

# Heritage (Decision about Registration of Royalla Woolshed, Tuggeranong) Notice 2020

Notifiable instrument NI2020—86

made under the

Heritage Act 2004, s 40 (Decision about registration)

---

**1 Name of instrument**

This instrument is the *Heritage (Decision about Registration of Royalla Woolshed, Tuggeranong) Notice 2020*.

**2 Decision about registration**

On 6 February 2020, the ACT Heritage Council (the **Heritage Council**) decided to register Royalla Woolshed, Part Block 1512, Tuggeranong (the **Place**).

**3 Registration details of the Place**

The registration details of the Place are in the schedule.

**4 Reasons for the decision**

The Heritage Council is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the Place has heritage significance as it meets one or more of the heritage significance criteria in section 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*. A detailed statement of reasons including an assessment against the heritage significance criteria is provided in the schedule.

**5 Date registration takes effect**

The registration of the Place takes effect on the day after this notice is notified.

## **6 Revocation**

The *Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of Royalla Woolshed, Tuggeranong) Notice 2019* (NI2019—612) is revoked.

Fiona Moore  
Secretary (as delegate for)  
ACT Heritage Council  
6 February 2020

**Schedule**  
**(See sections 3 and 4)**

---



ACT Heritage Council

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**  
**HERITAGE REGISTER**  
**(Registration)**

For the purposes of s40 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, an entry to the heritage register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following place:

**ROYALLA WOOLSHED**

**PART BLOCK 1512, TUGGERANONG**

**DATE OF REGISTRATION**

6 February 2020 Notifiable Instrument: 2020—

Copies of the Register Entry are available for inspection at ACT Heritage. For further information please contact:

The Secretary  
ACT Heritage Council  
GPO Box 158  
CANBERRA ACT 2601  
Telephone 13 22 81

This statement refers to the location of the place as required in s12(b) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

#### **LOCATION OF THE PLACE**

Royalla Woolshed, part Block 1512, Tuggeranong.

---

This statement refers to the description of the place as required in s12(c) of the *Heritage Act 2004*. The attributes described in this section form part of the heritage significance of the place. For the purposes of s12(c) of the *Heritage Act 2004*, the boundary of the place is at Image 1.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE**

Information under Description of Place has been declared restricted in accordance with s 54 (1) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

Royalla Woolshed, consisting of the following attributes:

The woolshed, including;

- Interior and exterior building fabric and layout related to use and function of the building as a woolshed, specifically;
- The engine room and the bale store;
- Bush timber posts and poles used to support and frame the building;
- Bush poles used to organise the layout and function of the building including those used to construct pens and the wool sorting bays;
- The original gates associated with pens;
- The battened flooring within the areas used for sheep management;
- The flooring associated with the shearing board and the flooring that was once the shearing board and now lines the exterior wall associated with the board;
- The Masonite lining affixed to the roof above the shearers board to protect shearers from condensation;
- The light fixtures over the shearers board;
- The lining board timbers of the north and south gable walls;
- The galvanised iron or steel water tanks and their stands in original locations;
- The galvanised iron or steel used in construction of the building, including the roof, the walls and that used to cover the sheep chutes from the shearers board and the galvanised iron or steel used to construct the wool sorting bins;
- Configuration of the sub floor pens as related to sheep management for shearing and the bush poles used in their construction and any original gates;
- The sheep ramps into the building, especially the detail of stone work on the northern ramp into the building and the red brick paving in this area;

- The loading ramp on the northern end of the building, including its rail way track counter weights;
- The windows and doors of the building, especially those that are original or of vernacular character;

The yards associated with the woolshed, including;

- The materials and layout of the tally pens from the shearers board, including their openings, chutes and yarding;
- The materials and configuration of the holding pens within the boundary of the place as defined here; and
- Any original and vernacular gates associated with the yards.

Elements of the building demonstrating resourcefulness and making do, including;

- The car exhaust associated with the engine room;
- The rail way line used as a counter balance for the loading ramp; and
- Other details that may reveal themselves to tell the story of resourcefulness and making do.

The pit toilet location to the north of the woolshed is a site of potential archaeological study, therefore from the centre of the toilet pit extending in a radius of 1 meter is an Archaeological Conservation Zone (ACZ); this is the only ACZ on the site. The dilapidated outhouse building associated with the toilet pit is noted as being beyond repair or retention.

The large woodland eucalypt at the north of woolshed within vicinity of the pit toilet, also forms part of the place. This is due to the pastoral woodland setting and the long association of the tree with the woolshed and its presence as possible justification for the location of the pit toilet.

---

This statement refers to the heritage significance of the place as required in s12(d) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

### **STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The functional significance of Royalla Woolshed is exceptionally well-captured in its intact vernacular fabric, its shearing equipment and its long association with the McDonald family. As vernacular buildings, woolsheds are noted as being products of their locality and era. Royalla Woolshed's construction using locally sourced bush posts and poles, as well as reused materials from a nearby former schoolhouse encapsulate a local response to place. Royalla Woolshed is of particular value because of its integrity as an intact complex of structures and its machinery of early twentieth century shearing, providing an uncommon opportunity to demonstrate and interpret the working conditions of a shearing shed of that period. Further details, such as the car exhaust for managing fumes from the engine shed parts of rail track used as counter balance for the sheep loading ramp add another layer to the building in terms of the adaptability and ingenuity of those working in, and with, the shed. For over 100 years Royalla Woolshed has settled into its pastoral woodland landscape adjacent the Monaro Highway. Whilst the Highway has encroached on the Woolshed's setting, the building and its adjoining yards remain remarkably intact. The passage of time is reflected in the fine and silvered weather boards of the Woolshed's north and south gable walls and large woodland tree to its north. Additionally, the ownership, construction and use of the building for shearing by the McDonald family for almost 100 years, provides a clear narrative for the location and timing of construction of Royalla Woolshed.

---

### CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE

The guiding conservation objective is that Royalla Woolshed shall be conserved and appropriately managed in a manner respecting its heritage significance.

The ACT Heritage Council may adopt heritage guidelines applicable to the place under s25 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

For further information on guidelines applicable to the place, or for advice on proposed works or development, please contact ACT Heritage on 13 22 81.

---

### REASON FOR REGISTRATION

The Council has assessed Royalla Woolshed, Tuggeranong against the heritage significance criteria and is satisfied that the place has heritage significance when assessed against criteria [a, b and d] under s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

---

### ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The Council's assessment against the criteria specified in s10 of the *Heritage Act 2004* is as follows.

In assessing the heritage significance of Royalla Woolshed, Tuggeranong the Council considered:

- the original nomination and documentary evidence supplied by the nominator;
- the Council's *Heritage Assessment Policy* (March 2018);
- information provided by a site inspection on by ACT Heritage on 6 June 2019 and by the ACT Heritage Council on 23 August 2019; and
- the report by ACT Heritage titled, *Background Information Royalla Woolshed*, February 2020, containing photographs and information on history, description, condition and integrity;

Pursuant to s10 of the Heritage Act, a place or object has heritage significance if it satisfies one or more of the following criteria. Future research may alter the findings of this assessment.

**(a) importance to the course or pattern of the ACT's cultural or natural history;**

The Council has assessed Royalla Woolshed against criterion (a) and is satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

Royalla Woolshed is connected with the early pastoral history of the ACT through the pastoral enterprise of the McDonald family who owned Royalla station for five generations. The first Archibald McDonald (grandfather to the second Archibald) was a bounty immigrant recruited by Charles Campbell to work on his properties, in keeping with Campbell's preference for employing free men as workers, as opposed to convicts or those with a ticket of leave. After working for Campbell for many years, including as overseer at Uriarra, Archibald McDonald purchased Uriarra from the Campbell family and also purchased land at Royalla, thus establishing a substantial inheritance for his children. Through the supply of meat, to railway workers constructing the railway line adjacent the woolshed, and then miners at Captains Flat, the second

Archibald McDonald accumulated wealth which he used to expand the Royalla property to eventually become one of the largest landowners in the area. He built Royalla Woolshed in 1907.

The siting of Royalla Woolshed was likely influenced by the railway line completed in 1888 and proximity to the Royalla siding; the existence and location of which, the second Archibald McDonald may have been able to influence. Construction of Royalla Woolshed was possibly also spurred on by knowledge of the impending closure of the Duntroon Woolshed in 1912 due to the forthcoming resumption of land for the Federal Capital Territory. Previously, the McDonalds had used the Duntroon Shed for their shearing and their use of it was in keeping with the arrangements many smaller landowners had with the owners of the big sheds.

With its 1907 date of construction, Royalla Woolshed is a fine example of a small, early built shed on the Limestone Plains. The use of bush posts and poles harvested from the local area and used to frame the building and to make yards and wool sorting pens is notable. The use of salvaged materials from the early Royalla Provisional School adds to the story of the building as a product of its environment. The car exhaust extending from the roof of the engine shed to manage fumes, and the sections of rail way line used as the counter balance for the sheep loading ramp on the north of the building, represent a fading way of life in terms of resourcefulness and making do in problem solving. The weathered and silvered boards of the building's north and south gable walls capture an essence of the woolshed's endurance in the landscape for over 100 years and the woodland setting and large woodland tree at the northern end of the building adds to a sense of permanency. Of additional value, Royalla Woolshed also has shearing equipment associated with it telling its history as a place of work.

**(b) has uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the ACT's cultural or natural history;**

The Council has assessed Royalla Woolshed against criterion (b) and is satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

Royalla Woolshed is of particular value to the ACT's cultural history, because of the integrity of the early twentieth century structures and shearing machinery in situ, providing an uncommon opportunity to understand the workings of a shearing shed of that period. There are estimated to be 48 woolsheds extant in the ACT, fourteen are included in the ACT Heritage Register either in their own right or as part of a precinct. However, Royalla Woolshed is rare in the ACT for its intactness and its machinery that effectively captures the working environment of pastoralism on a mid-sized station, including the transition to mechanised shearing.

**(c) potential to yield important information that will contribute to an understanding of the ACT's cultural or natural history;**

The Council has assessed Royalla Woolshed against criterion (c) and is satisfied that the place does not meet this criterion.

The history of Royalla Woolshed is relatively well documented in the historical record and in its built fabric. Additionally there is currently no compelling evidence to suggest that any study of the archaeology of the site would address a profound deficit in what is known of the building or its historical context. Having said this, it is acknowledged that pit toilets can yield archaeological information, and as such the toilet site at Royalla could be excavated in the future, if warranted. At this stage however, it must be noted that unless new information came to light, there is insufficient justification before Council to suggest that excavating the toilet site would yield information revealing of the ACT's cultural history.

**(d) importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or objects;**

The Council has assessed Royalla Woolshed against criterion (d) and is satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

As an intact woolshed with shearing equipment Royalla Woolshed demonstrates the principal characteristics of a class of place – that being a woolshed. In terms of built fabric the woolshed possesses all the attributes assigned a woolshed including; the shearers board, catching and holding pens, wool sorting bays, engine room and bale store plus shearing equipment. In addition, woolsheds are considered vernacular buildings arising from their place and time and the fabric of Royalla Woolshed tells its story exceptionally well. This includes the locally sourced bush posts and poles and materials sourced from a nearby former school house. It extends to include features such as the engine exhaust extending from the roof of the engine shed for managing fumes and the sections of rail line used to counter balance the sheep loading ramp. These features tell of the human attributes of resourcefulness and making do in problem solving which is in keeping with the rural tradition, and in the ACT is a vanishing way of life. The clear narrative afforded the Woolshed through its long association with the McDonald family and their place in the pastoral origins of the ACT adds clarity and focus to the building's narrative. Taken as a whole, the building's intactness, vernacular construction and the cohesive narrative that can be read or ascribed to its fabric mean the building is considered to meet this criteria as demonstrating the principal characteristics of a woolshed connected with the early and then enduring pastoral history of the ACT.

**(e) importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT;**

The Council has assessed Royalla Woolshed against criterion (e) and is satisfied that the place does not meet this criterion.

Woolsheds are connected with a pastoral idyll considered to be valued by many Australians. Woolsheds could be considered aesthetic signifiers in that their associated yarding, their form, the materials from which they are constructed, and the way they are sited in the landscape, all combine to evoke thoughts and feelings of the pastoral idyll. In addition, Royalla Woolshed is a highly visible landmark on the side of the Monaro Highway. As such it could be argued that due to its visibility Royalla Woolshed is an aesthetic signifier and therefore evocative of the ideal. While this could be the case, the aesthetic value of Royalla Woolshed to the ACT community cannot be quantified and for this reason the building cannot meet this criteria.

For the purposes of assessment against this criteria it is important to note that according to the ACT Heritage Assessment Policy (2018) the following applies;

- Professional groups and special interest groups do not constitute a community or cultural group for the purposes of this criterion. Common expertise or interest is not sufficient by itself to define a community or cultural group
- 'Community' is defined as follows; 'all the people of a specific locality or country' plus 'a particular locality, considered together with its inhabitants'
- For the purposes of the *Heritage Act 2004*, 'the community' is defined as 'the ACT community' or 'the community of the ACT'.



**(f) importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement for a particular period;**

The Council has assessed Royalla Woolshed against criterion (f) and is satisfied that the place does not meet this criterion.

In keeping with many rural and pastoral buildings, Royalla Woolshed represents the vernacular, rather than what is typically considered a high degree of creative or technical achievement. While the use of bush posts and poles and repurposed materials is notable and has added a hand crafted appearance to the building this all arises from practical need and therefore does not reach the threshold for 'high degree of creative or technical achievement'. While Royalla Woolshed preserves the resourcefulness and workmanship of a passing era and rural way of life its value in this regard is most usefully assigned against its criteria a and d.

**(g) has a strong or special association with the ACT community, or a cultural group in the ACT for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;**

The Council has assessed Royalla Woolshed against criterion (g) and is satisfied that the place does not meet this criterion.

While Royalla Woolshed is highly visible and familiar to many Canberrans it is not possible to say that the broader ACT community has a strong or special association with the place. Additionally, there is no evidence that any community or cultural groups have a special association with Royalla Woolshed.

For the purposes of assessment against this criteria it is important to note that according to the ACT Heritage Assessment Policy (2018) the following applies;

- Professional groups and special interest groups do not constitute a community or cultural group for the purposes of this criterion. Common expertise or interest is not sufficient by itself to define a community or cultural group
- 'Community' is defined as follows; 'all the people of a specific locality or country' plus 'a particular locality, considered together with its inhabitants'
- For the purposes of the *Heritage Act 2004*, 'the community' is defined as 'the ACT community' or 'the community of the ACT'.

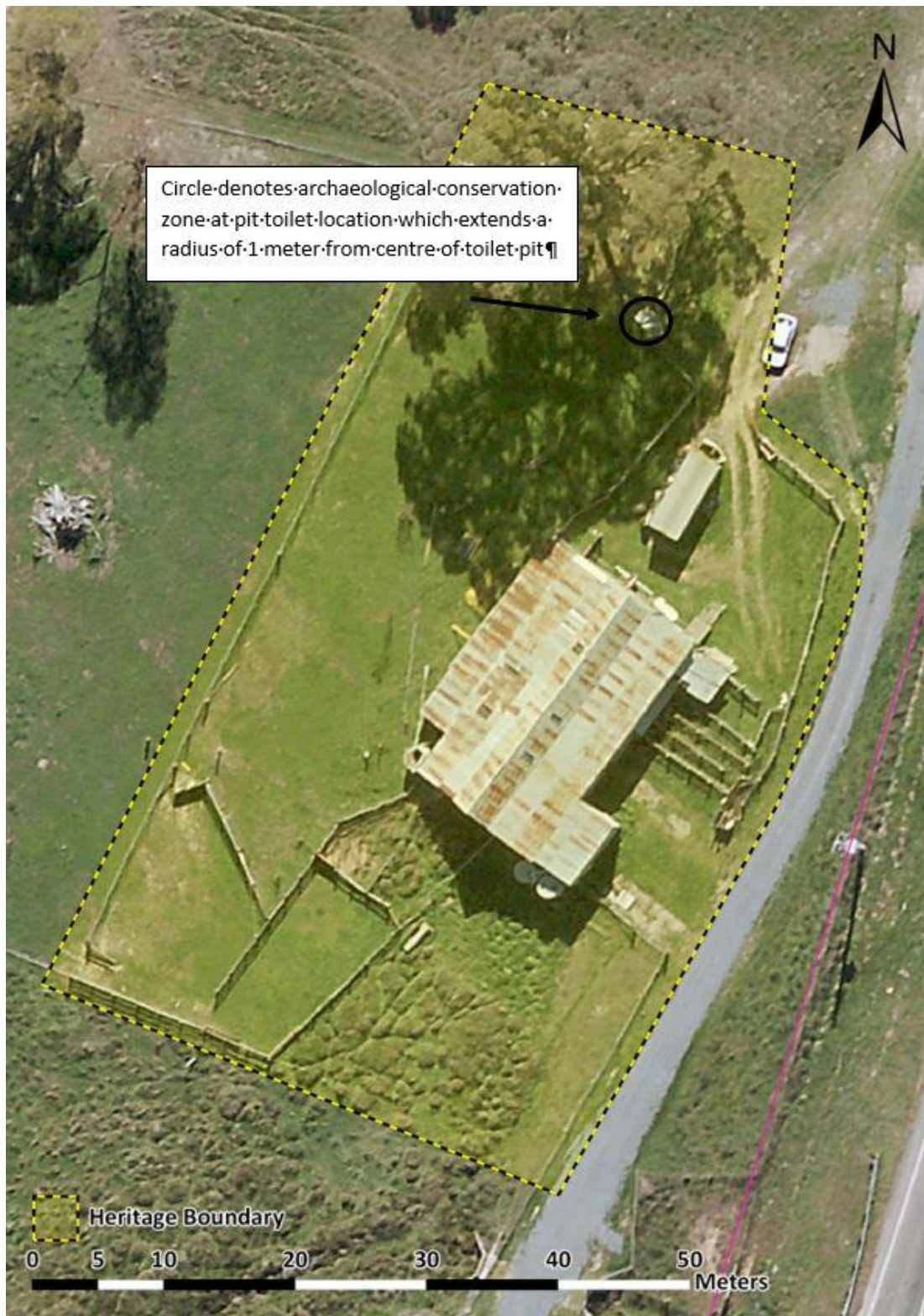
**(h) has a special association with the life or work of a person, or people, important to the history of the ACT.**

The Council has assessed Royalla Woolshed against criterion (h) and is satisfied that the place does not meet this criterion.

Royalla Woolshed's connection with the McDonald family is only one part of its story. The significance of the Woolshed is held in the aggregate of its intact vernacular fabric, moveable heritage and cohesive narrative borne from its ownership, construction and use by the McDonald family. It is for this reason that the significance of Royalla Woolshed has been assigned to criteria a and d. Additionally, while Royalla Woolshed is connected with the McDonald family, who arrived as bounty immigrants and achieved

enduring success across generations as landowners of Royalla station, there is nothing to suggest the McDonald's were more important to the history of the ACT than other early settlers who achieved a measure of success

## SITE PLAN



**Image 1** Royalla Woolshed registration boundary also showing archaeological conservation zone