

HISTORIC PROPERTIES ALONG NEWMAN ROAD, CHARLESTON

During the early settlement period of the area surrounding the present township of Charleston the English migrants who were to become the prominent families of the district began to take up land along Newman Road and the following people built substantial two storey houses in this location - William Dunn (Gumbank), Charles Newman (Blackford), George Bell (Bell View) and Charles Dunn (Mount Charles). Two of these properties (Gumbank and Blackford) have been described in the following pages.

Blackford

Charles Newman's house, Blackford, was built on Section 5130, Hundred of Onkaparinga in 1855 (pp. 180-182). This two storey stone house and its adjoining farm buildings illustrate a palladian⁴⁰ mode of design which endeavours to present a polite front to the street alignment. The house, which was designed with a symmetrical facade, was built of Carey Gully dressed stone and was probably originally roofed with slate (as the stable is today). A tall stone boundary wall with brick

40. Palladianism, a high renaissance style of architecture developed by Andrea Palladio, a late 16th century Italian architect working in the Vincenza area. His unique villas were later copied by English architects of the Burlington School, which created a style of housing design commonly used in the 18th and early 19th centuries both in Britain and its American and Antipodean colonies.

capping and a formal front garden separate the house from Newman Road while the farm buildings are set well away to one side or to the rear so as not to interfere with its perceived importance. However a curious aspect of the present house is the way in which the later two storey farm kitchen addition was placed at the side rather than at the back of the building thus breaking the symmetry of the facade. This aspect of the Newman house can be compared with a Scottish farmhouse designed in 1820 by James Anderson, architect.⁴¹ (p. 183) In this instance the architect has carefully shielded the farm kitchen and its associated rooms by placing them at the rear of the house so as not to interrupt the symmetry of the facade. One can only conclude that in the case of the Newman house the later addition was probably built without the professional advice of an architect or a skilled designer.

Gumbank

Adjacent to the Newman property, on Section 5129, Hundred of Onkaparinga, is the Dunn property, Gumbank, which was built c1843 (pp. 184-199). This farm is laid out in an entirely different manner to Blackford in that primary importance was attached to the farm yard rather than to the house. The entire complex is set well back from Newman Road and the first buildings seen when approaching the farm are the barn, stables and shearing shed. The barn and stables were built to form an L shaped structure which defined the area of the farm yard and the house was set at right angles to this yard on its southern

41. Fenton, A., Walker, B. The Rural Architecture of Scotland, p. 145.

side. This meant that the house was not only visually isolated from the main road but was also closely linked with the farm yard activities. "Gumbank" appears to be a traditional Devonshire farm complex and the only reference to Palladianism lies in the plan of the house which has a central hall and a symmetrical two storey facade. This is in contrast to the traditional long house form commonly found in earlier Devonshire farmhouses (p. 183). The original portion of the farm complex was built of cobwork⁴² which is a traditional mode of building in Devon. The two storey house, the barn and the stables are all constructed with cob walls resting on a 600 mm high stone base. Timber shingles were probably the first roofing material but these were replaced by corrugated iron at an early date (prior to 1880). The original plan of the house included three distinct areas. The main part was the living area which overlooked an informal garden. This consisted of two rooms (kitchen and parlour) and a central hall above which were three bedrooms. A passage, which gave direct access to the farmyard, extended along the rear (west) of these rooms and within this space was a steep stair which rose directly from the end of the entrance hall. This stair was later replaced by the present staircase which was aligned with the longer axis of the house to obtain a greater going. The third area, which was built at the southern end of the house, consisted of a single room at ground level with a bedroom over. The former had no access to the remainder

42. Cobwork, clay walling built up of layers of a mud, straw and water mix without the use of shuttering.

of the house and was provided as accommodation for a farm worker. These rooms have had less attention spared to detail and the corners remain rounded, while there is no ceiling within the farmworkers' quarters (now a kitchen). This section of the house was set back approximately 200 mm so that the impression of a symmetrical facade could be maintained. However the formality of the facade was further detracted from by the inexactness of the location, and of the shape, of the openings within it. By the 1880's a two storey stone extension had added a dairy kitchen and another first floor bedroom to the western side of the farmworkers' quarters, while a single storey stone addition at the northern end of the house had added a farm kitchen and bake oven. Probably in deference to the function of the farmyard into which it intruded this latter extension was set at an angle to the original building. By this time the cobwork of the house had been re-rendered over with a sand lime render lined out to represent ashlar stonework,⁴³ but the original windows, which probably had horizontally pivoted sashed, were still in place (p. 184). Later the window openings to the facade of the original building were enlarged and vertically hung sashes were installed. A verandah was built along the main facade and the central first floor window was replaced by a door leading on to the balcony.

The Barn and Stables

The barn and stables are also substantial cob

43. Ashlar, blocks of accurately dressed stone with extremely fine bed and end joints.





