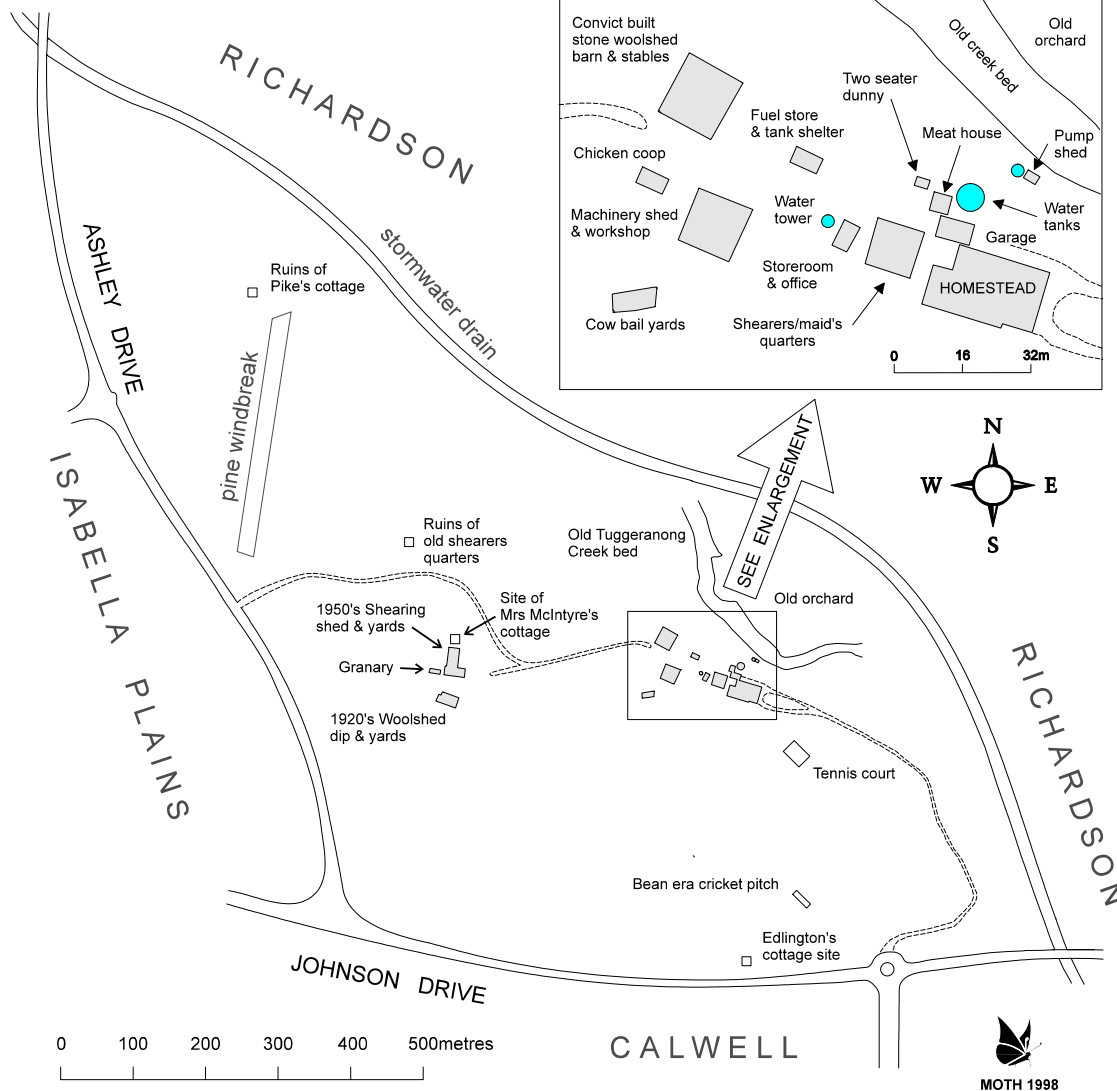


## Tuggeranong Homestead Significant Structures



(MOTH Inc.) successfully appealed against the decision stating that the heritage value of the property would be severely and irrevocably compromised. Subsequently the ACT Government withdrew plans for housing.

the Tuggeranong Homestead and takes a keen interest in its future.

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The Tuggeranong Homestead is culturally and historically significant and is highly valued by the community. The land has witnessed many changes in its occupation: from Aboriginal people; the pastoral communities of the 19th and 20th centuries; links to Federation; the War History team and the subsequent suburban development of Canberra.

Since February 2001, the Homestead hosts a popular conference, functions and events facility within pleasant rural surrounds.

MOTH Inc & Friends is a community group that promotes the cultural and heritage values of

## TUGGERANONG HOMESTEAD

The Tuggeranong Homestead is a 19th century, heritage-listed property situated in the southern Canberra suburb of Richardson. Johnson and Ashley Drives and a concrete floodway bound the 31 hectare property. Tuggeranong is an Aboriginal word meaning "cold plains".



### History

There is evidence of Aboriginal occupation within the landscape, notably, scarred eucalyptus trees that grow close to the homestead and axe-grinding grooves on a nearby hilltop. The Tuggeranong Creek and wetland was a reliable source of water and food, that was later drained to allow suburban development.

James Murdoch, an aide-de-camp to Governor Brisbane, was the first authorised settler. Murdoch was granted 2000 acres in 1827.

In 1829 John McLaren was granted 2560 acres of prime land alongside Murdoch's where he established a dairy cattle station.

Thomas Macquoid, the Sheriff of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, established the Waniassa estate in 1835 when he purchased both Murdoch's and McLaren's grants. He constructed a stone house and barn using convict labour. In their brief partnership,

Macquoid and Donald Campbell Simson secured other pastoral leases in the district.

Macquoid sustained heavy financial losses during the pastoral crash of the late 1830s, and in 1841, Waniassa and its livestock were put up for sale by auction. When the property failed to sell, Macquoid ended his own life.

Irishman Martin Pike, Macquoid's employee, purchased the only one of 22 farm blocks for sale at Waniassa. Ruins of Pike's pise and stone cottage, where he and his wife Mary Ann raised 9 children, can be seen near the century-old Aleppo and Stone pines to the west of the homestead. In 1870, Pike built the first Tuggeranong school house on part of his small farm.

Thomas Hyacinth Macquoid, the Sheriff's son, gained the permission of his father's creditors to stay and manage the estate until the debts were paid.

By 1856, Macquoid had survived the financial crisis and departed to England with his friend Edward Severn from Gudgenby. On their return in August 1857, both men drowned when the Dunbar was wrecked as it approached Sydney's South Head.

Andrew Cunningham from Lanyon purchased Waniassa in 1858 to expand his pastoral enterprise. About this time Waniassa became known as Tuggranong, spelt without the "e" to distinguish it from the Parish of Tuggeranong.

When Andrew Cunningham died in 1887, his elder son Andrew Jackson Cunningham continued to live at Lanyon while his younger son James managed Tuggeranong. In 1889, James Cunningham married Mary Twynam from Riversdale near Goulburn: together they raised 8 children at Tuggranong. Mary designed a new homestead for their growing family in 1908. The new building of pise, or rammed earth, incorporated some older sections of the house. Practical features included a hot water supply and acetylene gas lighting as well as distinctive lead-light windows, a chandelier and marble fireplaces. The

remodelled homestead became the largest in the district.

The Cunninghams planted the orchard shortly after they were married and the avenue of Monterey pines was planted in 1909. A few pines remain to mark the former entrance track parallel to Johnson Drive extending east to the Monaro Highway.

Reminders of other occupants and their families can be found in the surrounding paddocks. Peter McIntyre, who died at his cottage in 1916, was James Cunningham's overseer for over 30 years. McIntyre and his wife lived near the site of the present woolsheds.

Jack Edlington, who was Cunningham's horse-breaker, lived with his family in a weatherboard cottage near the cricket pitch to the south of the homestead.

The Commonwealth Government resumed Tuggeranong Homestead in 1916 for military purposes and as an administrative centre for the proposed arsenal. In 1919, war historian CEW Bean and his staff occupied the Homestead where they worked for five and a half years recording the Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918. Dr Bean established a concrete cricket pitch in 1921: it is located south of the homestead. Both cricket and tennis became popular recreations at the Homestead and were enjoyed by the local community.

It was while playing tennis at Tuggeranong, that Dr Bean met Ethel Young, a nurse from Queanbeyan. The couple married in 1920 and came to live at the Homestead. Bean's staff and their families occupied cottages at the Homestead. The old shearers' quarters in the woodland, now demolished, became the Wightman cottage, McIntyre's cottage became the Balfour residence and Pike's farmhouse became the home of the gardener and handyman, Paddy Byrne and his family.

When Bean and his staff transferred to Sydney to complete their work at Victoria Barracks, the

Homestead was leased to Timothy McCormack a grazier from Wheeo near Crookwell, New South Wales. Timothy McCormack was a well known descendent of a pioneering family.

During the 1920s, Tuggeranong reverted to a fine grazing property when McCormack introduced mechanised farming. McCormack was elected captain of the cricket team and the Homestead became a lively centre for local sporting events and social life. McCormack was also a horse trainer and breeder who initiated the Tuggranong Racing Club and held popular picnic races at Tuggranong. In 1926, TJ McCormack won the inaugural Canberra Cup with his horse "Spec".

For the next fifty years three generations of the McCormack family developed a successful fine wool Merino breeding farm, improved and developed pastures, grew cereal crops, built new dams and shearing sheds and added many purpose-built farm buildings. In 1949, Hugh and Kath McCormack redesigned the Homestead to accommodate their 5 children and extended family. Essential repairs were carried out to the pise house. The McCormack family continued an established farming tradition.

In 1976, Canberra's urban expansion forced the resumption of the Tuggeranong property. The creek was converted to a concrete drain causing catastrophic changes to the natural environment.

Tuggeranong Homestead was classified by the National Trust of Australia in 1980 and in 1981 entered on the Register of the National Estate (Australian Heritage Commission). The Homestead was occupied by agricultural rangers and in 1980 was leased to the Tuggeranong Pastoral Company. The property languished and its future became uncertain.

In 1993 it was nominated for inclusion on the ACT Interim Heritage Places Register and just a year later a proposal to erect 250 medium density houses was approved by the ACT Legislative Assembly. The community group Minders of Tuggeranong Homestead