



Nindooinbah

Heritage Awards 2012

nra | earc™

Noel Robinson Architects Pty Ltd

tel +61 (0)7 3229 5266

fax +61 (0)7 3221 0796

info@nrarc.com

www.nrarc.com

think green



Introduction Nindooinbah



Nindooinbah lies eight kilometres by road from Beaudesert in the Logan-Albert region, one of southern Queensland's earliest pastoral districts, about one hour by road from Brisbane.

The development of Nindooinbah is related closely to the development of other early pastoral stations in the region and to the inter-locking financial and personal interests of eminent families, particularly the Duckett White, the Collins and the Persse families. For much of its history, Nindooinbah should, therefore, be considered as a core part of a wider, but intimate, social and economic system. This pattern began to weaken in the late twentieth century when modern urban values became more clearly evident at Nindooinbah, a trend which continued with new ownership in the early twenty-first century.

Each era in the history of the Nindooinbah property, its homestead and outbuildings is represented in its fabric and setting in 2005. Some features distinguish various owners and occupants from each other and some themes remain constant throughout, yet the various layers of ownership and experience can be deciphered.

The agricultural and pastoral context, the arrangement of remaining buildings on Nindooinbah, those buildings themselves, the enclosure of the main house and garden as a 'park' separate from the 'farm', the house – including its layout and decorative schemes – and the garden itself, demonstrate important characteristics of an elite pastoral station as it evolved through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The new owners of Nindooinbah intend to continue pastoral and agricultural activities on the Nindooinbah property and to use the homestead as a family home where, on some occasions, three families will be in residence.

The structure of the Nindooinbah homestead was generally sound, although some repair was necessary. More importantly, changes and additions were inevitably required as new owners sought to make this place their own.

Although, in some senses, the previous state of genteel dilapidation was nostalgic, it is important to recognise that this ambience is largely the result of individual owners and occupiers impressing their tastes and values on the place over the past century.

The new owners' plans, therefore, form the next stage in the history of Nindooinbah. The cultural heritage significance of the Nindooinbah homestead as a whole, and the high significance of some elements within it, and more importantly the layers of meaning, required a thoughtful approach to refurbishment and change in the house and in the garden which surrounds it.

The conservation management plan, therefore, contains within it reports on the main homestead, the garden, and the wallpapers, carpets and window furnishings. Detailed conservation policies to guide future work in the Nindooinbah homestead and garden have been developed from these three reports. Conservation policies for the outbuildings and remaining area within the Heritage Register boundary will be developed for the final version of the conservation plan.

Nindooibah 2005, Nindooibah 2011



Scope of Project



This property was purchased at auction by the new owners it was a living museum at the time of the purchase and had very little money spent on it in previous years. Its maintenance was seriously in jeopardy to the point where the property was needed to be made livable.

Furthermore, the new owners had a vision to not only restore the buildings and farm structures but the vision included to turn the whole property into a working scientific primary production asset that was to be a leading edge facility in the development of the new rural industry business. This new vision was to give Nindooibah a new lease of life and an identity well into the future. The new owner had a passion to not only restore the building but to add elements of livability to the old building which meant sensitive insertions of new bathrooms, kitchens and alike so that these would comply with the conservation plan. In addition there were requirements for new out buildings which included a new garage structure and a new bush house.

Many of the other out buildings were restored such as the wool shed and other garages, however, the gardeners cottage was moved and restored further away from the main house. The Chimney of the old caretaker's cottage was left in place as a reference point to its original location.

The new owner, because of their passion for the property and their ability to think through a new business plan were in the fortunate position of being able to fund a substantial redirection in the future of Nindooibah; so much so that they were able to purchase and lease additional properties to reinforce the properties original pastoral history. The new owners also have developed a relationship with the township and council and regularly participate in community events using Nindooibah as an asset base.

Scope of Conservation Plan

Interior of entry porch



nra | **earc**[™]

The part of the Nindooibah property entered in the Queensland Heritage Register is an area of some 74 hectares within the total property area of 1346.73 hectares. In addition to the main Nindooibah house and its garden, two houses, an early woolshed, several outbuildings and a quantity of agricultural and pastoral land are included within the Heritage Register boundary. The Nindooibah Conservation Plan deals in most detail with the main house and its garden, as urgent conservation work was required.

Further detailed description of the remaining houses, the woolshed, the outbuildings and that part of the Nindooibah property included in the Entry in the Register, and further conservation policies for those elements, will be included in the final conservation plan. Several cultural heritage consultants have contributed to the development of this plan.

The analysis, statement of significance and conservation policies, were developed in workshops over many weeks. All consultants agree on the findings of this study. They are:

Richard Allom: architect and cultural heritage consultant, Allom Lovell Architects

Robert Riddell: architect and **Thom Blake,** historian and cultural heritage consultant, Robert Riddell Architects

Helen Gregory: historian and cultural heritage consultant, Cultural Heritage Strategies.

Beth Wilson: landscape architect, Wilson Landscape Architects

Nicola Stairmand: historic interiors consultant

Nindooibah 2005, Nindooibah 2011



History The Context



Nindooibah is located near Beaudesert in one of southern Queensland's earliest pastoral districts, the Logan-Albert region. This region is located in the traditional country of the Wangerriburra people of the Yugambah language group. Nindooibah draws its name from a Wangerriburra term generally accepted to mean 'place of ashes'. Nindooibah is derived from nuin, meaning charcoal, and doan, meaning black. It was probably a place where charcoal suitable for corroboree markings was obtained.

The current name, Nindooibah, has been adapted from the name Nindoomba or Nindoimba, recorded in the earliest government records, which may indicate the usual Wangerriburra pronunciation. Wangerriburra names persist in features in the Nindooibah landscape, and in the names of nearby stations such as Tabragalba, Mundayoolun, Tamrookum and Marroon. The development of Nindooibah is related closely to the development of other early pastoral stations in the region and to the inter-locking interests of eminent people, particularly the Duckett White, the Collins and the Persse families. As well as generations of inter-marriage, these associated interests included pastoral enterprises in the Burnett and Dawson River regions of Queensland, and the development of the pastoral companies, John Collins & Sons, Collins White & Company and the North Australian Pastoral Company which took up stations in northern Queensland and the Northern Territory. Nindooibah should, therefore, be considered as a core part of a wider, but intimate, social and economic system.

The Nindooibah property and the fortunes of its owners were also affected by government closer settlement policies, continual changes in Queensland's rural industry profile and more recent government plans, such as the site of the possible Glendower water storage dam. Each era in the history of the Nindooibah property, its homestead and outbuildings is represented in its fabric and setting in 2005. Some features distinguish various owners and occupants from each other, but some themes remain constant throughout. The agricultural and pastoral precinct, the arrangement of remaining buildings on Nindooibah, those buildings themselves, and the main house and garden, demonstrate important characteristics of an elite pastoral station as it evolved through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries into the twenty-first century. Finding promising land

The first white people to document the Logan and Albert valleys in the late 1820s, the Commandant of the Moreton Bay penal settlement, Patrick Logan and the botanist, Alan Cunningham, realised immediately that the Logan-Albert valleys, nestled between mountain ranges, held great promise for pastoralism.

By 1840, the great squatting rush for sheep land had penetrated beyond the plains west of Sydney northwards through the Hunter River and New England regions to the Darling Downs, the Brisbane River valley and, by 1842, to the Logan-Albert region. Choosing Nindooibah

Original stations from Gardner's map, 1845



Choosing Nindooinbah



Pastoral licence 662 for Nindooinbah was issued to Paul and Clement Lawless on 14 December 1842. The Lawless brothers, accompanied by William Humphreys, came north from the Liverpool Plains.

Humphreys had been attracted by stories of Logan's explorations and passed through the Darling Downs and came to the Logan-Albert which he described to his relative, John Collins, as the 'land of promise'.⁴

Humphreys and John Collins took up Nindooinbah's neighbouring run, Mundayoolun. The early holders of the Nindooinbah and Mundayoolun licences were among an important group of early pastoralists taking up runs in the area in the 1840s.

The Beaudesert pastoralists of the 1840s created family and land-holding networks which became influential in the history of Queensland's pastoral industries, particularly the beef industry. In 1847, John Collins bought out William Humphreys who took up Wetherston Station on the Burnett; Andrew Inglis Henderson took up Gimboomba, while his brother moved north to the Burnett; Thomas Lodge Murray Prior, who came north with the explorer, Ludwig Leichhardt in 1843, took up Bromelton. By 1856, Murray Prior had moved north to Hawkwood in the Burnett, a run which later formed part of the vast pastoral estate of Nindooinbah owner families.

Captain Tom Collins, one of Robert Towns' sea captains, purchased Telemon station, part of the original Innes Plains named by Patrick Logan, from Robert Tertius Campbell in about 1845 and shortly afterwards took over Marroon. R T Campbell's brother, John 'Tinker' Campbell, who opened Brisbane's first boiling down works, took up Kooralbyn, part of the original Tamrookum, later owned by William Barker. In 1864, Murray Prior bought Marroon from Tom Collins son, Carden, who had maintained a racing stable there. Murray Prior's son maintained an Arab stud at Marroon in later years. On 12 January 1843, Robert Dixon, appointed to survey the East Moreton district, took up the Tambourine property.

Part of Tambourine became Tabragalba, another neighbouring run to Nindooinbah which later formed part of a Nindooinbah family's wider network.

Despite their extensive holdings, the Logan-Albert squatters were not regarded as substantial squatters. Some Darling Downs squatters, whose holdings were much larger, referred to the Logan pastoralists as 'two-penny half-penny squatters'.⁶

William Humphreys had built a three roomed cottage of ironbark slabs with a thatched roof at Mundayoolun by 1847. The Lawless brothers are likely to have built the first house on Nindooinbah in the early 1840s.

Aerial photo



Choosing Nindooinbah

nra | earc™

The 1844 census recorded 10 people at Nindooinbah, and the existence of slab huts, about 50 acres of cultivated land, 200 cattle, 7 horses and 2500 sheep. A Crown Lands survey in 1845 recorded 10 people at Nindooinbah, wheat and maize under cultivation and 7294 sheep.

The first house was built on the slope of a low hill near the lagoon with a view across the alluvial river flats to the Albert River and the range.

It was described in 1850 as 'a sample of the houses of very inferior settlers here three or four years ago'. It was a five room building surrounded by a verandah:

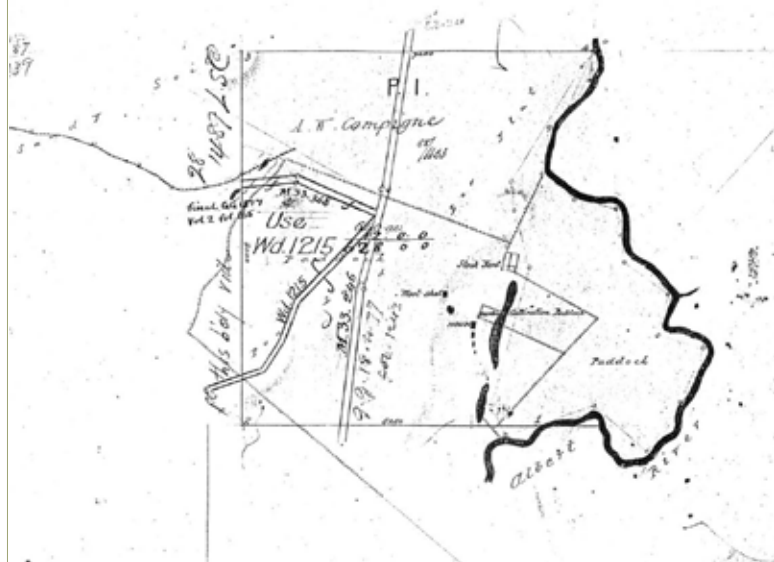
'Entering the verandah you pass a lot of spades, axes, wood, pegs etc etc ranged along the side of the house to the door. At the other end there is a long stick slung on to the rafters on which is a lot of saddles and harnesses. Entering the house, which does not look as if much of the water in the lagoon was wasted on it, on the left there are two boxes against the wall. The nearest serves as a cupboard, the next looks as if it was a place for laying things on, at its side is a large bundle of wool bags and in that corner a lot of trash. In the next corner there is a good sized wooden table covered with nearly all the odds and ends in the place... To the right next the fire is his [Compigne's] large chair, next another package of wool bags then another box.'

The roof of the house was described as covered in bark which 'let in the heavy rain'. There were two rooms at either side of the main room; the main bedroom was on one side beside a small saddle room, with a guest bedroom and a small store room on the opposite side.

The Lawless brothers left Nindooinbah in 1847 to take up Boobyjan in the South Burnett region [EHR 600639]. The relationship between district families and the Burnett region recurred frequently in subsequent decades. The Lawless brother's mortgagee, Captain Richard Jones, a pioneer Australian breeder of Saxon sheep, came north to the Moreton region with Alfred William Compigne, a lawyer turned squatter, who took over Nindooinbah in 1847.⁸ These were tough years: the 1840s recession which blighted the New South Wales economy was accompanied by drought in the Logan-Teviot region.⁹

Building Nindooinbah

Plan M11592-7



nra | earc™

Alfred William Compigne took over the lease to the Nindooinbah run in 1847-8. Compigne had arrived in Sydney in 1839, and came to Nindooinbah from the Carcoar district, some fifty kilometres southwest of Bathurst in western New South Wales bringing 7,000 sheep with him. The Nindooinbah run was described in 1848 as the smallest of the Beaudesert runs. It was some 10,000 acres in extent, 16 miles long and 1 mile wide, extending south towards Captain Collins' Telemon. Its carrying capacity was estimated at 4000 sheep, the minimum under New South Wales regulations.

Compigne also had an interest in the thoroughbred horse industry. In 1852, the thoroughbred, Plenipotentiary, was advertised as standing at Nindooinbah.¹⁰ Thoroughbred horses played an important part in the development of Nindooinbah in subsequent periods, and influenced the later construction of outbuildings. The surveyor and timber miller, William Pettigrew, noted in 1850 that several hundred acres had been fenced for horse paddocks, which he regarded as 'not a bad sign', presumably because fencing indicated that the run was being used productively. On 1 June 1853, Compigne married Jessie Lambert Collins a daughter of Captain Tom Collins of Telemon who lived at Nindooinbah with the Compignes in his old age. Captain Collins is said to have been buried at Nindooinbah 'on the hillside overlooking the lagoon'. Mrs Emma Henderson at Jimboomba was Jessie's sister. These marriages were the first of many interconnections linking Nindooinbah to other stations and families in the district.

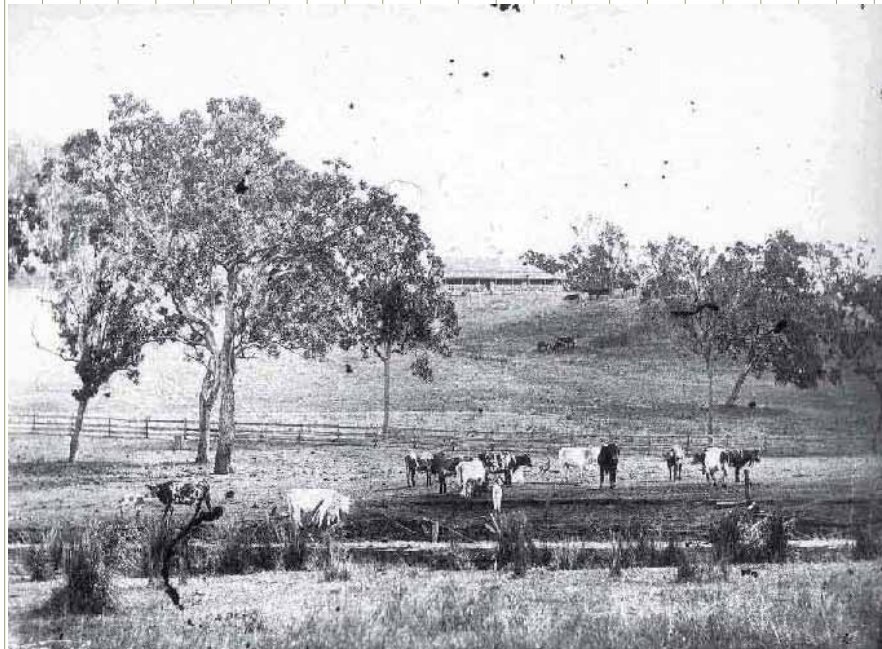
Compigne applied to freehold 640 acres of Nindooinbah in August 1855.¹¹ An 1857 survey of the area to be freeholded noted the position of the first Nindooinbah house, a woolshed, a garden and cultivated area.

This does not necessarily mark the beginning of commercial agriculture at Nindooinbah, as a condition of the lease was that produce of any cultivated land was to be for the station's own use, and not for sale or barter. A surviving indentation across the hillside between the present Nindooinbah garden fence and the lagoon may mark the position of either the original dray road, or a regular 'short cut' through the Nindooinbah paddocks noted by a later owner in 1912.

Good seasons in the early 1850s seem to have spurred Compigne's expansion to take over the runs of Sarabah and Kerry, a much larger run at 26,000 acres, and the further development of Nindooinbah. By 1852, 9000 sheep were grazing at Nindooinbah and Kerry, and Compigne had lent money to William Duckett White at Beau Desert station.¹² Compigne built a new, larger house in 1858; after he had been advised that his application to freehold 640 acres had been granted. In June 1857, Compigne raised a mortgage to John and George Harris for £2500 using as security 10,000 sheep, 100 horses and 500 cattle on his consolidated runs, Nindooinbah, Kerry and Sarabah.

Building Nindooindah

1872 William Boag photo of Nindooindah



nra | earc™

Compigne built his L-shaped house higher on the hill overlooking the lagoon. This site commands wider views than the site of the Lawless house and may have been chosen because Compigne demonstrated considerable wariness of local Aboriginal people in correspondence with the government[13]. The house was constructed of milled timber, both pine and cedar, probably felled on the property. The Albert-Logan region was already renowned for its superior timbers. At the time of his visit in 1850, William Pettigrew was planning his sawmilling business, and it is likely that he was scouting for good timber on his visits around the region with the Commissioner for Crown Lands, Stephen Simpson.

The 1858 Nindooindah house appears more refined than the cores of other homesteads, such as Munday, constructed in the area in this period[14]. It was a well proportioned aesthetically appealing house.

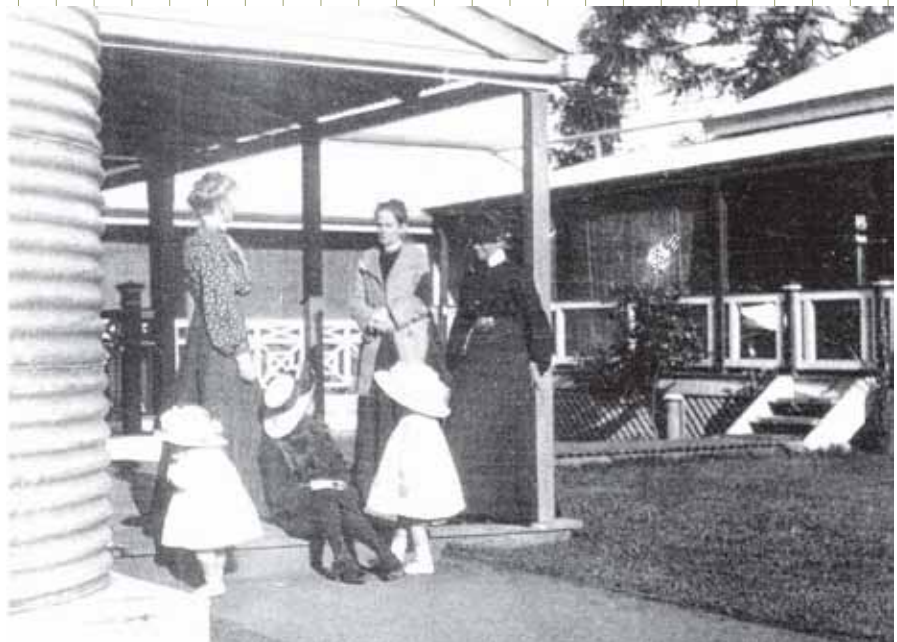
Figure 3: 1872 William Boag photo of Nindooindah

No architect or builder has yet been identified for the 1858 house. James Cowlshaw, Charles Balding and William Claydon Wakeling practised as architects in southern Queensland at this time. Of these three, Wakeling is possibly the most likely as architect for Nindooindah, although no evidence of this has been located. Wakeling also worked as a builder with Thomas Casey in Ipswich, the pastoralists' commercial centre. Nindooindah was a spacious house. There was a large drawing room adjoined on its northern side by a generous room which is likely

to always have been used as the main bedroom. Smaller rooms adjoined the main bedroom on its western side. A narrow room adjacent to the drawing room on its southern side was used as a dining room, although its position and earlier decorative schemes suggest that it was intended to be used as an entrance hall. The size and position of this room at the southern end of the original house may indicate that Compigne had planned a larger house. The door from the western verandah into this room, known in more recent decades as the telephone room, appears to be the original front door; it was presumably relocated from the eastern verandah with the heavy brass knocker still in place. This suggests that the room may have been designed as the entry hall to a larger house. Apart from the two rooms adjoining the main bedroom which sit side by side, the remaining rooms opened through French doors to verandahs on either side which provided cross ventilation. The verandahs were finished with Chinoiserie railings, reflecting the Victorian era fashion for oriental detail. A photograph taken in 1872 shows the verandah detailing, the shingled roof and also indicates that the verandah may have been painted in a pale colour. Unusually for this era, the house was elevated on stumps or blocks, perhaps reflecting the prevailing method of raising woolsheds on stumps so that sheep could shelter from the sun and rain underneath[15]. The extant woolshed at Nindooindah, believed to date from the same era as the house, is built on the side of a hill with stumps on its downhill elevations. The original kitchen at Nindooindah was also a well finished building which abutted the western elevation of the house.

Building Nindooinbah

Kitchen in 1905



nra | earc™

Compigne's finances appear to have deteriorated in the late 1850s, which is likely to explain the truncation of an original plan to build a larger house. As early as 1848, Compigne was mortgaged to the Bank of Australasia and to the entrepreneur, Robert Towns, for his interests in Nindooinbah, Kerry and Sarabah.

He appears to have been overextended, having tendered for the additional runs of Merry (Murry) Jerry and Dungogie, closer to the coast.¹⁶ By 1851, Compigne's mortgagors included T S Mort and the Brisbane merchants John & George Harris.

Shortly afterwards, he assigned his interests in Merry Jerry and Dungogie to William Duckett White.¹⁷ In June 1867 William Duckett White at Beau Desert station was reporting 'awful losses' for sheep farmers.¹⁸ Although seasons were generally good in the 1850s, all pastoralists suffered from labour shortages.

Workers left the pastoral districts for the goldfields in New South Wales and Victoria; the Logan squatters even advertised a reward for the discovery of gold in their district, doubtless hoping that if gold was found, labour would flock to the area, instead of leaving it. Chinese labourers, imported to make up the shortage, were employed in various parts of the Logan-Albert regions, including Compigne's Kerry run, where Chinese graves are believed still to exist, but the experiment was generally not successful.¹⁹

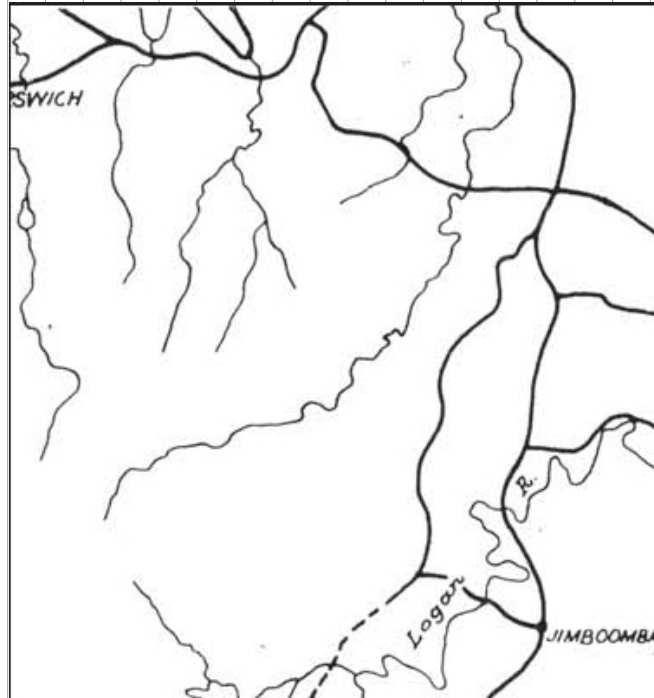
By 1859, Compigne's mortgages to John and George Harris, amounted to almost £6000 and, by 1861, he had transferred the leases to Nindooinbah, Kerry, Sarabah to the Bank of Australasia. In February 1861, he advertised for sale his bullock team, 3000 Saxon wethers and 2000 ewes.²⁰

The leases of the three runs were transferred to Robert Towns in 1862. At this time, another threat to the squatters was looming closer; runs in the area were being surveyed to be cut up for closer settlement and, in January 1863, it seemed that Nindooinbah would be next.²¹

In 1866, W D White wrote to his partner, George Robinson: 'you will be sorry to hear that our old friend Compigne is smashed. Captain Towns has had a mortgage over his property for some years and he has not paid interest for some time. He owed him £9500 and Mr Towns put him out lately'.²² Towns applied to consolidate the Nindooinbah run (divided into Nindooinbah north and south in 1867), Kerry and Sarabah runs under the 1868 Crown Lands Act. Half of the consolidated area, 32,280 acres, was resumed; the remaining half was leased to Towns for 10 years.

Becoming Part of an Empire

White Family Holding



nra | earc™

Robert Towns had cattle interests in North Queensland, as well as a large cotton farm, Townsvale, in the Logan region. The end of the American civil war in 1865 plunged the early Queensland cotton industry into disarray and Towns concentrated on developing his beef cattle interests. He sold the Nindooibah freehold to William Duckett White's son, Ernest, late in 1866:

*'Captain Towns sold the stations with 2800 head of cattle about 200 horses – six hundred and forty acres purchased land with a house which cost £3000 and other improvements and is worth £1000 more than £7400 sold to Ernest last Christmas; he does not pay any cash, his terms are 1-2-3-4 years with 8% interest – he has already sold over £6000 worth of fat cattle off it and I think will do very well with it.'*²³

Towns transferred the leased areas of the three properties to the Whites in 1871.

The White family was expanding its interests in several directions at this time. William Duckett White became manager of Beau Desert station in 1844, when it adjoined Nindooibah, and bought it in partnership with his cousin, George Robinson. In the 1860s, White acquired extensive lands towards the coast, presumably stimulated by the 1865 Queensland government regulations designed to encourage the cultivation of sugar and coffee. Fear of resumption of their land for cotton growing in the early 1860s spurred other Logan-Albert families to take up runs in the pastoral country of the Burnett. Anne Collins at Mundoolun in 1860s was afraid that government would resume Mundoolun for cotton, so encouraged her husband, John, to develop Waterton in Dawson River area for cattle, in case they had to move; the Collins family also took up

Westgrove on the Dawson River in 1862, a more suitable run for the sheep which were not thriving in the Logan-Albert River.²⁴ By 1868, the White family holdings included Tubber, Murry Jerry and Coombala (Coombabah) runs on the coast, Beaudesert station and the adjoining runs, Kerry, Nindooibah and Sarabah with 3,303 cattle. In the early 1870s, White acquired Bluff Downs near Charters Towers where he installed his son, Albert. William Duckett White sold Beau Desert to Robinson who, in turn, sold it to Ernest White who presided over its subdivision into town allotments.

As well as expanding their pastoral and agricultural interests, the dominant Beaudesert families formed business partnerships in the meat industry in this period. John Collins and Sons, based at Mundoolun, was formed in 1863, the Collins' family's North Australian Pastoral Company in 1877, and Collins White and Co in 1883, with Albert White of Bluff Downs as the White partner.

These partnerships all expanded their holdings in northern and western Queensland and the Northern Territory. William Collins, for instance, acquired Woodstock and Inkerman in the Burdekin from Robert Towns' estate in 1877. By the 1860s, the transfer from sheep to cattle and horses had been completed on all the Beaudesert stations.²⁶ Much of this expansion was financed by mortgages which provide an insight into the complexities of the Nindooibah families' business and personal relationships. William Duckett and Ernest White were, for instance, mortgaged to Bank of Australasia for £4000 in 1868 against the security of their Beaudesert and coastal runs. The interests of the Bank of Australasia brought William de Burgh Perse to the area.

Becoming Part of an Empire

1905 photograph, view from the west



nra | earc™

He had investigated North Queensland almost immediately arriving in Queensland from Ireland in March 1863 and was appointed by the bank to manage Tambourine and Marroon stations in March 1864, before buying Tabragalba, which adjoined Nindooibah, in 1865. Tabragalba was the base for his ownership of several stations in North Queensland which he sold in order to acquire five stations in the Burnett region. Cattle bred at Tabragalba stocked his stations Connemara and Palparara near Farrar Creek in the Cooper Creek area.²⁷

De Burgh Persse bought Hawkwood station in the Burnett, formerly owned by Thomas Lodge Murray Prior, in the 1880s and then bought Yerilla (Rocky Downs) which he held with his son, Dudley. In 1905, Persse combined Eidsvold, Boolgal and Culcraigie into Eidsvold (now Eidsvold) which he held with son-in-law Fitzpierce Joyce who married his second daughter, Rose Eileen. Joyce's brother, Edgar had married Persse's eldest daughter, Rita and his third daughter, Jessie, married Cecil S Delpratt of Tambourine station. During the 1867 drought Mundoolun cattle were agisted at Nindooibah because Ernest White had very little stock, suggesting that the White family may have used Nindooibah as a base to manage their extensive holdings. In 1869, a valuation included 534 rods of fencing.

Ernest White married Annie Barker from Tamrookum on 2 November 1871. A valuation in January 1871 listed the main house, valued at £2000, 2800 cattle, 200 horses and another house on the 640 acres of freehold land, with 391 acres of 'improvements' on the Nindooibah leasehold valued at £195.10.0. Fencing near the lagoon is shown in the 1872 photograph (See Figure 3) which also shows an unidentified outbuilding appears close to, and slightly

north of, the position of the present nursery wing. No development in the garden is visible in this photograph. Ernest White developed a horse stud at Nindooibah in the 1870s and was renowned as a horse breeder, raising the champion, Charlton. Stallions standing at Nindooibah included the chestnut, Clan Charlie.²⁸ Horse racing was a favourite activity for the Beaudesert families. Picnic races rotated around the various properties from the mid nineteenth century onwards.²⁹

The Nindooibah race course was located on the Wyambin side of the fl at land between the lagoon and the Albert River, within the Heritage Register boundary. The old Tabragalba race course site is also visible from the front verandah of Nindooibah. Although sheep had gone from Nindooibah by the 1870s, the woolshed remained in use as quarters for workers on the property. Ernest White rarely lived at Nindooibah after 1881. He was in ill health for several years before his death in 1884. His widow and children, who were all minors at the time of his death, continued to live at Southport. Ernest's White's children were his heirs; his widow had only a lifetime interest in his extensive estate which included considerable real estate in addition to Nindooibah, and his shares in the White & Sons partnership.

Ernest White's will directed that his other properties should be sold in order to postpone the sale of Nindooibah as long as possible.³⁰

In the 1880s, Nindooibah was regarded 'one of the finest cattle runs in the colony'.³¹ However, by the time of the next change of ownership in 1900, the house and the property had deteriorated markedly.

Nindooibah 2005, Nindooibah 2011



Developing Nindooibah

nra | **earc**[™]

In 1900, William Collins, the younger son of John Collins of Mundoolun leased Nindooibah from Ernest White's estate, and purchased the property, the original freeholded area, 640 acres, and 9500 acres of leasehold, at auction in 1906. This acquisition was part of the expansion of John Collins & Sons in the Beaudesert area. The Collins family had taken over Tamrookum from the Barker family in 1878 and Rathdowney in 1884.

Respected as a beef cattle expert, William Collins intended to use Nindooibah to fatten cattle for the frozen meat trade which he had helped to pioneer in the 1870s.³² He was also a co-founder of the North Australian Pastoral Company with his brother in law, Douglas Fraser, Sir Thomas McIlwraith and two other partners, and helped to establish wool sales in Brisbane.³³ Even though half of the run had been resumed under the 1868 Crown Lands Act, Nindooibah was one of the larger properties in the Beaudesert region in 1900: Jimboomba 4,000 acres; Maroon, 7,000 acres; Tamrookum, 11,000 acres; The Hollow, 7,000 acres; Rathdowney, 22,000 acres; Nindooibah, 19,000 acres; Undulla, 7,000 acres; Mundoolun, 12,000 acres; Tabragalba 19,000 acres; Tambourine, 5,000 acres, making a total of 141,000 acres held by 13 estates. William Barker held Tamrookum in 1854.³⁴

In 1900, William Collins married Gwendoline Roberts in Dunedin, New Zealand. In 1901 he offered to renew the lease of Nindooibah from William Barker, Ernest White's father in law and one of the trustees of his estate. At that time, Collins estimated the costs of necessary improvements and repairs at Nindooibah to be £600-£700. Noting that the house was 'out of repair', needing a new kitchen and painting throughout, he suggested that wallpaper might be preferable to paint.

A new fence around the house and garden and 'miles' of property fencing were also needed. The garden was a 'wilderness'; devoid of flowers. A photograph of Nindooibah, published in Queensland Country Life in 1900, with an article written to boost the sale of the first set of dairy farms cut from Nindooibah, shows a white picket fence close to the house, two chimneys, a narrow staircase; plantings close to house included two palms at the verandah corners and a large bunya pine close to location of the eventual southern extension.

[This photograph also shows another building with a high pitched roof at the rear. A 1905 photograph of the rear of the house shows this building, located close to the eventual kitchen wing, in more detail.]

In May 1901, William and Gwendoline Collins, then living at Mundoolun, visited Nindooibah. In August 1901, they were at Nindooibah 'fixing up' the house and unpacking the 'English and Japanese boxes' of treasures'.

Nindooibah was sold to William Collins at auction on 7 May 1906. He paid 2835.16.6 pounds for a total of 497 ac or 16p on three separate titles.³⁶ On the same day, 6092 acres divided into 26 dairy farms, were auctioned. These 26 farms were described as bordering 'existing farms'.

Developing Nindooinbah

1908 photograph of the western elevation of the house



nra | earc™

Dairying expanded rapidly in southern Queensland in the first decade of the twentieth century. The location of the Logan-Albert region close to Brisbane sparked a dairying rush. Two butter factories had been established in the area by 1906, dairy farms excised from Tabragalba sold successfully in 1905, and the local papers reported that potential dairy farmers seeking land were growing impatient.

The Nindooinbah farming land was described at the time of the auction as having 'all been ringbarked' with numerous cattle camps and large trees remaining for shelter'.³⁷ Seven dairy farms remained part of the Nindooinbah estate; the remnants of three of these farms are extant in 2005. William Collins embarked immediately on a programme of major development at Nindooinbah, on the property as well as at the main house.

Tenders were called to construct a cattle dip at Nindooinbah. Collins was closely connected to the battle against the cattle tick *Boophilus microplus*, which had been introduced to Australia with the importation of *bos indicus* cattle through the port of Darwin.

William Collins was one of the Queensland government commissioners who visited the United States to study Texas tick fever, and was co-author of a Queensland government report on tick fever in 189638. The Nindooinbah dip was completed in 1907.

Other features added at this time include large water storage tanks, mentioned as badly needed in Collins' 1901 letter, and a gas house adjacent to the large detached laundry, presumably to provide power for, among other implements, gaslights installed circa 1913.

A building in the position of the present laundry is visible in a photograph circa 1908.

The architect Robin Dods was commissioned to prepare plans for an extension to the main house. This which more than doubled its size and established Nindooinbah's status as the most distinguished homestead in the district, and one of the most important in Queensland.

Figure 9: 1908 photograph of eastern elevation, including garden

In executing the extensions, Dods respected the plan of the 1857 house. Most rooms maintain the 'one room' depth of the house, the verandah detailing was continued on the new verandahs and additional sets of stairs, and the roofline was retained when the roof was reconstructed. The extension to the main eastern elevation and the new northern and southern wings converted the original L shape into a U shape, a design found in other important early homesteads, such as Talgai on the Darling Downs.

Like Talgai, the main entry to Nindooinbah was by a carriage drive to the rear of the house. The addition of an entry porch and pergola at the rear of Nindooinbah gives the impression that the house is E-shaped. The extensions to Nindooinbah are also very important in demonstrating the domestic hierarchies which operated in that era.

Developing Nindooinbah

Stables and additional buildings



nra | earc™

The four Collins children, born between 1901 and 1908, were accommodated with their nurse and governess in a 'nursery wing', adjacent to the original bedrooms on the northern side of the house, with gauzing on the verandahs providing protection against mosquitoes. This wing was completed with a bedroom and bathroom, always known as the 'bachelor's room' where male guests were accommodated. A new 'service wing' on the southern side provided a new kitchen, utility rooms, staff dining rooms and smaller bedrooms for the staff.

The staff bedrooms at the end of the southern wing are not shown on Dods' original plans, but a photograph taken when the work was newly completed shows that the southern wing was completed at the same time as the main extensions.

The original kitchen shown in the 1905 photograph was moved to provide additional staff accommodation on the property and appears to have formed the core of the present manager's house.

Recycling usable buildings and fittings was common practice on pastoral properties and occurred several times at Nindooinbah, and as recently as the 1980s when a cottage located close to the manager's house was moved to serve as an artist's studio in a position commanding a view of the lagoon, the Albert River and the mountains beyond.

French doors from the 1858 house, which Dods replaced with wider French doors, appear to have been installed in both the manager's house and the present studio, a factor

which adds to their cultural heritage significance.

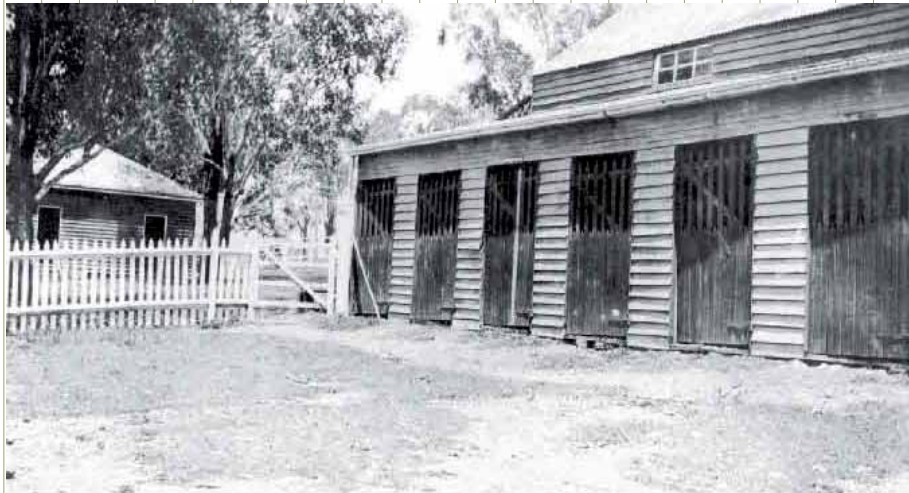
The surviving specifications for the new work demonstrate that high quality materials were to be used throughout[39]. Crows ash was specified for the floors of new wings, wider cedar French lights with top portion divided into 6 lights, bottom panelled and stock-moulded were specified to replace the narrower original French doors, and the verandah posts in the kitchen wing were to be ironbark with red Stringybark railings and cedar capmolds. The kitchen wing was to have T&G ceilings.

Fixtures in the kitchen included a towel roller to extend across the fireplace, a kitchen dresser, for which detailed specifications were provided, a pantry table and a glass fronted pantry cupboard. A long list of brass fittings was specified for the kitchen and bathrooms. The servant's bath was to be capped with beech and the walls were to be papered.

The new dining room, adjacent to the original dining room/entry hall is a fine example of Dods' work. It is panelled in silky oak, installed without nails, which disguise cupboards in its southern wall. Dods' specifications include tiles for the dining room chimney, but the preferred type and style of the tiles is not mentioned.

Developing Nindooinbah

Stables and additional buildings



nra | earc™

The decorative plaster ceiling includes a wreath over the eastern bay window with the date '1908', said to have been preferred by Gwendoline Collins instead of the more usual stamp of the owner's initials because she regarded 'WC' as unsuitable.⁴⁰

A small servery connecting the western wall to the back verandah close to the kitchen is remembered by family and guests as having been regarded as 'extremely useful' by successive owners.

The extant furniture in the new guest bedroom believed to have been constructed from bunya pine from the tree shown in the 1900 photograph (See Figure 6).⁴¹

The main point of entry was separated from the western verandah by an entry porch with a parapet designed to echo the verandah pattern.

4 inch concrete foundations were specified for the pergola walkway from the main drive to the porch. Entry through rear courtyards is found in many Victorian era homesteads, including Mundayoolun and Coochin Coochin in the Beaudesert and nearby Boonah districts and Talgai, near Warwick. Dods specified crows ash entrance gates but these are not shown in a circa 1908 photograph.

The new work included renovations in the existing 1858 house. These included an extended drawing room mantle, a cedar mantelpiece in the main bedroom and electric bells with ornamental pushes. Dods also specified the quantity of wallpaper he anticipated would be needed in the renovated area and in the extension: 82 square yards of

wallpaper friezes and 238 square yards of wallpaper. Wallpapers with decorative features are common in Edwardian houses, and it is likely that surviving wallpapers in the drawing room and guest room are the ones installed at this time, said to have been hand-blocked in London.⁴² Ceiling papers were also installed, although Dods had specified painted ceilings.

A great deal of attention in the specification was paid to bathrooms and lavatories. The 'existing bath' was to be 'moved and refixed' and fitted with a 'plunge' spray and shower bath with a waterproof curtain. A Doulton Simplicitus 300 E lavatory was also specified. Although two early lavatories are extant, neither are Doulton. The bathroom and lavatory arrangements indicate that the extensions at Nindooinbah were created with guests and entertaining in mind, as befits an eminent pastoral homestead. Two lavatories, with doorplates assigning one to women and the other the men, and a bathroom were installed at the far end of the main wing, separated from the main guest room by a corridor. The southern end of the back verandah was marked on Dods' 1906 plans as a service hall, further confirming that the extensions to Nindooinbah were conceived as creating an elite house where entertaining would be a feature of life. In several respects, Dods' 1906 plans and their accompanying specifications were not executed exactly as drawn. Extra rooms were added to the southern kitchen wing, so that in its length it is symmetrical with the northern nursery wing. At some later stage, the 'serving hall' was furnished with extensive built in bookshelves to create a library, which is shown in a 1920s photograph with a table and chairs under the southern windows.

Developing Nindooinbah

1921 photograph of the glass houses between the southern end of the front verandah and the bush house/fernery



nra | earc™

The garden

The garden was extensively developed during the Collins period. A photograph of the front of the house circa 1910 (See Figure 10) shows the main eastern elevation with an avenue of palms extending from the verandah towards the lagoon. It is likely that this avenue ended inside a fence enclosing the garden. A large round rose garden, shown developed to maturity in 1920s photographs, is not present in 1908, which may indicate that, if Dods had influenced the original layout of the garden and the palm avenue, his plan was modified by Mrs Collins who is known to have had a keen interest in the garden. It is not known whether earthenware pipes, believed to have been laid at Dods' direction, remain under the extensive lawn area. Plantings of annuals inside the garden fence, smaller round gardens, new trees, extensive bush houses and glasshouses, no longer extant, made a labour intensive garden. At least four gardeners were employed at Nindooinbah. By 1911, Nindooinbah was 'celebrated for its beautiful blooms'.⁴³

A series of photographs, circa 1921 Figure 12: 3 photographs show

1. The eastern elevation and the wider 'Dods' stairs with a rustic arbour placed immediately in front of the stairs, but not extending the full width of the stairs;
2. The entrance masonry-edged driveway passing close to end of the nursery wing and lined with small trees. The lawned area on the northern elevation indicates that a round garden, which may have dated from Compigne's time, had already been removed; and
3. Glass houses between the southern end of the front verandah and the bush house/fernery. The location of the glass houses is marked in 2005 by a pathway to a bush house. Extensive trellising is also shown in the southern garden.

A grand entrance driveway was also planned. Mrs Collins directed the planting of alternating camphor laurel and Jacaranda trees in three parallel rows. However, the trees did not thrive as they were planted into rock. The third row may have been inspired by driveways Mrs Collins had seen in Europe on her honeymoon tour and may have been intended to provide separate 'in' and 'out' driveways. Deliberate planning to provide a hippodrome form to exercise horses is also possible.

Nindooinbah 2005, Nindooinbah 2011



Maintaining Nindooinbah

nra | earc™

William Collins died suddenly on 22 January 1909. He died intestate and the property was transferred to John Collins & Sons. Mrs Collins and the four young children remained at Nindooinbah and changes continued. The Nindooinbah School, No 1388, was surveyed on part of Nindooinbah property in 1912 to educate the growing number of dairy farm children living on part of the old Nindooinbah. The school closed in the 1960s, but the school building is believed to remain. The presence of the school gave further form to the complex society which had been developing steadily. Mrs Collins was known to enjoy entertaining, a privilege she extended to her employees in 1911 when a ball was held in the woolshed, decorated with flowers and greenery from the gardens.⁴⁴

Further changes to the house were prompted by the Prince of Wales proposed visit to Nindooinbah in July 1920. Dods' entry porch was replaced by a 'tented ballroom', usually referred to in subsequent decades as the morning room or the sunroom. A shorter pergola remained after the larger 'ballroom' was constructed. It is likely that the bathroom was added to the main bedroom for the Prince of Wales' proposed visit.

The programme for the Prince of Wales' visit shows that he planned to arrive at Nindooinbah at 3.30 pm and to leave Beaudesert railway station at 10.30 pm. It is possible that the bathroom was constructed in case the notoriously bad roads forced the Prince to remain overnight. The bathroom, probably designed by Dods' partner, Francis Hall, who designed the ballroom, is an important example of an early ensuite bathroom. Bathrooms in the later Edwardian period in America, when cleanliness to the point of sterility was highly valued, were created to mimic a hospital in the home with 'hospital white' Predominating and white tiles replacing the heavy dark cabinets hiding ugly pipes predominating in older bathrooms.

Francis Hall also prepared plans in 1921 for a carriage porch at the end of the northern nursery wing, but this addition was never constructed. It is likely that the notion behind the carriage porch was to provide a covered point of entry in wet weather.

Nindooinbah 2005, Nindooinbah 2011



Maintaining Nindooinbah



The Collins family was often absent in the 1920s, either in Sydney where the children attended school, or overseas. The family travelled extensively and spent considerable time in England in the 1920s when John was studying at Oxford.

A tennis court was constructed in the north-eastern garden during the 1920s, and frequently used for entertaining during the next few decades. A small round pavilion, with an internal fountain, was constructed in conjunction with the tennis court. During the 1930s, young people – the Persses at Wyambyn and Tabragalba and the Collins family – frequently walked or rode to each other's houses and events such as the 1929 Nindooinbah-Tabragalba polo match were often held.

Horses had continued to be a major interest at Nindooinbah. Photographs from the late 1920s show the unusual two storey stables, possibly built in the Ernest White era and no longer extant, in a line of buildings which give an impression of the 'street of buildings' found on complex pastoral stations, such as Muddoolun and Jondaryan.

The Nindooinbah stables had a line of stable doors in its northern elevation, a large door on the upper level, through which hay was unloaded, and large double doors in the western wall.

The stables are visible in a circa 1935 aerial photograph, although other outbuildings are obscured by trees. [Figure 14: aerial photograph c1935]: Mrs Collins' youngest daughter, Janette, was frequently photographed on her horse, Spearfess, a grandson of Spearfelt which won the Melbourne Cup in 1926 and was himself a great-grandson of the great Carbine.

Domestic animals, particularly Dalmatian dogs, were also important at Nindooinbah and are shown in a videotape dating from about 1930.⁴⁵

John Collins, born in 1906, became the Nindooinbah property manager in about 1928, after completing his degree at Oxford. The creation of the five Nindooinbah dairy farms in 1931 was among John Collins' developments.⁴⁶

Nindooinbah 2005, Nindooinbah 2011



Maintaining Nindooinbah

nra | **earc**[™]

Two of the dairies, Cainbanel Creek and the Gorge, were owned by his sisters, Beryl and Janette. John Collins lived in a house located outside the main Nindooinbah gateway on its south-western side.

The core of this house may well have been the kitchen wing from the 1858 house, dismantled and reconstructed to contain material from the original house. It was extended during Collins' occupancy and its sunken bath became a talking point.

John Collins married Margaret Hagon, daughter of a former Lord Mayor of Sydney in 1933 and it is likely that an extension to the house to create a 'party room', with a plastered ceiling and decorative cornice, was constructed at about this time.

A built-in cupboard in the room housed Collins' trophies; he was a successful horseman and one of Australia's earliest amateur champion snow-skiers. John Collins had been the sole male Collins family heir since the death of R M Collins' son, Christopher, in the 1919 influenza epidemic.

John Collins became managing partner of Collins White in 1936, succeeding Douglas Fraser, who had married William Collins sister, Bertha. The Collins White Company was dissolved in 1941 following John Collins death.

The Nindooinbah airfield on the broad flat alluvial fields between the lagoon and the Albert River appears to date from John Collins' active years at Nindooinbah during the 1930s. Collins was a keen aviator who participated successfully in many competition events.

He was killed in an accident at Archerfield airfield in May 1941. His mother and sisters donated a large stained glass window to St John's Cathedral in Brisbane in his memory. The window, by the distinguished stained glass artist, William Bustard, was installed in the northern wall of the nave.

Nindooibah 2011

Robert Persse Era



nra | earc™

William Collins' second daughter, Beryl, married Robert Persse. They remained at Nindooibah following John Collins' death when their daughter, Margaret, was a few months' old. Gwendoline Collins retired to Kyora at Southport during this period, but visited Nindooibah regularly until her death in 1962.

The main bedroom was always reserved for her. Mr and Mrs Persse used the adjoining bedroom and Margaret used the nursery bedroom with Miss Lucy Morgan, her nurse/governess in the adjoining room.

Beryl Persse was keenly interested in the garden. Photographs from this era show opium poppies in the main heart-shaped garden on the eastern side.

Figure 14: aerial photo showing possible runways
A pecan tree was located in the lawned area long before such trees became fashionable.

The Nindooibah airfield was used by the military during the War. From about May 1943, a large camp of United States and Australian service personnel was based at Tabragalba, conveniently close to the main jungle warfare training centre at Canungra.

Camp Tabragalba, also known as Camp X, was developed as a training base for highly secret forces engaged in covert operations in New Guinea and the Pacific.

Groups training at Tabragalba included the coast watchers, Z Force and M Force.

Filipinos, New Guinea and Indonesian covert operatives were brought to Tabragalba for training which included parachute training using the Nindooibah airstrip.⁴⁷

Aerial photo showing possible runways



Post World War II era

nra | **earc**[™]

In the 1940s and 1950s, horses were kept on both sides of woolshed. Although the main drive into Nindooinbah remained in the alignment marked by the avenue planted by Gwendoline Collins, the fence-line on the western entrance and the entrance gates were moved further away from the house and the main gates were located outside the stands of bamboo marking the main entry.

In the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, garages were located on the far side of manager's house. One garage, with a lean-to storage area, is now located just inside the fence-line at the rear of the main house.

A garage for a vehicle used to transport people to and from the airfield in the 1950s and 1960s no longer survives on the fringe of the airfield. The airfield was still used until the late 1960s; users included a skydiving club which moved its activities away from Nindooinbah after a sky diver drowned in the lagoon. The old aircraft hangar was moved from the airfield to the rear of the house where it housed machinery until it was partly destroyed by fire at some point between the 1960s and 1981.

In 1972, Nindooinbah was described as a beautifully kept and tended property grazing an Aberdeen Angus herd as well as maintaining its dairy farms[48]. Dairying was discontinued in the late 1970s and, by 1981; all dairy buildings had either been demolished or fallen into complete disrepair.

After Robert Persse died in 1961, Mrs Persse and Margaret continue to live at Nindooinbah, maintaining a staff of 17 in the house and garden, including gardeners, a cook, and the long-standing governess, Miss Lucy Morgan. Beryl Persse engaged the interior decorator, Hugh Hale, for redecoration, shown most clearly in the ivory wallpaper and green carpet in telephone room.

This colour toned with the gown in the large portrait of Gwendoline Collins which had been hung in this room for many years. Hale generally favoured the more streamlined decoration characteristic of this era. Photographs from the 1950s and 1960s show furnishings in the drawing room to be restrained, with fewer ornaments and potted plants. The front and side verandahs were not extensively furnished in this era, apart from a few squatters' chairs.

Nindooinbah 2011

Presenting Nindooinbah



Margaret Persse married the well-known Australian artist, Patrick Hockey in 1983. Nindooinbah was valued in 1981 in order to finalise William Collins' estate in September 1983. His heirs were Gwendoline Collins and her three daughters and one son. John Collins had died without children in 1941, his eldest sister, Dorothea Scott, died without children in 1981, Beryl, Persse died in May 1982, leaving Margaret Persse as her heir with 5/8 of the estate. Janette Persse held the remaining 3/8 which, on her death in 1985, would have passed to her three children. Margaret Hockey bought this share and divided ownership of the whole property with her husband.

The 1981 valuation provides a useful picture of Nindooinbah at that time. The freehold was held in three lots: Lot 1 was 531.5 ha (1313 a Or 36p) in area; Lot 2 was 4047 sq m and Lot 3 was 5585sq m. Lot 1 was described as the remaining homestead block of old Nindooinbah. The house was described as well maintained, but too large for its present occupancy.

A limited amount of old furniture and household effects remained, but the valuation records unspecified furniture as having been discarded or beyond repair. The remaining furniture was valued at \$3720. The garden was described as a large semi-circular lawn and garden in front of the homestead, surface levelled, grassed, and planted with shrubs. The tennis court was disused, partly enclosed by a timber-wire netting fence in bad repair. The laundry on the southern side of the house was described as a 38'x12' wooden building with a galvanised iron roof, with a part hardwood and part cement floor. It was cited as having been erected in the late 1920s or early 1930s.

The manager's house and the gatehouse were described as 'sound'. The 'nicely painted' manager's house was 120'x32' containing eight rooms, some of which were wallpapered. There was a brick fireplace and open verandahs. The detached laundry, 29'x22', no longer extant, was described as 'more than 70 years old, and in bad repair'. The manager's house was valued at \$30,000. House 3, presumably the gatehouse; was described as the 'manager's cottage' in the valuation; was 38'x43'; with partitions, linings and ceiling in T&G pine and a galvanised iron roof. It was valued at \$20,000.

The remaining buildings were described as a fuel shed, constructed of 12'6" bush hardwood poles with a fl at galvanised iron roof, 'old burnt second hand galvanised iron walls' and a hardwood floor. This 'old rough shed' was valued at \$100. The garage, 'an old shed in mediocre repair' valued at \$1000, was 20'x18' with bush hardwood poles and a flat galvanised iron roof with second hand galvanised iron on 3 sides, with the fourth side open, and an earthen floor.

The machinery shed, valued at \$1000, was described as the old aircraft shed. It was 33'x20' with second hand galvanised iron on all four sides and a dirt floor. A separate building, described as the old aircraft hanger, partly destroyed by fire, was valued at \$250.

Nindooinbah 2011

Presenting Nindooinbah



nra | earc™

The woolshed, described as being in 'bad repair' had a shingled roof covered with galvanised iron with a broken kitchen 12'x12' attached to it. Adjoining the woolshed was a saddle room, leaning badly, 6'x6' with a hardwood frame, single walls and a broken concrete floor. There was also a new steel frame hayshed. All outbuildings, apart from the woolshed were described as being in 'fair repair'. At that stage, all livestock, farm plant and crops belonged to the Nindooinbah Pastoral Company. The total valuation of Lot 1 was \$462,500 with the main house and garden valued at \$150,000.

The remainder of the property in Lot 1 included timber, 50 hectares of first class agricultural land under cultivation, plus 40 hectares of low blue-gum fl at which would be arable if drained and 10 hectares which was too wet for cultivation but suitable for grazing, 231.5 hectares of low forest ridge which was 'useful grazing' and 200 hectares of rough timbered country of low value.

Native and improved grasses remained on the good grazing country. The remainder of property was cleared and some was liable to erosion. Most of the fencing was old, but recently renovated. Some of the older split post barb wire fences had been discarded to create fewer, larger paddocks. The water supply was described as 'good' and pumped from the lagoon to tanks behind the house from where it was reticulated to the buildings, the dip and 3 stock troughs.

A restricted irrigation licence limited available water in dry periods and detracted greatly from the productivity and value of the agricultural flats. Lot 2, valued at \$1500, was described as a small rectangular shaped block on the eastern side of the Albert River with a frontage to Cainbabel road, 4 kilometres from the main Nindooinbah block. This land was all river flat, originally set aside and used as cattle dip area. The yards and buildings on Lot 2 were all defunct and the land was under cultivation.

On 27 August 1981, the total valuation of Nindooinbah estate was \$814,100.

Decor in the drawing room and verandahs, Nindooibah 2011



Persse-Hockey Era

nra | earc™

Patrick Hockey came from a grazing background, having grown up on Abercorn near Eidsvold in the Burnett district, where many earlier owners of Nindooibah had taken up stations. Hockey became a well-known artist, whose work is featured in major public collections in Australia and overseas and in private collections such as those of the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Edinburgh and Margaret Rockefeller.⁵⁰

Patrick Hockey's work reflected his upbringing on a grazing property. He painted herds of cattle, cattle sales, drovers, country racetracks, water tanks, windmills, miners, outback landscapes and bush people, always with a great sense of humour. Later in his career, Hockey moved more towards painting interiors and flowers and, at Nindooibah, painted several interiors, as well as the gardens, the flowers and the pet Dalmatians.⁵¹ The tomb of one of many Dalmatians who have lived at Nindooibah through the decades is located just inside the eastern garden fence. Patrick Hockey lived for many years in Sydney's fashionable eastern suburbs and was well-known for lavish entertaining many celebrities in the world of the arts from films to painting. In this sense, he was an 'urban' person. Nevertheless, Hockey retained interests in the Burnett region where he bred Santa Gertrudis cattle.

He was the first Nindooibah resident owner to combine distinctly urban values with more traditional rural pursuits. At Nindooibah, the Hockey era marked an 'opening' of Nindooibah, once a very private world limited to extended families and their guests, to wide publicity in newspapers and popular home journals and to broader community causes. As in Sydney, Hockey entertained many celebrities at Nindooibah. This era marked a distinct change: many long-standing employees, such as the nurse-governess, Lucy Morgan, left Nindooibah almost as soon as Patrick Hockey arrived. Patrick Hockey described the house as 'very dilapidated' when he arrived in 1983, which differs from the view of the 1981 valuer.⁵² His arrival marked changes in the house, particularly altered usage of some of the rooms, and extensive re-development of the gardens. Patrick and Margaret Hockey used the main bedroom for the first time since Mrs Collins' death in 1962.

The original wallpaper below the frieze was removed and replaced with pink paper and the lower portion of the frieze was filled in with black paint. A doorway next to the bed, which Margaret Hockey described as remaining under the wallpaper, had been blocked up earlier than the Hockey era, as shown in a photograph of the room taken before Gwendoline Collins died.

Patrick Hockey said the Ensuite bathroom was refurbished in 'original style', but the wine red curtains installed by Mrs Collins and shown in a 1970s photograph, were removed. Furnishings and decorations in the main bedroom and drawing room and on the verandahs were much more flamboyant in the Hockey era.

Untitled (Nindooibah View) c.1988 by Patrick Hockey, oil on canvas



Persse-Hockey Era



In an interview in 1987, Hockey said that he intentionally recreated the 'cluttered' décor of Edwardian era, using lots of ornaments as well as palms and other plants in jardinières, including large majolica vessels said to have been purchased by William and Gwendoline in Spain during their honeymoon world tour in 1900.

The Persse wedding presents from 1938 were unwrapped and used in the 'Edwardian décor'. The verandahs were furnished with colourful tables, chairs and plants in pots. A chandelier added to the drawing room.

The gardens were extensively redeveloped. A tea house drawing on Japanese design and a new pond were constructed to the south-east of the house, new bush houses were built and a new circular garden was installed in line with the main entry to the house on the western side.

Although Hockey said he used the original garden design and 'embellished' it⁵³, the new elements, which included large Tipuana trees on the front lawn at either end of the verandah, the removal of the tennis pavilion and tennis court fence, the new garden and fountain on the western side, and the teahouse and pond could be considered to be more extensive than 'embellishments'.

However, the gardens inside the fence line on the eastern side were replanted with longer lived plants than the annuals favoured by Mrs Collins.

Many more rose bushes were added in the Hockey era, although the hybrid tea rose 'Gwendoline Collins' created by Alistair Clarke in her honour in 1937 does not appear to have been planted⁵⁴. The Hockey gardens included statuary, including an Italian statue at the eastern end of the tennis court with a curious representation of a kangaroo appearing more like a dog, which Margaret Hockey named 'Blue the kangaroo'.

The Hockey's continued grazing activities. In 1990, 200 acres were planted with sorghum and soya beans grown by dry land farming methods. Patrick Hockey died in 1992. After his death, Margaret Hockey continued to live at Nindooibah and contributed to many community and environmental causes for which she received the OAM in 2000. Her private entertaining at Nindooibah reverted to more traditional ways with a strong emphasis on family and long-standing friends.

The main development to the property in this era was refurbishment and stabilisation of the woolshed, although the original battening around the stumps, visible in many photographs, was not restored.

The main homestead retained the furnishings installed by Patrick Hockey, and those from earlier eras, and only limited basic maintenance was performed.

Nindooibah 2011, Nindooibah 2005

Entering the twenty first century



nra | earc™

Margaret Hockey died in 2004 and the property passed out of Collins-Persse family ownership to Patrick Hockey's nephew. In June 2005, the property was sold at auction. At a subsequent auction, much of the important collection of furniture, objects and art works which had furnished the house for up to a century was sold.

Continuation of grazing and agricultural activities and conservation of the house, outbuildings and the property generally are planned for Nindooibah.

[From 2005, a new layer of living will be laid down at Nindooibah. This layer, which will include modernisation of facilities and services, and possibly some change in the pastoral-horticultural profile, will become an important aspect of the continuing cultural heritage significance of Nindooibah. This will follow similar activities undertaken by previous owners:

1. Clement and Paul Lawless, 1842-47: the selection of choice grazing land, beautiful surroundings and the site of the first house overlooking the lagoon.
2. A W Compigne, 1847-1866: the construction of a substantial house (1858) sited further up the hill, but retaining the same favourable aspect as the first house and construction of the woolshed.
3. Robert Towns, 1866-1871-: continuation of pastoral activities, changing from sheep to cattle, and ownership of Nindooibah at the same time a wider pastoral and financial network was developed.

4. Ernest White, 1871-1900: Nindooibah was at the centre of an expansive commercial and pastoral network and was renowned for breeding fine horses.

5. First Collins period, 1900-1909: William Collins and his wife first rented Nindooibah and then purchased the property at auction. The distinguished architect, Robin Dods, was commissioned to design major extensions to the house, and renovation of the 1858 house. The garden was extensively developed and the 'bones' of the modern garden laid down.

6. Second Collins period, 1909-1941: Following William Collins death in 1909, his widow and young children continued to live at Nindooibah. In 1920, in anticipation of a visit by the Prince of Wales, the entry porch designed by Robin Dods was removed, and a 'tented ballroom' replaced it. A bathroom was added to the main bedroom protruding into the verandah space at the north-eastern corner. In the late 1920s, a tennis court was added. A small building, likely to have been constructed from materials from the 1858 detached kitchen and some elements, such as the 1858 French doors, was extended and renovated as a residence for William Collins' son and heir, John Collins, who managed Nindooibah and further developed dairying activities, until his death in 1941. During the second Collins period, an airfield was constructed on the alluvial flats between the lagoon and the Albert River.

Nindooinbah 2005, Nindooinbah 2011

Entering the twenty first century



nra | earc™

7. Perse period, 1941-1983: William Collins' second daughter, Beryl, and her husband, Robert de Burgh Perse, took over the active management of Nindooinbah following John Collins' death. The garden was further developed, and some rooms inside the house redecorated in the 1960s.

8. The Hockey period, 1983-2005: Margaret Perse and her husband, the artist Patrick Hockey, lived at Nindooinbah. The main changes in the house were re-decoration of the main bedroom and other minor renovation. Patrick Hockey restored the garden replanting 1909-41 gardens further developing it with the introduction of new elements such as a pond and teahouse on the south-eastern side and a large round garden between the entry driveway and the house fence on the western side. Hockey also re-located a property worker's cottage from its position near the manager's house to the mound outside the fence on the eastern side where it is flooded with natural light and commands an extensive view. This cottage contains some of the fittings from the 1858 house; its new sit is important in demonstrating the location an artist chose for his studio. Patrick Hockey died in 1992 and Margaret Hockey continued to live at Nindooinbah until her death in 2004. In many ways, the most substantial change in the house in this period occurred after her death when many of the original contents were sold separately from the house into diverse ownership.

9. 2005-: Before Nindooinbah and most of its contents was sold by Margaret Hockey's heir, Patrick Hockey's nephew, the Queensland Heritage Council commissioned a museum consultant to review the interior of Nindooinbah. Following this report, the Entry in the Register for Nindooinbah was amended and the Heritage Council adopted policies for the conservation of interior elements dating from the 1906-08 Dods' renovations. However, the sale of most of the contents of the house has distorted the significance of the interiors in some rooms. Almost 500 items were listed in the auction catalogue; only a handful remains at the house.

Nindooinbah landscape



Nindooinbah in 2005



4. Nindooinbah in 2005

4.1 Nindooinbah as a whole

Nindooinbah in 2005 presents layers of use and occupation accumulated since the first pastoralists arrived in the 1840s and the first substantial house was built in 1858. This complex layering expresses successive owners' perceptions of Nindooinbah's standing, as well as their own needs, agricultural interests, tastes, awareness of prevailing fashions and standards, and financial position.

Nindooindah 2005, Nindooindah 2011

Nindooindah in 2005



4.2 The house

4.2.i The house as a whole

The present house represents a major work by R S Dods, of Brisbane architects Hall and Dods. When the Collins Company secured the freehold of the homestead block which included the 1858 homestead in 1906, Dods was consulted for a major expansion of the home. The Collins family knew Dods from his involvement with the Mundoolun Church built in 1901 and were donors to St John's Cathedral where Dods was also involved. For the Robert Collins family he subsequently designed a chapel at 'Tamrookum' in 1913 and carried out additions to 'Tamrookum' homestead. The design for 'Nindooindah' which was drawn in May 1906 used the old homestead in part and incorporated it into a much larger building. It is likely that the early homestead was intended to be larger and the scheme by Dods fulfilled this intention. The present telephone room, while it may have been used as a dining room in the past, was always intended to be a central hall to a larger house. Two early decorative schemes under the present wallpaper support this assumption, (Preliminary investigation of the interior finishes appear to support this assumption, however further investigation is required.

The big change Dods made to the homestead, was to put emphasis on the west side as the entry side whereas the earlier house had been entered in a conventional way from the east. In the new arrangement the east elevation became a garden front but the entry was then from the west, via a long pergola and porch placed centrally between a bedroom wing and a service wing on the north and south respectively. An earlier service (kitchen) wing, which was detached, was moved and was likely to have become the core of the present manager's house.

The homestead was the largest domestic work designed by Dods, which was actually built. Its cost is not known but it is estimated it would have been more than £3,000. The records which pertain to the house include the working drawings and details as well as a specification and bill of quantities. This in itself is very rare and helps to interpret the work that was undertaken. The design was not typical of other designs by Dods for houses or homesteads. Unlike other domestic works it used many of the details of the old homestead such as the verandah posts and balustrade and replicated them so that the completed building had consistency. This may have been a request of its owners, or it may have been entirely Dods' decision, but it was different to the approach used with other additions to houses, where the new work was very distinct from the old. With houses where additions were made, like 'Callandar House' for his brother Dr Espie Dods, or at 'Glengariff' for T C Beirne at Hendra, Dods did not try and match details of the original buildings.

Nindooinbah 2005, Nindooinbah 2011

Nindooinbah in 2005



nra | earc™

The explanation may be simply that Dods liked the robust nature of the 1858 homestead and saw this as an opportunity to complete it. In any event he did make improvements to it such as replacing all the existing French lights with much wider (5'0") openings to improve cross ventilation.

The early house was raised on stumps and this was a departure from the construction of other homesteads in the vicinity such as 'Mundoolun', which was also in the Collins ownership. The tradition, which dated from the 1840's, had been to build on a foundation of logs lying horizontally on the ground rather than to use 'blocks' or 'stumps' projected vertically from the ground. The 1908 additions to 'Nindooinbah', while supported on stumps, appeared from the western side to sit low on the ground. The levels had been excavated and shaped to give it this setting, which concealed the stumps. This was consistent with Dods dislike of highset houses and his preference for connecting the house visually to the ground. On the garden elevation the space between the stumps was infilled with lattice in the manner of the 1858 house.

The external cladding of 12" chamfer boards was matched in the new work but a visible joint maintained to show where the old walls met new walls. Although not detailed on the drawings, much of the old house

was reconstructed. Cedar had been used widely in its construction even to the rafters and the floorboards which were 1 1/4" thick. The verandahs were replaced with crows-ash tongue and groove boards and the old verandah flooring in cedar was reused as lining boards within the roof space.

Some other elements of the original verandahs can be seen reused as floor and verandah framing. The work was completed by 1908 judging by the date incorporated into the plaster decoration in the dining room ceiling. The dining room itself is without parallel as an example of Dods' interior work in an Arts and Crafts manner. In fact it would be difficult to find a better example in Australia of its type. Its vaulted plaster ceiling, sparingly modelled with enrichment is combined with silky oak panelling and built in furniture, and a secretly nailed hardwood floor. The chimney piece in sandstone and glazed tiling combine with the other elements including distinctive joinery to the bay windows to produce a room relying on minimal finishes and superior workmanship. The inscription over the fireplace is totally in keeping with its English or Scottish origins:

'The garden is gay in the month of May the fire the flower of a winters day.'

Nindooindah 2005, Nindooindah 2011

Nindooindah in 2005



nra | earc™

One can see parallels here with the work of Sir Robert Lorimer, who was considered the finest Scots architect of his day and who was a close friend of Dods. The dining room had a built-in sideboard within the western bay window and an upholstered seat within the eastern bay. The windows here have particularly heavy and additional transoms with many small panes of glass. The stain glass patterns on the west side were simplified from the detail shown on Dods' drawings, in fact a rather ordinary green patterned glass was used. In addition, a china cabinet was concealed behind the panelling, which helped distinguish this house as very up to date. What is important about the design of this room is that no finishes were used to disguise the nature of its materials. The plaster was left unpainted and the panelling was left raw. The floor of Red Stringybark had only a beeswax polish. The stone too was left natural all of which was consistent with an Arts & Crafts approach. The dining room suite, while not to Dods design is still a valuable addition to this room and has survived.

The house in its enlarged form was indeed a superior specimen of its type. Dods replaced the timber shingles of the old homestead with corrugated iron and introduced a slatted soffit to the verandah edge, which allowed increased cross ventilation. The additions also included ventilation openings in the 3 gables of the western elevation to supplement 2 more traditional iron ventilators on the ridge. On this house there was no horizontal ventilated ridge as found on almost all of Dods other houses with iron roofs.

The gables on the western elevation form an important part of the design. To equalise the width of the 2 wings of which the bedroom side was the greater, a double gable was used on that side. This offbeat symmetry was typical of Dods and can be seen also in the garden front and its relationship with the avenue of palms centred on the northern most staircases rather than on the central gable.

Unlike most other houses by Dods, this project made extensive use of wallpaper. Wallpaper was commonly used in Queensland homes and was readily available through a number of local suppliers. Wallpaper had been used in the early house also. The specification notes that walls in the added 1908 rooms were to be sheeted in flush 6" boards to which hessian was attached ready for wallpaper. In all, 11 rooms were wallpapered and the ceilings and frieze were included in most.

Much of the wallpaper is in poor condition (I would argue its condition; while it is poor compared to new papers, it is good compared to papers of a similar age which survive insitu) having suffered from acid attack through the hessian and timber boarding to which it has been fixed. The most significant paper is in the drawing room and in the guest room. The floor coverings, wallpaper and window furnishings are discussed in a separate report.

Nindooindah 2011



Nindooindah in 2005

nra | earc™

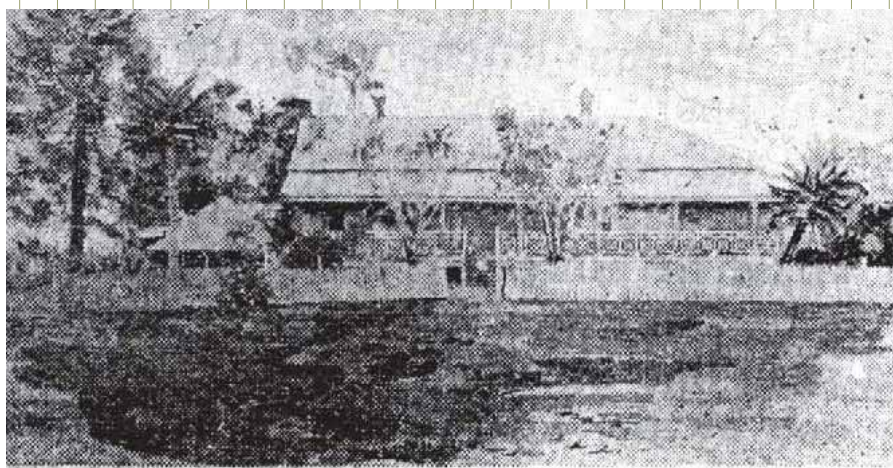
There were a number of differences between what was shown on Dods' drawings and what was actually built. This was not unusual as changes were often made during construction. It nevertheless needs comment. The drawings show a large central stair to the eastern (garden) front whereas twin staircases symmetrical about the centre gable were in fact used and a parterre type garden bed, heart shaped, was on axis with the stair closest to the drawing room. This was a more complex idea than as shown on the drawings and replicated the position of the earlier 1858 stair. It also worked better to have the stairs either side of the gable that was added central to this elevation.

The service wing was lengthened from that drawn to bring it level with the bedroom wing. This involved some planning changes. An important part of the design was the ceremonial entrance path beneath a substantial pergola with a grapevine growing over it. This element terminated with a balustraded porch decorated with a low parapet balustrade around its roof. Although it no longer survives, this element was built as drawn, and it appears in photographs after the work was completed. The porch was later enlarged to make it suitable for dancing and the posts reused. The new building while lacking the finesse of its predecessor still has significance in that it marked the visit of the Prince of Wales who famously, failed to appear in July 1920, choosing instead to visit the nearby property of 'Coochin Coochin'.

Another addition likely to have been carried out at this time is a delightful corner bathroom in the form of a 5 sided bay window, Ensuite to the best bedroom. Its painted panelled walls and continuous sash windows and fittings make it an extraordinary survivor of the period. The most significant rooms are in the garden front part of the house and include the best bedroom with its Ensuite, the drawing room, the telephone room or former entrance hall, the dining room and the guest bedroom. The guest bedroom adjacent to the dining room was included in the 1908 work. According to Philip Cox a large Bunya pine was felled to extend the house at this point and Dods suggested that the timber be used to turn into furniture for the room. This was apparently done and included was the chimney piece also of Bunya pine. The furniture was probably not designed by Dods although the chimney piece may well have been. This room is considered to be the next most significant room in the house after the dining room and contains a complete decorative scheme. Adjoining the guest room are the bathroom facilities for guests including bathroom and separate ladies and gents toilets.

Nindooinbah in 2005

1900 photograph, view from the east



Nindooinba, Albert River.

nra | earc™

The 1920 ballroom which replaced the 1908 porch is again of considerable significance. In the absence of any documentation of its design it would seem that the integrity of its enclosure is suspect. It was either hastily conceived or has had a series of repairs as it lacks the attention to detail apparent in the rest of the work. Dods was not part of this later work as he left Brisbane in 1913, dissolved his partnership with Hall in 1916 and died in 1920. The homestead as a whole is a stunning example of its type as well as being one of Dods' best works. Dods' work is highly regarded but few houses have survived in anything like the way they were designed or built.

The bedrooms in the north wing and the kitchen and servant rooms in the south complete an impressive and clear plan surrounded by generous verandahs. There are flyscreen doors to most rooms and a flyscreened enclosure to both verandahs outside the best bedroom. Of course the homestead is the largest of a group of buildings on the site which when included with the outbuildings and other houses amounted to almost a village.

The homestead has been home to three generations of the same family being that of William Collins (1846 – 1909) and his wife Gwendoline. Although William lived in the house for less than a year after its completion. Gwendoline stayed on until her daughter, Beryl married Robert de Burgh Persse in 1938. Even then Gwendoline had the best bedroom set aside for herself until her death in 1962.

Beryl Persse also outlived her husband and stayed in the house until her death in 1982. Her daughter Margaret married Patrick Hockey in 1983 and outlived him until dying of cancer in 2004.

The story of Nindooinbah is much related to these 3 women and the wealth that enabled the place to be established to such a high standard and its gradual decline thereafter.

[Nindooinbah is a private house, not a museum. However, it is rare for wallpapers, carpets and window furnishings to survive for almost a century as elements of what was once a rich and diverse collection. Although not a museum, the relationship between the surviving items and the building in which they are located is strong. They provided a backdrop for the furniture, fixtures and furnishings throughout the house, and give insight into the decorative inclinations, social status and style of the family, the architect and early 20th century society in general. They provide information about the design intent of the architect, Robin Dods, and although it is not known whether he personally selected the decorative elements, he specified that the walls were to be prepared for paper, specifying costs and, therefore, quality of the wallpapers, and dictating to some extent the arrangement of the papers by placement of items such as picture rails. The finishes allow the rooms to be 'read', providing information about social conventions of the Edwardian period by affirming the hierarchical pattern of room usage.

Nindooinbah sits in a valley overlooking a lagoon, flanked by alluvial land, the Albert River and mountain ranges. This drama of this setting is enhanced by the sense of anticipation engendered by the approach to Nindooinbah via Nindooinbah House Road which offers significant views, and by the driveway to the house which contributes to the sense of entry to a private world.



Nindooibah in 2005

6.3 The Nindooibah homestead

Explanatory note: The Nindooibah homestead is significant for the manner in which the 1858 house was incorporated into a larger house by the architect, R S Dods, and for the overall intactness of the Dods' design. Further, the house reflects the status and lifestyle of each occupant and demonstrates a sense of refinement and comfort. Domestic hierarchies are demonstrated by the arrangement and use of spaces in the house and in surviving wallpapers, carpets and window furnishings. The homestead and the domestic utility buildings should be considered as one entity.

6.3.i The house as a whole

- The plan clarity, intactness and the detail of the homestead, and the sense of scale demonstrated by the homestead, should be conserved by minimising change and limiting interventions.
- As a matter of principle, the zoning of the house in three areas— bedrooms, reception rooms, services – and the use of the rooms should be maintained.
- Evidence of the original house and extension to the homestead in the periods 1906-08, 1919-20 should be conserved.
- The expression of the values, tastes and interests of different owners in different periods, including several interspersed periods of expansion and contraction of owners' fortunes, should be conserved.
- Wear and patination reflects the continuing use of Nindooibah and should be respected.]

Nindooibah 1908, Nindooibah 2005, Nindooibah 2011



The Outcomes

nra | **earc**[™]

The property today stands as a testament to the owners vision of a research and development asset as well as a business which has been invested in heavily to now become one of the country's leading IVF Beef Breeding facility in Australia/world. The pharmaceutical knowledge and the financial ability came from the owners long term business development acumen through the development of their own pharmaceutical company – the philosophy of what was good for humans is good for the beef industry.

Today the building stock at Nindooibah stands among the most significant In Queensland and not only is it a working asset but it is one of the most delightful homes to live in Australia. This project exemplifies the emerging fusion of architecture adaptive reuse and contemporary detailing which morphs into one exciting and memorable experience.

Nindooibah, as a result of this substantial investment and vision of the current owners, will stand the test of time for many years to come.

Think Green.