

## NATIONAL TRUST REGISTER OF SIGNIFICANT PLACES

### CITATION

**NAME OF PLACE:** CUPPPACUMBALONG CEMETERY AND AVENUE OF ELMS.  
(DE SALIS GRAVE SITE)

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**LOCATION OF PLACE:** ACT

Section and Block Suburb: Portion 14 in Block 1, Tharwa (West bank of the Murrumbidgee, approximately 3kms south east of Tharwa Village ACT). (Access is via Australia Outward Bound School entrance, 2kms south of Tharwa.)

Curtilage: Including avenue of elms leading back to Cuppacumbalong.

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**FEATURES INTRINSIC TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLACE:**

The features intrinsic to the heritage significance of the place are:

Historical links with the early settlement of the Tharwa area.

A most unusually constructed private cemetery c.1886.

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

The Cemetery, one of very few intact nineteenth century cemeteries situated on formerly isolated pastoral holdings, is significant because of its historical link with the early settlement of the Tharwa area and with significant figures in the area's history. Its unusual construction and the avenue of elms leading to the site are also of importance.

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**SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:**

The following requirements are identified as essential to the conservation of the heritage significance of this place. These requirements are prepared to implement the following conservation policy for the place:

**CONSERVATION**

**A Conservation/Management Plan was undertaken in 1988. Further conservation work is needed, and a landscape management plan is imperative.**

**1. Requirements Relating to the Building**

Not applicable

1.2

**2. Requirements Relating to the Setting**

2.1

2.2

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**MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:**

In assessing this place for the interim Heritage Places Register, the Trust recommends that the following actions and activities should be undertaken which will enhance the heritage values of the place.

See above.

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**DOCUMENT HISTORY**

1. 26/5/80 Draft citation considered by Council at Meeting (number)
2. 8/8/80 Revised citation for Council Meeting (number)RNE.....
3. 1983 RNE - ACCEPTED
4. 1990 Submitted for inclusion in interim Heritage Places Register
- 5.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1. DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:

The grave site is elliptical in shape and about 20 x 15 metres in area. It is formed by a mortar-free stone wall varying from one metre to three metres in height. The grave site is earth-filled and contains 16 graves; 6 members of the de Salis family and 10 employees who either worked at Cuppacumbalong or for the de Salis family.

Four immediate members of the de Salis family are buried within a circular enclosure of Michelago marble on the western side of the site. The Jeffreys' burial plot also on the west is surrounded by an iron railing. Mrs Jeffreys was a sister of Charlotte de Salis. The employees are buried in a row on the eastern side.

The plot is on the spur-line overlooking the confluence of the Murrumbidgee and Gudgenby rivers and has an attractive avenue of elms marking the way towards Cuppacumbalong. Little trace of the original plantings remain, though some of the elms immediately to the north of the cemetery as well as a single pine (*Juniperus sabina*) within the mound area itself have survived.

### 2. STATUS OF PLACE AT NOMINATION DATE:

**Classified,**

### 3. BACKGROUND:

**BUILDER :** Leopold Fane de Salis.

The Cuppacumbalong property, near the village of Tharwa, was first settled by James Wright formerly of Lanyon. Wright sold to Leopold Fane de Salis in 1855. In 1876 Leopold's second son, Rodolf was buried on the site of the Cuppacumbalong Cemetery after his death from typhoid fever. The gravesite was selected simply because it was a favourite spot of Rodolph. The site chosen proved to be difficult, consisting largely of decomposing granite which was almost impossible to excavate.

It was not until the death of Charlotte, Leopold's wife, on 9 February 1878 that work commenced on the cemetery as it presently exists. Stones hauled from Mount Tennant by Thomas Tong over a period of ten months created the elliptical outer wall, and soil was obtained from the river to create the distinctive cemetery mound. Plantings of trees, shrubs and flowers within the mound area created a setting for the graves. Plantings of elms (*Ulmis procera*) provided a visual link between the cemetery and the homestead.

There were an increase in burials after 1880 and included station workers and their families with long standing associations with the area as well as a small number of convicts who had worked for Cuppacumbalong's original owner, James Wright.

Leopold de Salis died at Lambrigg in 1898. His daughter and son-in-law erected the present monument to his memory on the Lambrigg property. Even though Cuppacumbalong had been sold by then, Leopold was buried at the old family cemetery at Cuppacumbalong. The graves of four immediate de Salis family members were enclosed within an inner stone wall that was erected at the end of the nineteenth century. The de Salis headstone is a polished granite obelisk, made by a well-known Sydney mason, J Cunningham, and delivered by rail towards the end of 1899. George de Salis arranged for its collection from the Tuggeranong siding in January 1900 and supervised the erection of the headstone at the cemetery, marking the graves of three generations of his family. The ornate Calvary cross at the grave of Charlotte's sister and her husband, H C Jeffreys, and the plain headstone

paid for by George de Salis for longstanding station employee, James Gray, were also made by Cunningham of Sydney. The simple sandstone Edlington monumental stone was made by local Queanbeyan mason, R W Horton, around 1904. The last known burial was in 1905, when Elisa Edlington was interred alongside her son and grandchildren at the Cemetery. In 1988 a walking track was constructed which gives public access to the Cemetery.

The site has deteriorated significantly since 1970 with conservation work required. A conservation plan was commissioned for the site and some work undertaken.

Cuppacumbalong Cemetery is now administered by the ACT Government through its Parks and Conservation Service.

#### **4. RELEVANT PRINCIPAL NATIONAL HISTORIC THEMES:**

The Cemetery, one of very few intact nineteenth century cemeteries situated on formerly isolated pastoral holdings, is significant because of its historical link with the early settlement of the Tharwa area and with significant figures in the area's history. Its unusual construction and the avenue of elms leading to the site are also of importance.

**5. ANALYSIS AGAINST THE CRITERIA SPECIFIED IN SCHEDULE 2 OF THE LAND (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT) ACT 1991**

**Under Section 56 the criteria for the assessment of the heritage significance of places are:**

- (i) a place which demonstrates a high degree of technical and/or creative achievement, by showing qualities of innovation or departure, or representing a new achievement of its time;**
- (ii): a place which exhibits outstanding design or aesthetic qualities valued by the community or a cultural group;**
- (iii) a place which demonstrates a distinctive way of life, taste, tradition, religion, land use, custom, process, design or function which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest;**
- (iv): a place which is highly valued by the community or a cultural group for reasons of strong or special religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations;**
- (v) a place which is the only known or only comparatively intact example of its type;**
- (vi) a place which is a notable example of a class of natural or cultural places or landscapes and which demonstrates the principal characteristics of that class;**
- (vii): a place which has strong or special associations with a person, group, event, development or cultural phase which played a significant part in local or national history;**
- (viii) a place which represents the evolution of a natural landscape, including significant geological features, landforms, biota or natural processes;**
- (ix) a place which is a significant habitat or locality for the life cycle of native species; for rare, endangered or uncommon species; for species at the limits of their natural range; or for district occurrences of species;**
- (x) a place which exhibits unusual richness, diversity or significant transitions of flora, fauna or natural landscapes and their elements; or**
- (xi) a place which demonstrates a likelihood of providing information which will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of natural or cultural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality or benchmark site.**

**6. REFERENCES:**

Author Title date publication

Sandy Blair and Maura O'Connor, *Heritage Australia*, Spring 1988

De Salis W A F, *Some Family History*, CDHS 1962

De Salis Diaries, *Microfilm Reels 2-7, G20, 728-G20, 733*

Peter Freeman & Partners, *Cuppacumbalong Cemetery Conservation Plan 1986*, (Canberra)

Bruce Moore, *The Lanyon Saga* (1982)

Maura O'Connor, Report on Cuppacumbalong Cemetery, 11 December 1984

Perkins Papers, (MS936) *NLA Series 1*, Boxes 1-7