



ACT Heritage Council

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION
TG1 (TEA GARDENS 1)
(BLOCK 2 SECTION 32 AND ROAD EASEMENT, NGUNNAWAL)**

At its meeting of 30 May 2019 the ACT Heritage Council decided that TG1 (Tea Gardens 1) was not eligible for provisional registration.

The information contained in this report was considered by the ACT Heritage Council in assessing the nomination for the TG1 (Tea Gardens 1) against the heritage significance criteria outlined in s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

HISTORY

The site, TG1 (Tea Gardens 1) was located during the ACT Sites Inventory Project, conducted by the Canberra Archaeological Society (CAS) under a National Estate Grants Program, and reported on by Access Archaeology in 1991. The project was part of a due diligence study for the development of Gungahlin and included the property “Tea Gardens” which was then managed by the Territory, but would be auctioned in 1992.

TG1 is a stone wall base of large field stones in double rows with a coarse cement mortar along the south and east with a single row on the north and west. It is 250mm high and 350mm wide. An account from a long-term local noted that it was a stone hut with a single door and no windows until the 1950s when it was demolished and the stones removed (Saunders 1991: 3). It is unknown what the building was used for, but the description of the place in the 1950s suggests it may have acted as a small dairy or other outbuilding.

The European settler history of the place, which TG1 relates to, started in 1857 when Anthony Rolfe purchased the 320 acre portion 123 in the Parish of Goorooyaroo and named the property “Tea Gardens”. He expanded the property to 580 acres, keeping the original land containing the main homestead which passed on to his daughter Martha and her husband John Ryan. It stayed in the Ryan family until 1958 before being sold to Norman Coulton until 1964. It was then purchased by Finlay MacDiarmid and become known as “Ginninderra Park”. In 1978 it was leased to T&M Thoroughbreds. In 1981 it was taken over by Smith and Whittaker who named it “Baden Lodge” and ran a riding school before the development of the suburb of Ngunnawal in the early 1990s resulted in its current configuration.

The Ginninderra region was the early focal point for the area, with the school and store/post office being there, but it was not long before Hall took over as the focus before Canberra was declared as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and the focus for the region changed completely (*Canberra Times* 6 February 1979:32). From the early heyday of Ginninderra through to the early decades of the FCT, the Tea Gardens homestead acted a one of the local social focal points, with the Rolfes and then the Ryans being actively involved in the community and supporting local causes, such as various church building fundraising efforts.

Moriarty’s 1914 (as examined in Freeman Collet and Partners, 1993) schedule of improvements to John Ryan’s Tea Gardens holding did not include any

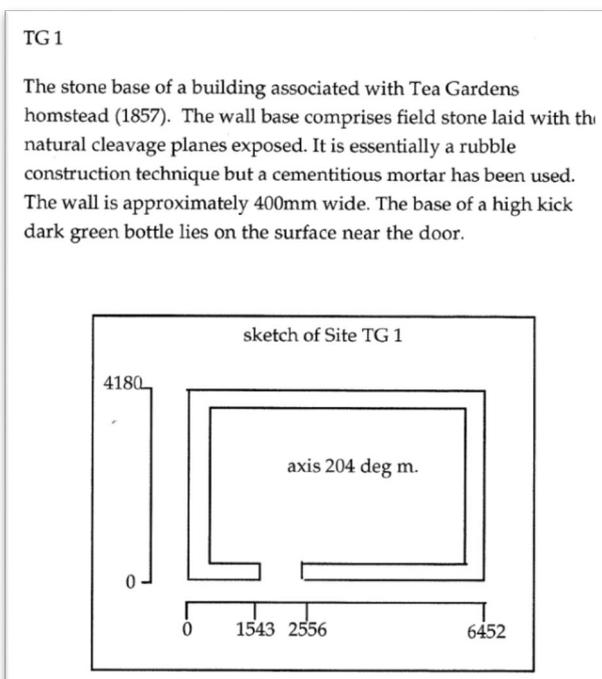


Figure 1 Description and site diagram from Access Archaeology 1991

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – TG1 (TEA GARDENS 1)

descriptions that could be attributed to TG1, either in location, size, or building material. This could be due to it being considered a ruin at the time and not worth recording; or that it was built afterwards.



Figure 2 TG1 in 1992 with the remains of the stone wall sitting slightly above ground level (Heffernan, 1992)

DESCRIPTION

In 1992 before it was covered, TG1 consisted of stone rubble roughly coursed with a cement mortar holding it together sitting about 30cm proud of the ground surface forming a small rectangular building with a single door in plan. The site was overgrown and no flooring or artefacts were noted at the time. The stone was locally sourced, mostly of chert blocks under 30cm in sized (see Figure 6); the most likely source of which being the nearby Aboriginal chert quarry (Aboriginal Place PH13 – Girrawah Park).

The site is currently only evidenced by a plaque set in concrete at the front of a level platform cut into the gently sloping ground. The area was covered in compacted decomposed granite as a parking area between 2010-2011.

Physical condition and integrity

During development of the suburb, TG1 was covered in a geotex fabric and soil fill placed over the top. It is assumed that the site remains as an archaeological ruin in-situ under its current cover of compacted decomposed granite.



Figure 3 Detail of stone and mortar construction of TG1 in 1992 (Heffernan, 1992)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – TG1 (TEA GARDENS 1)

SITE PLAN



Image 1 TG1 (Tea Gardens 1) site boundary.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – TG1 (TEA GARDENS 1)

IMAGES



Figure 4 The site of TG1 (ACT Heritage, 2018)



Figure 5 TG1 plaque (ACT Heritage, 2018)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – TG1 (TEA GARDENS 1)



Figure 6 Detail of the chert and mortar used to form the walls of TG1 (Heffernan, 1992)

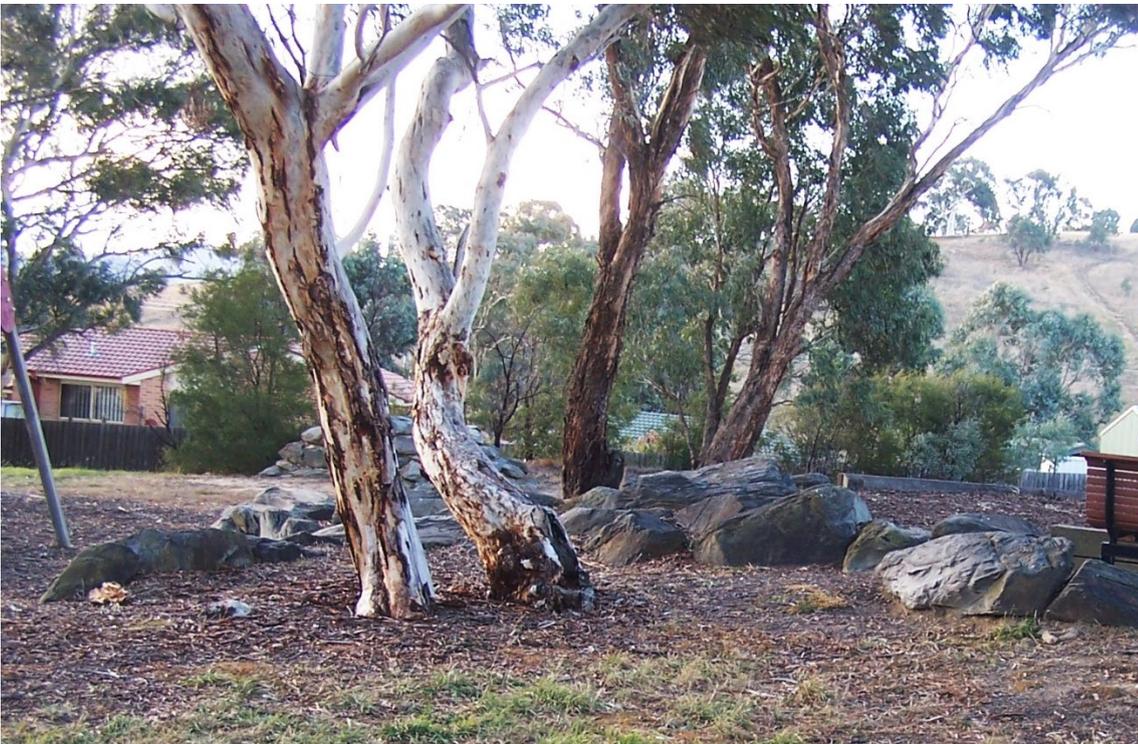


Figure 7 PH13 quarry (ACT Heritage, 2005)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – TG1 (TEA GARDENS 1)

REFERENCES

Access Archaeology (1991) *Ginninderra Truck Sewer: Archaeological Survey I*. Report to Kinhill Engineers Pty Ltd, Canberra.

Freeman Collett and Partners (1993) *Tea Gardens Homestead Golf Course Estate Gungahlin: an investigation of the history and fabric including a draft preliminary citation for listing on the ACT Heritage Register*. Report for MBA Land, Canberra.

Saunders, P. (1991) *Canberra Archaeological Society inc. A.C.T. Sites Inventory Project Stage Three. Fieldwork report for 27 October 1991 "Tea Gardens", "Malton" and Crinigan's Hut, Gungahlin, A.C.T.* Canberra Archaeological Society, Canberra.