

Place No. 42 Old Woodbrok Station Homestead Group (fmr)



Old Woodbrok Station homestead ruins, 2012

LOCATION	
Name of Place	Old Woodbrok Station Homestead Group (fmr)
Other Name (1)	Woodbrok Station
Other Name (2)	Hancock's Homestead
Location/Address	
Street Number	
Street Name	Roebourne to Harding Dam Road
Suburb/Town	Roebourne
Other Locational descriptor (text)	527705 mE, 7679775 mN (MGA94 Zone 50) Longitude 117.2665 Latitude -20.9824

OWNERSHIP & LAND DESCRIPTION				
Owner	Address	Phone/fax	Status	Item No.
Ieramugadu Pastoral Co	MT Welcome Station, Roebourne			
Reserve No.	Lot/Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio	Item No.
Lease 146 Woodbrok on Jones Creek	Pastoral Leases North District book 1237, Battye Library			
Lease 106/102	De Witt Location 47 on Jones River, 1911 Pastoral leases map			

LISTING AND ASSESSMENT	
HCWA Reference Number	8692
State Register of Heritage Places:(Y/N)	No
Classified by the National Trust (Y/N)	No
Register of the National Estate (Y/N)	No
Local Town Planning Scheme (Y/N)	Yes
Management Category	A

DESCRIPTION	
Construction Date (1)	1870s
Construction Date (2)	

Site Type (Place Type)	Individual building or group Other Aboriginal site
Use(s) of Place	
<i>Original</i>	FARMING\PASTORAL: Other - Pastoral Station
<i>Present</i>	VACANT/UNUSED : Vacant/Unused - Ruin
<i>Other</i>	OTHER: Aboriginal Occupation
Construction Materials:	
<i>Walls</i>	9. STONE 904 Local Stone 2. BRICK 203 Handmade Brick
<i>Roof</i>	
<i>Other</i>	
Condition	Poor - Ruin
Integrity (how much of the original fabric is intact?):	Little, approximately 30%
Physical Description	
<p>Old Woodbrook Station site is situated on the banks of a creek that runs into the Jones River at the foot of a range of hills. The name Old Woodbrook, is commonly used to differentiate it to Andover Station, which was later renamed Woodbrook.</p> <p>The house walls, built from local stone, are still standing and there is evidence of other stone buildings and stone walls. A well with a windmill is situated close to the homestead and a large water hole in the river suggests the site's importance for Aboriginal and then colonial people. The range of hills to the south, overlooking the station homestead remains, contains a large assemblage of rock engravings, which suggest local Aboriginal people used the location intensively. There are also historical engravings by both Aboriginal artists (depicting horses in particular) and Europeans, many of whom engraved their names and dates at the site.¹</p> <p>The site is located at a point in the natural route running W-E along the Jones River from Andover Station to Inthanoona, Warambie and Pyramid stations. After its abandonment the use of the name 'Woodbrook' to refer to the nearby homestead, also known as Andover, seems common.</p> <p>Geographic Names Committee records that 'Hancock's Homestead was recorded by A. Forrest on p.30 of FB 26 in 1878, on TN (April 1879) and P.P.North 16 (July 1879)'</p>	
History	
<p>Old Woodbrook is on a lease of approximately 30,000 acres was taken up by John Frederic Hancock around 1864. John Frederic Hancock arrived in the Northwest in 1864 with John Withnell and his sisters Emma and Fanny. It wasn't until 1871 that John and his wife Mary (nee Strange) was able to commence the development of their own pastoral lease. This was accomplished while managing the neighbouring property, Andover, which sometimes is also referred to as Woodbrook.²</p> <p>The family resided at Andover and appear to have moved to Woodbrook in 1877, with three of their six children being born there. One daughter, Alma, recalls some of her early life there.³ Her account suggests that the stone buildings were not built until after 1877, replacing bough sheds. Her memories are of a peaceful isolated life, of hard work, bible readings, and the eventual arrival of a governess. By the early 1880s the family had sold their lease and moved south.</p> <p>The homestead appears to have fallen out of primary use, being absent from key maps in the early twentieth century, although it presumably continued in use as a watered outstation of Andover well into the twentieth century. That lease is variously held by Hancock, York and Edwards, Burges, Church (with Meagher, then MacKay, then Gillam), Gillam and (in 1912) A.G.McRae.⁴</p>	
Archaeology	

The homestead is a significant archaeological site, with a rich record of the homestead and its use, of Aboriginal camps in the contact and pre-contact period, of various phases of rock engraving, and of the organisation of the sheep station with nearby yards, sheds, and further stone yards on the Jones River.

The homestead is made of local stone, of excellent construction by a skilled mason. The walls were rendered and painted. The location of a wooden sideboard is reflected in discoloured paint. The remains of a Ronisch piano suggest something of the life of the house. A large open oven would have been able to provide for the pastoral work force. The Aboriginal camps along the river include flaked tools of glass and stone and assorted material culture.

The rock art along the ridge is diverse, including geometric motifs, anthropomorphs and zoomorphs. The contact art suggests an interest in horses, with horse tracks depicted running down the boulders, and a scene suggesting the breaking in of horses.

The names and initials of individuals include: A.G. McRae, A.M. Knight, Maun, Alice Hill, M.E.W., H.W., E.R., W.B. (1880), Elwood, E. Davis, L. Platt (1888) and others. Dates range from 1871 to the mid 20th century

SIGNIFICANCE	
Historic theme (s)	1. DEMOGRAPHIC SETTLEMENT & MOBILITY 102 Aboriginal occupation 107 Settlements 3. OCCUPATIONS 301 Grazing, pastoralism
Statement of Significance:	
<p>The site is significant as a location used by both Aboriginal people and then European pastoralists. It is perhaps the largest single complex of European historical engravings in the state. It contains a significant corpus of Aboriginal contact rock art at an existing site, revealing continuities in Aboriginal peoples' life in the colonial era. The ruins are a fine reminder of the hardships endured and the strengths of the early pastoralists, and are associated with various key colonial names including the Hancocks, where three members of the family were born. Its history links from the earliest colonists to Lang Hancock's father George Hancock, who was born here.</p>	
ASSOCIATIONS	
Architect/Designer (1)	
Architect/Designer (2)	
Other Associated Person(s)	John Hancock and Mary Hancock (nee Strange) A.G. McRae A.M. Knight Alice Hill Elwood E. Davis L. Platt
MHI Review 2012	Site identified through community consultation
MHI Review 2012	Site assessed and Place Name Record created



Historical engravings overlooking the station ruins



Bottle base flaked to produce glass tools



Jack Shaw next to Windmill, Old Woodbrook Station, 2012



Glass, ceramic and metal artefact debris, Old Woodbrook Station, 2012



Old Woodbrook Station homestead ruins, showing remains of render on stonework, 2012



Iron frame of "Ronisch" brand piano inside ruins of Old Woodbrook Station homestead, 2012

¹ Paterson, Alistair G. "Towards a Historical Archaeology of Western Australia's Northwest." *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 24 (2006): 99-111.

² H. L. Kilpatrick. *The Hancock Story*. Kingsley: Kilpatrick. H. L (Herbert Leslie), 1991.

³ Hardie, Alma. "Memories of Nor'west Life in Early Days." Personal Recollections, Typescript, 9 pages, n.d. Battye Library, Perth.

⁴ Battye, Jas. S. *The History of the North West of Australia*. facsimile ed. Carlisle, WA: Hesperian Press, 1985 [1915], p 222. It should be noted the image of Woodbrook shown in Battye appears to be Old Woodbrook, not Andover.