CONSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION STUDY OF THE RURAL HERITAGE LANDSCAPE OF THE LANYON-LAMBRIGG AREA, ACT.

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INTRODUCTION

The study which this paper outlines was undertaken in 1986/1987 by K. Taylor, J. Winston-Gregson, and K. Johnson following the issuing of a brief by Jennifer Cox, Heritage and Museums Unit of the then Department of Territories. The study, assisted by the National Estate Grants Programme, was part of an interpretative research exercise for the historic rural landscape, particularly at Lanyon and was coincidental with other work. The study area is in the Murrumbidgee River valley and lies thirty kilometres south of the centre of Canberra. Urban development associated with the new town of Tuggeranong will shortly abut the eastern side of the historic landscape at Lanyon (see Figure 1). The rural landscape at Lanyon-Lambrigg had previously been identified as possessing significant cultural heritage significance in the landscape.

The purpose of the study was to examine the context of the historic landscape as a continuum, a setting created by a series of events, undertaken by various people, that have resulted in a particular sense of place.

More particularly the study objectives were:

- to interpret a sense of the stream of time at Lanyon Lambrigg and develop an understanding between occupancy of the landscape and its appearance;
- to interpret educational and heritage values of a working pastoral landscape which has developed through Aboriginal occupancy followed by 150 years of European occupancy and which demonstrates themes of continuity of landscape development;
- to develop the values of an ordinary landscape as an essential element in the Australian sense of place;
- to indicate an understanding of human use of, and dependency on, available resources;
- to enable conservation policies an interpretation/presentation strategy for the heritage landscape components to be developed.

The idea of continuity in the landscape, layers over time, is an important concept underlying the study approach. It was decided that it was vital to demonstrate that cultural heritage significance in the landscape is not a matter of dots or sites on a map separated spatially or in time. The study is, therefore, a detailed reading to present how the landscape was made, who made it, and why. It is an approach to interpreting the meaning of this particular landscape, particularly on the basis of Historic Values and Social Values described in the Burra Charter. Historic value and social value criteria may be seen, in the interpretative context, as underlying the cognitive and affective process of understanding a heritage resource. This is particularly where knowledge of past events and people can be interpreted and lead to the formation of associative values. These values are the foundation for the concept of landscapes as symbols of who we are, as clues to our culture. Lowenthal summarises the concept in the proposal that "awareness of the past is essential to the maintenance of the purpose of life. Without it we would lack all sense of continuity ... all knowledge of our own identity".

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

In view of the theme of the Seminar and without wanting to trespass into the area of other speakers, it seems appropriate to comment on the term "cultural landscape(s)". Cultural landscapes are rural and urban settings that people have settled and altered through time. They include cultural and natural elements of the ordinary, familiar, everyday landscape. In Australian usage "cultural landscape" is often applied where a rural setting is the focus of attention. However it is important to remember that cultural landscapes include townscape as well as rural areas.

In a non-urban context the USA National Park Service has developed a useful generic definition of the term "cultural landscape" with five specific types. They have applicability in Australia and are therefore summarised as follows:

Cultural Landscape: "a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources, including the wildlife or domestic animals therein, that has been influenced by or reflects human activity or was the background for an event or person significant in history". An update of this definition (see Landscape Architecture 77:4, "Preservation: Defining an Ethnic" p 96) omits the reference to significant historic events and people but adds the term Historic Landscape: "a geographic area that has functioned as a setting for or been the object of an event or interaction that is significant in human history". The qualification of the term "cultural landscapes", which are the ordinary landscapes that surround us and that have
been settled and modified by human actions, with the word "historic" is more precise for heritage work application. Five categories of historic cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive, are defined.

i. **Historic Scene.** A micro environment where a significant historic event occurred, frequently with associated structures or tangible remains. Such scenes promote understanding and interpretation of events, ideas or persons associated with the landscape.

ii. **Historic Site.** A site where an activity or an event has imbued a particular piece of ground with significance that warrants preservation of the historic appearance.

iii. **Historic Designed Landscape.** A landscape where the form, layout and/or designer are the primary reasons for significance.

iv. **Historic Vernacular Landscape.** A landscape possessing a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of natural and man-made components which are united by human use and past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development. Style, workmanship and land-use management techniques tend to be typical of particular groups or historic periods, rather than unique or innovative. In terms of the Seminar generally and this paper in particular, the latter qualification is particularly notable and, in my view, should be central to the identification, assessment and evaluation process where an enquiry into the existence of cultural heritage significance for a rural vernacular landscape is a study objective.

v. **Historic Ethnographic Landscape.** A landscape characterised by the use of distinct ethnic groups that have added cultural imprints on the landscape significance is derived from human interaction or consumptive use of the natural environment.

A common thread runs through these definitions. It is the human use of the landscape and how we see the resultant cultural landscape type as an expression of past human attitudes and values.

**LANYON-LANBRIGG STUDY**

A singular and most important aspect of the foregoing definition, in particular for rural vernacular landscapes and applied in the Lanyon-Lambrigg study, is that it involves a way of looking at the landscape, not merely what is seen. It is a way of looking and interpreting how people have manipulated the natural landscape by overlaying patterns of human use. The resultant cultural landscape is a montage consisting of:

- Natural features and elements.
- Landscape components from a number of historic periods as a result of human activity and modification to the natural features.

Patterns created in the landscape over time; these are layers in or on the landscape.10

A set of hills, valleys, a river, roads, buildings, and tree patterns can be regarded as either a physical landscape or as a cultural landscape.11 The former is a physical entity where elements can be seen and objectively described; the latter is connected with human meanings and the extent to which it is a way of seeing and interpreting, rather than what is seen. The Lanyon-Lambrigg study therefore takes the approach of interpreting the heritage resource, that is the patterns in the landscape and why they are there. It does not involve a visual assessment of the landscape to identify scenic values. It was decided, in the light of the brief and its objectives with their emphasis on cultural heritage interpretation and conservation, that an attempt to address scenic quality issues would not be productive. As Melnick indicates, visual resource management, although a useful tool, does not address the complexity of cultural and historic meaning in landscapes.12 The obvious example of a flat featureless agricultural landscape which may be given a low scenic rating is quoted. This same landscape may of course have significant cultural meaning for people who have settled, lived in and cared for the land. In an earlier paper Melnick gives five cogent reasons why rating for scenic value is inappropriate in the cultural resources context.13

**Study Method**

Figure 2 shows the systematic method applied to the heritage study of the Lanyon-Lambrigg landscape. It is a process for identification and assessment of the role of cultural landscape components, natural features and overall patterns which create the previously mentioned montage effect. Evaluation of the overall landscape fabric's integrity in terms of representing historical periods succeeds the identification and assessment. Evaluation involves examination of interrelationships in the landscape, associative values, sense of continuity through layers in the landscape, historical integrity of the components and the existence of a landscape continuum which displays a sense of the stream of time.14 In summary the study process has three major stages with various steps:

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<th>Steps</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>1-4</td>
<td>Identification and Assessment</td>
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<td>5-11</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Conservation Management Guidelines</td>
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As an interpretative study aimed at reading the landscape the following questions guided the study team:

WHERE have things occurred;
WHAT has occurred;
WHEN did it or they occur;
WHO promoted the action(s);
WHY
I Identification and Assessment

This stage of the study concerned, in particular, two reviews of the landscape setting. The first was physiographic, ecological and historical. Because a 1980 report by The National Trust of Australia (ACT) had previously distinguished ecological values of the study area it was decided not to reiterate these. This study also addressed scenic values. The physiographic review gives the local and regional geographic setting of the area. It shows the degrees of accord and contrast between the existing rural landscape and its physiographic context.

The historical review shows how the landscape we see today is an artefact of 15,000 years of human occupation. Emphasis is given to the historic period and highlights how the cultural landscape is a product of the actions of various people, philosophies on land management and political decisions. It is essentially a summary of the who in the landscape.

For the physical review it was decided to identify the components of the cultural landscape and assess their role in the landscape patterns that we see. The concept of cultural landscape components in patterns is common to a number of cultural landscape assessment studies, including rural vernacular landscapes, historic designed landscapes and places where buildings are an important part of the setting. Components used in the Lanyon-Lambrigg study are based on the work of Melnick et al. It is these components which create the patterns we see and experience. Reading the landscape components and patterns through field observation, archaeological data, and historical research facilitates the interpretation of the history of a particular landscape. The components are:

i. Overall spatial patterns which may yield important data in evaluating a district's integrity and significance.
ii. Land-use, a determination of which leads to understanding of human interaction with the landscape.
iii. Response to natural features which can reveal traditions of land-use and lifestyle.
v. Boundary demarcations past and present which can help an understanding of land ownership, patterns, improvements and changes and attitudes to land.
vi. Vegetation related to land-use; vegetation is a dynamic landscape component, its condition and treatment can tell much of past human relationships with the landscape and human values.
vii. Cluster arrangements or the location of elements within a landscape setting which can reveal much of the continuing use of the cluster and past relationships of people to a setting.
viii. Structures.
ix. Small scale elements.
x. Historical views and other perceptual qualities which can indicate how past inhabitants experienced an area.

It should be noted that Melnick's work has recently been revised by McClelland et al. A result is the refining of the above components into a classification system of twelve characteristics for reading the rural landscape under the heading of Processes (Spatial Patterns; Land-Uses; Response to Natural Features; Cultural Traditions) and Components (Circulation; Boundaries; Vegetation; Structural Types; Cluster Arrangements; Archaeological Sites; Small-scale Elements; Perceptual Qualities). In the Lanyon-Lambrigg study it became apparent that a distinction clearly exists between the characteristics now called Processes, which reflect relationships between the ways the landscape has been and is used, and Components that are tangible cultural elements in the landscape. It is also suggested that in identifying and assessing the characteristics it would be useful to differentiate between biotic cultural resources and abiotic cultural re-
sources for both interpretation and management guideline purposes. Firth in a 1985 publication draws attention to the different management implications for biotic and abiotic cultural resources in historic districts. In the Lanyon-Lambrigg study this became apparent in section 5 of the report (Conservation Management Proposals & Guidelines).

Abiotic resources - buildings, structures and objects - can be the focus of restoration and reconstruction to an historic form and style. Biotic resources need a different approach. Individual trees and plants and animals cannot be perpetuated; they can be replaced or replanted with the same species or their remains preserved. At Lanyon this is a pertinent issue of whether individual dead trees that are significant historic elements in the landscape should be preserved alongside replacement planting. Plant communities can be protected and encouraged to regenerate. At Lanyon, for example, a conservation management option is proposed to replant and regenerate a partial woodland cover on the hill landscapes that were cleared in 1948 for modern pasture improvement. This option (see Evaluation below) would rehabilitate the hills with some tree growth and partially resemble the landscape pattern of 1880 to 1945. It is a conservation management option that needs to be in harmony with modern pastoral management and is not intended to be a reversion to a late nineteenth century landscape, rather a landscape that partially reflects an earlier pattern. Section 5 of the Lanyon-Lambrigg report distinguishes de facto, through a listing system, biotic and abiotic elements with appropriate conservation management guidelines.

Chapter 3, section 3 of the Lanyon-Lambrigg Study (see note 1) is a detailed reading of the components of the historic cultural landscape as an introduction to understanding the interrelationships between them. An overview of the landscape patterns is presented through identification and assessment of:

- overall spatial landscape patterns and organisation;
- land-use categories and activities;
- response to natural features.

These are the processes which, through human actions, have shaped the landscape and give a series of layers. Assessment of the other components fills in the details of the landscape composition. It is shown that the study area is a clearly defined landscape setting emphasised by patterns of vegetation, topography, and pastoral land-use. The silhouette of hills and valley floor create a distinct imageability, sense of place and unity. The pastoral landscape is reminiscent of the imagery of nineteenth century pastoral landscapes portrayed in Australian landscape paintings. Major elements identified as important in the landscape pattern and organisation are:

- Mosaic of valley slopes and varied patterns of vegetation from open river flats with scattered eucalypts to savanna woodland and forest which create a picturesque landscape.
- Enclosure of the landscape by dominant skyline ridges.
- Large scale grazing paddocks in sympathy with the overall landscape scale.
- Empathy between the landscape and the building clusters at Lanyon and Lambrigg.
- Other settlement patterns such as the village of Tharwa.
- Location of routes which reflect historical patterns and movement.
- Absence of twentieth century small scale subdivision.
- The Murrumbidgee River which has historically been a natural and political boundary and provided water for settlement and grazing.

Lanyon 1987 showing the hills east of the Homestead cleared in 1948 for pasture improvement and the foreground area cleared post 1868 according to Portion Plans. This is the area described as "Fine Forest" in 1823 by Captain Mark Currie.
II Evaluation

The components of the historic landscape at Lanyon-Lambriigg are the result of a series of interrelated events and actions. At Lanyon, for example, these date from three distinct eras of ownership and occupation:

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<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wright era</td>
<td>1834 to 1848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunningham era</td>
<td>1848 to 1920's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field era</td>
<td>1930 to 1971</td>
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During these three periods the owners and their workforce created the landscape we see today. A continuity of landscape development exists at Lanyon with four periods of historic landscape significance interpreted: pre 1830; 1830 to 1868; 1868 to 1910; post 1945. Before the 1830’s the landscape would have resembled Captain Mark Currie’s description of 2 June, 1823 as ‘fine open forest’ when he passed through the area.21 In 1837 Farquar McKenzie described “Wright’s place ... one of the most picturesque places I have seen in the whole colony and all natural beauty. Art having as yet contributed nothing towards its improvement”.22 It was post 1868 that most of the major modifications in the landscape took place, particularly through tree clearing and fencing. 1880 to 1910 is regarded as the heyday of the Lanyon property where the flats along the inner, progressively cleared since James Wright’s time, were used for crops; the wider flats and lower slopes were cleared to open park-like savannah as they are today with the hills substantially wooded, but lightly grazed. The landscape would have had a truly picturesque appearance and prompted such description as:

> The principal river of the district, as well as one of the principal rivers of Australia is the Murrumbidgee... nothing can be more beautiful than the scenery about the banks of this river; the fine swelling hills 700 to 800 feet above the river level; the rich flats; the river winding amongst these clear and bright as crystal ... the profusion of vegetation, together form a picture of the most serene and peaceful beauty. 23

Whilst the period 1880 to 1910 saw the creation of a significant pastoral landscape which continued until 1945, of particular importance at Lanyon is the fact that landscape components from the 1830’s to the present day are preserved. The landscape is a remarkable composite picture of the Australian pastoral past. The fact that some nineteenth century components remain, some have been altered and later ones added tends to increase the area’s cultural significance. In particular the integrity of the nineteenth century landscape is intact with a number of significant components remaining: e.g., Wright’s assumed ditch and bank field boundary (c1838); Cunningham’s ditch and bank boundary (c1869); clearing patterns and tree densities; building clusters dating from c1838 important not for their vernacular architectural style (for this study) but for their placement in the landscape.

The Lanyon-Lambriigg landscape is a remarkable window into the nineteenth century. It tells us much of the way in which people, owners and employees, reacted with, and viewed, the landscape, their lifestyle on the land, and is very much a record of social history. The cultural landscape at Lanyon-Lambriigg is a manifestation of the interrelationships between events, the place, and people. Strong associative values result from its interpretative qualities and sense of continuity through 150 years of European occupation. The integrity of the landscape fabric and parts in terms of design, setting, materials and feeling is quite clear.

Conservation management proposals and guidelines are formulated on the basis of the need to protect the landscape’s integrity and historic significance as a remarkable example of the Australian pastoral past. Conservation management recommendations are based on two principles:

i. **PROTECTION** of the landscape components and historic fabric within the framework of continuing pastoral activity. This means the landscape cannot be a museum stopped in time, but does require that future actions and changes must not destroy distinguishing qualities and character; in particular cultural components and natural features. For example the ditch and bank boundaries could be obliterated by ploughing for pasture improvement. Another example is the Stone Hut sited by the river some 400 metres north of the Lanyon Homestead. It is a mid 1830’s random rubble stone building connected with convict labour and has remained intact. An earlier proposal by the National Capital Development Commission for recreation access along the river placed it in extreme jeopardy from potential vandalism.

ii. **INTERPRETATION** to reveal the meaning of the landscape and awareness of the past.
Management recommendations for protection of historic landscape integrity address geographically identifiable zones or themes. They include Pastoral Activity; Riverside Zone; Individual Elements and Artefacts; Vegetation Patterns. An important part of interpretation is the opportunity to give visitors to Lanyon a sense of participation in a rural setting with historic connections.

Vegetation patterns are probably the most obvious component of a rural landscape, the one that registers so readily in initial observation. The absence or presence of trees, patterns of tree cover, and the type of grass cover with seasonally changing colours are vivid parameters of our appreciation of landscape character. The current indigenous tree patterns at Lanyon are the result of three major clearing phases. These are referred to above. Attention is drawn to the character of the hills; until 1948 the hills remained under a woodland cover. The Field family cleared the hills and pasture improved them with clover and introduced grasses maintained by chemical fertilisers. Currently the hills, in particular Lanyon Hill, are open grassed slopes dotted with ring barked dead trees and some surviving trees. They form yet another layer of change in the landscape. Conservation management guidelines in the Lanyon-Lambrigg study recommend partial revegetation of the hills. The proposal, whilst not reinstating a nineteenth century landscape, does have historical basis. It would partially recreate a landscape with some resemblance to the picturesque effect of the 1880 to 1948 period. More importantly, the proposal represents a rehabilitation of the landscape with historical, aesthetic and ecological benefits. On the western side of Lanyon Hill, for example, the proposal is replanting and regeneration in fingers down the hill, either in gullies or along the spurs, gradually merging into the open savannah parkland of the lower slopes with replanting here in groups and singly. Grazing would continue in the open woodland areas and intervening open areas. Landscapes change in response to changing conditions and needs and this proposal is yet another layer of change. There are advantages in the proposal for soil conservation, land management, and wildlife reasons. Most of the existing trees are post mature, in poor condition and we are in danger of losing them. Partial revegetation with trees would reinforce historic landscape values and still accommodate pastoral activity, and needs in what can be termed adaptive use and rehabilitation. It would also improve the utility, function, and appearance of the landscape. A recent study and report supports the partial revegetation of the hills, the effects of which are shown in figures 3 and 4. I am indebted to Alun Chapman for permission to reproduce these drawings. The heavy planting proposed on the eastern side of Lanyon Hill fronting Tharwa Road is an attempt to form a buffer between the Lanyon property and the suburbs of Tuggeranong which will soon creep along the eastern base of Lanyon Hill.

CONCLUSION

The value of such studies as Lanyon-Lambrigg is not only in the development of methodologies for reading and interpreting historic cultural landscapes. There is value in the fact that information on a particular landscape is presented and becomes available to, and can be shared by, the public. It is only through information on the meaning of landscapes that the public are likely to support heritage conservation management efforts, because they begin to understand the importance of landscapes as part of their cultural background and history. Dissemination of information on why landscapes look like they do, what their connections with human history and interrelationship are, should help build a constituency of public support for the protection and conservation of significant examples as part of an holistic approach to land-use planning.

REFERENCES


2. In particular a research study and notes by Chambers, D., "Lanyon as a Pastoral Property between 1835 and 1970", undertaken in 1986 for the Department of Territories to investigate archival and other primary historical sources on the development of the property. Material of interpretative value was used and referenced in the study method in note 1.

3. The National Trust of Australia (ACT), *Murrumbidgee River Valley Study*, The National Trust of Australia (ACT), Canberra, 1980. Following this study, publication of the report, and additional work the Lanyon-Lambrigg area was nominated for inclusion in the Register of the National Estate; it was placed in the interim listing in 1986 and confirmed for full inclusion in 1987 for its historic values, social values and aesthetic values.

4. The study was coincidental with protracted discussions between The National Trust of Australia (ACT), Australian Heritage Commission, Department of Territories and the National Capital Development Commission whose plans at the time were for residential development at Lanyon. The Parliamentary Joint Committee on the ACT in its final report (1984) following the inquiry on the Murrumbidgee River Valley recognised the heritage value of the Lanyon landscape and recommended against development (see Report of the Joint Committee on the


7. See Lowenthal, D., "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory", page 12, The Geographical Review 65:1; 1975; 1-36, where he suggests that "Symbols are doubly historical: they serve to remind us of the past, and they require time and a past to become symbols".


20. ibid, p8.

21. Captain Mark J. Currie’s diary entries from his journey between the Limestone Plains where Canberra now stands and the area we now call Monaro quoted in Gale, J., Canberra, Fallick & Son, Queanbeyan, 1927.


23. Gale, J. (1875) writing in the Queanbeyan Age during August 1875 provides this description of the area in an Historical Descriptive Account of ... (in part) the County of Murray ... written and published at the request of the Philadelphia Historic Environment VII 2 (1989)
International and Melbourne InterColonial Exhibition Commissioners 1875: see The National Trust of Australia ACT (1980) op cit.

24. The term adaptive use is quoted in an issue of Landscape Architecture 77: 4 July/August 1987 devoted to the theme: Preservation, Defining an Ethic; see glossary of terms page 96.


* Note: now The ACT Administration.