



ACT Heritage Council

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Greenhills Ruin

(Part Block 510, Stromlo)

At its meeting of 22 September 2016 the ACT Heritage Council decided that the Greenhills ruin was eligible for registration.

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

HISTORY

In considering the history of Greenhills Ruin, the ACT Heritage Council acknowledges that the Ngunnawal people are traditionally affiliated with the lands in the Canberra region within and beyond contemporary ACT borders. In this citation, 'Aboriginal community' refers to the Ngunnawal people and other Aboriginal groups within the ACT for whom places within the Canberra region are significant. These places attest to a rich history of Aboriginal occupation extending from 25,000 years ago, as indicated by the Birrigai Rock Shelter, into the 19th century colonial period. They show that Aboriginal people continued living traditionally in the region through to the 1870s-80s. During the 19th century, traditional Aboriginal society in colonised areas suffered dramatic de-population and alienation from traditional land-based resources. In the Canberra region some important institutions such as intertribal gatherings were retained in some degree at least until the 1860s.

Pre-Federal Capital Period

During the 19th century, Canberra was a rural settlement that grew organically. This settlement was diametrically different to that established during the Federal Capital phase, as it was not guided by formal planning principles. At this time, the settlement comprised a network of large pastoral estates, stations and villages concentrated on the Limestone Plains, today the suburbs of Canberra and in the narrow valleys of Orroral, Gudgenby and Naas, and along the banks of the Murrumbidgee River in the southern part of the Territory (O'Sullivan and Huys 2011: 9).

A result of transforming Canberra into an urban centre after the formation of the Federal Capital Territory was that significant amounts of physical evidence of the 19th century settlement pattern, including homesteads and their outbuildings, were modified or destroyed. Many buildings were demolished as the Capital encroached upon rural properties to accommodate the sprawling city and archaeological deposits were disturbed through construction works. More recently there have been two major events that have destroyed evidence: first, the construction of Lake Burley Griffin in the 1960s, during which many cottages located along the Molonglo Plain were dismantled during the damming of the river and today, the only standing evidence of these houses of the Molonglo Plains is Blundell's Cottage (Young 2007); the second, the 2003 bushfires, during which many hut sites in the region were fire-affected or destroyed, and seven out of ten known historical sites in the Molonglo and Stromlo districts were destroyed (Australian Archaeological Consultants 2006).

European settlement of Canberra during the 19th and early 20th centuries can be divided into two main cultural phases:

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1. The initial European settlement of Canberra (1820-1850) after European exploration of the Limestone Plains and the Murrumbidgee River and subsequent establishment of permanent occupation of the region; and
2. The consolidation period (1850-1911) commencing in the 1850s during the gold rush period and the introduction of Robertson's Land Acts in the 1860s.

Phase I: Initial settlement of Canberra 1820-1850

European interest in the Limestone Plains began in the 1820s, when Charles Throsby entered the region, carrying out a survey in order to define the road for the Goulburn Plains. He first heard of the area when Aboriginal informants spoke of Lake George; Wee-ree-wah, it was called. In 1821, Throsby reached the Murrumbidgee River, near Tuggeranong (Gillespie 1991: 2-6).

Early European settlement in the ACT was established through the acquisition of land grants and the practice of squatting. In 1829 the NSW government proclaimed that the Limestone Plains, today the ACT, formed part of two counties, Murray and Cowley. The Murrumbidgee River that runs south-east to north-west through the region was the boundary between the counties. The County of Murray extended as far north as Lake George and was bounded on its western side by the Murrumbidgee and by the Shoalhaven River to the east. The Murrumbidgee River formed the southern and eastern limits of the County of Cowley and the Goodradigbee River of the Snowy Mountains, the western boundary. At this time, the counties were divided into smaller units called parishes. This proclamation provided the Government with the formal legal power to sell and grant land with the proclaimed areas, as well as formally permit permanent settlement.

During this early phase, life was as difficult. The infrastructure was poor; there were no roads or rail services and the mounted police were located more than 60km away (Gillespie 1991: 23-25). By the mid 1830s, the conditions improved, as postal services were established in Queanbeyan, the urban centre of the Limestone Plains, and by 1838, Queanbeyan also had a blacksmith, a store and a police magistrate (Gillespie 1991: 23-25; Young 2007:7).

Phase II: Consolidation Period 1850-1911

Settlement of Canberra continued to consolidate as gold was discovered east of Queanbeyan in the 1850s (Lea-Scarlett 1968: 243-253). Towns prospered in areas such as Captains Flat as a result of mineral exploitation, while the agricultural industry expanded, particularly as there was increasing demand on farmers to provide goods, such as wheat, to feed an influx of people, a consequence of the gold diggings at Kiandra, Araluen, and Majors Creek (Gillespie 1991: 130). In 1862, the first township of what is now the ACT, called Tharwa, was established in the County of Cowley and was located on the road en route to Kiandra (Gillespie 1991: 128-129). As the diggings dried up, many people, returning from the goldfields, settled in the region.

In 1861, the NSW Lands Minister introduced the Crowns Lands Alienation Act and the Crown Lands Occupation Act, collectively known as the Robertson Land Acts or Free Selection Acts. These Acts allowed that any individual to choose a block of Crown Land between 40 and 320 acres at a fixed price of £1 (\$2) per acre. The purchase conditions required minimum improvements within a three year period. The primary aim of the Free Selection Acts was to ensure equal opportunity and access to land, while producing stable rural communities 'and a class of contented and prosperous settlers' (Waterhouse 2005: 25,30; Dingle 2000: 59).

Initially, the Acts had limited effect in Canberra, as much of the best land had already been acquired by squatters. However, free-selectors took up small conditional holdings in the periphery of the Limestone Plains in the forested areas in Parishes of Gooroyarro (Gungahlin), Amungula (Kowen) and Yarrolumla (Molonglo) and also in the narrow valleys of the County of Cowley (Gillespie 1991: 51). Many settlers purchased holdings that were not suitable for agricultural production and too small for grazing livestock. The Acts also encouraged many people with little capital at their disposal to travel to rural areas (Dingle 2000: 59).

In 1911, the Federal Capital Territory was established when the Seat of Government (Administration) Act 1910 came into effect and gradually acquired land within its jurisdiction (Gillespie 1991: 247-249). In the County of Murray, the boundaries of the four parishes, Yarrolumla, Canberra, Narrabundah and Gigerline, were dissolved and all land within them was surrendered. As a consequence, many farmers of the region were forced to quit their properties. Some smaller sections of land were resumed from other parishes, including Queanbeyan, Amungula, Pialligo, Ginninderra, Weetangera and Gooroyarro.

Greenhills

The following information has been drawn largely from *The Warm Corner* (1981) by Bruce Moore, a Moore family descendant.

Greenhills was built in 1876 in the present-day District of Stromlo, in an area colloquially referred to as Bulga Creek, which once fell within the Parish of Yarrolumla. The ruin is situated on land selected by grazier and carrier Richard Moore, the second son of Bounty immigrants Richard and Margaret Moore from County Cavan, Ireland. The stone homestead was built a short distance from the banks of the Murrumbidgee in a sheltered hollow, slightly upstream from the junction of the Murrumbidgee and Cotter rivers (Moore 1981: 55). Richard and his older brother, William, selected neighbouring land at around the same time (see Image 2 for an overview of portions selected near the Murrumbidgee by the Moore brothers in the Parish of Yarrolumla).

Richard Snr had also been a carrier, and had taken up property in Queanbeyan and selected land in the Burra area, where the Moore family home – ‘Warm Corner’ – was located. Richard Moore Jnr built a home on the Warm Corner block not far from the Moore family homestead prior to building Greenhills. In their adulthood Richard and older brother, William, had helped to develop Warm Corner to the stage where it would ensure a comfortable living for their parents (Moore 1981: 11, 24).

Richard Jnr married Agnes Naylor in 1874, who was the eldest surviving daughter of Peter and Elizabeth Naylor of the property ‘Urila,’ which neighboured Greenhills (Moore 1981: 24). It was after the birth of their first child, Ernest Oscar, that the couple moved away from the home on the Warm Corner block to reside at Greenhills in 1876, as the Burra block was probably not large enough to support the entire family, and little adequate land remained in the Burra area that could be selected (Moore 1981: 24). Agnes and Richard Moore Jnr’s family lived at Greenhills for the next thirty years (Moore 1981: 55).

With regards to the building of Greenhills, Moore (1981: 55) recounts the following anecdote:

Richard secured the services of a Scottish stonemason and set about building a two-storey stone house of considerable size. The stone for the walls was obtained nearby and the building progressed to a stage where the walls had reached about twelve feet. The construction had not been without incident and there had been numerous conflicts between the stonemason and Richard. The day arrived when the mason decided to call it quits. He packed his tools and departed for other fields. This sudden departure, not altogether unexpected by those who knew Richard well, left him in a quandary. He found it impossible to secure the services of another stonemason and had no experience of working stone himself. He decided to alter his plans and went ahead and roofed the existing structure. This was a task he could do with the aid of his brother, William and other neighbours who were used to working with timber. Although Greenhills did not become the home he had planned, it was still the largest and most substantial building in the area.

Moore also notes that Greenhills was known for its very large dining room, which provided the venue for many weekend parties involving dancing and card games. Indeed, the Queanbeyan Age reported on several social gatherings held at Greenhills. In 1896 a fundraising ball took place at Greenhills for the Bulga Creek Cricket Club, and in 1899 at least 20 couples attended the silver wedding anniversary for Richard and Agnes.

Greenhills operated as a general store and post office from 1895, when Richard Moore took the role of Postmaster. He would meet the Uriarra mailman at the junction of the Uriarra and Cotter roads to pick up the mail.

Post offices in the pre Federation era were established by NSW postal authorities, whereas from Federation in 1901, the Postmaster General’s Department (PMG), a Commonwealth Department, was responsible for communication services and systems throughout Australia, including postal services, telegraph and telephone systems (Australia Post 1975:17). Dates for the opening of post offices in the Pre-Federal Capital Period are as follows:

1. Ginninderra (opened 1859)
2. Lanyon (opened 1860)
3. Canberra, later Ainslie (opened 1863)
4. Greenhills (opened 1895)
5. Hall (opened 1886)
6. Majura (opened 1898)

7. Weetangera (opened 1896)

As the population on the Limestone Plains grew, there was increasing demand for postal services and the post office emerged as a vital administrative and business hub for local communities and critical to its long term development (Mercury, 27 May 1927, p 10).

Richard Moore also led an active life in public affairs. He had been a leader of sorts among the Bulga Creek community since early selection days. The establishment of the post office at Greenhills was evidently sought by him as a benefit to the residents and not for the small financial return involved (Moore 1981: 57).

Initially he was involved in the Selector's Association and had been vocal in disagreements between small landholders and squatters. The animosity and bitterness between the two factions had come to an end towards the end of the century but the class struggle continued. The financial status of the selectors had made it impossible for them to compete with the squatters in public offices. Members of the upper classes still held the main offices in public affairs. Few, if any, of the struggling settlers could afford either the time or money to carry out these functions. With the passing of time some had acquired considerable assets and with large families available to take on the responsibility of the running of their properties, they could give more attention to public affairs (Moore 1981: 57).

In 1891 Richard was elected to the first committee of the Pastoralists' Association, and in 1900 he was elected a Director of the Stock and Pastures Board. He was the first of the selectors to hold office in district affairs. Richard's election was to bring him into close association with two of the district's largest landowners, Fred Campbell of Yarralumla and James Cunningham of Tuggeranong (Moore 1981: 57).

Richard was a candidate for municipal elections in Queanbeyan in 1905, although he still resided at Greenhills some twenty miles from town. His decision to nominate at this time was largely influenced by the intrusion of party politics into municipal affairs. At this juncture, the Council consisted of eight aldermen, four of whom were elected each year. This was Richard's entry to Municipal affairs and he would win many more elections, resulting in him taking up residence in Queanbeyan, where two of his sons, Ernie and Albert, were already in business for themselves (Moore 1981: 62, 66).

He was now involved with the Stock and Pastures' Board; the Pastoral and Agricultural Society; the Farmers and Settlers' Association and the Municipal Council, besides being on numerous committees. By living in Queanbeyan, he would be in the centre of his various business affairs (Moore 1981: 62, 66).

When Richard and Agnes' son Arthur married Dinah Gifford in 1905, the newlyweds moved into and took on the running of Greenhills. From the time of living in Queanbeyan Richard Moore continued to accumulate property within the municipality in preference to adding to his rural holdings (Moore 1981: 62, 66).

Richard served as an alderman from 1905-1917. He was unanimously elected Mayor on three occasions during that period, 1909, 1913 and 1914. He first raised the question of a water supply for Queanbeyan in 1907, when he complained to the Council that the water in the weir was bad. (Moore 1981: 67)

He realised the importance of technical education to the youth of the community and, in 1908, became Chairman of the Technical Education Committee. The purpose of this body was to have technical classes made available to the youth of the town (Moore 1981: 69).

During these years there were many inspections of Canberra as a possible site for the Federal Capital. Richard Moore was a foremost advocate of the potential of the Cotter River as a source of permanent water supply. Most of the inspection parties were entertained at Greenhills after visiting the potential site (Moore 1981: 88).

The siting of the Cotter Dam and associated works was responsible for the early Commonwealth acquisition of the Greenhills property. This occurred on 27th July, 1912. Greenhills' 833 acres were acquired for Two thousand six hundred and thirty four pounds. Richard Moore took a lease back on Greenhills and Arthur and his family remained in residence (Moore 1981: 88).

One of the first works in connection with the proposed Cotter Dam was the construction of the measuring weir. Arthur Moore had the job of reading the gauges and sending daily reports to officials camped at Acton (88).

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Work on the Cotter Dam and pumping station commenced in 1912. A store was opened at the Greenhills to cater for the residents of the Cotter construction camps; and the Post Office was elevated to money order status in 1913 (Moore 1981: 88).

The Greenhills lease was surrendered at the end of 1917 and Arthur and his family moved to Queanbeyan. There was little future for him managing his father's properties, who, even in his old age, reportedly kept a tight control over all his investments (Moore 1981: 89).

Moore was known as proud, stubborn, independent, and cantankerous. His children found that the only way they could retain harmonious relations with him was to be entirely independent. His obsession was the welfare and progress of the town of Queanbeyan and district. In this respect he showed great foresight. He was most insistent upon bringing about changes that would add to the quality of life for the residents. His advocacy of a water supply, of sewerage, and of technical education is proof of this (Moore 1981: 90). He died on 1 September, 1923, at the age of 77. Agnes Moore died in Sydney on 7 February 1932, and was buried in the Moore family plot at Riverside cemetery in Queanbeyan (Moore 1981: 91).

Masonry and other European architectural traditions in 19th century Australia and New South Wales

During the 19th century, building construction in the Canberra region was vernacular in style. Slab construction, using readily available local timber, was the most common as it was quick and cheap (Young 2007: 11-12). This technique was used extensively throughout the new colony (Connah 1988:70; Lawrence 2003: 24-25). Slabs were made from splitting logs from straight trees made available through land clearing. In the Molonglo Valley the Yellow Box Eucalyptus was one possible resource, albeit difficult to work (Young 2007: 11). A typical homestead generally comprised a basic rectangular structure with a simple floor plan comprising commonly one to two rooms, a fireplace and chimney for cooking and heating. To block draughts the joins and splits in the cladding were plugged with clay or even newspaper and the internal walls were plastered with a mix of clay and straw, lined with hessian and then white washed (Cox and Freeland 1969: 20-22).

Early structures were roofed with shingles made of timber, while from the mid-19th century, corrugated galvanized iron was used (Young 2007: 11). Pisé construction, comprising walls of rammed earth, was introduced later; the first structure was built in 1874 by Eusebio Ponsey, a South American, in the area that later became Tuggeranong (Gillespie 1991: 156).

In the early settlements, the problems of labour and transportation made the cost of stonework prohibitive. It was generally reserved for civic buildings or dwellings for people of authority and wealth (NSWNPW 2002: D2). Expense limited the use of stone in rural areas. Larger properties often featured stone houses, perhaps mimicking buildings and gardens on British country estates. Smaller properties and those away from the sandstone belt lacked the resources to quarry suitable stone for facing a building. Therefore, the majority of stone buildings utilised smaller bush rock from the site with rendered walls to provide a neat appearance. The use of dressed stone is rare, limited to one-piece lintels or sills at doors and windows, quoins (large corner stones) or a course of stone around the base of the building (NSWNPW 2002: D2).

In rural areas, stone was typically obtained as bush rock found loose on the surface of surrounding land, by being quarried from a nearby outcrop, or obtained from river beds or mining spoils at the site (NSWNPW: D3). Buildings of stone construction, especially when made with materials sourced locally from the property, demonstrate nineteenth century customs of vernacular building techniques used to create simple structures which were appropriate for their purpose (ACT Heritage Council 2011).

There were three main types of masonry. Representing the 'top end' of masonry was ashlar work, where pieces of stone were cut on four sides so that adjoining sides would be at right angles to each other. Then there was coursed rubble, where roughly rectangular stones of varied sizes were laid in order to produce a horizontal coursed effect. The joints (or edges) between individual stones and courses were wider and less uniform than with ashlar work. Third was random rubble, the poorest form of masonry, where stones of different sizes were bonded together, but with little attention to regular coursing (Connah 1988: 64; Poplar Heights Farm 2005).

In the ACT, examples of pre-Federal Capital rural stone buildings include:

1. Woden Homestead (Hume)
2. Belconnen Farm (Belconnen)
3. Mugga Mugga (Symonston)
4. Duntroon Dairy (Campbell)
5. Duntroon Woolshed (Pialligo)
6. Stone outbuildings at Lanyon (Tuggeranong)
7. Lanyon Homestead (Tuggeranong)
8. Tuggeranong Homestead Barn (Richardson)
9. Blythburn (Paddys River)
10. Blundell's Cottage (Parkes)
11. Horse Park Homestead (Gungahlin)
12. The Oaks (Oaks Estate)
13. The Valley Ruin (Gungahlin)
14. Crinigan's Hut Ruin (Amaroo)
15. 1874 ruin adjacent to Canberra Park (Kenny)
16. Majura Stone Cottage (Majura)
17. Collier's Homestead Ruins in the Glenburn Precinct (Kowen)
18. Greenhills Ruin (Stromlo)

Examples 1 to 8 are associated with large scale rural holdings of wealthier landholders with familial squatter backgrounds. For example, Woden Homestead, Belconnen Farm, and Mugga Mugga were part of the Campbell Estate, with Lanyon and Tuggeranong Homestead situated in the lands taken up by the Cunningham family.

The other dwellings represent smaller rural holdings which were usually taken up by small-scale selectors after the introduction of the Robertson Land Acts. Of the smaller dwellings noted above 9 to 12 are still extant with sufficient heritage fabric and integrity. The remaining places, as indicated in the list, stand ruinous, but in some cases retain heritage significance and appear on the ACT Heritage Register, such as Crinigan's Hut Ruin and the Valley Ruin.

DESCRIPTION

Greenhills Ruin was a stone building, partially built by a Scottish stonemason, supposedly finished in timber by Richard Moore with the aid of his older brother William, and reportedly it was meant to be two-storeys, but ended up as a single-storeyed homestead (Moore 1981). As at 2016 the place stands as a ruin, the collapsed stone of the original structure forming a rectilinear rubble pile beneath the visually striking stone arch, with attached walls either side, which once stood as part of the interior of the Moore homestead (see Image 6).

Photographs of Greenhills circa 1915 suggest that, like most other houses in nineteenth century Australia built of 'bush' stone, it was rendered, probably with lime (see Image 3). The homestead had a veranda and a dual gabled roof, probably sheeted with corrugated iron. As with most rural holdings of the era, there were several outbuildings adjacent to the homestead, apparently of horizontal and vertical slab construction (see Image 4).

Physical condition and integrity

Barz and Winston-Gregson drew a plan of the building site in 1981, based on what was evident on the surface at the time. They depicted a four-roomed, two-chimneyed rectangular plan with a detached kitchen. Interpretative signage at the Greenhills Conference Centre demonstrates this site plan (see Image 5).

While sufficient heritage fabric remains, it is not in good condition and the structure is in danger of collapsing further. The arch, including its attached wall portions, is approximately ten metres long, running in a south east to north west direction. An undated photo in Moore's 1981 volume emphasizes the homestead's rectilinear shape and gives some indication of the scale of the building and how it appeared within a pastoral landscape that is no longer extant (see Image 7).

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Greenhills Ruin consists primarily of tumbled, partially dressed stones of granite or basalt. It is likely many stones have been removed offsite (for use in gardens, rock walls etc), and some dumping has also occurred at the site (see Image 8). The rubble is piled quite high in the vicinity of the ruin (see Image 9) indicating a large amount of stone has collapsed over the original structure, and may have preserved the interior layout of the homestead and archaeological material relating to domestic occupation. The rubble pile constitutes an area of archaeological sensitivity around 15 metres wide by 20 metres long, centred on the stone arch.

The stone arch and an adjoining portion of wall is the only standing part of the original homestead, and retains some integrity, demonstrating the building techniques employed in its construction. For example, the structure appears to have been built using coursed rubble, with some coursing, and some tieback still evident (see Image 10), although the mortar has deteriorated.

No ashlar work is evident. The absence of ashlar work is fitting with the small-scale selector, rural nature of the homestead, and the lack of local availability of soft rock for cutting on four sides. It is likely that Greenhills was built using locally available, harder rock (such as granite or basalt) but the procurement source for the stone was not located.

No elements of the pastoral landscape, such as fencelines, outbuildings, or significant stands of exotic plant species are evident at the surrounds of the Greenhills site.

SITE PLAN



Site Boundary Greenhills Ruin (part) Block 510 Stromlo



Image 1 Site Boundary, Greenhills Ruin. Inset: Greenhills Conference Centre

IMAGES

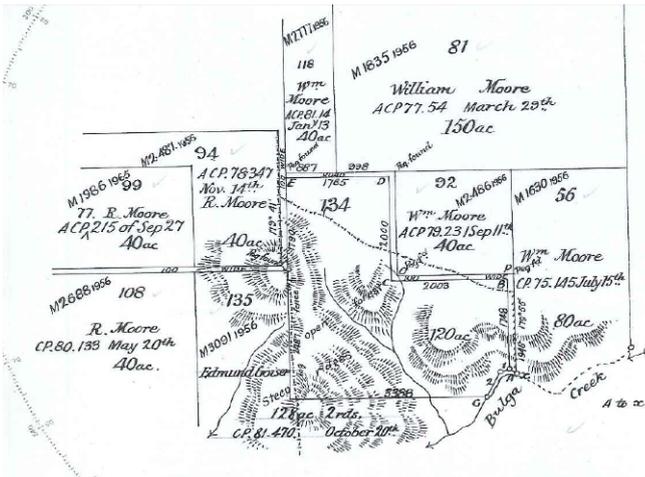


Image 2 Portion Plan 134, dated 1882, Parish of Yarrolumla, County of Murray, showing some of the holdings of the Moore brothers.

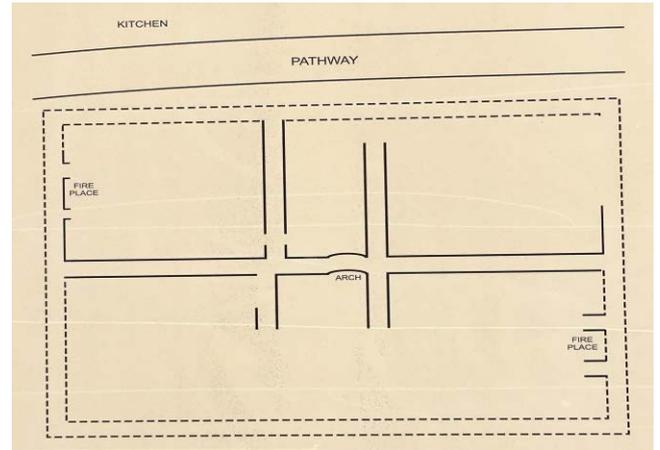


Image 5 Site plan of Greenhills Homestead showing arch, attached walls, internal fireplaces, and approximate location of kitchen (Interpretative signage at Greenhills Conference Centre 2016).



Image 3 Greenhills homestead circa 1915, showing veranda, chimneys, rendering, and horizontal slab building at rear (Moore 1981).



Image 6 Greenhills Ruin archway with adjoining walls (ACT Heritage 2016).



Image 4 Greenhills homestead circa 1915 (in background) surrounding rural landscape and vertical slab outbuilding in foreground (Moore 1981).



Image 7 undated image of Greenhills Ruin from Moore's (1981) volume, showing scale and shape of homestead and situation in pastoral landscape.

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Image 8 Rubble dumping beside Greenhills Ruin (ACT Heritage 2016).



Image 9 Standing portion of Ruin with high pile of building rubble adjacent, from original structure (ACT Heritage 2016).



Image 10 Evidence of possible coursed rubble construction on archway, stonework missing mortar (ACT Heritage 2016).

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