



ACT
Government

Namadgi National Park Huts

Project proposal

November 2022

Namadgi National Park Huts

Background

The Orroral Valley bushfire of January 2020 burnt more than 80% of Namadgi National Park, causing significant damage to natural, cultural and social values throughout the park. This included two heritage listed stockman huts located in the Booth Range area: Demandering Hut and Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut.

There were in the order of seventy-two huts and homesteads in the area that became Namadgi National Park in the middle of twentieth century. Demandering Hut and Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut were two of the 15 that remained in 2020.

Demandering Hut was constructed by Bill Cotter and Jack Simpson in 1945 and was named after the Cotter family property, Demandering Run, on which the hut was constructed. This leasehold was purchased in 1860 by Jack's great grandfather, Garrett Cotter, after whom the Cotter River and surrounding area is named. After 1956 it became an outstation of the Mt Clear property owned by the Curtis family. The hut was used as part of the summer season movement of sheep to the area of Tantangara in what is now Kosciuszko National Park. The grazing leases were terminated in 1979 and the area became part of Gudgenby Nature Reserve, and then Namadgi National Park.

Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut was built in 1967 by Max Oldfield and his cousin Bert (Herbert) Oldfield. Around half of the huts in Namadgi National Park are in some way associated with the Oldfield family.

Both huts are included on ACT Heritage Register as part of the serial listing Stockmen's Huts Namadgi National Park (H58, Demandering item H58a and Max and Bert Oldfield's item H58c), with consideration of their aesthetic, historic, social and rarity values.

Proposal

Following consultation with the ACT Heritage Council and key stakeholders, the ACT Government is proposing a three-pronged approach to addressing the loss of the two huts:

Two new hut structures

In commemoration of Demandering Hut and Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut, two new hut structures are proposed. While the form and materials of the proposed structures will respect and reflect their original values, their location, design and construction details will be subtly different. In recognition of the social value the huts represent, both structures will be designed to provide a basic level of emergency shelter for bushwalkers during inclement weather.

Demandering Hut is proposed to be rebuilt as an enclosed structure resembling the original hut, approximately 30 metres from the centre of the old site. It will honour the simple form, size and external cladding materials of the old and convey its internal spaces, including the open gable roof space.

As shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2, construction details will be varied from the original to assist the old-to-new story, construction ease and fire risk response. Examples include: a plain not framed door, single pane casement windows, fire mesh screening between the ground and the floor level and a varied fireplace and chimney design using a slow combustion stove.

To commemorate the **Max and Bert Oldfields hut's** historic values, an open 'lean-too' structure is proposed to be erected approximately 35m south of the original site that will provide shelter from prevailing weather events and interpretive material.

As shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4, the new structure will have four round timber corner posts and a low skillion roof form as that of the old hut. The new structure will provide shelter and weather protection on the west and south sides with corrugated iron sheeting but remain open on the sunny northern and eastern sides. This will provide a strong visual connection with the original hut site and its broader setting, supporting contemplation and commemoration of the original hut place.

Research, conservation and interpretation

A 'Historic Huts Project' pursuing research, conservation and interpretation of Demanding Hut and Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut is proposed. This project will bring together family and caretaker site knowledge, with built heritage specialist and archaeological investigation, to build a single archival record of place and its conservation needs. This component will help communicate the extent, construction and use of each original hut place.

Conservation Management Plan

A single Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the series of Stockmen's Hut Sites in Namadgi National Park that form a serial listing on the ACT Heritage Register is proposed. This CMP will assist the ACT Parks and Conservation Service with land management responsibilities and volunteer organisations, such as Kosciuszko Huts Association, with required maintenance. It will encompass any individual Conservation Studies and those prepared by the Kosciuszko Huts Association for Demanding Hut and Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut in the 1990s.

The CMP will be informed by the first two components of this project and therefore not pursued prior to their completion.

Have YourSay

To have YourSay on the Namadgi National Park Huts Project Proposal, complete the YourSay Conversations survey before 13 February 2023.

Site plans and artists impressions

Demandering Hut

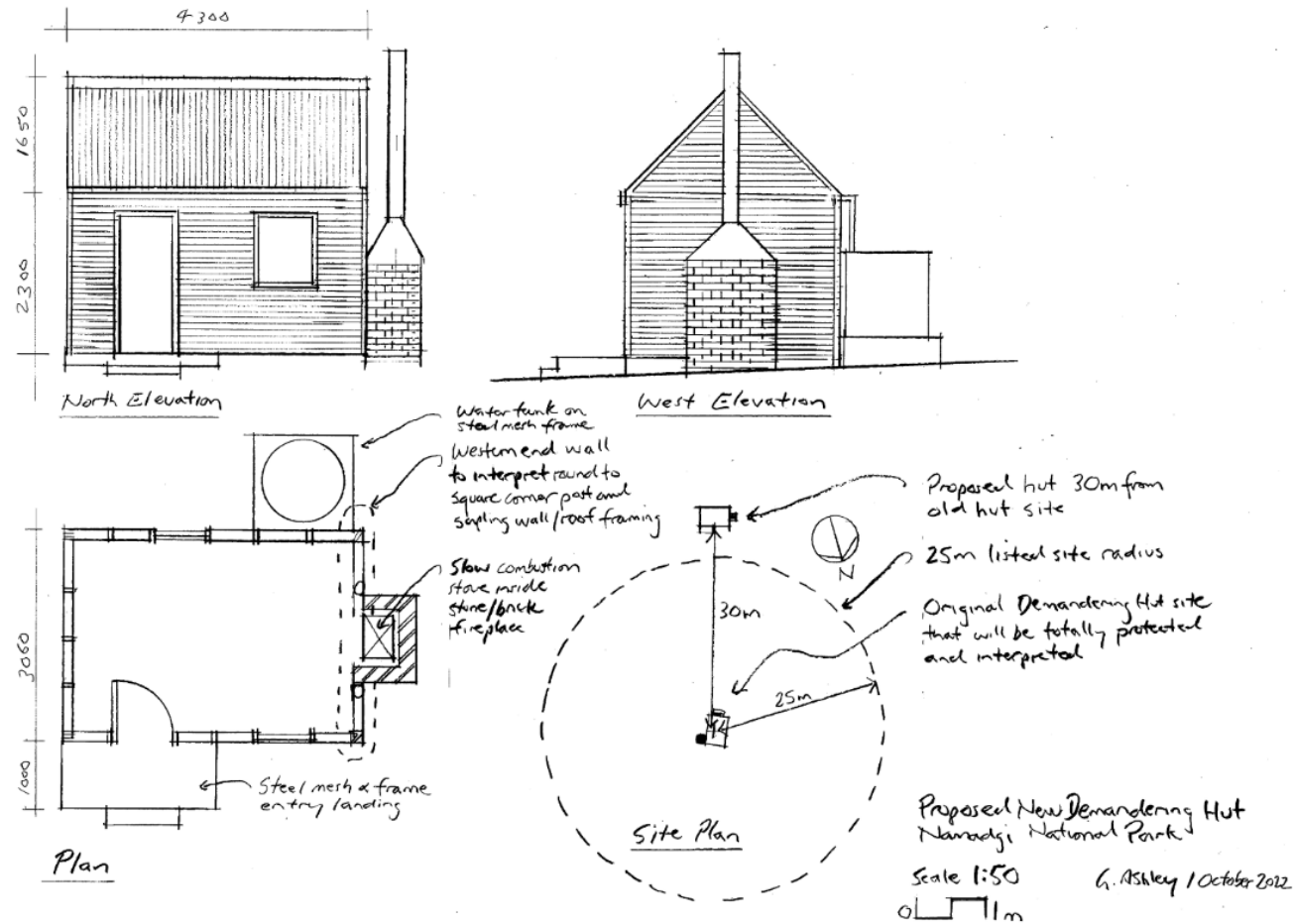


Figure 1. New Demandering Hut Structure — site plan showing original hut place and new hut, floor plan and elevations. (Source: G Ashley)



Figure 2. Artist's view of Demanding Hut place and New Demanding hut from the approach path from the Naas Valley Fire Trail. (Source: Colin Small)

Max and Bert Oldfield Hut

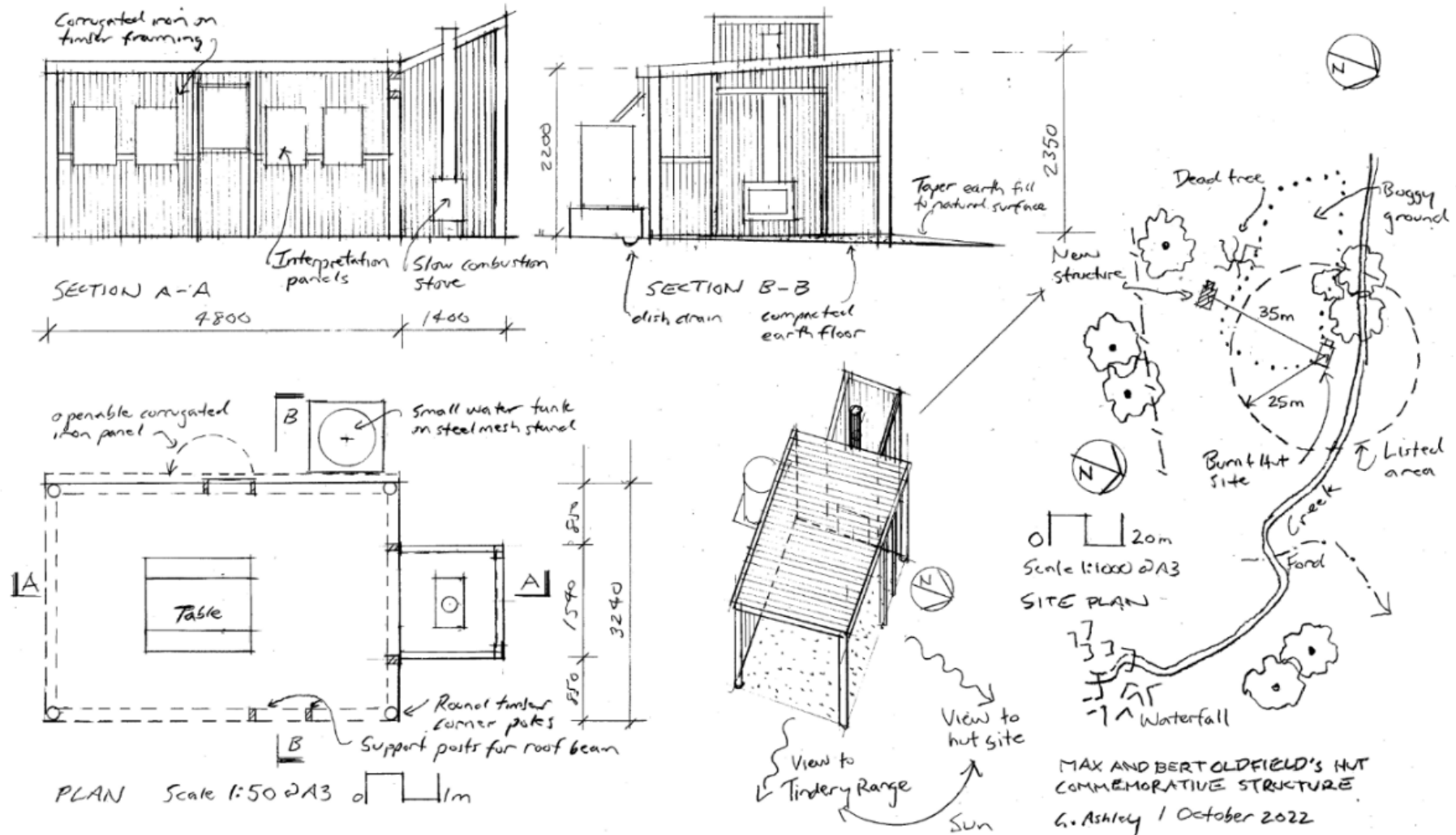


Figure 3. Max and Bert Oldfield's New Structure — site plan showing original hut place and the new structure location and a floor plan and sections. (Source: G Ashley)



Figure 4. Artist's view of Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut site from behind the proposed partially enclosed structure looking north towards the original hut place and east with distant view of the Tindery Range. (Source: Colin Small).