



ACT Heritage Council

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Site B (Shores of Yerrabi Pond)

(Block 1 Section 105, Amaroo)

At its meeting of 2 June 2016 the ACT Heritage Council decided that Site B (Shores of Yerrabi Pond) was not eligible for provisional registration.

The information contained in this report was considered by the ACT Heritage Council in assessing the nomination for Site B (Shores of Yerrabi Pond) against the heritage significance criteria outlined in s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

HISTORY

There is little known history for Site B (Shores of Yerrabi Pond).

There is no definitive local knowledge of the site or who might have lived there. It was suggested that Schumack (1967: 65) identified John McGregor as living on Ginninderra Creek in 1858 “three miles east of the head station” on a farm of seven acres; neighboured by stone mason and bricklayer Mr Crabb. However, local historian Lyall Gillespie, was noted to disagree that the place belonged to either McGregor or Crabb (Cooke & Saunders, 1996: 4).

Parish records for Goorooyaroo indicate that the site was in Portion 124 (640 acres) originally held by George Palmer. It is likely that the site was a small holding set aside for one of Palmer’s workers, many of whom were convicts that later obtained tickets of leave, similar to the history of the nearby Crinigan’s Hut (registered) and Malton (Cooke & Saunders, 1996:4).

The site was not included in the Gungahlin EIS of 1989, but it was known to Canberra Archaeological Society (CAS). They became aware of the possible threat to the site and pushed for it to be properly recorded and assessed.

The site was again identified in a 1991 archaeological survey of the area by Access Archaeology for the then proposed Ginninderra water quality control pond, now Yerrabi Pond. It was described as a levelled platform of roughly 8x6m with cultural remains consisting of the remains of a shale chimney and hearth with brick, charcoal, ceramic, glass and metal fragments spread out over a 140x105m area surrounding the platform (Cooke and Saunders, 1996:9).

The site was thoroughly recorded and excavated by CAS volunteers, under the guidance of experienced archaeologists, over nine weekends around May and September 1992.

CAS was awarded a Heritage Grant in 1993 to prepare a report for excavations of Historic Site B, which had been identified in CAS surveys and excavated the previous year. Initial work on the report was unable to be completed by the original consultant, with only an interim report on the ceramics completed at the time. The final report was not completed, and the grant acquitted, until 1996.

The excavation report revealed that the hut was likely a two room building of wood slabs which may have burnt down and been rebuilt, including the hearth and chimney, on one occasion. The artefacts recovered were typical of small 19th century rural remains, consisting of stone, brick, mortar, nails, window glass, ceramics, domestic glassware, animal bones and a small assortment of personal items. The analysis of the items suggested a small family, but there was some confusion if they lived at the hut, or their rubbish was simply dumped there after it was abandoned. The analysis of the site and artefacts suggests an occupation in the latter half of the 19th century. The site has revealed

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – Site B (Shores of Yerrabi Pond)

some evidence about the lives of rural workers and the tactics of land owners in the 1800's. It is related to the excavations of Malton and to the ploughlands study in Gungahlin and adds somewhat to the information about 19th century rural lifestyles that these other studies have provided.

The Cooke and Saunders (1996:13) report assessed the heritage significance of the place and suggested that, while it was of historic interest, it was unlikely to be considered to have heritage significance that warranted heritage listing.

DESCRIPTION

The site is enclosed in an 8x11m galvanised wire fence with treated pine corner posts. The extent of the house remains are fully enclosed within this fence and have been covered over with an orange-red crushed granite. The only part of the original structure visible is the outline of the hearth, which has been reconsolidated with concrete. There is a small concrete plinth with a plaque noting the history of the place.

Physical condition and integrity

The site has been thoroughly excavated and it is unlikely that any artefactual material remains in-situ. The remains of the footings of the place remain covered by the crushed granite and the small section of the hearth that sits above ground level has been reconsolidated with cement.

There is very little of the original structure remaining, resulting in very poor physical condition and as an excavated site the integrity is also considered to be very poor.

SITE PLAN

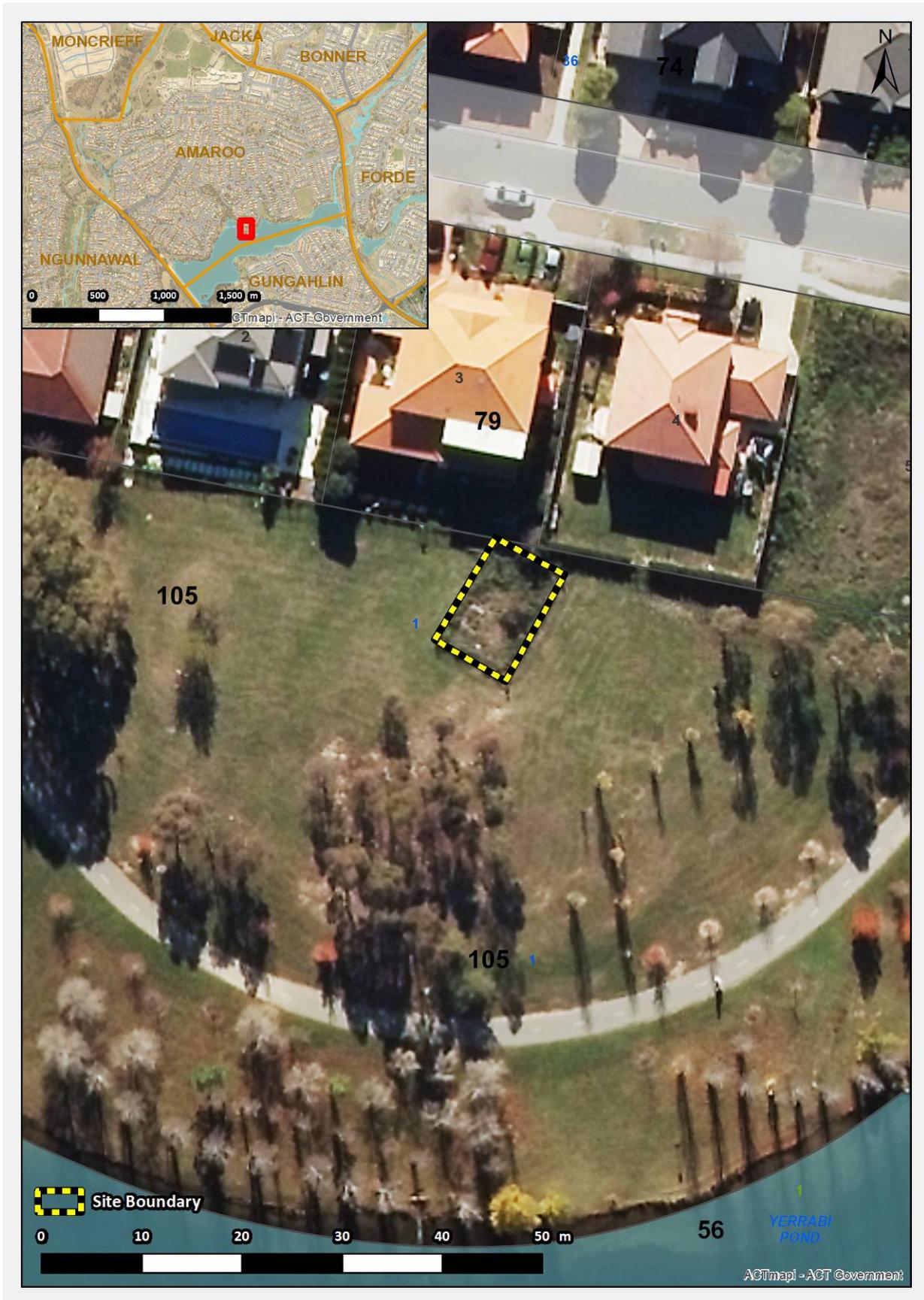


Image 1 Nomination boundary

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – Site B (Shores of Yerrabi Pond)

IMAGES



Image 2 Overview of the Site B, facing east with Yerrabi Pond in the background (ACT Heritage, 2016)



Image 3 Overview of the site facing north with Block 3 Section 78 Amaroo in the background (ACT Heritage, 2016)



Image 4 Closeup of the reconsolidated hearth (ACT Heritage, 2016)

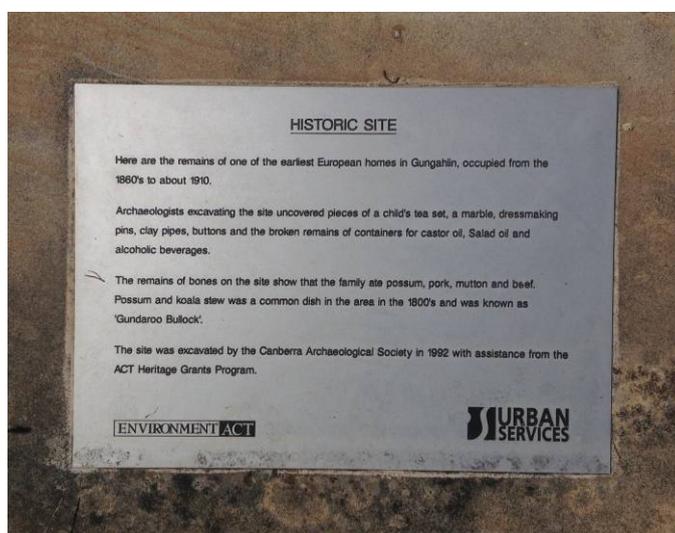


Image 5 Closeup of the plaque (ACT Heritage, 2016)

REFERENCES

Cooke, H. & Saunders, T. (1996) *Archaeological Investigations at historic Site B, Gungahlin ACT*. Report to Canberra Archaeological Society Inc.