

Rupertswood

Macedon Street, Sunbury, Victoria

Rupertswood Mansion, built for Sir William Clarke at Sunbury in 1874-76, was one of the largest houses built in Victoria in the nineteenth century.

The foundation stone for Rupertswood was laid on 29 August 1874 with some 1000 people in attendance. The mansion was built by contractors George Sumner & Co. from designs prepared by architect George Brown, whilst interior decorations were carried out by Schemmel and Shilton. At the time of its completion it was described as being in the "Byzantine order of architecture". The ballroom was completed in 1882. The elaborate gates and lodge were built at the same time as the main house also to designs by George Brown.



Front elevation

In 1922 the property was bought by manufacturer Hugh Victor McKay, the owner of the Sunshine Harvester works, who achieved his long-held ambition of owning Rupertswood. However he died four years later, and in 1927 the property was sold to the Salesian order which used it as a school. A school still operates on the site but the house is used for accommodation and receptions.

During the ownership of Sir William Clarke, Rupertswood became one of the principal social centres in Victoria, with hundreds of guests arriving at the estate's private railway platform to attend hunt meets, balls and house parties. Clarke was one of the most prominent people in the colony. He was a member of the Legislative Council and received the colony's first baronetcy. He was so prominent that he was able to have the Mt Alexander rail line diverted past his property. Hence, the Rupertswood Railway station.

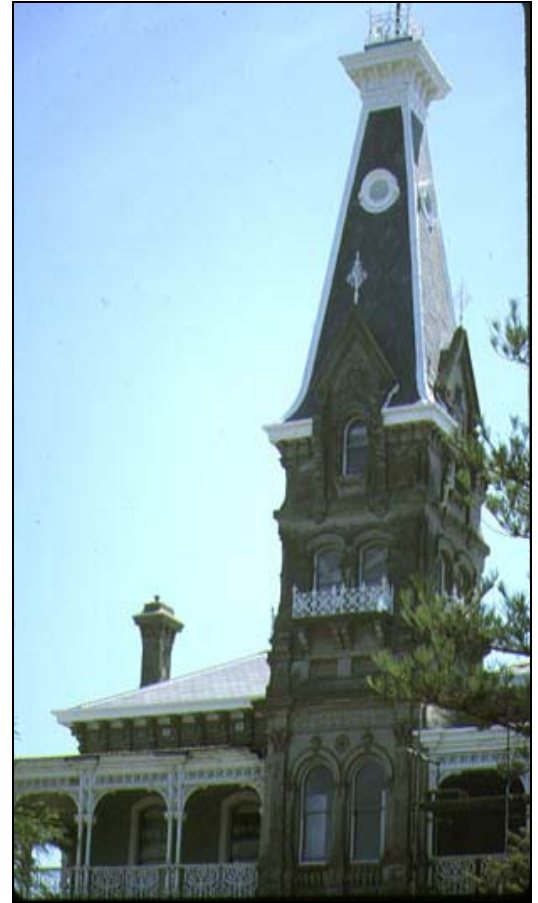
The estate also had its own half battery of horse artillery when Sir William Clarke formed a small permanent force in 1885. The drill hall and the vault remain as reminders of this privately sponsored regiment.



Rupertswood is open to the public for tours and accommodation. Visit www.rupertswood.com for details

Rupertswood is of great national and international significance for its association with the history of cricket as the birthplace for the Ashes, cricket's most illustrious trophy. After a social match on the property with members of the English touring cricket team in 1882, Janet, Lady Clarke, burnt a bail and presented the ashes in an urn to the victorious English captain, Ivo Bligh.

The garden and parklands were designed in the Picturesque style by William Sangster, the leading landscape architect of the 1870s. Despite the loss of much of the plantings and some of the pathway system, the garden retains elements from the original design such as the entrance and lodge, drives, lake and rockery, the gardens around the mansion, the escarpment, remnants of the water supply system, the household produce garden and the farm.



Tower



Encaustic floor tiles

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