

The Early Settlers' Hut



The restoration committee decided to reshingle the roof and this has been carried out by placing new locally split stringy bark shingles over the original ones.

3) Chimney, Fireplace and Bread Oven: This is a fine example of the stonework of that period being constructed of local granite. The fireplace was continually white washed with pipe clay which over the years has built up considerably

The bread oven was used originally for what it was designed but in later years was used as a storage area for Tetrachloride (sheep drench) and more latterly when vaccines were introduced for stock husbandry, these were stored here.

4) Room 7- The Wallpapered Room: Early newspapers which date back to 1903 were used as a base for the wallpaper in this room. Both were preserved by the committee with the help of conservators from the Museums Association of Australia Incorporated.

The preservation process included the removal of dust from the cracks of the walls and ceiling and the repasting of the papers using a starch and water glue.

5) Fencing: The post and rail fence is a reproduction of the type which firstly surrounded the hut. The picket fence is typical of the era in which the hut was originally built. The method of fixing the pickets with wire was a common style practised in early days which today is an almost forgotten skill.

* As with the timber used to restore the hut, the fencing material was obtained locally and worked with appropriate skills by local craftsman.

6) Landscaping: Evidence of an early garden in the form of bulbs, paved and flagged paths have been found close by the hut. The restoration committee has not attempted to restore the garden to its earlier state but has tried, within the bounds of practicality to echo what might have been by employing a low maintenance style and utilising trees (English elms, claret ash, and silver birch) and shrubs which would have appeared in gardens of a similar period.

7) Artefacts: A display of artefacts found in the building is on display in the kitchen area and Room (7). Some old farm implements are also to be found in the grounds.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Delegate Bicentennial Committee wishes to gratefully acknowledge the generous donation of the Jefferys family of the land and building to enable this project to be carried out.

Delegate's
Bicentennial
Project



Historical Background

The building is situated one kilometre southwest of the township of Delegate, adjacent to the Bonang Highway.

This building is not only of unique local significance, but has associations going back to the earliest establishment of European settlement in the colony.

The name "Delegate" is an aboriginal name meaning "one big hill" and is first noted in colonial writings by the Polish explorer Dr John Lhotsky, who during an exploration journey to the Monaro in 1834 stated that Robert Campbell (of Campbell's Wharf and Duntroon fame) had been in occupation of country at "Dziliket" since 1827.

Robert Campbell came to Sydney and established a trading business in 1798. He was the first free and non-military merchant and one of the founding fathers of Australian commerce.

In 1825 Campbell was granted an area of 4,000 acres of land at Limestone Plains (Duntroon) and it was from here that he occupied or "squatted" at Delegate Station 1827.

The Building

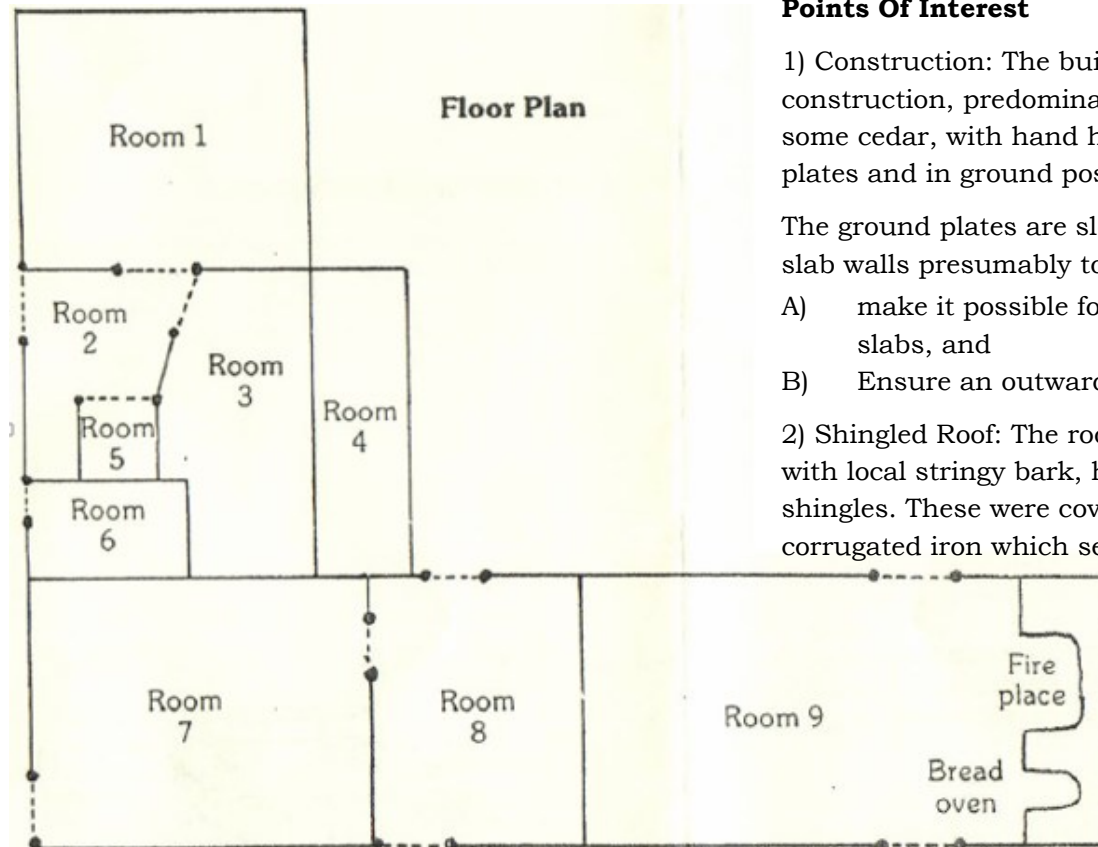
The first dwellings erected at the initial occupation of a squattage were generally of bark and pole construction, fragile and rough in construction, and of little permanence.

This building is of the type erected on the squattages in the mid 1840's when the squatters were first given some form of permanent occupancy (14 year lease) and this hut undoubtedly dates from this period.

Evolution Of The Building

Historical facts point to the hut being used originally as a Manager's residence (the first Manager being Mr Donald Ross). The hut when it was first constructed was not as large as it is today. The first rooms were Rooms (8) and (9) with Room (9) acting as the living and sleeping quarters and Room (8) acting as a storeroom.

It was later used as a kitchen when a second house, located directly adjacent to this building was erected and hence became known as the "old kitchen". The building at one stage could have been used as maids quarters as evidence of some rooms, particularly Room (7), being made more liveable is obvious in the wall papering.



Once other houses were built on the station the early hut became a storage shed with Rooms (3), (5) and (6) being used as meat rooms until quite recently.

The objective of the Delegate Bicentennial Committee (the restoration committee) was not to restore the building to its original state but rather to show and preserve the process of evolution this hut has undergone during the past 140 odd years.

All timbers used in the restoration were obtained locally and worked with tools such as adzes and broad axes by local craftsmen practicing skills of a bygone era.

Points Of Interest

1) Construction: The building is of solid slab construction, predominantly of stringy bark with some cedar, with hand hewn ground and wall plates and in ground posts for overall support.

The ground plates are sloped outwards from the slab walls presumably to:

- A) make it possible for secure fitting of the slabs, and
- B) Ensure an outward flow of moisture.

2) Shingled Roof: The roof was originally covered with local stringy bark, hand split, three layered shingles. These were covered in the 1890's with corrugated iron which served to preserve the

underlying shingles and interior wall in almost original condition. Please note In Room (9) that the original smoke blackened shingles are clearly visible.