

# Blue Mountains Heritage Register Review

SHI Number

1170629

Study Number

MT001

## Heritage Inventory - 2016 Heritage Review

**Item Name:** Cave Hotel**Location:** 2-20 Bells line of road, Mount Tomah [Blue Mountains]

**Address:** 2-20 Bells line of road  
**Suburb / Nearest Town:** Mount Tomah 2758  
**Local Govt Area:** Blue Mountains  
**State:** NSW

**DUAP Region:** Sydney West  
**Historic region:** Sydney  
**Parish:** Irvine  
**County:** Cook

**Other/Former Names:** Shearwood's Hotel; Emu Cave; Cave Hill**Area/Group/Complex:** **Group ID:****Aboriginal Area:****Curtilage/Boundary:****Item Type:** Archaeological-Terrest **Group:** Aboriginal **Category:** Art site**Owner:** Roads and Traffic Authority**Admin Codes:** **Code 2:** **Code 3:****Current Use:** Cave**Former Uses:** Cave; Aboriginal Site; Drivers' Rest**Assessed Significance:** Local **Endorsed Significance:**

**Statement of Significance:** This is a significant Aboriginal art-site, and was the first dated rock art site in the Blue Mountains, as well as being used in some way by one of the few local settlers who offered accommodation to drovers on Bells Line of Road.

**Historical Notes or Provenance:** The Aboriginal presence in the Mount Bell area is likely to have come from the Darug and / or Darkinung people. There are 127 emu prints and 45 other engravings. The engravings have been dated and have a minimum age of 2000 years (Kelleher 2009:76-77). Thomas Shearwood or Sherwood, whose name appears as Shearwood on the Cave Hotel inscription, was a native-born son of convict parents. Thomas was born in Richmond in 1824, the year after Archibald Bell junior opened up the new Line of Road and as a child he lived on the Bell estate of Belmont at North Richmond. In the 1830s Thomas worked with his father at his new farm at Kurrajong Heights.

On bad terms with his father, Thomas left home in the 1840s and worked as a sawyer and timber-getter as well as doing some droving along Bells Line of Road to Bathurst and beyond. His association with the Mount Tomah area came when he acted as caretaker for Robert Town at Bulgamatta. He built a house with timbers from Bowen's old house there and offered accommodation to drovers and other travellers. In 1871 the cave was known only for its Aboriginal carvings: a correspondent writing in the Town and Country Journal for 2 June 1871 describes Mount Bell, 'at the end of which is Cave-hill, named from a curious cave at the side of the road, the roof of which has some singular impressions resembling emu's tracks'. Although the carvings are in fact on the walls rather than the roof, it seems likely that Shearwood's inscription had not yet been added to the site in 1871.

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Shearwood left his Mount Tomah property in 1872 and lived for his remaining twenty years in or around Orange. His eldest son continued to occupy the house close to Bulgamatta, but his name was James. It is likely therefore that the inscription by T. Shearwood was made in the latter part of 1871 or in 1872. Whether it was an elaborate jeu d'esprit or whether it reflects accommodation being used by drovers who might otherwise have lodged at Shearwood's conventional accommodation house is unclear. The existence of the drainage channel suggests real use of the Cave Hotel, however (Hungerford, Bilpin, 90-92).

It has been suggested that the cave was used during the Depression of the 1930s (Woods, Yellow Rock to Green Gully, 54, sub Emu Cave) and this is perfectly likely. But it does not explain the inscription.

Themes:	National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
	2. Peopling	Aboriginal cultures and inte	(none)
	3. Economy	Pastoralism	(none)
	4. Settlement	Accommodation (Housing)	(none)

Designer:

Maker / Builder:

Year Started: 1871      Year Completed: 1872      Circa: No

**Physical Description:** The cave is close to the present Bells Line of Road and, because of the realignment of the road, is now perched several metres above the road surface. It was formerly on a gentle slope. The cave is 9 metres deep; at the mouth it is 6 metres across, but it narrows quite sharply. Many emu footprints were carved into the rock walls by Aboriginal people. There is no obvious evidence of European occupation of the cave itself, but outside, on a flat vertical expanse of rock, there is carved an impressive inscription in block capitals: 'The Cave Hotel by T. Shearwood'. Between the inscription and the end of the ledge above the main road there is an artificial drainage channel cut into the horizontal rock, which presumably diverted water from the cave immediately to the west.

**Physical Condition:** Good

**Modification Dates:**

**Recommended Management:** Management of this site is the responsibility of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water.

**Management:**

**Further Comments:** On the Croft and Associates Heritage Inventory form of 1983, MT 001 is entered as 'Cave Hill', with 'Sherman's Cave' added. The location was wrongly identified and mapped as the

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Mount Tomah Spur, now the northerly extension of the Botanic Garden (MT 006). Cave Hill no longer exists as a local placename. The map reference below is to the third edition of the Mt Wilson map.

**Criteria a)** This is a significant Aboriginal art-site and was the first rock art dated in the Blue Mountains. It was also used in some way by one of the few local settlers who offered accommodation to drovers on Bells Line of Road.

**Criteria b)**

**Criteria c)**

**Criteria d)** The cave has local social significance for the Darug Aboriginal community.

**Criteria e)** The cave and surrounding area has a high archaeological potential, both for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artefacts.

**Criteria f)** Rock engravings on cave walls are rare in the Blue Mountains as is intaglio art in general.

**Criteria g)**

**Integrity / Intactness:** High

<b>References:</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>
	Christopher J. Woods	Yellow Rock to Green Gully: Place names of the Blue Mountains	1999
	L. Coleborn	The Cave Hotel, Oolite, Volume 19(1)	1989
	M. Kelleher	Aboriginal Art in the Blue Mountains in E. Stockton and J. Merriman (eds), Blue Mountains Dreaming, 2nd ed.	2009
	Meredyth Hungerford	Bilpin, the apple country: a local history	1995

<b>Studies:</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Year</b>
	Blue Mountains City Council	Technical Audit BM Heritage Register	MT001	2008
	Jack, Hubert, Lavelle, Morris	Blue Mountains Heritage Review	MT001	2003
	Tropman and Tropman	Heritage Study Review, Blue Mountains	MT001	1992
	Croft & Associates Pty Ltd & Meredith Walker	Blue Mountains Heritage Study	MT001	1983
	Blue Mountains City Council	LEP 2015 Heritage Review		2016
	Jim Smith	LEP 1991 Consultant Review		2010

<b>Parcels:</b>	<b>Parcel Code</b>	<b>LotNumber</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Plan Code</b>	<b>Plan Number</b>
	LOT	35		DP	232476

**Latitude:**

**Longitude:**

**Location validity:**

**Spatial Accuracy:**

**Map Name:** Mt Wilson 8930-1-N,

**Map Scale:** 1:25000

**AMG Zone:** KH

**Easting:**

2574

**Northing:**

62853

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Listings:	Name:	Title:	Number:	Date:
	Local Environmental Plan	LEP2015	MT001	21/12/2015
	Local Environmental Plan	LEP1991	MT001	27/12/1991
	Heritage study		MT001	

Local Instrument: LEP 2015

Local Identifier: MT001

Draft Instrument:

Technical Comment:

**Update Notes:** (1) Content added. (Jim Smith 2010)  
(2) 2016 Review - Lot/DP added, Aboriginal statement added, minor Admin updates (CA/Nov2016)

**Aboriginal Heritage:** The Blue Mountains Local Government Area is within the Country of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples and Blue Mountains City Council respects their cultural heritage and deep ongoing connection to this Country.  
This inventory sheet documents the European occupation of the site only, and the heritage significance of the place in this context (assessed against the heritage criteria set by the NSW Heritage Council).

This does not therefore, represent a complete history of the place, or represent the perspectives of Darug and Gundungurra Traditional Owners in relation to the colonial impacts on this site. Consultation with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal stakeholders is required, before Aboriginal Cultural Heritage that may be associated with this place, can be recorded.

**Data Entry:** Date First Entered: 21/09/2004

Date Updated: 11/11/2016

Status: Partial

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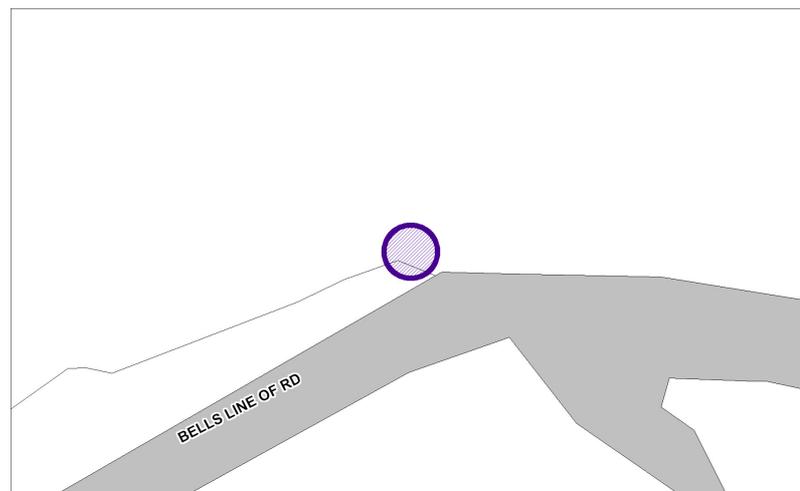
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Location: **2-20 Bells line of road, Mount Tomah [Blue Mountains ]**

Image:



**Caption:** Location Map

**Copyright:** City Planning

**Image by:** City Planning

**Image Date:** 2/03/2011

**Image Number:**

**Image Path:**

**Image File:** 1170629b00.jpg

**Thumb Nail Path:**

**Thumb Nail File:**

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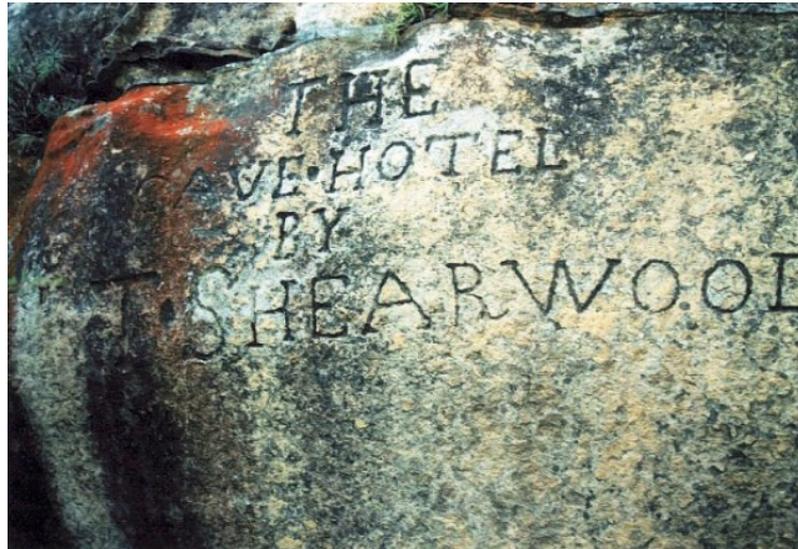
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Image:



**Caption:** Mount Tomah Cave Hotel

**Copyright:** BMCC City Planning

**Image by:** BMCC City Planning

**Image Date:**

**Image Number:**

**Image Path:**

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Image:



**Caption:** Mt Tomah Cave Hotel

**Copyright:** BMCC City Planning

**Image by:** BMCC City Planning

**Image Date:**

**Image Number:**

**Image Path:**

**Image File:** 1170629b02.jpg

**Thumb Nail Path:**

**Thumb Nail File:**