

Australian Capital Territory

Heritage (Decision about Registration of the Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River) Notice 2015

Notifiable Instrument NI2015—461

made under the

Heritage Act 2004, s40 Notice of decision about registration

1 Revocation

This instrument replaces NI2015—159.

2 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Heritage (Decision about Registration of the Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River) Notice 2015*.

3 Registration details of the place

Registration details of the place are at [Attachment A](#): Register entry for the Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River.

4 Reason for decision

The ACT Heritage Council has decided that the Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River meets one or more of the heritage significance criteria at s 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*. The register entry is at [Attachment A](#).

5 Date of registration

30 July 2015

Pamela Hubert
A/g Secretary (as delegate for)
ACT Heritage Council
30 July 2015



ACT Heritage Council

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

For the purposes of s. 40 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, an entry to the heritage register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following place:

Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds

(part) Block 240, Paddys River

DATE OF REGISTRATION

30 July 2015 Notifiable Instrument: 2015–461

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 Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds as required in s. 12 (b) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

LOCATION OF THE PLACE

(part) Block 240, Paddys River, Tidbinbilla Ring Road.

This section refers to the description of Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds as required in s.12(c) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE

Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, consisting of:

- Pisé homestead;
 - footprint of original house paddock reflected by present-day fence line, consisting of:
 - internal pathway network;
 - surrounding landscape inside citation boundary, consisting of:
 - original entry road
 - original orchard block north of the homestead; and
 - orchard block adjoining the eastern side of house paddock.
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This statement refers to the heritage significance of Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds as required in s 12(d) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds is important to the course of the ACT's cultural history as an example of a vernacular building style adopted by European settlers, and an example of pisé construction that demonstrates the main attributes and advantages of the building method in the era of European settlement. Because of its survival during, and restoration after bushfires in 2003, it is an excellent interpretive site. Pisé was employed by European settlers as a form of inexpensive architecture, as materials were locally sourced and readily accessible. However, few examples of pisé buildings from the 19th and early 20th centuries survive in the ACT and as such, the homestead is rare [*criteria (a) (b) (d)*].

The homestead and surrounds display practices of European settlement and land use necessary for the survival, if not prosperity in remote settlements in the nineteenth century, such as use of locally available building material, clearing of native vegetation, exotic plantings, and cultivation. This makes the place significant as evidence for the era, representing a landscape important to the course of the ACT's cultural history. [*criteria (a) (b)*].

CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE

The guiding conservation objective is that Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds 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

Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance when assessed against criteria (a), (b), and (d) under s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The Council's assessment against the criteria specified in s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004* is as follows.

In assessing the nomination for Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River, the Council considered:

- the original nomination and documentary evidence supplied by the nominator;
- information provided by a site inspection on 28 November 2014 by ACT Heritage; and
- the report by ACT Heritage titled, *Background Information Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds*, July 2015, containing photographs and information on history, description, condition and integrity.

Pursuant to s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, 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;

Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River, meets this criterion.

The place is important to the course of the ACT's cultural history as the homestead is a pisé construction, an important vernacular building style of the era, and the place bears a strong association with European rural land use during the early colonisation of the ACT.

The homestead is a vernacular pisé building, constructed in the 1890s, with later additions completed in 1905. Pisé was adopted as a result of economic conditions, enabling European settlers to construct homes from inexpensive, readily available materials. This demonstrates the resourcefulness of settlers and the environmental, social, and economic demands of the era and location. The building maintains a plan common for rural structures of the day, namely dwellings in which rooms did not permit internal access, but used an external space such as a veranda for access. This footprint is also evident at nearby places Orroral Valley and Nil Desperandum homesteads.

The homestead and surrounds display a cultural landscape revealing European rural land-use and lifestyles adopted during the era of early colonisation of the ACT, with a time-depth occupation from the selector-era, development of the Federal Capital Territory, to incorporation of Block 243 into the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Resourceful, mixed farming and recreational activities were undertaken at the place, essential for the survival of the Green family in their remote location. Evidence for subsistence and recreational land use includes the original orchard block inclusive of vegetable garden, exotic plantings outside the house paddock, the levelled area where the tennis court was constructed, and the ornamental house garden.

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

Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River, meets this criterion.

The homestead is a pisé construction, a rare and endangered building type in the cultural history of the ACT. In addition, the place demonstrates patterns of land use adopted by early European settlers which represent rare aspects of the ACT's cultural history.

The Pisé homestead is a rare and endangered example of vernacular architecture adopted by European settlers in the region that later became the ACT. In 2001 there were 42 known pisé buildings in the ACT, with only 14 in good condition, seven of these surviving without being subject to major modification, with several of these affected by bushfires in 2003.

The homestead and surrounds reflect patterns of land use and construction adopted by European settlers, some of which are practised rarely, or are no longer practised. The patterns indicating late 19th and early 20th century cultivation and recreational land use are evidenced by the remnant orchard paddocks, inclusive of the original vegetable patch, and footprint of the original house garden.

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

Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River, does not meet this criterion.

There is insufficient evidence before the Council to suggest that the place will provide important new information contributing to a wider understanding of the ACT's cultural or natural history. The Council does not recognise a strong presumption of research potential at the place in one or multiple fields of scholarship.

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

Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River, meets this criterion.

The homestead demonstrates the principal characteristics of pisé construction, and is important in displaying these owing to the processes of damage and renewal it underwent prior to, and after bushfires in 2003. Before 2003, render had fallen away from the interior walls, which were also deteriorating in places, revealing the original matrix and the materials and methods used during its construction, including formwork based on locally available resources such as silty gravel for the 1895 structure, and decomposed granite for the later constructed rooms. Subsequently fires in 2003 revealed the benefits of using rammed earth as a building material in

the ACT environment, as the core pisé structure withstood the blaze, demonstrating its fire retardant properties.

Although the Homestead has been partially restored, restoration works have left the core matrix visible in its interior rooms, where the difference in building materials is still evident, and will permit ongoing interpretation of the building methods adopted by European settlers in the ACT region.

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

Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River, does not meet this criterion.

The Homestead and Surrounds are situated in a picturesque visual setting and incorporates an attractive cultural landscape. However, they do not possess landmark qualities, artistic excellence, or visual prominence demonstrated to be valued by the wider ACT community or a cultural group. While the place is valued by professional and special interest groups, these are not connected through the same way of living, which has been transmitted from one generation to another, and do not share a cultural or ethnic background, and therefore do not fall within the definition of a cultural group as defined by the Council in its *Heritage Assessment Policy 2014*.

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

Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River, does not meet this criterion.

While the homestead provides a good example of pisé construction, there is insufficient evidence before the Council demonstrating a high degree of technical or creative achievement more than other similar places in the ACT.

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

Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River, does not meet this criterion.

While the Homestead and Surrounds are important to interest and professional groups, previous occupants and their descendants, the association does not extend to the ACT community or a cultural group, is not easily recognisable to the broader ACT community, and is not an association beyond the ordinary. These groups are not connected through the same way of living, which has been transmitted from one generation to another, and they do not share a cultural or ethnic background, and therefore do not constitute a cultural group defined by the Council in its *Heritage Assessment Policy 2014*.

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

Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds, Paddys River, does not meet this criterion.

While the pisé homestead is associated with the Greens and Hatcliffs who were pioneering families, and notable builders of pisé homesteads in the area, it is not demonstrated that these individuals have been instrumental to the history of the ACT.

The homestead has some connection with the Wrights and the Cunninghams, prominent figures in the development of the Tidbinbilla and Tuggeranong Valleys, however, this connection is not demonstrated to be special, as required to meet the threshold for listing under this criterion.

SITE PLAN



Image 1 Rock Valley Homestead and Surrounds