

COOLIBAH

Place No. 255

ADDRESS	13 Arunga Drive Wonga Park	Last Update
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DESCRIPTION	Coolibah is a large rural property, now subdivided into smaller allotments and still owned by Aird family members. The entry drive passes a number of the extant structures, but is not the original entry drive off Launderers Avenue (of which some evidence is said to remain). The current house (an architect designed house built in 1968) is set within the garden of the previous house and retains a number of large trees.		
	Close to the house are three farm buildings: a brick and timber dairy, with cool room, machinery room and milking stall; a small timber shed used for tool storage and a large barn, with steel frame, corrugated iron cladding and three horse stalls (of an original six). Two other nearby buildings were used for goats: a milking shed and separate stalls/feed shed. A bore is located on the ridge above the orchard and there are two tanks (one original). It may be the only bore in Wonga Park. The cottage and orchard are nearby. The cottage was extended by the Airds. A few orchard trees remain within a paddock now used for grazing, their contour alignment still clearly apparent.		
	Condition Good	Integrity	Minor modifications
	Threats Deterioration	Key elements	
	Designer		

HISTORY	<p>The property was established by Samuel Frederick Brown who, in 1930, purchased twenty acres of the more than 39 acres in Lot 52 of the 1897 subdivision of Crown Allotment 11A of the Wonga Park Estate.[1] Samuel Brown is said to have purchased the property with his son Frank, and together they owned 40 acres. [2] This allotment was originally owned by William Brown Jnr.[3] Samuel F. Brown purchased from Peter E. Barton of Northcote, whose name is written across Lot 52 on a surveyor's plan of the 1897 subdivision.[4] According to Myrtle Slade, Brown later acquired the entire 39 acres in Lot 52.[5]</p> <p>A sheep dip discovered on the creek indicates that William Brown had kept sheep. Samuel Brown grew flowers as well as fruit, and there are still bulbs in one paddock. [6]</p> <p>Barton seems to have bought Lot 52 in c1918 as an investment. In 1918-19 he was living at Preston, from 1920 at Clifton Hill, and from 1929 at Northcote.[7] However, according to Myrtle Slade, Samuel Brown's daughter, the name 'Coolibah' may have been given to the property by two Barton sons who "lived in an iron construction near the gate entrance". The Barton property was located at the end of Launderers Avenue.[8]</p> <p>Another local resident, Mr E. Fitton, whose family owned the adjacent Lot 51 (bounded on the north by Launderers Road and on the east by Old Yarra Road) remembers the "Barton's shed" and tells how "Brown's property was near the back fence of the Fitton property". He also remembers a mine shaft for gold on the creek near the Barton property (however Mrs Aird believes it was further downstream). Mr Fitton recalls that Brown was associated with ice works at Abbotsford. Fitton's mother ran an ice-cream shop on their property in Old Yarra Road during the 1920s.[9]</p> <p>A house was rated for the first time on Lot 52 in 1930-31, on Brown's 20 acres.[10] Its valuation decreased slightly during pre-war years, 1931 to 1939.[11].</p> <p>The next owners were a Mrs and Miss McPherson who acquired the property in 1947 after Frank Brown (son of Samuel Brown) returned from war service. During their ownership the property was managed by Charles and Elspeth Allen. Mr Finger, then working with the Department of Agriculture, advised on the planting pattern for the orchard which was laid out by the Allens around the contours to assist with watering. About 6 acres of cherries and plums were planted, a some plums remain to the rear of the cottage. It was during the McPherson's ownership that most of the farm buildings were erected. The Allens milked goats. [12]</p> <p>Podolinski occupied the property next. He was a biodynamic famer, and kept cows for milking. He left the district and moved to Gladysdale. [12]</p>
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Mr and Mrs Aird purchased the property of 54 acres in 1965. They demolished the original house and built a new, architect-designed house on the same site. Most of the farm buildings associated with previous owners have been retained, except for one shed which was demolished.[12]

Creation Date 1930s

Change Dates

Associations

Local Themes

Brown, Barton, Aird

5.01 - Squatters, selectors & small farmer

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE Of local significance as a representative example of the small mixed farms established at Wonga Park following the 1890s breaking up of the large district pastoral properties, demonstrating characteristics of farming life in Wonga Park since the 1930s. (Criterion D2)

LEVEL

RECOMMENDATIONS

Heritage Register Listings

Register	Reference	Zoning	Status
None Specified			

Extent

Heritage Schedule

External Paint Controls:	On VHR:	VHR Ref No:
Internal Alteration Controls:	Prohibited Uses:	
Tree Controls:	Aboriginal Heritage Place:	
Outbuildings or Fences:	Incorporated Plan:	Incorporated Plan Details
Description:		

Conservation Management

Extra Research

- BIBLIOGRAPHY** [1] Shire of Lillydale RB 1930-31 South West Riding No. 58082A.
 [2] Information provided by Frank Brown's niece, via Mrs Aird.
 [3] Parish of Warrandyte. Parish Plan.
 [4] Wonga Park near Ringwood. Tuxen Bros. Surveyors.
 [5] Slade MSS.
 [6] Jean Aird : current owner, correspondence 11/2/1997
 [7] Shire of Lillydale RB 1918-19 No. 2027; 1920-21 No. 2151; 1929-30 No. 5001.
 [8] Slade MSS.
 [9] E. Fitton, pers. comm; see separate listing for former ice-cream shop. Mrs Aird, correspondence 11/2/1997
 [10] Shire of Lillydale RB 1930-31 No. 5082A NAV 23 pounds.
 [11] Shire of Lillydale RB 1931-32 No. 5175 NAV 19 pounds; 1938-39 South Riding No. 5787. NAV 19 pounds.
 [12] Jean Aird: current owner