



ACT Heritage Council

## Entry to the ACT Heritage Register

*Heritage Act 2004*

### **20096. Orroral Valley Homestead and Ploughlands**

Block 8 (part)

**District of RENDEZVOUS CREEK**

This document has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council.

This entry which was previously part of the old heritage places or the old heritage objects registers (as defined in the *Heritage Act 2004*), as the case may be, is taken to be registered under the *Heritage Act 2004*.

Conservation Requirements (including Specific Requirements), as defined under the *Heritage Act 2004*, that are contained within this document are taken to be Heritage Guidelines applying to this place or object, as the case may be.

Information restricted under *the old heritage places register or old heritage objects register* is restricted under the *Heritage Act 2004*.

**Contact:** ACT Heritage Council c/o Secretary PO Box 144  
**Enquiries:** phone 02 6207 2164 fax 02 6207 5715

**Lyneham ACT 2602**  
e-mail [heritage@act.gov.au](mailto:heritage@act.gov.au)



ACT Government



environment ACT

Helpline: 02 6207 9777  
Website : [www.cmd.act.gov.au](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au)  
E-mail: [EnvironmentACT@act.gov.au](mailto:EnvironmentACT@act.gov.au)



ACT Heritage Council

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY  
ENTRY TO AN INTERIM HERITAGE PLACES REGISTER FOR:**

**ORRORAL VALLEY HOMESTEAD and PLOUGHLAND,  
NAMADGI NATIONAL PARK**

For the purposes of s. 54 of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*, this heritage assessment for the above place has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council as the basis for its inclusion within an interim Heritage Places Register.

Notification effective: 3 September 2004

Background material about this place and additional copies of the entry are available from:

**The Secretary  
ACT Heritage Council  
PO BOX 144  
LYNEHAM ACT 2602**

**Telephone: (02) 6207 7378  
Facsimile: (02) 6207 2200**

## ORRORAL VALLEY HOMESTEAD and PLOUGHLAND, NAMADGI NATIONAL PARK

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### LOCATION OF PLACE:

Namadgi National Park, Rendezvous Creek 1:25,000 776541. Part Block 8, District of Rendezvous Creek.

Orroral Valley Homestead is located off the Orroral Road, 18 kilometres south west of Tharwa. The boundary is that part of Block 8 that is within the fenced area of the Homestead building, extending east to the Orroral River. (Refer Figure 1 below).

The ploughland occupies the land between the homestead and the Orroral River, and extends from the swampy land north of the homestead south to the creek line.

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### FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF ORRORAL VALLEY HOMESTEAD AND PLOUGHLAND

The features which contribute to the heritage significance of the Orroral Valley Homestead and Ploughland, and which require conservation, comprise:

- The Homestead Complex including:
  - the Homestead building;
  - moveable heritage related to the Homestead complex
  - the archaeological remains of the kitchen;
  - ground traces of the school building;
  - the stone-lined well, and
  - the ploughland.
- The rural landscape setting, including :
  - views and vistas along the Orroral Valley;
  - the identified ploughland;
  - mature exotic trees including three pine trees (*Pinus radiata*), three willow trees near the creek and the fruit trees in the orchard (probably nectarine and peach); and
  - two mature eucalypts

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Orroral Valley Homestead is significant for its association with the permanent settlement of the area in the nineteenth century. Together with other structures and remnants on the site, it provides evidence of pastoral life in the Orroral Valley and of a way of life, which is no longer practised since the area became part of Gudgenby Nature Reserve and subsequently Namadgi National Park.

The Homestead represents the resourcefulness and skills of the early settlers in using local materials to build a durable family dwelling. The general structure of the Homestead is consistent with the building methods and fabric employed in remote rural areas in the late nineteenth century, with timber and stone being its principal construction materials. It is one of only two slab buildings surviving in Namadgi

National Park and is the oldest surviving structure in the Park. It is one of only twelve slab buildings classified by the National Trust of Australia (ACT). It is significant as an extant example of an isolated rural homestead, one of the oldest surviving in the ACT.

The Orroral Valley and Homestead are associated with the McKeahnie family who were 'enterprising Gaels', migrating to Australia from Scotland and establishing themselves and their descendants as owners of rural properties in the district. The McKeahnies played a significant role in settling pastoral properties in the Namadgi area.

Orroral Valley Homestead is valued by the community for its aesthetic qualities as a rural homestead in a pastoral landscape. The Homestead and its surrounding environs are recognised as constituting a rare historic site within the ACT. The site is used in field studies for University students and is ideal for further historical, architectural and archaeological research. Use of the Orroral Valley walking track, which passes through the site, contributes to an increased understanding of the Homestead's social and aesthetic significance.

The ploughlands are significant as a component of the wider Orroral Homestead Complex and are significant evidence of cultivation of the Orroral paddocks before the advent of mechanised ploughing. The evidence of ridge and furrow features, while sporadic and faint rather than continuous across the paddocks, is sufficient to indicate the nature of the agricultural activity. The ploughlands are among a small number of clear early ploughing features surviving in the ACT associated with historically documented settlement sites.



## **SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ORRORAL VALLEY HOMESTEAD and PLOUGHLAND**

In accordance with s.54 of the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*, the following specific requirements are identified as essential to the conservation of the heritage significance of the place. The guiding Conservation Objective is:

**The features of the Orroral Valley Homestead and Ploughland that contribute to its heritage significance shall be managed in a manner that conserves the significance of the place.**

### **CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE 1.**

**Provide adequate conservation management planning**

#### ***Conservation Objective 1.1***

Ensure that any actions impacting on the significance of the place are based on professional conservation planning.

#### **Specific Requirements for Conservation Objective 1.1:**

- (a) A conservation management plan (CMP) shall be developed for the Orroral Homestead and other features listed as significant in the complex, to guide the conservation and future use of the place.
- (b) Any necessary works that have a potential to impact on significant fabric not covered in the CMP shall be guided by a professionally documented interim assessment and conservation policy relevant to that area or component ie a Heritage Impact Statement [HIS]. No changes of use necessitating substantial changes to the place, or other substantial works affecting fabric, other than reversible stabilisation works, will be permitted before the preparation of an HIS or CMP, after which all works and uses should be in accordance with those documents.
- (c) Maintenance is as defined in the Australia Icomos Burra Charter, and will not involve change to significant fabric. Maintenance should be continued regardless of the status of the conservation documents.
- (d) Following the preparation of a CMP or HIS, identified essential conservation works should be implemented.

## CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE 2.

### Conserve the Significant components of the Orroral Homestead

Protect and conserve the significant features of the Orroral Homestead.

#### **Conservation Objective 2.1**

Maximise the retention of the historical integrity of Orroral Homestead by preventing demolition of the existing building.

#### **Specific Requirements for Conservation Objective 2.1.**

- (a) The building shall be conserved. Maintenance shall retain as much original fabric as possible and where replacement of materials is required, materials shall be replaced with same.
- (b) The demolition of features identified as intrinsic to the significance of the place shall not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances.

#### **Conservation Objective 2.2**

Retain the historical form and architectural character of the existing Orroral Homestead building:

#### **Specific Requirements for Conservation Objective 2.2**

- (a) Additions to the existing building shall only be permitted in the context of a preferred adaptive reuse which accords with the CMP
- (b) Existing structures shall not be relocated unless it can be demonstrated that the structure was originally in the proposed location or that relocation of the structure will enable items of greater significance to be recovered, and
- (c) Original fabric shall be conserved *insitu*. Any disturbance to the building fabric shall be recorded before any development occurs.

## CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE 3.

### Conserve the Landscape Character

#### **Conservation Objective 3.1**

Conserve the rural setting of the homestead complex reflecting its historical function as an agricultural enterprise.

#### **Specific Requirements for Conservation Objective 3.1**

- (a) The rural landscape setting of the homestead complex, and the views and vistas along the Orroral valley and to the hills beyond the property, shall be conserved.
- (b) The ground surface of the ploughland shall not be disturbed by ploughing, harrowing or like surface treatments and should be managed as pasture or fallowland.

### **Conservation Objective 3.2**

Retain and conserve individual and collections of tree species identified as intrinsic to the natural values.

#### **Specific Requirements for Conservation Objective 3.2**

- (a) The trees identified as intrinsic, including three pine trees (*Pinus radiata*), three willow trees near the creek and the fruit trees in the orchard (probably nectarine and peach); and two mature eucalypts shall be identified and management guidelines for the individual or collection be undertaken as part of the Conservation Management Plan.
- (b) Removal of trees may be permitted where it can be demonstrated, with supporting specialist advice, that the tree is causing structural damage to an intrinsic feature; or the tree is structurally weak and there is a potential danger of causing injury to persons or damage to property, or the tree represents a serious plant disease threat.

## **CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE 4.**

### **Conserve the Archaeological Sites**

#### **Conservation Objective 4.1**

Conserve the archaeological evidence associated with the significant building and sites.

#### **Specific Requirements for Conservation Objective 4.1**

No disturbance should occur within the archaeologically sensitive areas other than excavations for the purposes of archaeological research or in relation to works that will benefit the conservation of the place.

- (a) Any disturbance of sub-surface deposits in the vicinity of any building or ruin shall be preceded by an archaeological assessment, and works shall be guided by the outcomes of such assessment.
- (b) An archaeological zoning map shall be prepared as part of the CMP or as an interim component conservation plan, and should include the definition of precise boundaries of all archaeologically sensitive areas. Until this zoning map has been prepared, any development will be considered to involve archaeologically sensitive deposits.

## **CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE 5.**

### **Conserve moveable heritage items of the place**

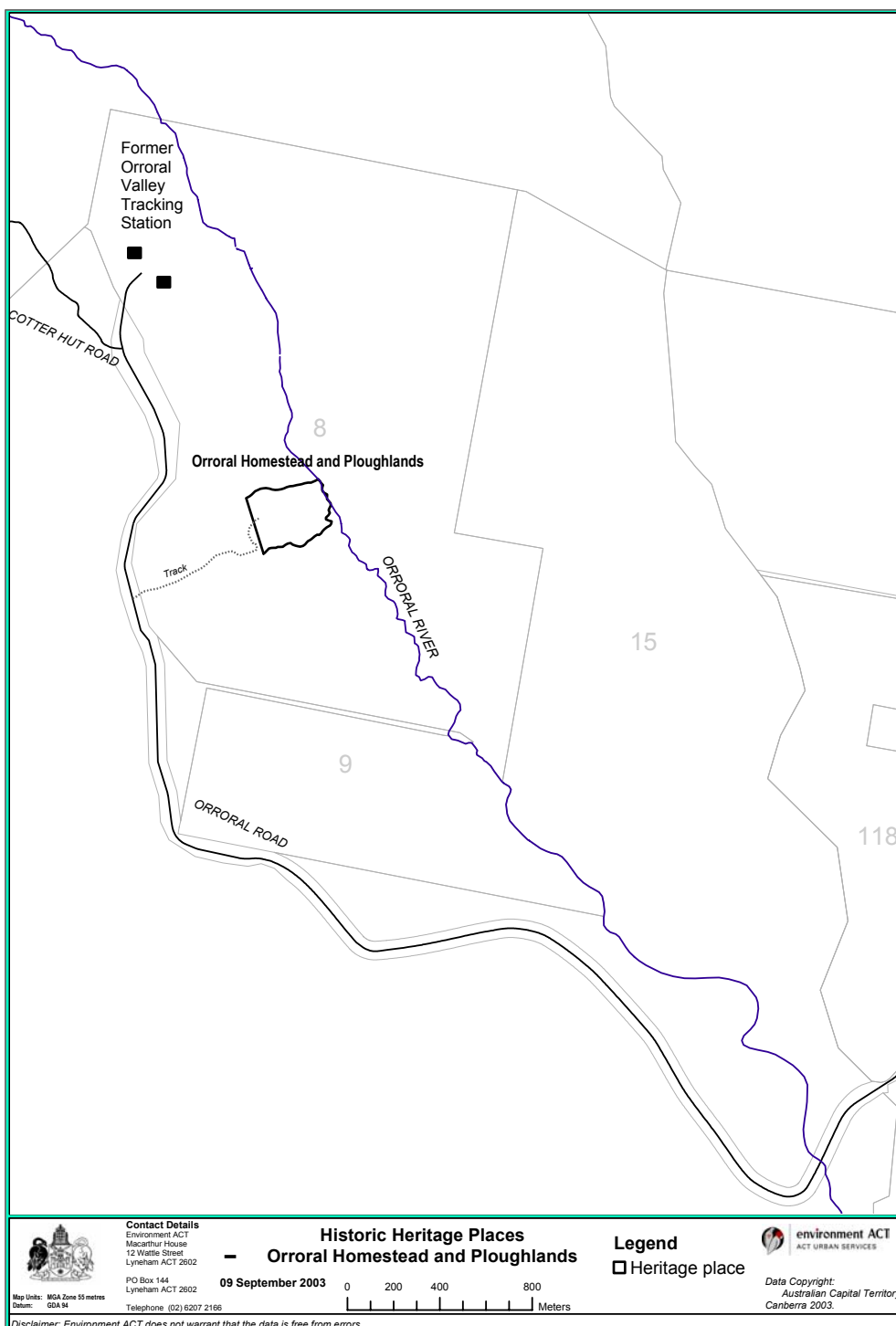
#### **Conservation Objective 5.1**

Conserve moveable heritage items associated with the significant building and sites.

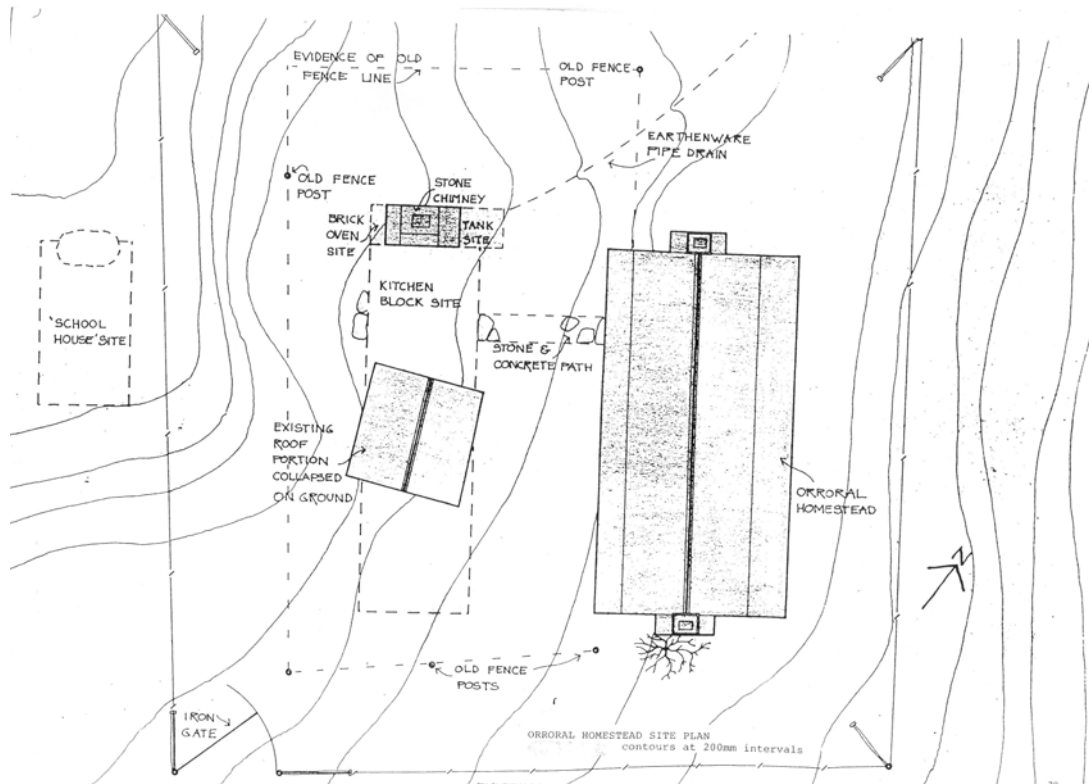
#### **Specific Requirements for Conservation Objective 5.1**

- (a) An inventory of moveable heritage items associated with the significant building and sites should be developed, to guide its conservation and future use.
- (b) Any necessary works that have a potential to impact on significant fabric not covered in the inventory shall be guided by a professionally documented interim assessment and conservation policy relevant to a piece of moveable heritage (ie a Heritage Impact Statement -HIS). No substantial works affecting fabric shall be permitted before the preparation of an HIS or Moveable Heritage Inventory, after which all works and uses should be in accordance with the Moveable Heritage Inventory or HIS.
- (c) Maintenance is as defined in the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, and will not involve change to significant fabric. Maintenance Should be continued regardless of the status of the Moveable Heritage Inventory or HIS.
- (d) Following the preparation of a Moveable Heritage Inventory or HIS, identified essential conservation works should be implemented.





**Figure 1**  
 Orroral Homestead & Ploughlands, location plan, 2004.



**Figure 2**

Site plan of the Orroral Homestead group. Note that the 'existing roof portion collapsed on ground' associated with the kitchen block site has been removed.

*Orroral Valley Homestead CMP, 1983, Corkery, P. & E. G. Butt.*