome marble mantelpiece in this room, though not so costly as the one in the drawing-room. Returning to the entrance hall it is found that the staircase-hall opens out of it. The entrance to it is surmounted by an arch, supported by two composite columns. The walls are to be painted in marble sienna blocks, and the ceiling hatched up in gold.

To the left of the staircase is the dining room. Its size is 30 feet long and 24 feet wide, and it is lighted by three large windows, which look to the south-west, or to the rear of the house. Its ornamental cornices are to be similar to that of the drawing-room.

There is a butler's pantry off this room, fitted up with all the latest improvements; and north-west of the stair-case hall is a large lobby or passage, which is entered by a folding door. This passage also leads into the house from the north-west or garden entrance, and extends right and left of the stair-case hall the full length of the building. The entrance is by a large circular folding door, with side lights.

The verandah, which was noticed before as being on the right of the main entrance, extends to the north-west, or garden entrance to the edifice. To return to the passage, there are three large bed-rooms on the south-west side and one on the north-east, varying in the size from 17 feet by 14 feet to 17 feet by 11 feet, and well lighted. Opening out of the stair-case hall also is the library, which is a neat and commodious room, and is lighted by one window.

To the left or south-east of the stair-case hall is the continuation of the passage leading from the south-west or side entrance to the house, which conducts to the servants' apartments. Ascending the stairs the upper story is reached, the landing of which is

lighted by a sky-light. Running north-west and south-east is a passage the full length of the main building. Immediately off the staircase landing is a clothes' closet.

There are six bedrooms and a bath-room off the north-east of the passage. But the principal room on the second story is what may be termed the upstairs drawing-room, which is 30 feet by 24 feet, and is to the south-west of the passage, with its windows facing the same direction. This was the only room completely finished in the house at the time of our visit. It has an ornamental cornice and centre-piece - the ceiling and cornice being hatched up in gold and silver. The walls are painted in lavender and grey tints, and are embellished with 12 panels. At every corner the panels are ornamented with a Scotch thistle, and the Southern Cross - the former representing the worthy owner's native land, and the latter his adopted. There are 48 of these emblems painted on the walls of this room. All the woodwork is painted in satin. It is understood the principal rooms in the house are to be finished off in a similar manner to this one. It also possesses a pretty white marble mantelpiece.

All the rooms on the lower story are 16 feet high, and 14 feet on the upper story. The bedrooms and passages in the house have plain cornices. Every bedroom has a fire-place in it. The bathrooms, up and down stairs, have a constant supply of cold water, and one has a supply of both hot and cold. The water supply in the house is most abundant. There is a large tank in the roof of the building which supplies the house throughout by means of pipes, and in case of failure of supply, it can be replenished from an underground tank capable of holding 26,000 gallons.

The principal entrance to the servant's division is to the southeast by a small court. There are two entrances from the main building into it - one by the passage on the lower story which leads from the south-west of the staircase hall, and the other by the passage which conducts to the rooms of the house upstairs. On each side of the entrance to the court-yard there is a dairy and a meat-house, both fitted for the purpose - the floor of each being formed of tiles. The court will also be laid with tiles, with verandahs on the north-east and south-west sides.

On the south-west of the courtyard there is the kitchen which measures 16 feet by 15 feet. It is fitted up with a very large registered stove of the newest construction, with a brick oven on the right hand side. To the right of the entrance to the kitchen is the scullery; and on the left is the laundry, which is fitted up with a large sink, which will have a supply of hot and cold water.

To the north-east of the court are the overseer apartments. They consist of a sitting room, 15 feet by 16 feet; a bedroom, 14 feet by 10 feet; and an office. Opening out of the court is the staircase, which conducts to the upper story of the servants' division. Off the staircase there is a bath-room. Leading from the staircase landing on the second story are a small clothes-room, a closet, and a bath-room. From the landing is a small passage, which runs north-west and south-east. There are three bedrooms off it, the largest of which measures 16 feet by 14 feet.

The entrance to the tower is from the main staircase landing on the upper story. The tower is 65 feet high and an admirable view of the surrounding country can be obtained from the top. It is four-storied, one of which is set apart for a smoking-room. On the upper flat there is a balcony.

The building has now been in course of erection about 18 months, and is not likely to be finished for several more. It was to have been completed last November, but circumstances have arisen which prevented its being finished then. The entire cost of the building is likely to exceed 10,000 pounds, apart from painting and mantel-pieces, which were not included in the original contract.

The ground in front of the building is to be laid out as a flower garden, which will have a carriage drive through it. To the south-west or side entrance there is already a garden. At the bottom of the garden is the Mosquito Creek, which is here permanent, and greatly enhances the scenery.

When finished the new house will be one of the finest private residences in South Australia; and we hope Mr Robertson, whose hospitality is a byword, will be long spared to enjoy its comforts. There is a very creditable and pleasing fact in connection with the building of this house, which rebounds to the credit of the mechanical skill of the district, viz - that all the workmen employed in its erection were local hands. Mr H Smith of Narracoorte, is the contractor for the entire building, who, so far, has carried out his contract in a creditable manner. Messrs Goss and Hosking, as sub-contractors, did a portion of the masonwork. The plastering is being done by Mr T Campbell of Narracoorte, and is in first-class style. It is worthy of note that all the plaster ornaments - cornices and centre-pieces were made on the ground. The painting is being well executed by Mr Robbie, of Penola. Mr Smith has the wood-work under his own immediate care. The architect is Mr W T Gore, formerly of Narracoorte; and the building has been erected under the inspection of Mr G Pannell, architect, Mount Gambier.

## Appendix C Schedule of Exterior Paint Colours and Finishes

Prepared by Lothar Brasse amended 10/03/1989.

STRUAN HOUSE:

### SCHEDULE OF PAINT COLOURS AND FINISHES REVISED 10/3/89

- Caroline: slightly changed O.K.?*  
*R.L. 15.3.*
- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Roof Sheeting (generally) including hip and valley flashings<br><u>Colorbond Slate Grey</u>                         |                                      |
| 2. Verandah Roof Sheeting (alternate as indicated on the roofing drawing).<br><u>Colorbond Red Oxide and Off White</u> |                                      |
| 3. Verandah hip and valley flashings   | <u>Colorbond Red Oxide</u>           |
| 4. Gutters (including moulding under)  | <u>Light Stone</u>                   |
| 5. Rainheads and downpipes   | <u>Light Stone</u>                   |
| 6. Exposed pipework, vent, etc.  | <u>Light Stone</u>                   |
| 7. Tower finial  | <u>to match colorbond Slate Grey</u> |
| 8. Tower balconies lace work/handrail/<br>baluster posts   | <u>Deep Buff</u>                     |
| 9. Cast verandah columns   | <u>Deep Buff</u>                     |
| 10. Verandah lacework  | <u>Deep Buff</u>                     |
| 11. Fascias  | <u>Mid Biscuit</u>                   |
| 12. Eaves corbelled brackets   | <u>Deep Buff</u>                     |
| 13. Eaves soffit and flat surfaces   | <u>Light Stone</u>                   |
| 14. Tower corbelled brackets   | <u>Deep Buff</u>                     |
| 15. Tower balconies corbelled brackets   | <u>Light Stone</u>                   |
| 16. Tower eaves soffit   | <u>Light Stone</u>                   |
| 17. Tower balconies soffit   | <u>Light Stone</u>                   |
| 18. Tower balconies rest of timber work  | <u>Mid Biscuit</u>                   |
| 19. Rendered quoins/cornices/corbel/<br>string bands/mouldings   | <u>Light Stone</u>                   |
| 20. Flat wall areas (where already painted)  | <u>Mid Biscuit</u>                   |
| 21. Chimneys (flat surfaces)   | <u>Mid Biscuit</u>                   |
| 22. Chimneys (feature-corbels/string bands/<br>mouldings)  | <u>Light Stone</u>                   |
| 23. Window frames and door frames<br>(where painted)   | <u>Deep Buff</u>                     |
| 24. Windows, sashes doors and fanlights  | <u>Deep Buff</u>                     |



25. Verandah timberwork (generally)	<u>Mid Biscuit</u>
26. Verandah corbel brackets	<u>Light Stone</u>
27. Verandah balustrade (generally)	<u>Mid Biscuit</u>
28. Verandah handrail	<u>Deep Buff</u>
29. Verandah roof soffit	<u>Green Tea</u>
30. Tower ceiling soffit (generally)	<u>Green Tea</u>
31. Tower ceiling soffit (features)	<u>Pewter Blue</u>

NOTE:

- A. Colours are to match those from the Solver Heritage Range.
- B. Masonry is to be painted with acrylic type paint.
- C. Timber and Ironwork is to be painted with gloss enamel.
- D. Samples of paint areas are to be provided for inspection before proceeding.

To be included in final report.