



ACT Heritage Council

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Rosebud Apiary and Surrounds

(part Block 1491, Belconnen)¹

At its meeting of 4 June 2015 the ACT Heritage Council decided that Rosebud Apiary and Surrounds was eligible for provisional registration.

The information contained in this report was considered by the ACT Heritage Council in assessing the nomination for Rosebud Apiary and Surrounds against the heritage significance criteria outlined in s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

HISTORY

Contextual History

The Belconnen area has been a focus of activity for Aboriginal people well before Europeans arrived. The earliest known date for Aboriginal people in the ACT region comes from Birrigai Rock Shelter which contains evidence of Aboriginal occupation from approximately 25,000 years ago. The area is known to be part of an Aboriginal pathway leading towards the mountains where Aboriginal people would gather seasonally to feast on Bogong moths. During this period groups from the coast, the lower Lachlan and Murrumbidgee Rivers and all neighbouring regions in between would gather in the alpine regions south and southwest of the ACT to feast on the plentiful supply of Bogong moths as they aestivate over summer (Flood, 1996; Gale 1991; Kabaila, 2005).

The first European to record the Belconnen and Gungahlin areas was Charles Throsby, who, during his explorations, relied on his Aboriginal guides for knowledge. The first European settlement of the district was circa 1826 by George Thomas Palmer at the area later known as 'Ginninderra'. George Thomas Palmer Junior took over the Palmer Estate and came to live in it in about 1845 with his wife and two children. Their third child George Charles Frederick was born there on 27 Feb 1846, and William Davis became the manager a year later, by which stage the estate was known as Ginninderra. William Davis had arrived in the colony in 1837. Davis was a very successful farmer and Ginninderra Estate became a show place under his management (Canberra Archaeological Society 2010).

Further squatters and pastoralists took up extensive areas of land in the Belconnen and Gungahlin areas. 'Until 1861 the majority of landholders took up large blocks, or amalgamated smaller holdings into larger agglomerations' (Pearson, 2002: 13). From 1861 with the introduction of the Robertson Land Acts, selectors began to occupy smaller holdings (Pearson 2002: 13). These selections resulted in a denser and more varied population than the previous large pastoralist holdings. The Robertson Land Acts required selectors to reside on their land, resulting in an increase in the area's population (Pearson, 2002: 14).

These early settlers were generally on smaller holdings than the early land grants of Moore, Palmer and Campbell. It was often a high priority for settlers to establish themselves as self sufficient. Land was quickly cleared and crops and gardens were established with wheat, oats, maize, fruit trees and basic vegetables providing some of the staples of life alongside livestock such as cattle. Wheat was an important crop with flour being an essential commodity. Sheep were the main livestock on most of the large holdings in the area, although cattle and horses were also common (Navin Officer, 2010).

¹ Rosebud Apiary and Surrounds is situated on Designated, Territory Land, under the National Capital Open Space System.

Rosebud Apiary

The slab cottage known as 'Rosebud Apiary' was built around 1866 by Mark Southwell. Mark and his wife arrived in Australia in 1858 and came to live at 'Parkwood,' a property established by Thomas Southwell, Mark's brother, on Ginninderra Creek in the Parish of Wallaroo. Mark worked for Thomas and others for some years before selecting land south of Ginninderra, in the County of Murray. Mark and his nephew Samuel had 263 acres of land, on which Mark erected the slab cottage which was then leased to George Harcourt, proprietor of the Ginninderra store (Gillespie 1988: 68).

Mark and his wife Ellen had four children, born between 1859 and 1871. The Southwells were a notable pioneering family in the district. Thomas Southwell is credited as the 'father of Methodism' in the area, rebuilding Parkwood Church in its stone form in the Wallaroo Parish at his own expense. At least thirty properties in the future area of the ACT were settled by offspring and descendants of the Southwell brothers.

Richard Shumack bought the land owned by Mark and Samuel Southwell in 1879. The Shumacks were an important settler family in the district, being one of the first to select and farm land in the Parish of Weetangera. The Parish Map of 1912 shows the Shumack's portions amounting to approximately 1000 acres (See Image 2), although compared to surrounding holdings, this was a small selection. Samuel Shumack (son of Richard) authored the oft-cited autobiography titled: *Tales and Legends of Canberra Pioneers* (1967), which provides detailed anecdotes on life in the Canberra region in the late nineteenth century. The Shumack family were long-term, successful settlers in the area, with the Bells, descendants of the Shumacks, occupying Rosebud Apiary until the 1930s.

Richard Shumack was one of seven brothers who migrated to Australia from County Cork, Ireland, in 1856, following his brothers, who had all migrated earlier. He had been left to care for his parents and decided to emigrate when they died. At that time, he was 39 years old and he and his wife, Ann, had four children.

On arriving in Sydney, Richard was immediately hired by George Campbell of Duntroon. His brother, John, had already settled at the Glebe farm on the Limestone Plains. Richard and his family settled at Duntroon in a two roomed slab and bark construction. In 1858, Shumack was employed as a shepherd on the property of Ginninderra, owned by William Davis, where, in addition to wages, he had a paddock of four acres for his own use rent free (Shumack 1967: 27, 45).

After the Robertson Land Acts were enacted, Richard and his son, Samuel, then aged 15, took up 100 acres at Weetangera in 1865, calling their house and land 'Springvale' (see Image 3). In 1867, Richard's other son, John, selected 100 acres of land adjoining Springvale (Shumack 1967: 46). In spite of dire predictions from William Davis, who called the selection 'Shumack's Folly,' the Shumack's prospered on their wheat and sheep property. William Davis dismissed Richard Shumack in 1869, and the Shumacks took up more land, Samuel selecting another 100 acres and John Shumack another 200 acres. The family moved into Samuel's house at Springvale (Shumack 1967: 50-51).

In 1879 Richard Shumack bought the 263 acres of land owned by Mark and Samuel Southwell, on which they had erected the slab cottage that would become known as 'Rosebud Apiary.' The Shumacks were able to do this due to an amendment to the Land Act of 1861 which allowed the selectors to increase their holdings. The land was unenclosed except for some small cultivation paddocks. Samuel Shumack dismantled the cottage and re-erected it at Round Hill (now known as Mount Painter) and enclosed it with a split timber fence. This property adjoined Springvale and was later the home of Samuel Shumack's brother, George (Shumack 1967: 107).

Honey and apples were kept in a shed (now referred to as 'Bell's Cottage') nearby the cottage at Round Hill and it was from the bee hives in the orchard that the 'Rosebud Apiary' cottage derived its name (Waterhouse 1980: 38). The practice of storing and selling honey can be traced back to 1859 when dealers travelled from farm to farm throughout the district buying butter, eggs, poultry, beeswax and honey. The latter was plentiful, as bee's nests in the bush were abundant and honey fetched two shillings a pound. These commodities and other farm produce went to the goldfields, where beeswax candles were in great demand for use in deep mining shafts (Shumack 1967: 36).

In 1880, Samuel Shumack's father (Richard), sister Emily and brother George left his home at Springvale and moved to Rosebud Apiary. Richard Shumack's wife (Ann) had died in 1873 and he remarried a schoolteacher named Eastern Jane Armstrong.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – Rosebud Cottage and Surrounds

When the Federal Capital Territory was created in 1911, the Federal Government resumed many of the properties in the newly surveyed Territory. The previous owners were allowed to stay on as tenants but many did not wish to do so as they would no longer be free men on their own holding but would now be under the control of an outsider. Samuel Shumack's property at Springvale was resumed at £1 less per acre than had been offered in 1908, when the rabbit plague was at its height and before improvements to the property had been completed. Samuel Shumack and brother George both left the district in 1915 (Shumack 1967: 165, 166).

Rosebud Apiary was resumed by the government in March 1915 and George and his wife moved to a property at Tamworth. However, three months later they returned and took out a lease on the property. In 1913 Jean Shumack, who was the second daughter of George Shumack and had been born in the Rosebud Apiary cottage, married Christopher James Bell. Jean came to live in the cottage with her husband and they raised thirteen children there. The lease of the property was transferred from George Shumack to Bell in 1927, when George and his wife moved to a property at Yass. 'Rosebud Apiary' was then renamed 'Hill View' and the Bells ran sheep on it.

The orchard at Rosebud Apiary and Surrounds was still in use when Donald Tully acquired the land in 1937 and it included plums, pears and apples, as well as walnut trees (Tully, 1998). Jack Gault, a cousin of Donald Tully, lived in the cottage for about five years in the early 1940s with his wife, Jean and four children. After the Gault's moved out, Donald Tully used the cottage for shearers' quarters and the kitchen building as a cook house for the shearers. He replaced the slabs on the kitchen building with fibro and corrugated iron in the early 1950s. A workman lived in the cottage in the 1960s and left in 1966, leaving it vacant. In 1967, Donald Tully was forced to relinquish a large area of pasture to make way for the suburban development of Belconnen. However, the cottage and nearby buildings have survived to the present. The property remains in the Tully family: <http://www.rosebudcottages.com>

Slab Buildings

Timber post and beam structures form the majority of Australian vernacular building construction. 'Post and beam' describes only the main structural frame; buildings are more typically described by their walling system, e.g. *slab* hut. Logs used in the construction of the structural frame were invariably obtained in the immediate vicinity of the building, usually within 1km. Trees were felled using either a standard axe or crosscut saw; once on the ground the crosscut saw was the preferred means of cutting logs into the required lengths (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002: E2).

Vertical slab construction was developed in the early 19th century subsequent to the introduction of log and horizontal slab construction. Vertical slab construction was more common than drop slab (horizontal) construction. It rapidly gained predominance and by the 1820s it was recommended to new settlers as the construction method for their first homes (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service 2002: E6).

Rosebud Apiary and Surrounds represents one of 27 known properties with slab constructions in the ACT. The majority of these were constructed in the nineteenth century, with just three constructed after 1900. The earliest were constructed in the late 1830s/40s at Lanyon and Oaks Estate. Good examples of slab construction within the ACT can be seen at Well Station, Orroral Homestead and Elm Grove, all of which are entered in the ACT Heritage Register (ACT Heritage Council 2010: 11).

Often, slab constructions within the ACT were part of a larger complex of buildings, with uses including stables, gardener's cottages, sheds, school rooms, and kitchens. However, a number of slab constructions within the ACT were also used as cottages or small homesteads. Slab buildings are vulnerable to water and termite damage, and many do not survive owing to the ease with which slab buildings could be dismantled, with timber used elsewhere (ACT Heritage Council 2010: 11).

DESCRIPTION

Rosebud Apiary and Surrounds is situated on the south western side of what is now the suburb of Cook in the ACT. Valuer A. W. Moriarty's Schedule of Improvements (1916) lists the various buildings on George Shumack's holding at Weetangera, County of Murray:

- Stable and Shed: slab sides, bark roof, floored loft. Good condition, built 1890.
- Shed: Open sides, straw top on good rafters and 9 stout upright posts.
- Woolshed: Slab sides, iron roof, wood and batten floor. Good condition, probably built 1895-1890.
- Fruit and Apiary Store: slab walls, iron roof (guttered), wood floor and floored loft. Good condition.
- House: Slab walls, three sides, one end stone, brick chimney, wood floor, iron roofed and guttered, hessian ceiling, verandah with wood floor.
- Kitchen: Slab walls, iron roofed and guttered, stone chimney, wood floor, skillion wood ceiled and floored, iron roof.
- Baker's oven and boiler fireplace: Bricked in open yard.
- Dairy: Slab walls, bark roof, cement floor.

As of 2015, the site includes:

1. Slab cottage ('House,' see above), known as Rosebud²;
2. corrugated iron and fibro (formerly slab) cottage ('Kitchen,' see above);
3. slab outbuilding ('Dairy,' see above);
4. slab outbuilding ('Fruit and Apiary Store,' see above now referred to as 'Bell's Cottage');
5. slab stables ('Stable and Shed,' see above');
6. landscape features;
7. Multiple pieces of machinery:
 - Sunshine harvester
 - bale lifter
 - chaff cutter
 - corn crusher
 - two buggies
 - 3 ploughs, including one disc-plough; and
 - Model T Ford automobile shell.

Physical condition and integrity

1. Slab Cottage – 'Rosebud' (see Image 4)

The cottage in excellent condition. It is clad with vertical timber slabs with undressed timber posts forming a veranda and a corrugated iron roof. Axe-marks are still visible at the base of the slabs where they were cut to fit bottom plates (see Image 5). Metal strips, used to cover spaces between slabs, are still extant on external cladding (see Image 6). The top of the verandah posts have been notched to fit square horizontal beams, demonstrating post-and-beam construction, with wire-cut nails still embedded in the timber, and wire-lashing still present (see Image 7). The verandah floor was originally of timber boards but has been replaced with a concrete slab. All slabs, posts, beams, and iron sheets are from the original house described by Moriarty.

The south-eastern wall of the cottage is of rendered brick and incorporates a fireplace with a brick chimney. The north-western wall is of vertical timber slabs with a slab gable. Some of the foundations of the cottage, originally timber logs, have been replaced by concrete, as the logs were being eroded by termites.

² Although referred to as 'Rosebud Apiary,' the main house/cottage was not used as a fruit and honey store. The latter was a separate building, referred to by Moriarty as the 'Fruit and Apiary Store' in 1916, which is currently titled as 'Bell's Cottage.'

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – Rosebud Cottage and Surrounds

There are three rooms in the cottage: the kitchen/dining area, the bedroom, the laundry/bathroom. In the third room (laundry/bathroom), there is evidence of layers of wallpaper over the slabs, which have been peeled back to reveal newspaper lining, dated 1889.

The Bell's daughter, Mrs Rees, remembered the cottage as being larger than it is now. She recalled that each end of the verandah was closed in with a bed at both ends. The walls of the buildings were whitewashed each year in time for Christmas. (Mrs Ivy Rees, CDHS files). Remnant whitewash is evident on the slabs of the front facade.

2. Fibro Cottage – Kitchen

The kitchen building is less than two metres from the cottage, on the north western side. It was originally a timber slab building but the slabs were taken down and new walls of corrugated iron and fibro erected around the early 1950s. This building still has its original log foundations, and its two brick chimneys are also original. There is a small corrugated iron water tank on a stand at the side of the building. It is not known when the original building was constructed but it may have been at the same time as the cottage was re-erected.

3. Dairy (See Image 8)

The dairy is also of vertical timber slabs with a steep pitched corrugated iron roof with slab gables. Axe marks where slabs were cut to fit top and bottom plates, and remnant whitewash are visible on the external slabs. The floor is concrete, and although the building was recorded in the 1980's (Kalgovas) as tipping slightly, it has now been straightened and strengthened and is in good condition.

4. Fruit and Apiary Store – 'Bell's Cottage' (see Image 9)

Bells Cottage is a two-roomed structure in good condition, built of vertical timber slabs with a corrugated iron roof with slab gables. Metal strips, used to cover spaces between slabs, are still extant on external cladding. This was originally the storage area for honey and fruit. Original poles, slabs, and interior battens remain in the structure. A skillion roof has been erected on the south west side of the building to house machinery, including the Model T Ford and buggy. A portion of the wood floor mentioned by Moriarty is still present on the south side of the building (see Image 10).

5. Stables (See Image 11)

While the stable roof is clad with galvanized iron, it was originally a bark roof. The building has been propped up and is in good condition. Slab walls are still in place, with visible axe marks where the slabs have been shaped to fit bottom-plates. Poles are undressed. The original undressed poles and interior battens are still present. This structure is in the process of being converted into a short-stay accommodation venue, similar to Bell's and Rosebud Cottages. Moriarty listed 'slab sides' of the stable in 1916, and the western side remains in situ, in good condition, without modification or stabilisation.

6. Landscape Features

There are a number of mature exotic trees in between and surrounding the buildings. This includes three pine trees (*Pinus radiata*) between the dairy and Bell's Cottage, and seven mature cypress pines (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) to the south east of the complex of buildings. A small cottage garden has recently been planted at the front of the cottage verandah. There was an orchard located to the north of the cottage but it has been replaced by a suburban street (Skinner Street). The buildings are grouped together, forming a complex, which is surrounded by mature *Pinus radiata* dating to Shumack's occupation of the property.

7. Machinery (See Images 12 to 15)

Farm machinery and motor equipment, originally used on the Shumack property, has been incorporated into garden beds. Items exist in fair to good condition, and, when viewed in visual and thematic context with the place, are highly evocative of the past industries employed at the pastoral property.

SITE PLAN



Rosebud Apiary and Surrounds (part Block 1491 Belconnen)

Image 1 Site Boundary

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – Rosebud Cottage and Surrounds

IMAGES

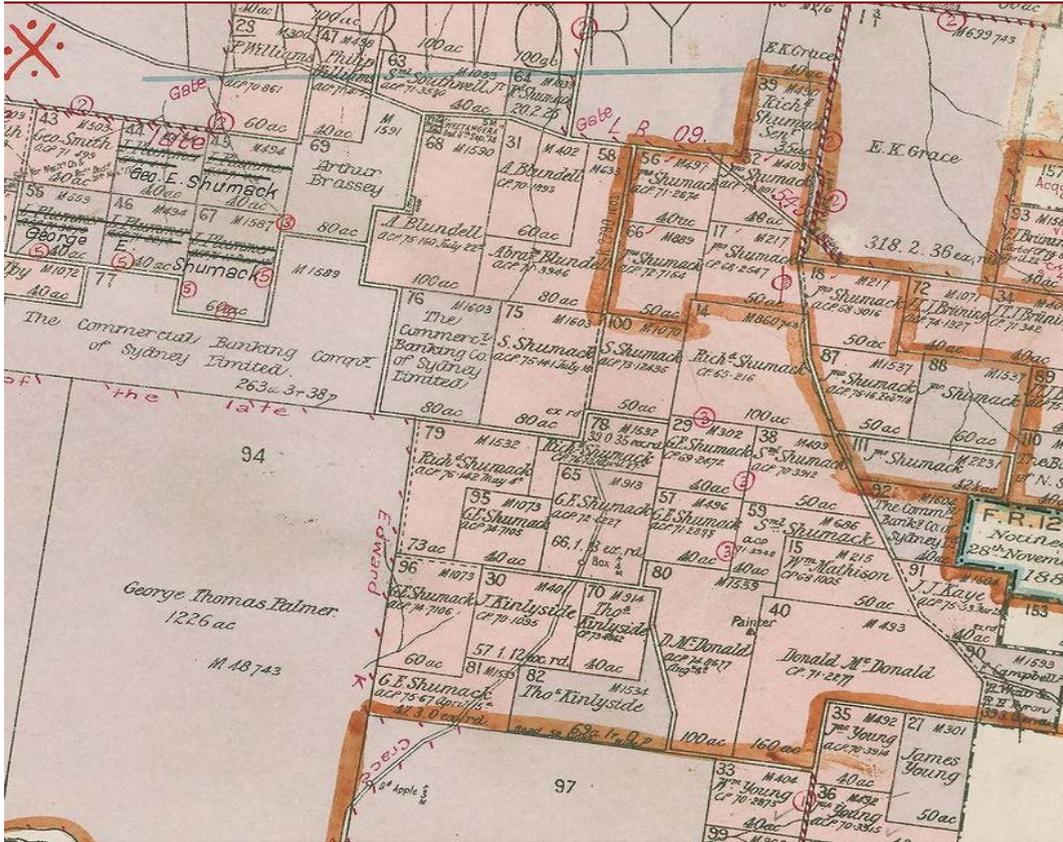


Image 2 1912 Parish Map, Weetangera (Historical Land Records Viewer: NSW Government Land and Property Information)



Image 3 Springvale Homestead 1912 (ACT Heritage File)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – Rosebud Cottage and Surrounds



Image 4 Rosebud Cottage
(www.rosebudcottages.com)



Image 5 Tapered posts to fit bottom plating (ACT Heritage 2015)



Image 6 Metal Space Filling (ACT Heritage 2015)



Image 7 Cut nails, notching and wire lashing (ACT Heritage 2015)

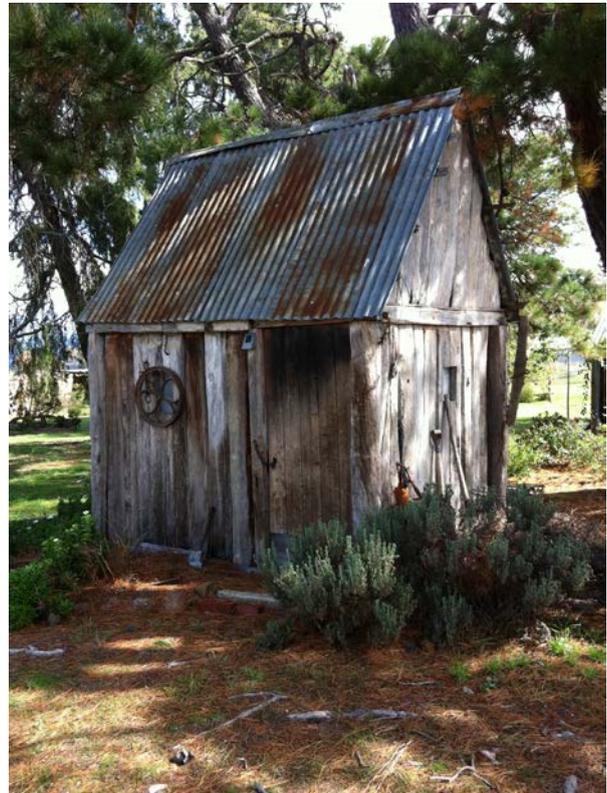


Image 8 Dairy (ACT Heritage 2015)



Image 9 Bell's Cottage front (ACT Heritage 2015)



Image 12 Plough (ACT Heritage 2015)



Image 10 Original floor, Bell's Cottage (ACT Heritage 2015)



Image 13 Chaff Cutter



Image 11 Stables (ACT Heritage 2015)



Image 14 Buggy (ACT Heritage 2015)

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