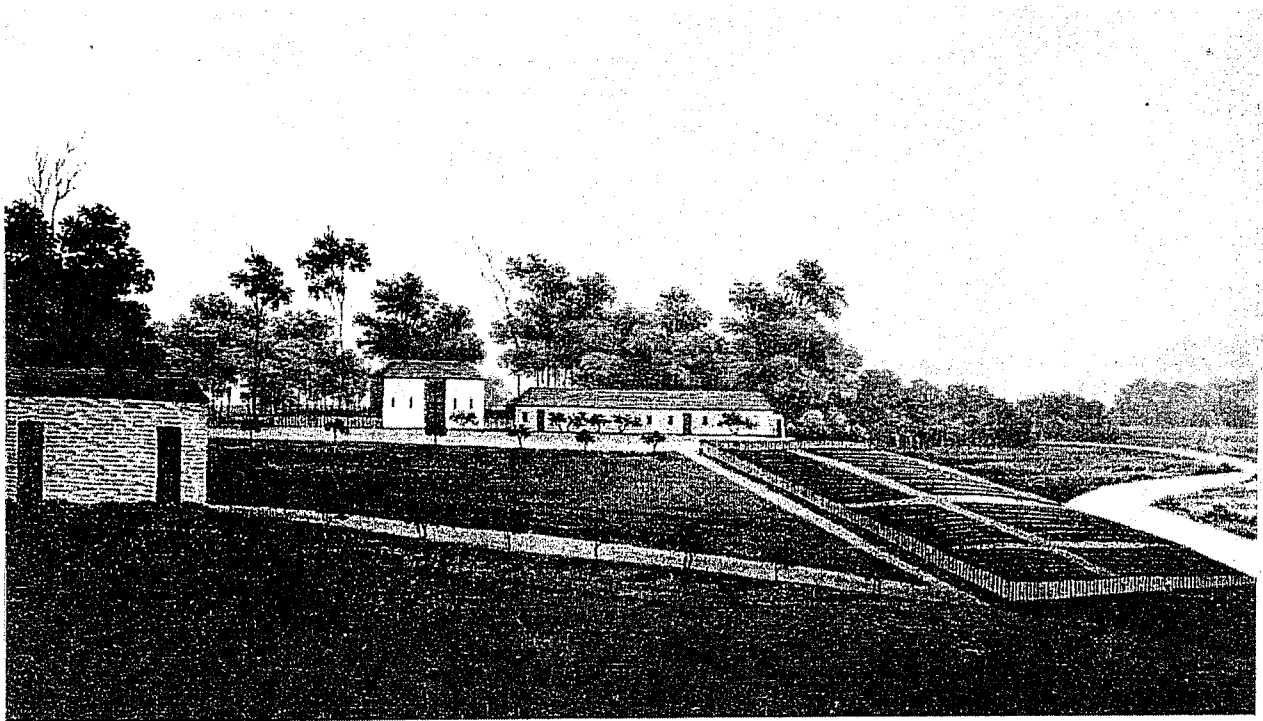




**HERITAGE LANDSCAPE
AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT OF
PART OF THE SITE OF
GOVERNOR BLIGH'S 'MODEL FARM' *BLIGHTON*
NEAR PITT TOWN, NSW**



Prepared for the Johnson Property Group

by

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November 2005

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1.0 Introduction & Aim

As part of the studies being undertaken on the site generally known as Blighton, near Pitt Town, the Johnson Property Group engaged Mayne-Wilson & Associates, Conservation Landscape Architects, to identify, record and analyse its landscape and visual character values in order to assess elements which may have heritage significance.

1.1 The Study Area

The study area for the purpose of this report is shown in Figure 1 below. It comprises Lots 11 and 12 of DP 1021340 near Pitt Town, bounded by the Hawkesbury River in the north, Hawkesbury St. in the east, Hall Street in the south, and Punt St. in the west. The total site area is approximately 19.4 hectares.

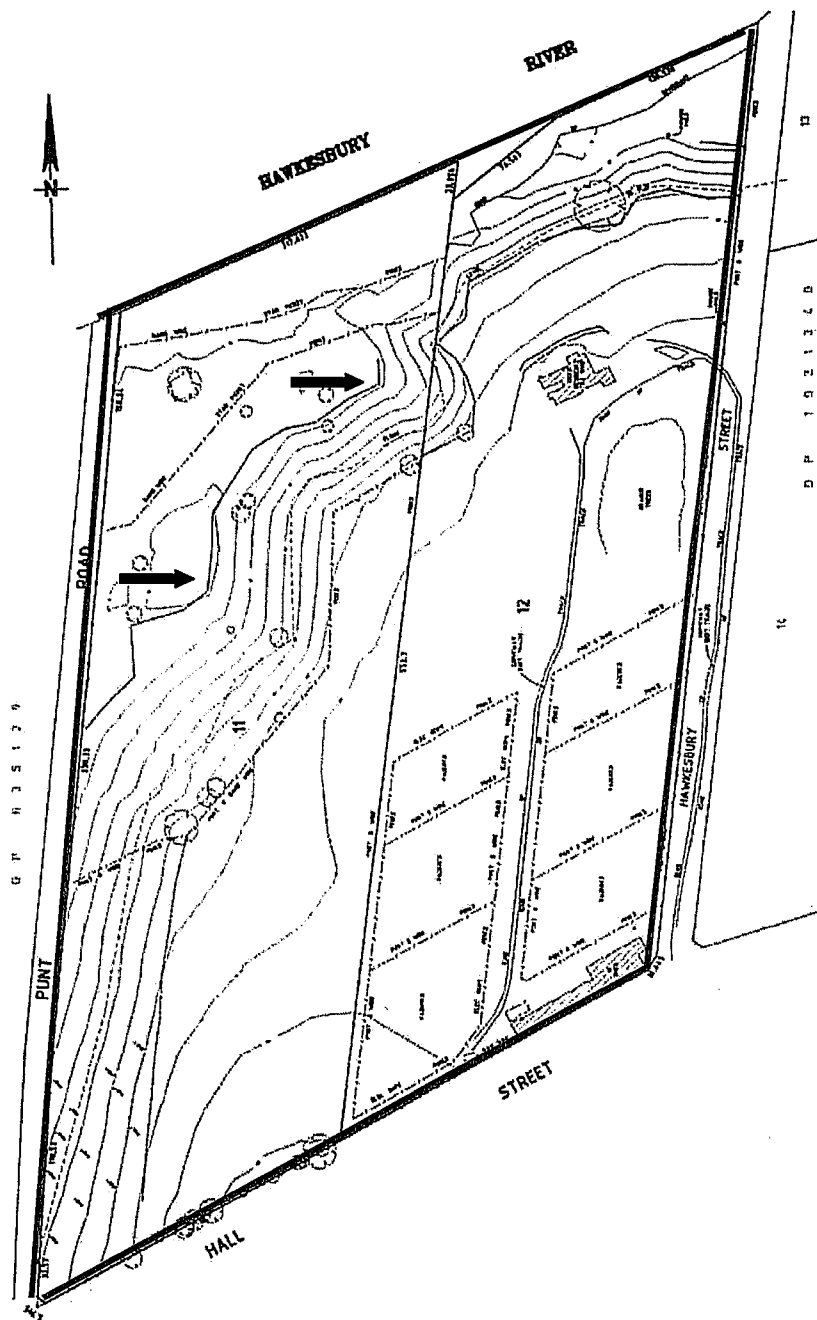


Figure 1 – The study area is defined by the red line. The 100 year flood line is arrowed.

1.2 Report Structure and Methodology

This report commences with a brief overview of the historical development of the *Blighton* site (the study area), obtained from existing documentation. This includes an examination and analysis of the historical drawings and paintings that were prepared in the first half of the 19th century, as well as 20th century photographs, maps, and aerial photographs. It then identifies whatever physical fabric – principally vegetation and landform – is present on the site and discusses whether any of that fabric may be associated with its early development. Associated with this is the recording and examination of views into, out of, and within, the study area, and the extent to which these can be identified with the early paintings and views of the *Blighton* farm area.

Items identified through a site visit have been marked on the site survey plan contained in Appendix A. The landscape findings are presented principally through photographic evidence, with captions drawing attention to elements that may be relevant for a determination of possible heritage significance. Following a discussion as to whether any of the available evidence, or elements, could be clearly identified with the earliest stages of development of the site, this report then assess their cultural values through a statement of heritage significance. Elements identified as having significance are then ranked, followed by advice as to whether they warrant conservation, and if so, whether their conservation may provide constraints to possible future development of the site.

1.3 Authorship

This heritage impact assessment report has been prepared by Warwick Mayne-Wilson, Director of Mayne-Wilson & Associates, in consultation with Graham Brooks, Director of Graham Brooks and Associates, and Peter Douglas of Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions Pty Ltd. Ari Anderson of MWA assisted in fieldwork and in mapping the findings.

1.4 Limitations

The authors were not requested to undertake original research but to rely on existing documentation already prepared on the *Blighton* estate and on findings resulting from further research undertaken by Peter Douglas' team. While generally these documents were adequate for the purpose, they did not provide much detail on landscape elements, roadways, and visual issues. However, it does not appear from the Douglas team extensive research that such detail is ever likely to be available. A further limitation is that the actual sites of the farm buildings have not been clearly identified and pegged out, and that virtually all above-ground traces have been removed over the nearly two centuries since Governor Bligh was deposed, particularly during the later orcharding period. Accordingly, some assumptions made in this assessment must necessarily be a little conjectural.

1.5 Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank Graham Brooks for providing briefing and documents on the site and the issues involved, and Peter Douglas and his team for providing supplementary research information.

2.0 Historical Overview

Governor Bligh's 'model farm' *Blighton* was established in 1807 on part of land previously granted to Thomas Tylor in May 1797, to which Bligh added the farm he purchased from James Simpson, to the north-east of Tylor's land. When Bligh acquired the land, Tylor had already erected a cottage and some farm buildings on his land. However, Bligh added new buildings to it and preparations for more were in progress when Bligh was deposed. To date, only one watercolour painting, that attributed to George Evans, shows only 3 of the 10 or 11 *Blighton* farm buildings in 1810. Descriptions of the buildings associated with early development of the farm are given in Comber's

report¹, pages 15 to 21, and also in Peter Douglas's more recent report² and do not need to be repeated here. The latter report contains a more detailed analysis of the documentary evidence, and includes two additional buildings not mentioned by Comber.

However, from the site visit undertaken in September 2004, no above-ground remains of these buildings was evident, and investigations by the Douglas team did not definitively reveal such sites. However, both this author and that team have concluded that the intensive cultivation of the land for orcharding during the 20th century has led to the removal of practically all fabric on the surface of the land that could have been associated with the early settlement and occupation of the study area.

2.1 Analysis of Early Images

Because of the lack of extant physical fabric from the Bligh period, this author (and others) have had to fall back on an analysis of three images painted at, or shortly after, the period of Bligh's farming activities. However, even an analysis of the one painting – that attributed to George Evans, which includes buildings - does not provide definitive evidence as to their precise sites.

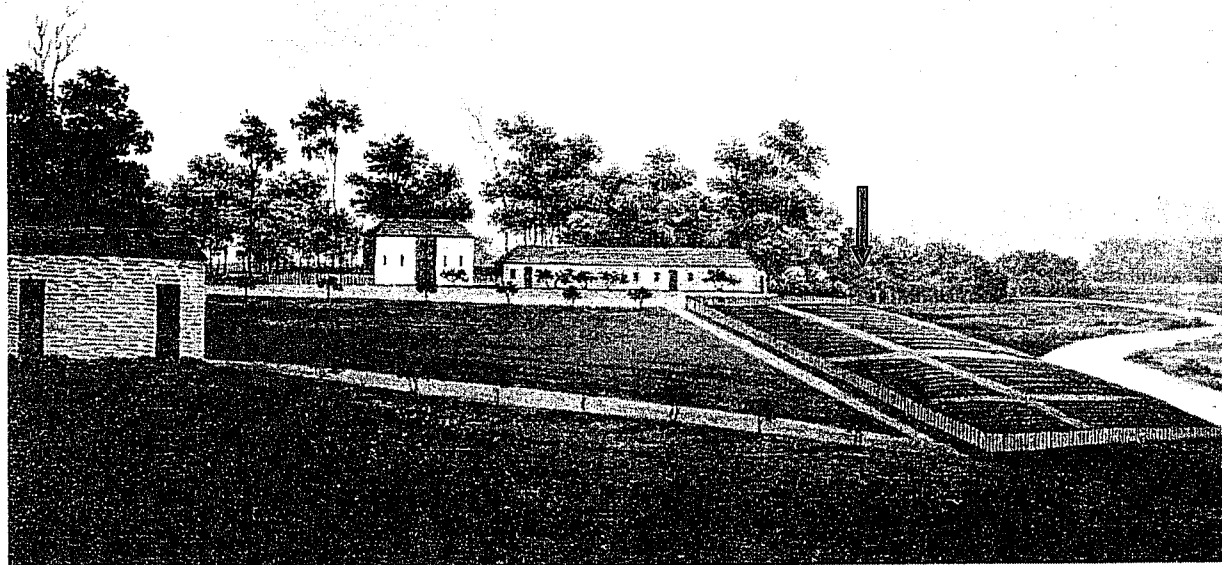


Figure 2 This watercolour painting of the Blighton estate in 1810 attributed to Evans appears to have been made from near the eastern boundary of the farm, with the York Reach of the Hawkesbury River on the far right. (However, the bend shown in the river toward the Wilberforce Reach appears to have been exaggerated.) The painting shows the river flats in their correct location (though broader than they are today), with three farm buildings on the ridge above. A fourth (arrowed) appears to be located on the river flats, and it has not so far been conclusively identified. The long, low single storey weatherboard shed with shingled roof (at center) is likely to be the 200 feet long shed mentioned in Andrew Thompson's reports, while the two storey building close to it is likely to be the brick barn. This analysis is similar to that in the Comber report – see the extract of its Figure 21, which is reproduced on the following page for ease of reference. The structure to the far left of the image has not been conclusively identified, but may be Tylor's corn house as it has no windows, and is consistent with the location of two of Tylor's buildings shown in the Clint plan of 1841.

The Evans' painting also shows a somewhat angular field at its center, which is bounded by pathways or tracks, and planted around by trees at regular intervals – quite possibly citrus or other fruit trees. The multi-

¹ Comber, J. 2004. "Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Archaeological Survey and Assessment, "Blighton", Pitt Town.

² Archaeological and Heritage Management Solutions Pty Ltd. (AHMS) October 2005. "Historical Archaeological Assessment Research Design & Test Excavation Methodology for Lots 11 – 18 in DP 1021340 land east of Punt Rd & north of Hall St Pitt Town, NSW"

trunked trees in front of the 200 ft long shed do not have the form of oak trees, and may also be fruit trees. A stout paling fence links the shed and barn, continuing the enclosure of the stockyard.

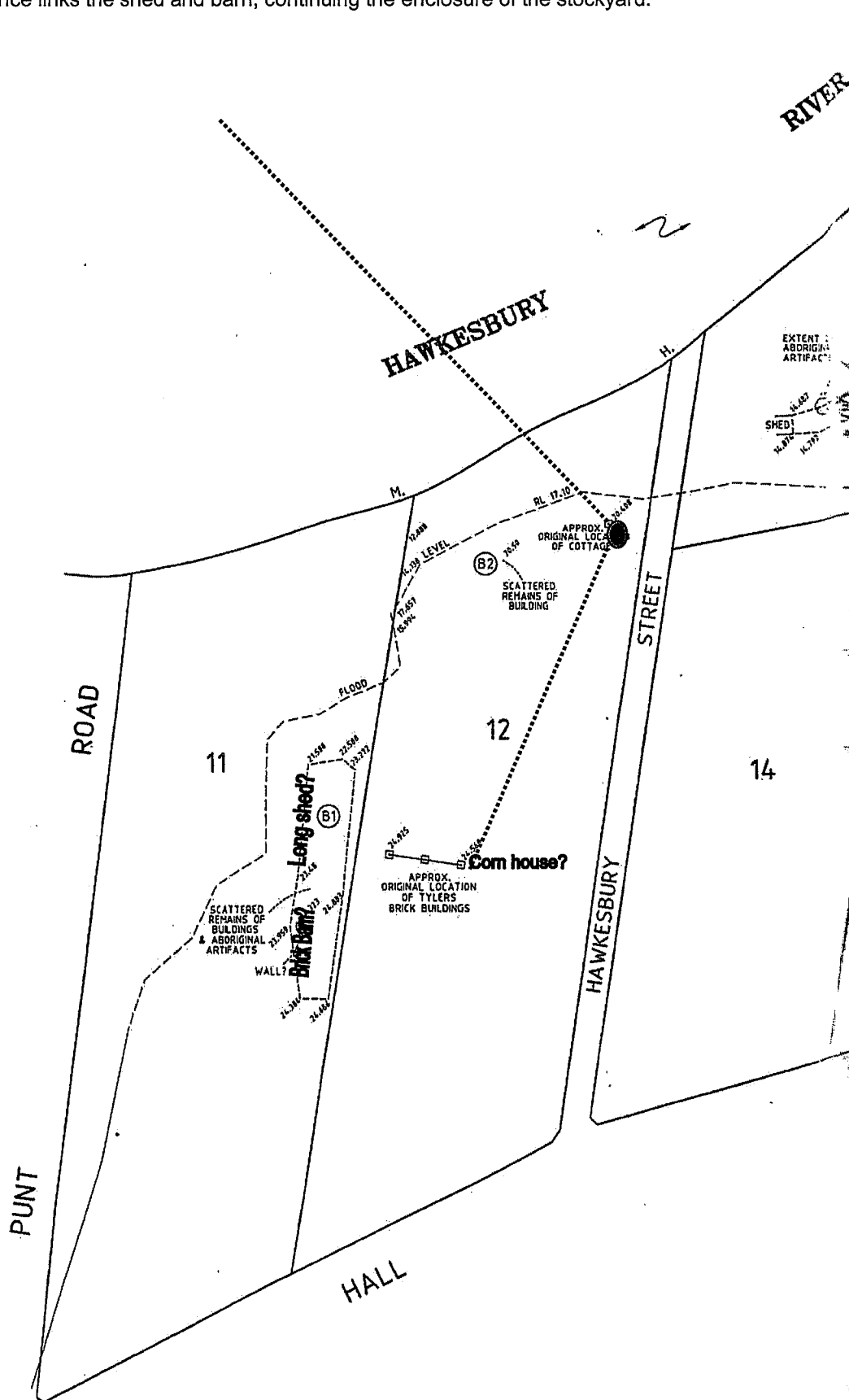


Fig. 3 Excerpt from Fig. 21 in the Comber report showing at B1 the scatter of artefacts consistent with the long shed and the brick barn of Blighton. The blue overlay shows the estimated viewing point of the painter (Evans).



Figure 4 This earlier painting by J. W. Lewin c.1806-08, also made from the east, also shows a mild bend of the Hawkesbury River northward from the York Reach before making a broader curve toward the Wilberforce Reach that tends south-west. Unlike Evan's painting, this image shows the farmland virtually depleted of trees, and no buildings on it – perhaps because Bligh's buildings had not yet been erected. There are, however, small farm cottages on the far side of the river, and a shed on the flats of Blighton (blue arrow) - possibly the same building as that arrowed in Fig. 2 above. A track appears to run down the slope (arrowed white, just behind the large gum tree in the center of the painting) toward the river, and a corresponding track appears to have been constructed opposite it. This 'prospect' to the Blue Mountains was highly valued at the time.

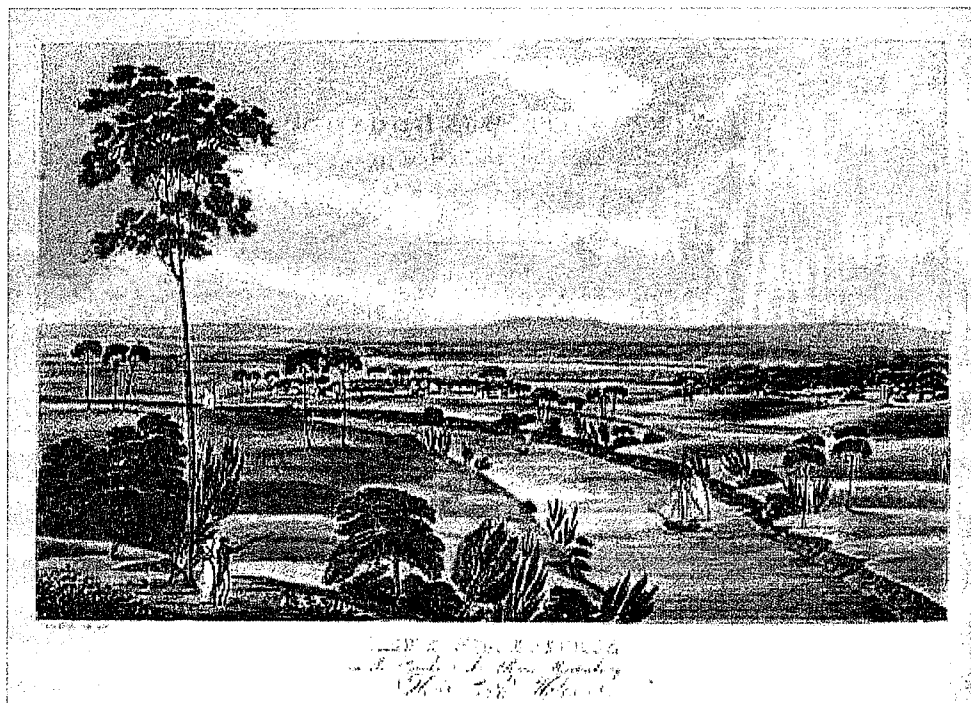


Figure 5 This Lycett painting of c.1820-22 of the view toward Wilberforce from Bligh's former farm depicts the river curving toward the south-west, with the flats (Pitt Town Bottoms) in the center-left of the painting. It also shows very few trees on any of the land, and none of Bligh's buildings in the foreground. It was painted from further to the west than those of Evans or Lewin, and presents a somewhat idealized landscape.

2.1.1 Findings

It appears that two of the historical paintings of the prospect from Bligh's farm were made from the eastern side of the ridge (i.e. from Lot 12), while the third (Lycett's) may have been made from the edge of the ridge of Lot 11. The artists of these three paintings were clearly captivated by 'the prospect' looking west up the Hawkesbury River with the town of Wilberforce in the middleground across the River, and the Blue Mountains serving as a backdrop and view closer on the horizon. These components – elevated position, curving water, contrast between open land and township, and mountain backdrop – were typically favoured by artists of the time and, indeed, are still regarded as key attributes of high scenic quality in landscape views today. It explains why commentators of the period (including Governor Macquarie) praised Bligh's choice of land and siting for his farm buildings, and why the new house on Lot 12 has been located where it can capture just that view.

Because of the repetitive nature of these paintings, and their satisfying, picturesque quality, these images have become embedded in the consciousness of those who know the area and take an interest in its historical development. Their association with the troubled Governor Bligh, and the aspirations he had for creating a 'model farm' – only partly realized because of his brief occupation of the land – have reinforced and embellished the perceived significance of the site, or at least the northern segment of it and its relationship with the River. In the complete absence of any remnant structures on the ridge, it is the embedded image of the visual catchment out from it that is all that remains for people to grasp or hold onto, in terms of appreciating and determining the site's cultural significance.

2.2 Aerial Photographs

An examination of the earliest available aerial photograph, 1947, reveals very little fabric of any kind on the study area. There is no clear sign of 'Bligh's oak trees' (for which the farm was once noted) although a dark smudge is evident along the western edge of the ridge where it has been assessed they were located (see below), possibly indicating where they had been burnt after felling earlier that year. A small scatter of trees appear on the flats, near the river edge. On the lot to the east of Lot 12, across Hawkesbury St., which once comprised Simpson's land grant, there is a scatter of trees, but their species cannot be determined from the aerial photograph. There is also no evidence of the present remnant (mostly dead) Pine Trees on Lots 11 and 12, which indicates they had not yet been planted. Orchards are already present to the east and west of the study area, and these were intensified over the ensuing decades as the aerial photographs for 1955 and 1982 show.

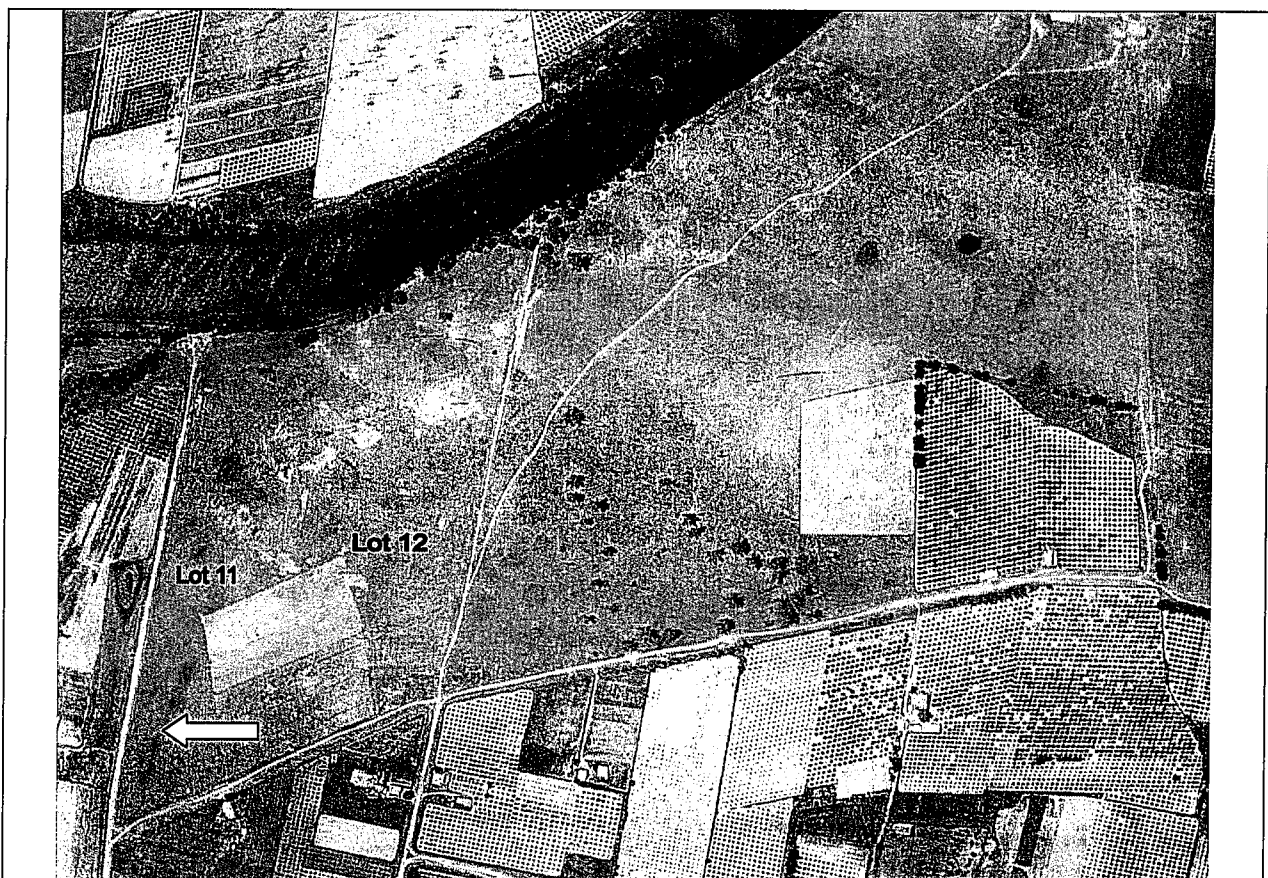


Figure 6 - 1947 Aerial photograph, showing how denuded lots 11 and 12 were at that time. There is no clear evidence as to the location of Bligh's oaks on those lots, although the smudge (arrowed) in the corner of Lot 11 indicates their possible remains. Source: Landsphoto NSW 61-146 Windsor Run 46 January 1947



Figure 7 - 1955 Aerial photograph, showing the intensive planting of fruit trees on the ridge area of lots 11 and 12. Note the boundary plantings of pine trees, which judging by their size, must have been planted in the late 1940s (but after the 1947 aerial photograph was taken). Hawkesbury St. (yellow arrow) has now developed a form more like a road reserve. The first section of the fruit packing shed (red arrow) is now in place along Hall St. Note the rectangular dam in the north-west corner of lot 11 (blue arrow).

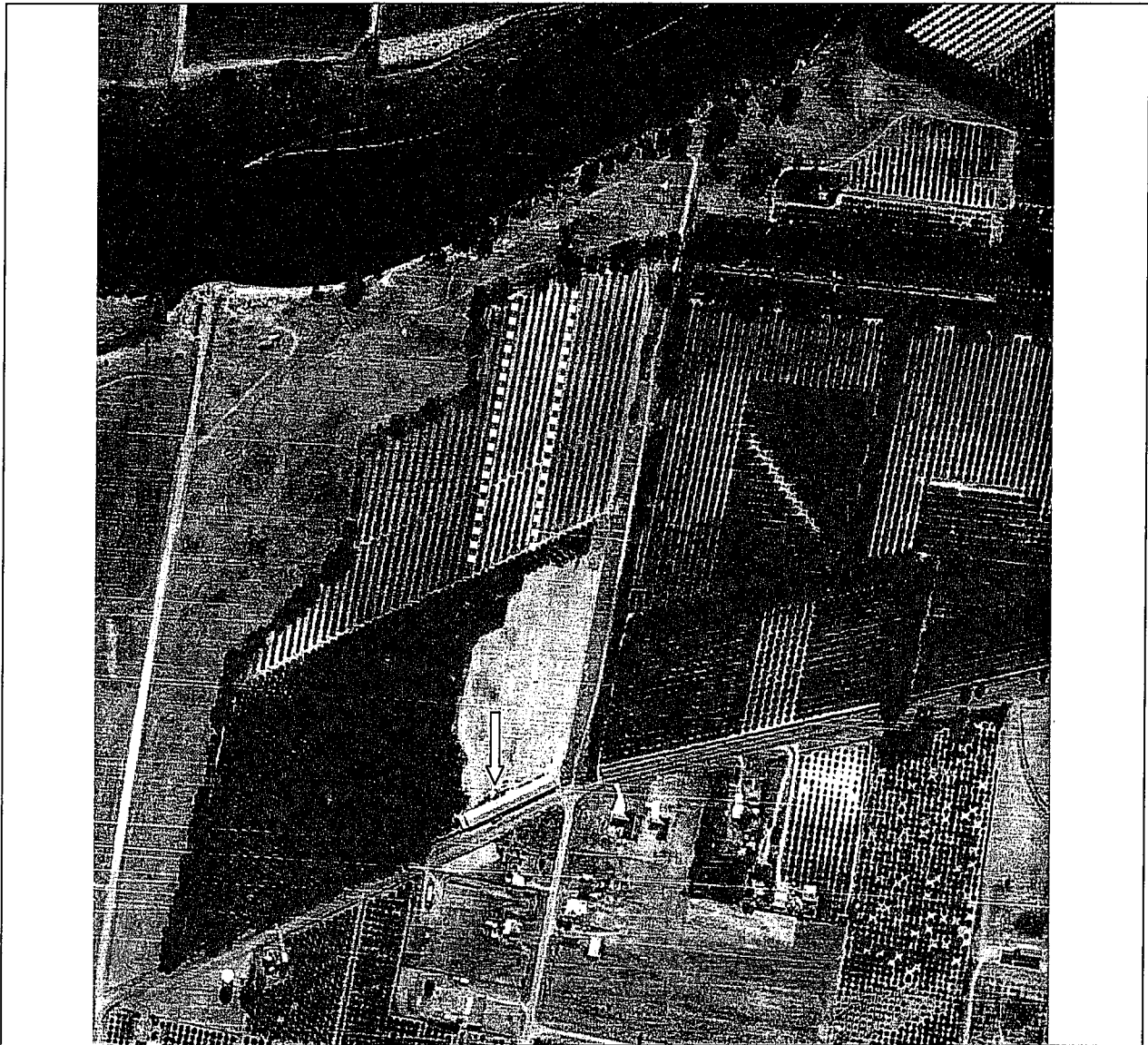


Figure 8 - This 1982 aerial photograph shows the intensity of cultivation of the land on the ridge. The orchard area closest to Hall St. has matured and developed a dense cover, and the Pine trees have reached a mature form. Some gaps in the regular row seen in the 1955 aerial are now apparent. The area lying between the white dashed lines appears to be lighter in colour and may be disturbed ground. Note the extension of the fruit packing shed (arrowed) and the cleared land to the north of it. There is no sign yet of the timber stockyard structures along Hawkesbury St. that are present today (see Figure P11)

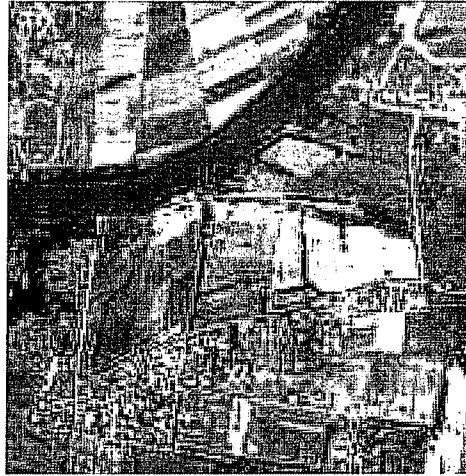


Figure 9 - This high-level 2001 aerial photograph indicates that the orchard trees have been removed and many of the Pine trees as well.

3.0 Physical Analysis

The baseline analysis of the physical characteristics of the study area has already been adequately described in chapter 3 of the Connell Wagner report³ and only key elements are summarized here. About 30% of the study area (below RL17.1) comprises alluvial flat land along the banks of the Hawkesbury River, with the remainder rising up a steep slope from 8m AHD to a relatively flat ridge of 24m. The outer edge of the flood plain occurs at about 17m AHD and is shown on the site survey plan at Figure 1.

The soils are mostly quaternary, being both alluvial and colluvial deposits. Those on the flats consist of gravel, sand, silt and clay, while those on the ridge comprise quartz sand (reddish brown iron oxide coated), clay and minor pebbles. Patches of the harder underlying Wiannamatta shales occur along the western edge of study area, and to the north-east of it, within the northern loop of the river. These more erosion resistant strata have determined the meandering course of the river and also the steepest slopes of the ridge edge. The alluvial soil on the ridge proved easier to cultivate than Wianamatta shales customarily do, and produced good crops for the early settlers. They also later proved highly suitable for orcharding.

The site visit revealed that as the land had been cultivated and irrigated for two centuries, and particularly intensively for orchards since the late 1940s, only fragmentary evidence was found of former buildings on the ridge. (The only structures today are the fruit storage sheds and the new house on the northern end of Lot 12). Only a few Pine trees remain on Lot 11, and none on Lot 12. With the exception of a few storm-damaged Pines along the boundary with Hall St., all the Pines were dead, most showing fire-blackened trunks. As the 1947 aerial photograph showed virtually no trees on Lot 11 or 12, it must be assumed that these Pines – and the few other species (an Oak, Camphor Laurel, and a few Eucalypts – were planted after that date. Several row plantings of trees, in fact, appear in their present location on the 1955 aerial photograph. None of them, therefore, have any heritage value.

The only above-ground evidence of old buildings was seen dumped around a couple of wattle trees in the lower, northern section of Lot 11. The origin of this structure is not known to this consultant, but it may be related to the removal of the small cottage, possibly that which once housed the punt operator. An oral history source may be able to throw light on that.

³ Connell Wagner. April 2003. "Pitt Town – Local Environmental Study", prepared for Hawkesbury Council. Revision 2, Reference 1119.01.GE
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3.1 Bligh's Oaks

These Oaks have been the subject of discussion in previous reports, and their photographs – see below – have been analysed in an attempt to assist in the location of buildings erected by Bligh or his overseers. Reference has been made to suggestions that a line of Oaks was put in on behalf of Bligh's daughter Mary, presumably in 1807 or shortly thereafter.

The precise location of those Oaks has yet to be identified, although the following analysis indicates they were planted along the top of the ridgeline along the western side of the property. If it is accepted that the brick barn was located as surmised on Fig. 3 above, then the image below would indicate that the oaks shown behind it were further west.

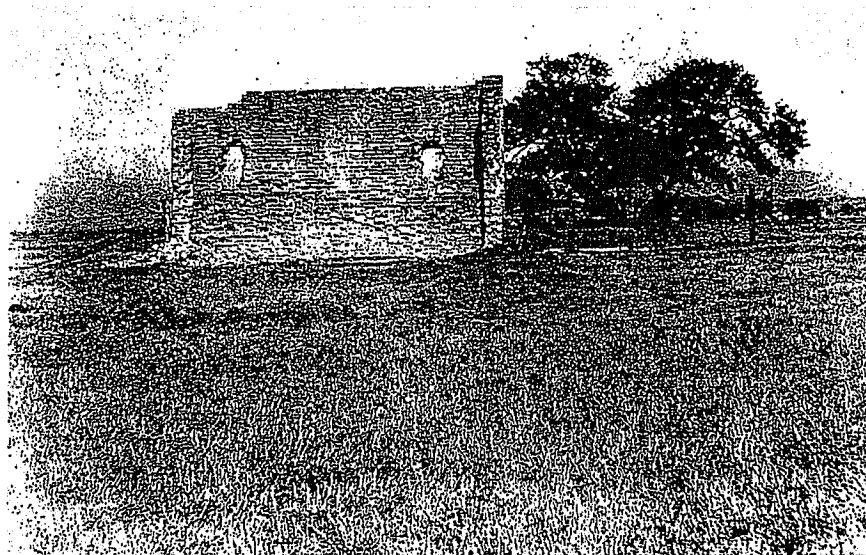


Fig. 10 The above image shows the remains of Bligh's brick barn, with the image of the bifurcated oak tree behind it. Source: 'View of ruins' (n.d.) FILMNUM: 60-16 Hawkesbury City Council Library (original Collection of Jean Purtell).

This assumption is supported by the evidence in the image below:



Figure 11 - These trees appear to be viewed from the east, along the top of the ridge, with what appears to be the Blue Mountains along the horizon. This photograph shows more trees were present, and the post and rail

fence still in place, than the later images below. Source: 'Bligh's oaks at Pitt Town' (n.d.) FILMNUM: PITT TOWN Hawkesbury City Council Library (original Collection of Coral Cleary)

The image below shows the same group of trees, this time viewed from the east:

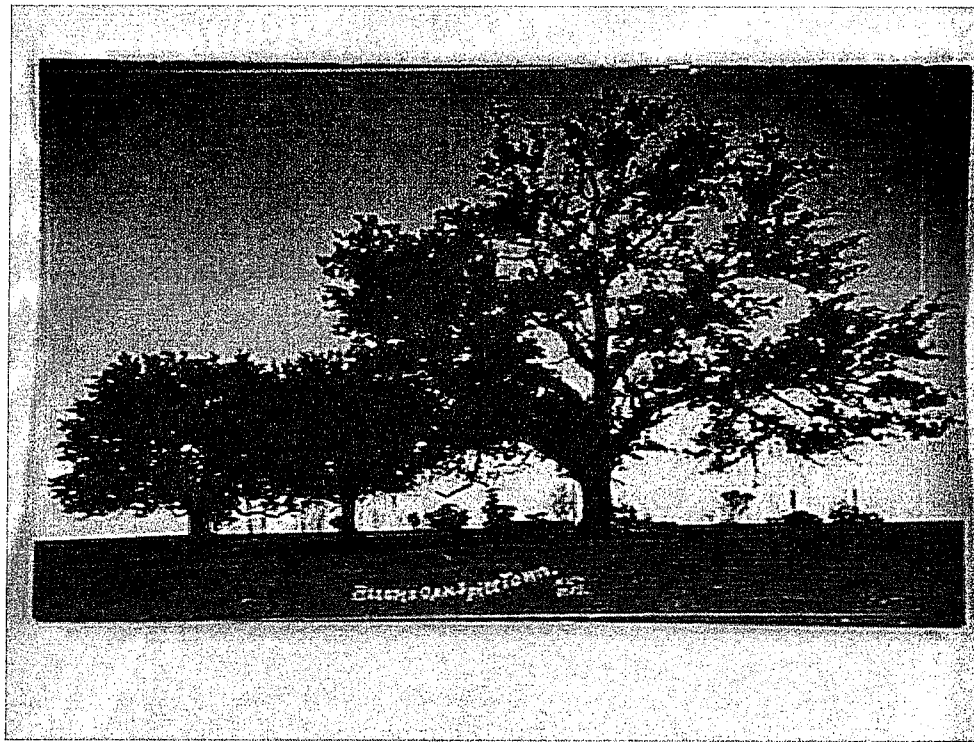


Figure 12 - This photograph of three oak trees appears to have been taken from the west, looking up toward the crest of the ridge, as the land in front of them is sloping downhill. Elements behind them do not provide useful clues as to their actual position, but they do not appear to be located along a boundary (such as Hall St.) St.). Source: (SLV). Undated but part of a series c.1890 reissued in 1932.



Figure 13 - "Bligh's Oaks" (n.d.) This image also suggests that this oak was on the western edge of the ridge, (indicated by the dashed white line) where the land slopes down toward Punt Road. The building on the left is considered to be the Manse, and the land behind it Pitt Town Bottoms. The bifurcated trunk is the same as that of the tree in Figures 10 and 11 above.

3.2 The Punt

Although a punt was used for many years to ferry people across the Hawkesbury River to and from Wilberforce, it has not been in service for some decades. No trace of it remains, but the river edge is used as a launching ramp for small craft, and the road to it retains its name of Punt Road. Only the continuous association of this site with boating and river crossing has historical significance, but this is no longer accompanied with fabric. The site of the punt operator's cottage on lot 11 can also be considered to have a little significance although not necessarily associated with the owners of that lot.

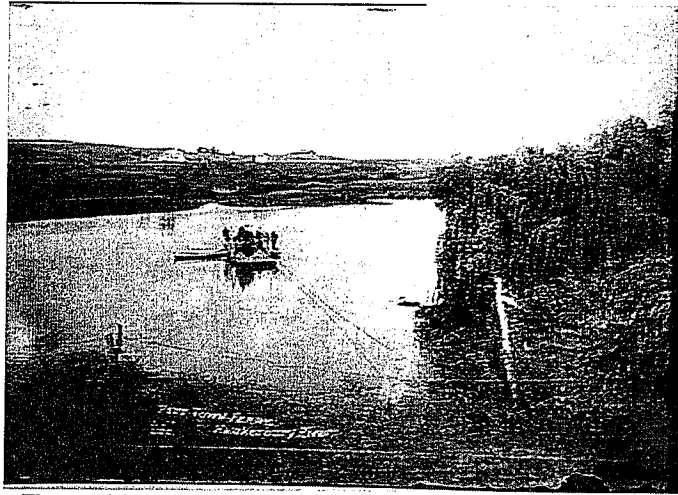
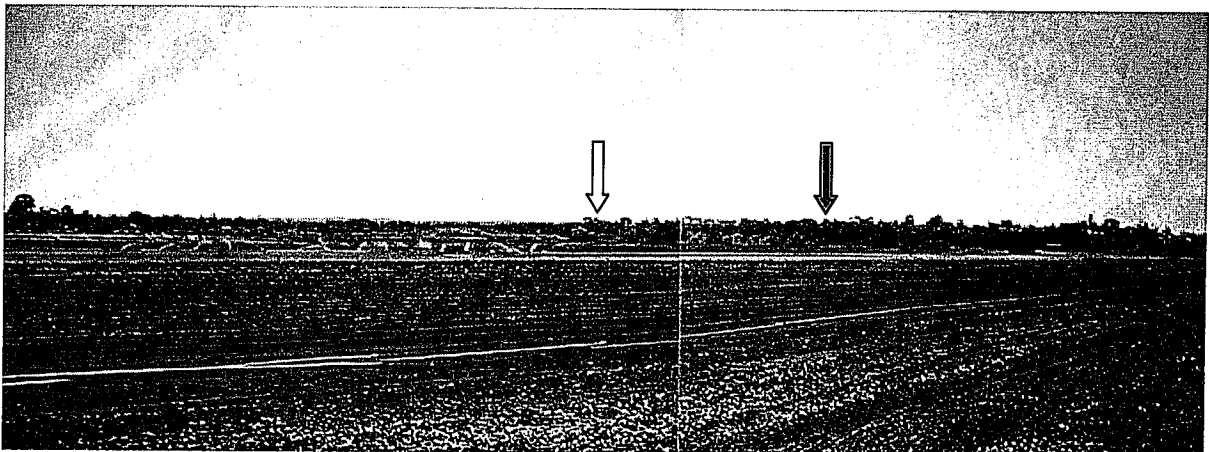


Figure 14 – Undated photograph of the 'Pitt Town Ferry'.

4.0 Visual Character and Issues

The first land to be granted, and farmed, in the Pitt Town area is shown in the foreground of this image. It is an alluvial flood plain, which meant that although it was very fertile, it was also periodically inundated, especially after the early settlers had removed most of the tree cover. As a result, many farmers sought land on the ridge behind (to the east) of it, out of the reach of the floodwaters. Because the ridge is a relatively low one – only about 14 or so metres above the plains as the photographs below show – it is not a striking topographical feature in views toward the town. Nevertheless, the very flatness and horizontality of the landscape means that any vertical element above, say, 5 metres tends to be silhouetted against the skyline. For that reason, the new house constructed on lot 12 is visible from a considerable distance.

4.1 General views towards the site



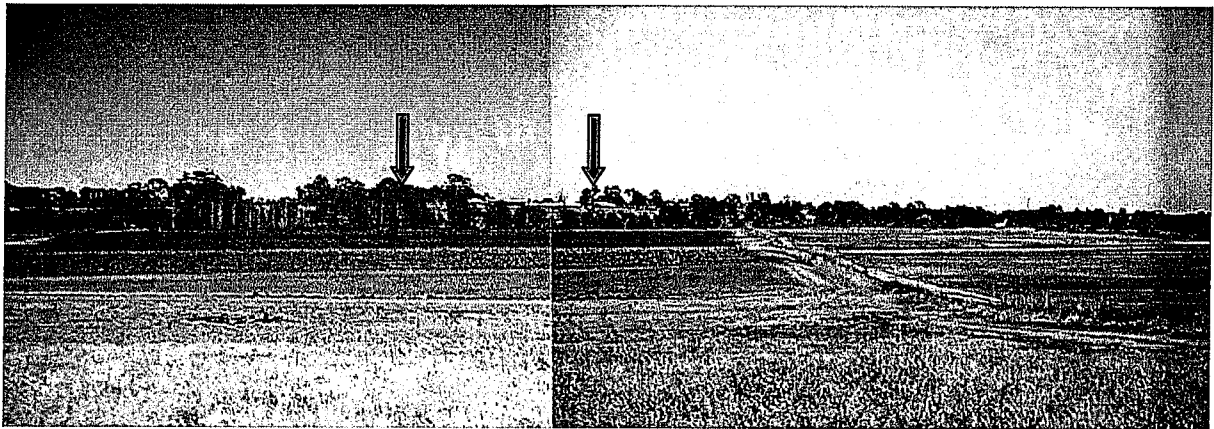
Viewpoint G1 – View from Pitt Town Bottoms Road across Pitt Town Bottoms showing the Pitt Town ridge at the centre and far right of the image. The yellow arrow marks the recently constructed house on Lot 12 and the blue arrow marks the water tower on Hall Street. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



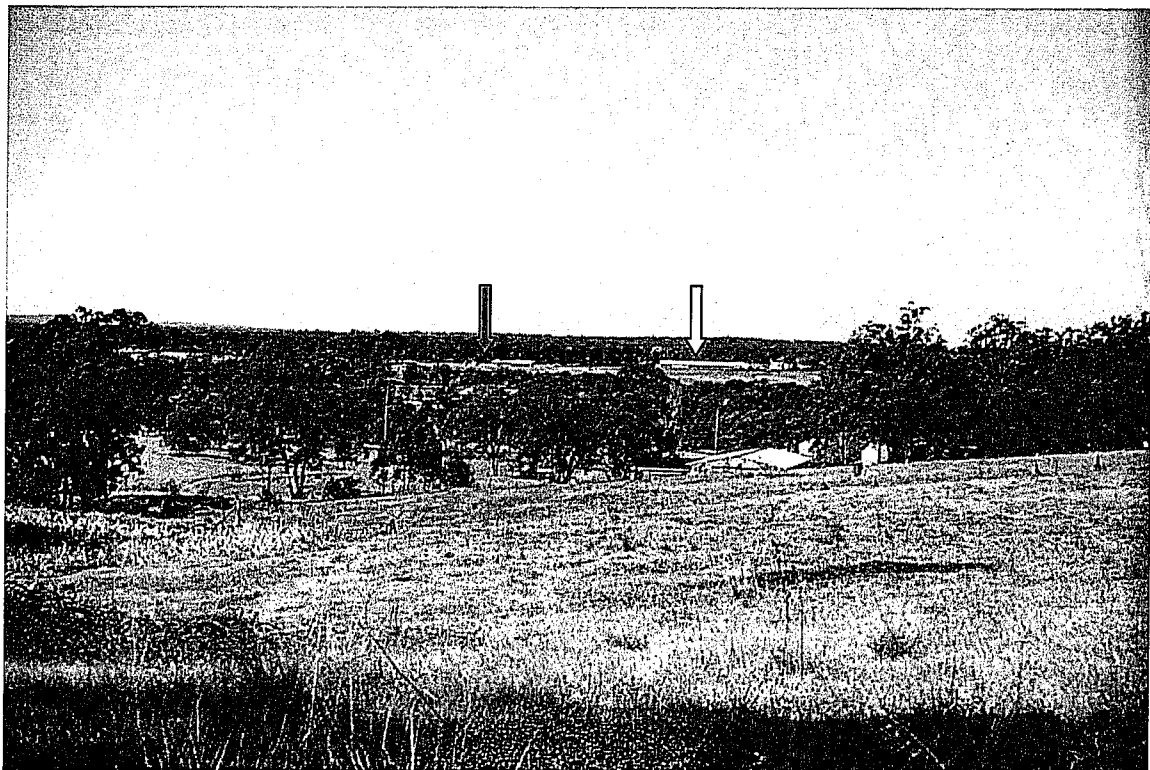
Viewpoint G2 – Looking north from Pitt Town Road towards the ridge on which Pitt Town is located (in the right middle distance). Note that from a distance the level change between the Pitt Town Bottoms (at left) and the ridge to the east does not appear very substantial. Buildings on the military crest (below the ridgeline) are not intrusive. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



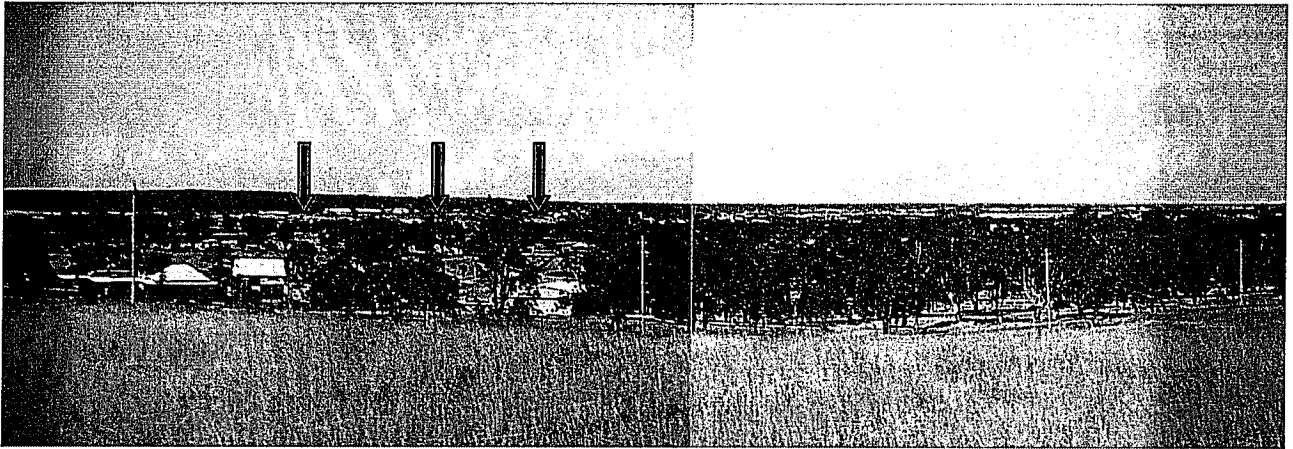
Viewpoint G3 – Looking across the Hawkesbury River towards the site from Pitt Town Ferry Road, on the northern side of the river. Note the recently constructed residence (arrowed) on the ridge within Lot 12 at the left of the picture, and the gentle fall of the ridge to the west (right). Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint G4 – View southward to the Blighton site from the shallow ridge at the northern end of the orchards on the north side of the Hawkesbury River. The southern-most section of the Pitt Town Ferry Road is at the right of the image. The ridge which extends through the subject site is marked by the red arrows. It is partly obscured by riverine vegetation. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint G5 – Looking south-east to the site from the corner of Old Sackville Road and Salters Road in Wilberforce. The red arrow marks the recently constructed house on Lot 12. The old fruit packing shed is indicated by the yellow arrow. Because of the higher elevation of this viewing point, the ridge appears more like a table top, and the silhouette effect is lost in the land behind it. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint G6 – Looking south from the eastern end of Old Sackville Road (Wilberforce), with the subject site identified by the red arrows. From this vantage point, the Pitt Town ridge does not read as being substantially elevated above the Pitt Town Bottoms, although structures on it are clearly visible.

Photo: MWA, September 2004.

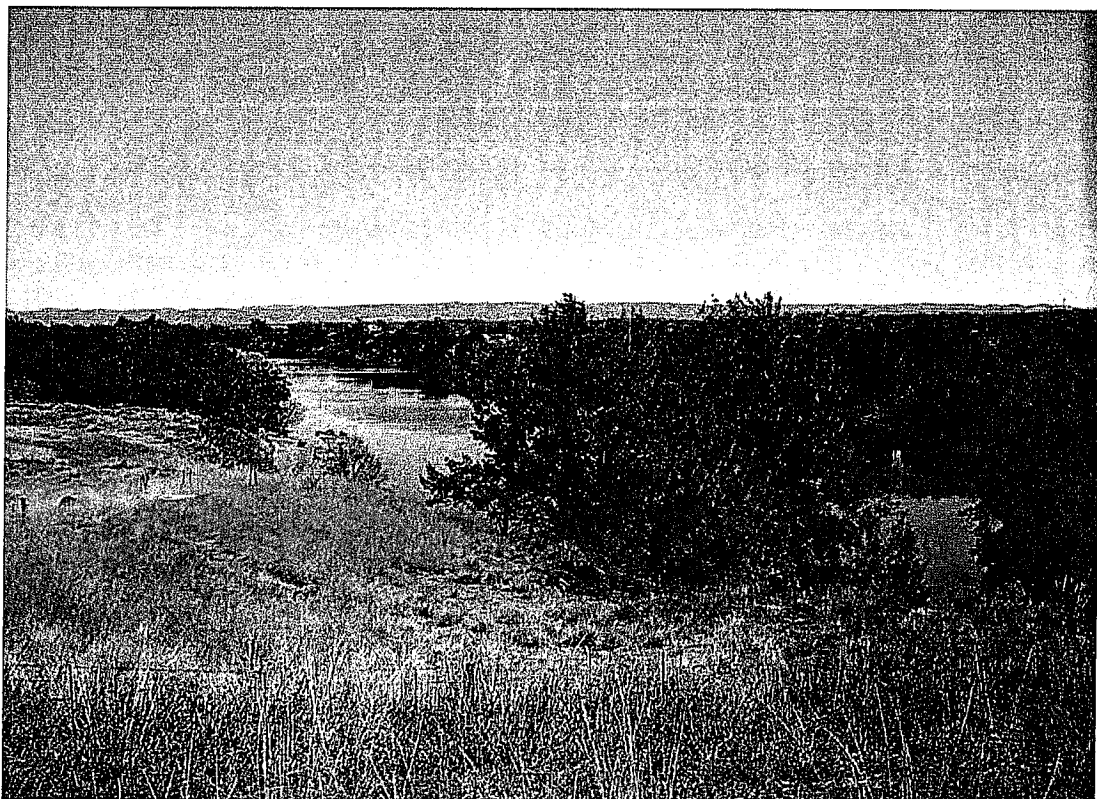
4.2 Views out from the site



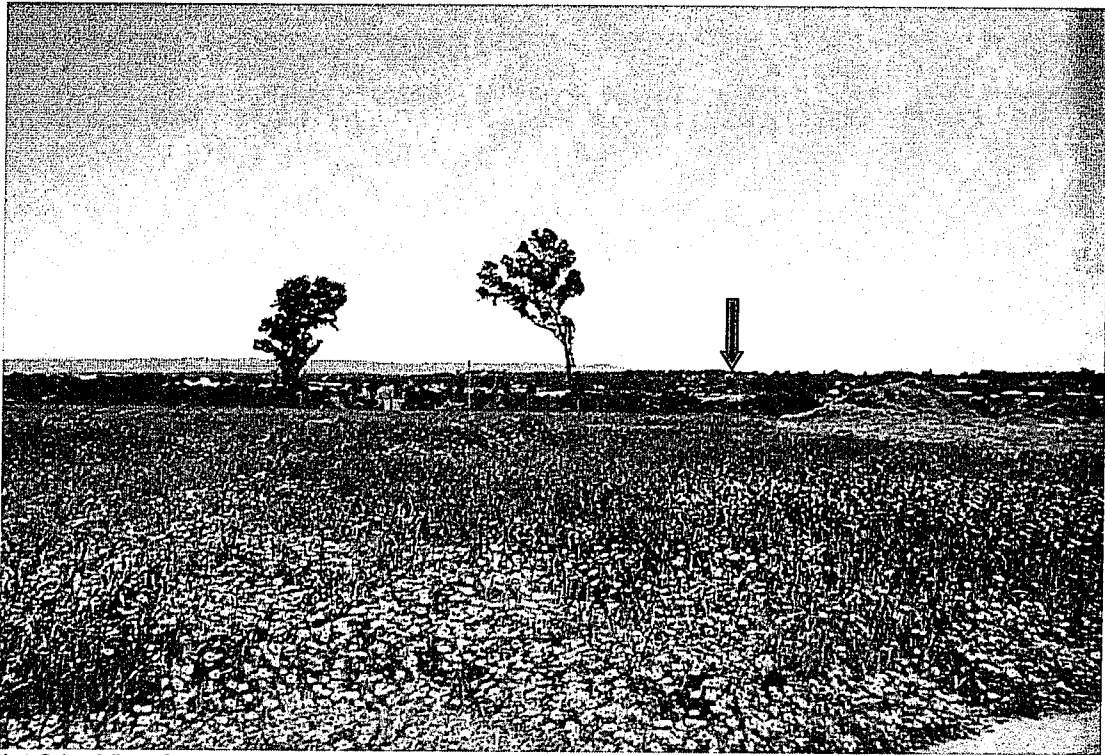
Viewpoint S1 – View west from the south-west corner of the site, showing in the middleground the Old Manse Farm property. Note in the foreground two of the burnt *Pinus radiata* which are located on the edge of the ridgeline around the site. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint S2 – View towards the river and Wilberforce from the ridge through the site, the photographer standing to the west of the recently constructed residence on Lot 12. Photo: MWA, September 2004.

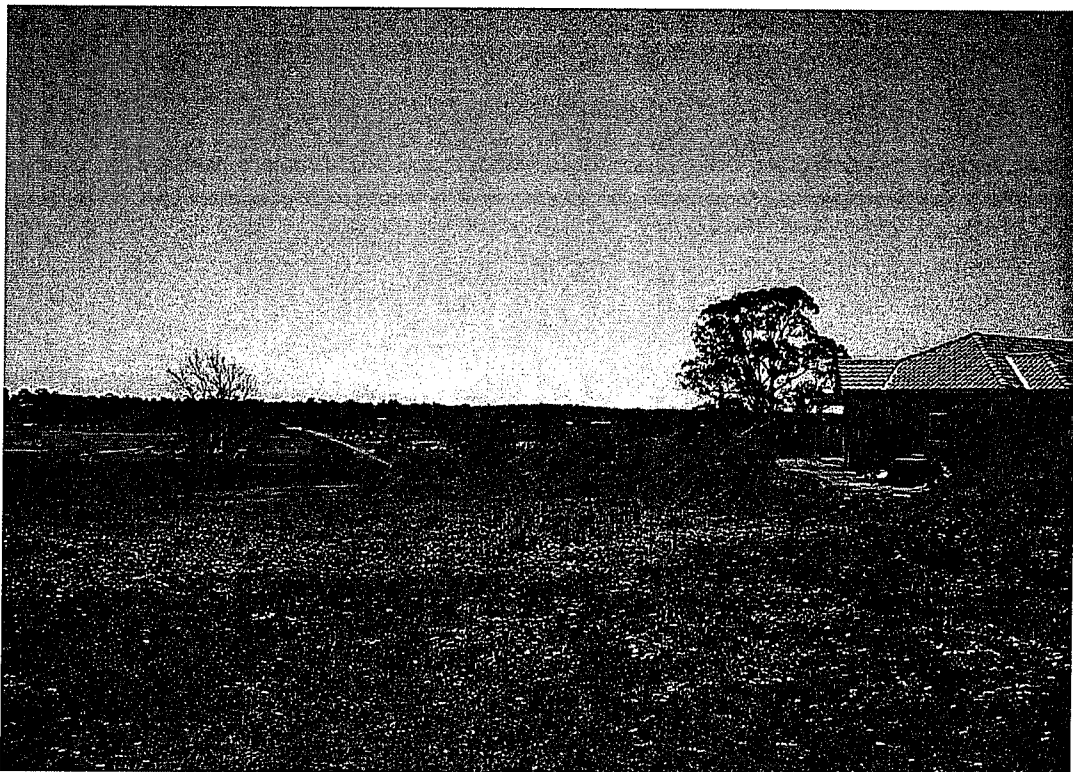


Viewpoint S3 – View from within Lot 12 looking towards Wilberforce (in the middle distance). The Casuarinas near the river are relatively recent regrowths. This view appears to be a little to the east of the site of early paintings – see the comparative section below, as the flats are further in the distance. Photo: MWA, September 2004.

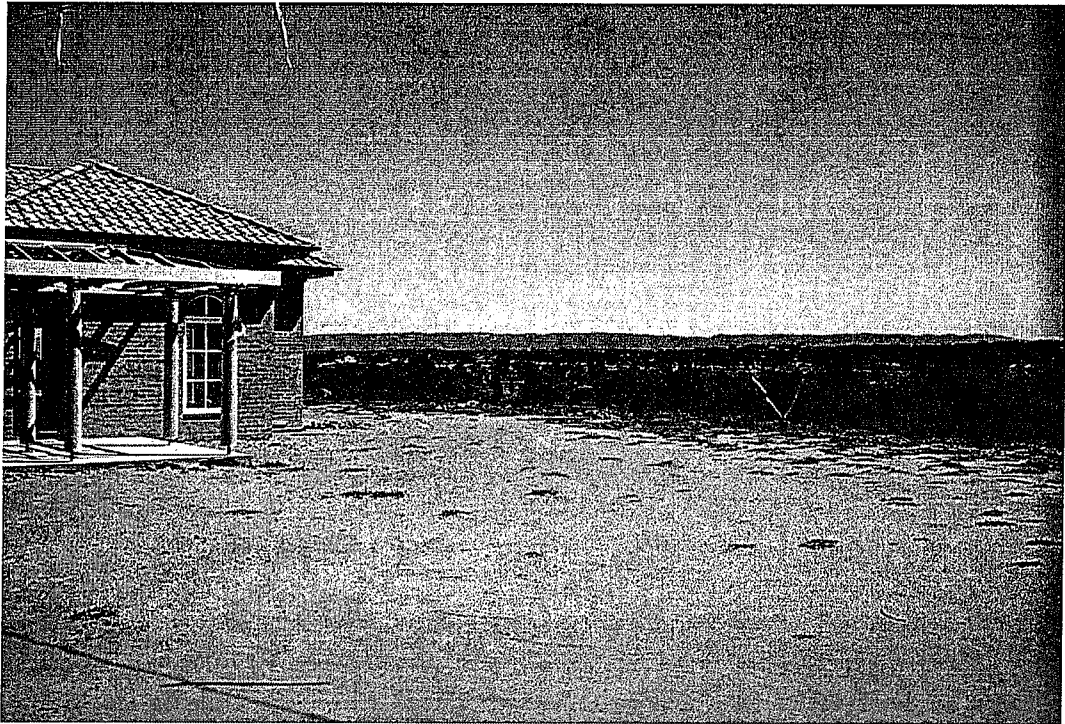


Viewpoint S4 – View from within Lot 12, to the south of the recently constructed residence, looking west across the ridge toward Wilberforce (marked by the red arrow). The two Eucalypts in the middleground are growing on the edge of ridge, where it falls away to the river flats. Both are probably post-1950 trees.

Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint S5 – Looking north across the Hawkesbury River (at left middle distance) from the western end of the recently constructed house on Lot 12 showing its perched position relative to the low lying crop lands on the other side of the river. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint S6 – Looking to the northwest, towards Wilberforce (in the middle distance), from the ridgetop on which this house on Lot 12 has been recently constructed. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint S7 – Looking north from the front of the new house on Lot 12, as the ridge falls away towards the River in the middleground. The large Eucalypt at centre is the only tree on the slopes to the north of the house. However, it is not of heritage value. Photo: MWA, September 2004.

4.3 Views along the perimeter of the site



Viewpoint P1 – Panoramic view into the site from Punt Road, showing the ridge extending through the middle of Lot 11 (the western half of the site). Note the remaining mature *Pinus radiata* (burnt by bushfire) dotted along the ridgeline - they are arrowed green. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint P2 – View north along Punt Road, from its junction with Hall Street. Lot 11, the western half of the site, is on the right of the image. The Old Manse Farm property is on the left, marked by the group of the trees in the middleground. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint P3 - View of the south-western corner of the site, the area said by some to be the location of Bligh's famous Oak trees. This consultant, however, considers they were more likely located near where the dead Pine trees are located (center of photo) None of the trees present pre-date 1947.
Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint P4 – View from Punt Road into the south-western corner of the Lot 11, showing former post and rail paddock fences and one of two small Oak trees near the junction of Hall Street (at far right), presumably planted in this location to invoke a sense of Bligh's Oaks. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint P5 – Looking north-east along the York Reach of the Hawkesbury River from the top of the riverbank on the northern edge of Lot 11. Dense Casuarina and Wattle clumps camouflage easterly views of the river from the top of the riverbank in Lot 12. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint P6 – View west along the Hawkesbury River from its southern banks at the base of Lot 11 (the western half of the subject site). The end of Punt Rd. is indicated by the arrow.

Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint P7 – The junction of the northern end of Punt Road with the Hawkesbury River. The large Casuarina at centre is the only visually significant tree at the north-western corner of the site.

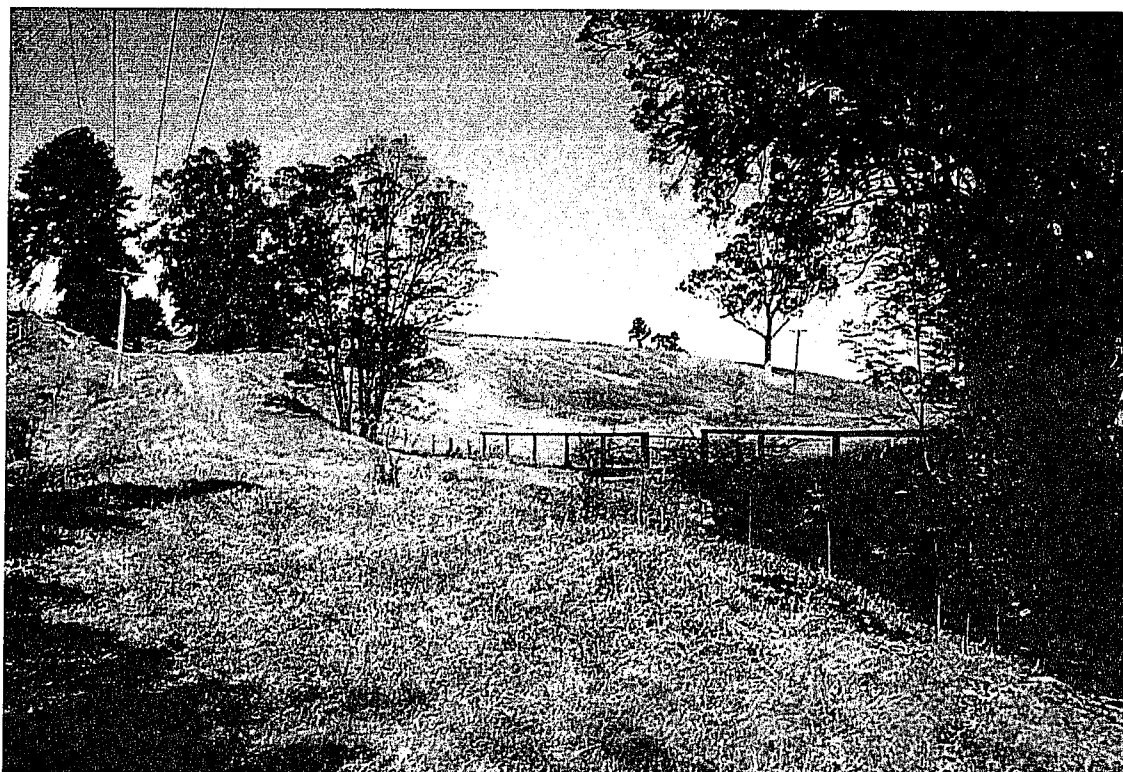
Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint P8 – The northern end of Punt Road, along the western perimeter of the site. The high bank along the eastern edge of the road, at left, does not allow views into the site until the viewer reaches the top of the rise from the river, marked on this image by the green arrow.
Photo: MWA, September 2004.



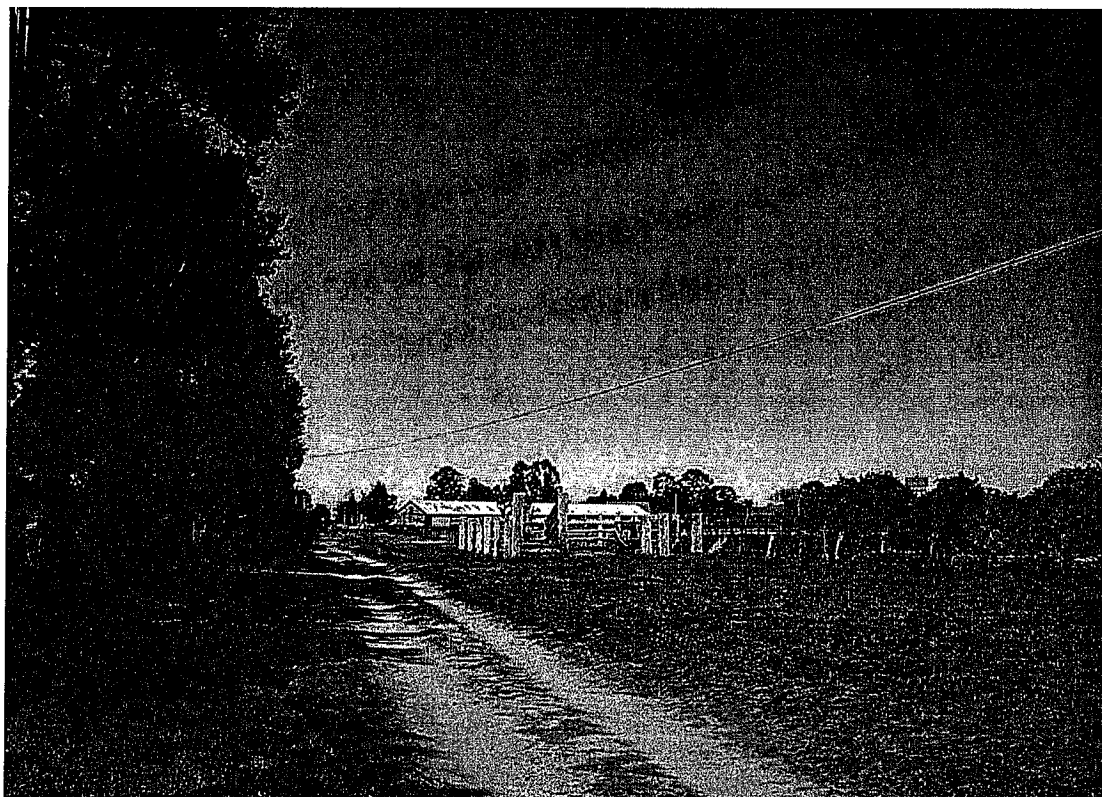
Viewpoint P9 – Looking north along the Hawkesbury Street road reserve which extends along the eastern side of the site. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint P10 – Looking into the north-eastern corner of Lot 12, with the unformed northern end of Hawkesbury Street at the left of the image, extending up the ridge. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint P11 – The north-eastern corner of the site at the junction with the Hawkesbury River. This photograph was taken from the unformed Hawkesbury Street road reserve. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint P12 – Looking south along the Pine avenue which runs along the neighbouring property to the east of the subject site. The track in the centre in the photo is the Hawkesbury Street road reserve.
Photo: MWA, September 2004.

4.4 Internal views within the site



Viewpoint A1 – Looking south-east up the ridge from the north-west corner of the site, near the large Wattles above the northern end of Punt Road. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint A2 – Looking east from the north-west corner of the site, showing the recently built residence on the ridge within Lot 12 and two post 1950 Eucalypts (to the west of the house) which identify the ridgeline from afar. The bare trees are remnants from the orchard period. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



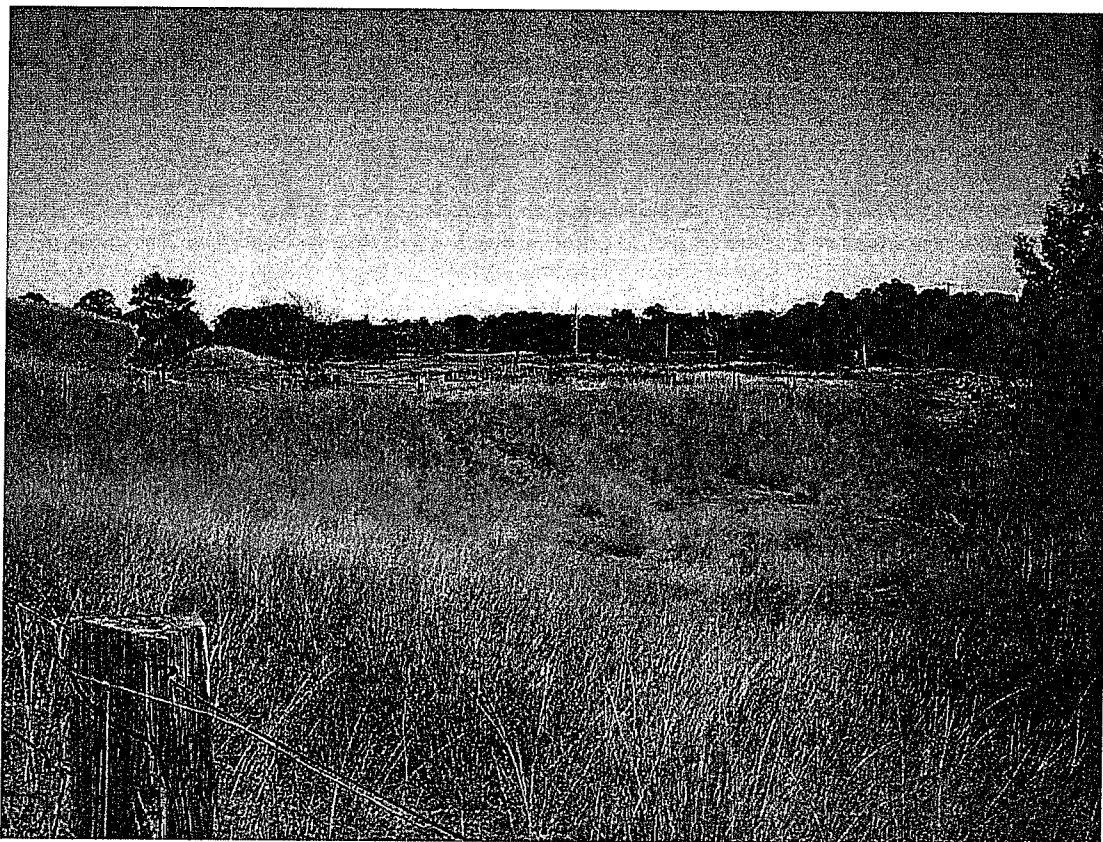
Viewpoint A3 – Looking NNE from the northern end of Lot 11 The fenced-off area in the foreground may have once been the site of the small dam present in the 1950s. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



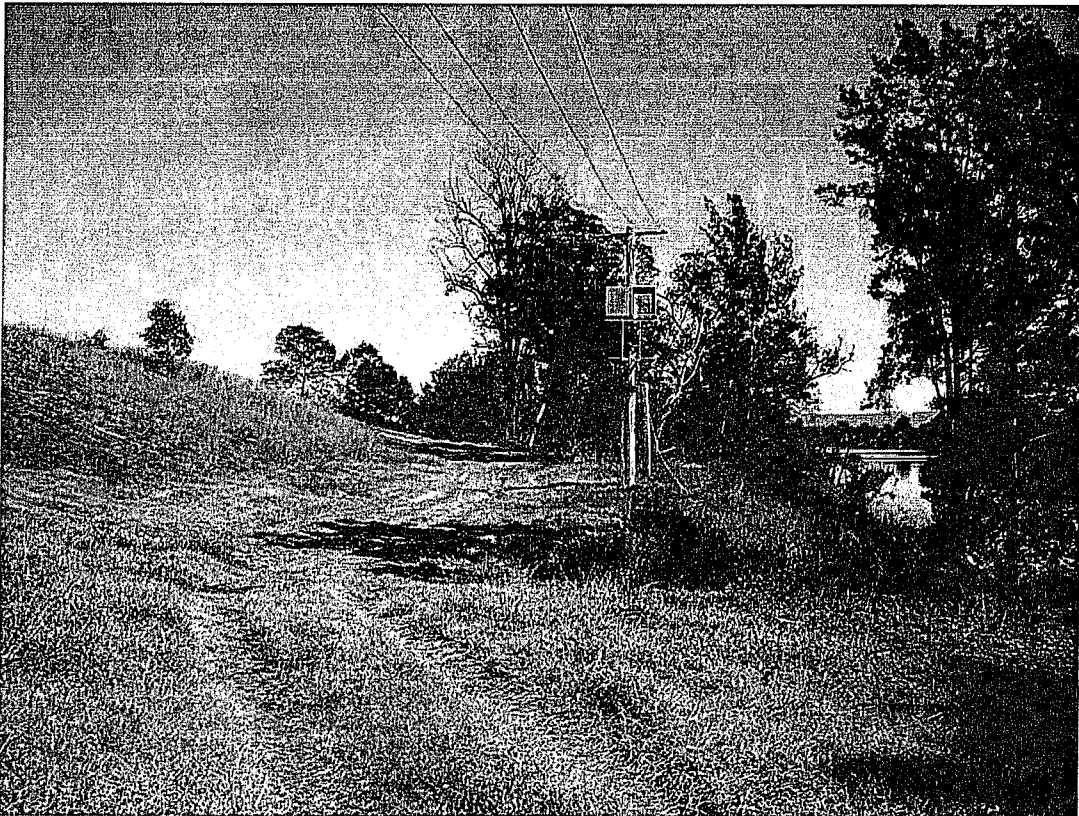
Viewpoint A4 – Looking east up the ridgeline which extends through Lot 11, with two large Eucalypts identifying the top of the ridge. The vehicular track provided access from the lower portion of Lot 11, adjoining Punt Road, onto the ridge and along the fenceline which divides Lots 11 & 12. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



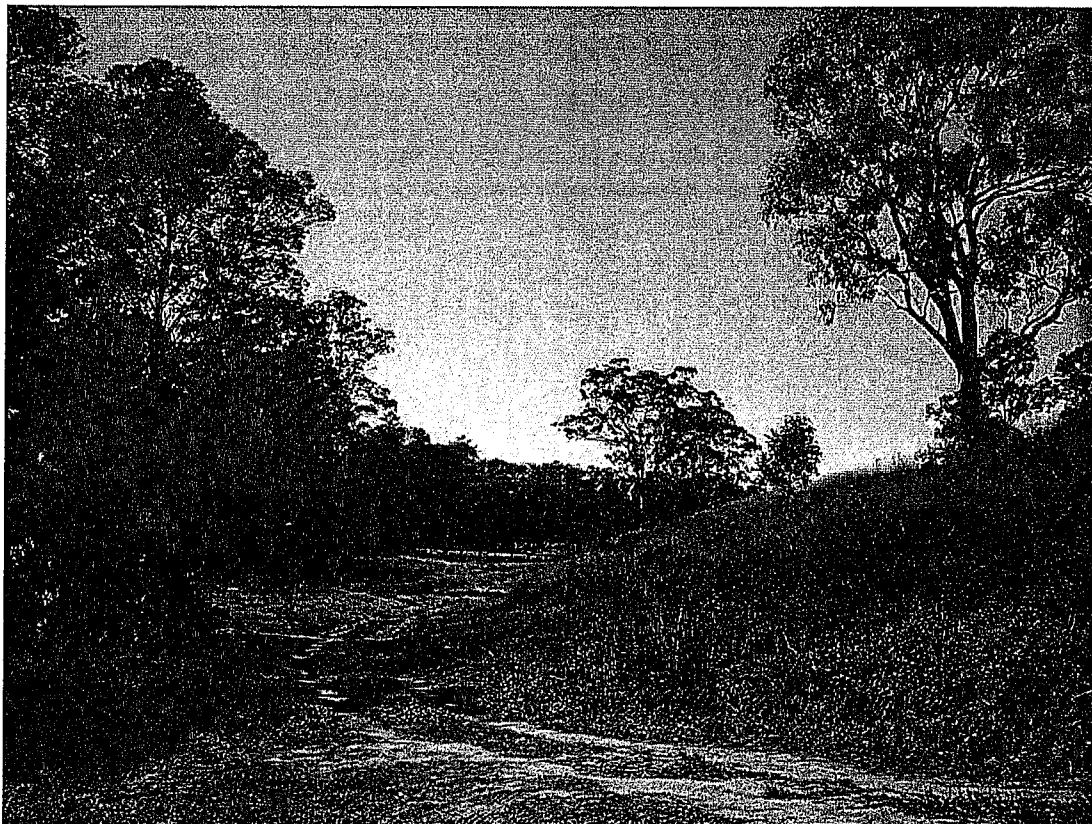
Viewpoint A5 – The two large Wattles which are located towards the north-western corner of the site. Note the building rubble beneath the trees, the source of which may be ascertained through oral history investigations. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint A6 – Looking across the lower section of the ridge towards Punt Road from the northern end of Lot 12. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



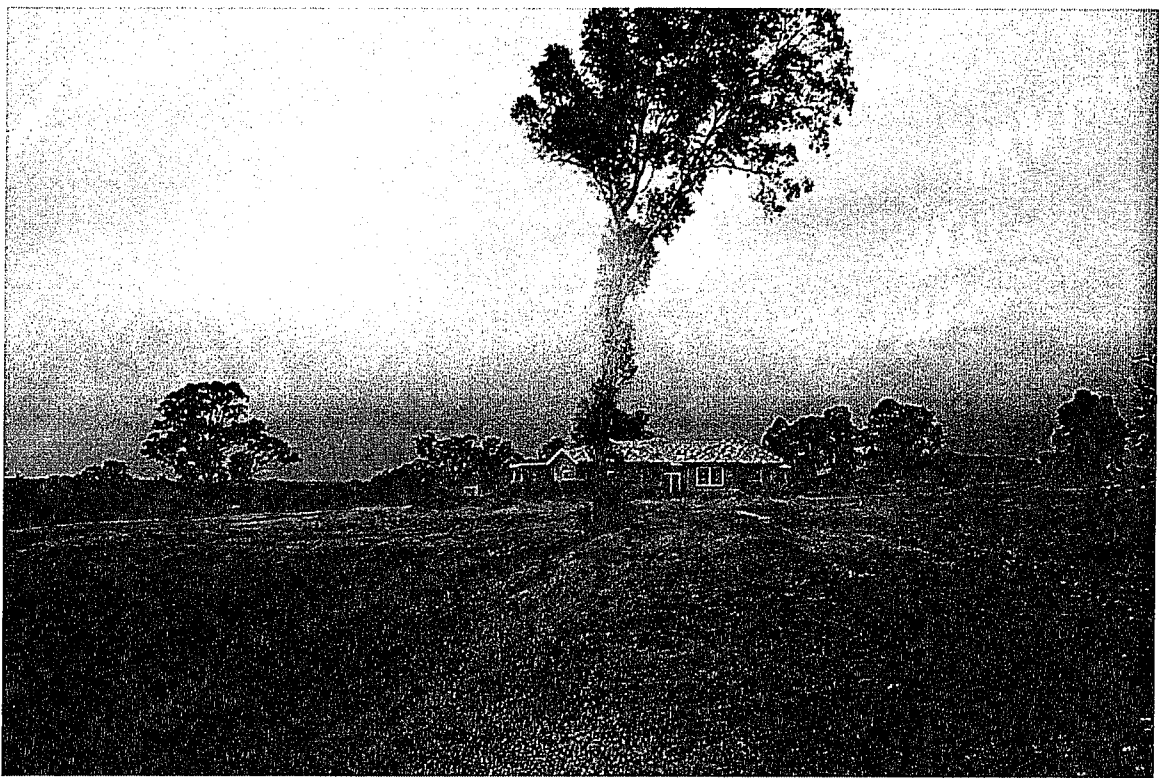
Viewpoint A7 – Looking west along the top of the river bank in Lot 12, with the shoulder of the ridge at left. The river flats are minimal at this eastern end of the site. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint A8 – Looking east along the northern-most section of Lot 12.
Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint A9 – Looking west from the fenceline between Lots 11 & 12. The top of the ridge through the site roughly follows the barbed wire fence in the middleground of this image.
Photo: MWA, September 2004.



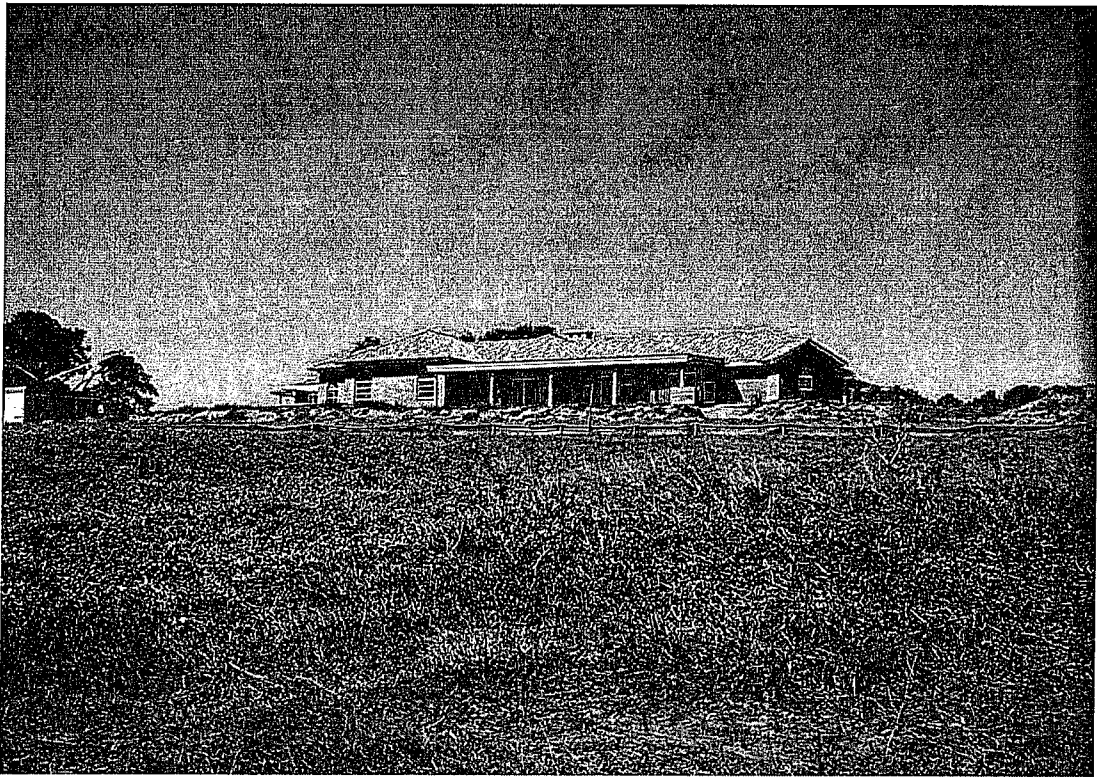
Viewpoint A10 – View along the top of the ridge within Lot 11, towards the recently constructed house in Lot 12. The Eucalypt in the foreground is one of only two remaining Eucalypts which lie on the ridgeline.
Photo: MWA, September 2004.



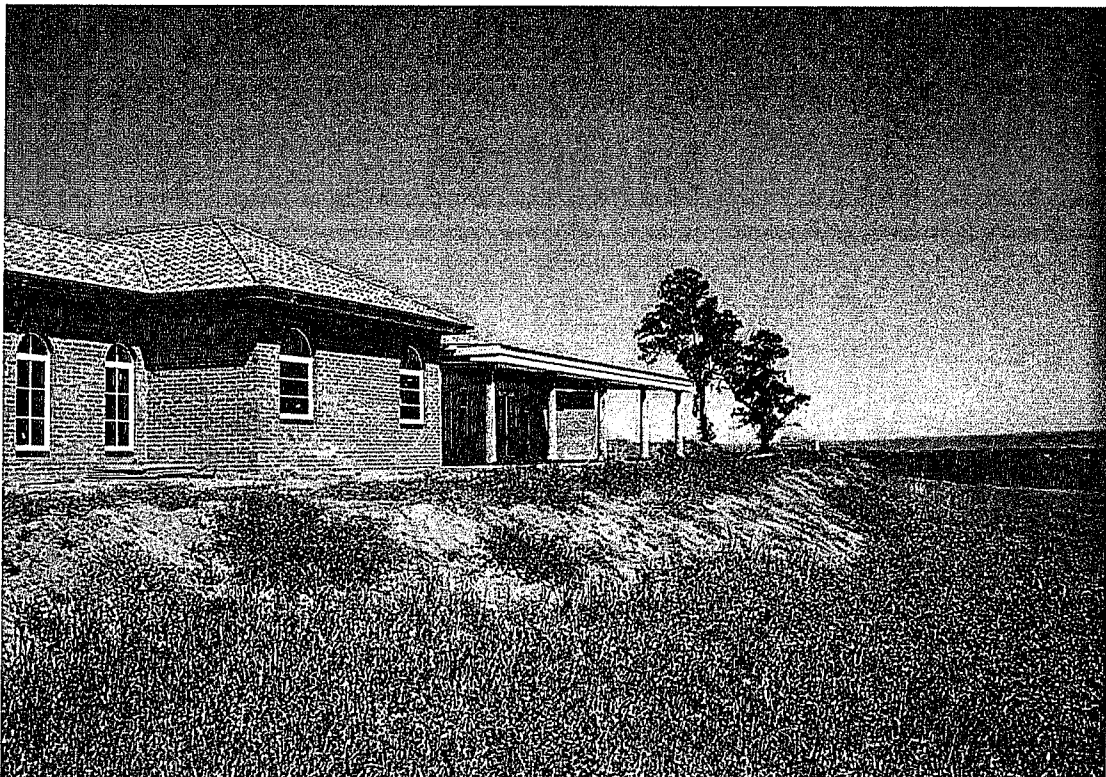
Viewpoint A11– Looking along the northern edge of the ridgeline within lot 11, showing four dead *Pinus radiata* (planted c.1950) beside the track running along that edge. These marked the western limit of the orchard plantings, for which the Pines were used as a windbreak. It is surmised that the Oaks were planted more or less along the same alignment as these Pine trees. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint A12 – Looking north towards the recently constructed house on the edge of the ridge in Lot 12 of the subject site. Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint A13 – View from the middle of the ridge in Lot 12, looking towards the new house.
Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint A14 – Looking west along the top of ridge, along the front façade of the new residence in Lot 12. Note the elevated platform for the house, presumably built to maximize view opportunities.
Photo: MWA, September 2004.



Viewpoint A15 – Looking south through Lot 12 of the subject site towards the large fruit packing shed on Hall Street (at left). Note the gentle rise of the land up toward Hall St. Photo: MWA, September 2004.

4.5 Comparative Study of Present and Historic Images



Figure C1 – A contemporary view west along the Hawkesbury River from the north-eastern corner of Lot 11 (the western half of the subject site). Although it has similarities with the Lewin painting - see below, the latter appears to have been painted from a location further to the east, and higher, since more of the ridge is visible in the foreground of that painting. Photo: MWA. Sept. 2004



Figure C2 - The above painting by J.W. Lewin, clearly titled "View from Governor Bligh's farm Hawkesbury, New South Wales" c. 1807-08, appears to have been painted from a location approximately between that of the Lycett and Evans paintings – see below. It is a much less romanticized view than the others, showing how savage the tree clearing had been by the early settlers. Some simple cottages and sheds are visible in the distance, but (interestingly) none of those of Blighton. The track to the Punt and its counterpart of the opposite bank can be discerned (arrowed). The tall grass in the foreground could be wheat, with pasture beyond.

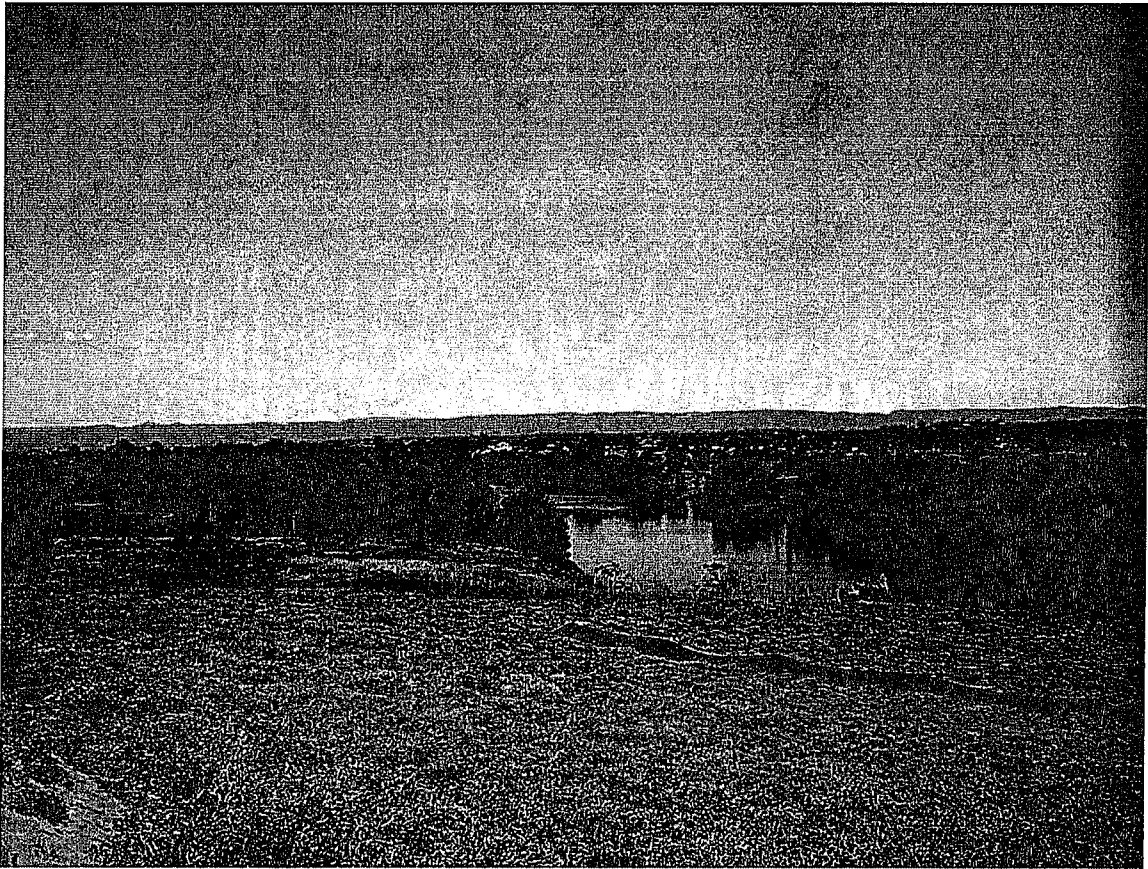


Figure C3 - This photograph from near the new house on Lot 12 contains much more of the ridgetop in the foreground. However, the buildings of Wilberforce appear to be in much the same position as in the Lycett painting, and the curve of the river to the south-west also corresponds to it.

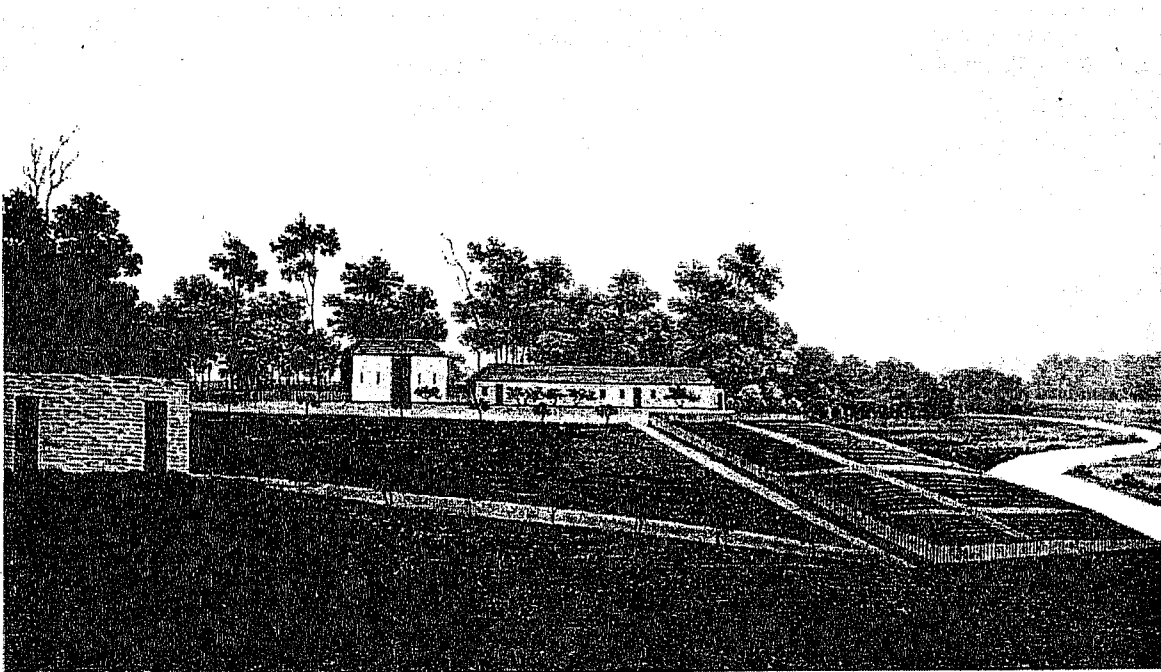
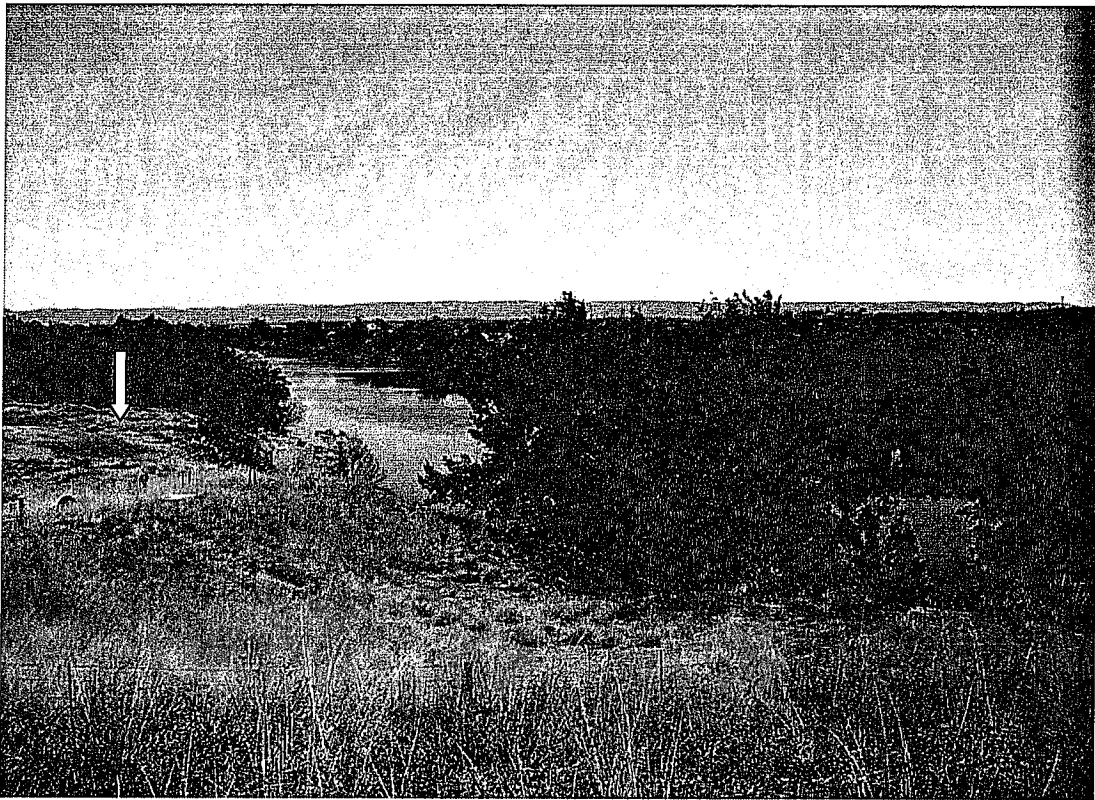


Figure C4 In this painting, attributed to G.W. Evans, there is also a good deal of the ridgetop in the foreground – as in the image above - and the river takes the same, but slightly more exaggerated bend to the north-west. The Blue Mountains are depicted as being much closer than they really are, and the background of trees much lusher than in the Lewin painting above.



C5 View from within Lot 12 looking towards Wilberforce (in the left middle distance). It is likely that the Lycett painting (see below) was made from the promontory indicated by the arrow. MWA Sept 2004



Figure C4 - This painting by Lycett in 1820-22 appears to have been made from a position somewhat to the west of the site of the new house on Lot 12, since it shows much more of the river flats (Pitt Town Bottoms) than is visible from that house. It also shows clearly the south-western curve (Wilberforce Reach) of the river.

5.0 Findings

It is evident from the above description and analysis of the Blighton site that, in terms of landscape fabric, there is nothing remaining on it of heritage significance. Although it is possible that a few of the very old weathered and emaciated fence posts may date from some time in the 19th century, there is nothing that clearly links them with the Bligh period of ownership of the farm. The only painting we have seen of that period which includes fences, shows stout paling fences, not the typical post and rail or post and wire fences of which some old posts today may be remnants.

None of the vegetation present on the site today is older than fifty five years, the Pine trees having been planted in the late 1940s. None of Bligh's Oaks, the subject of several photographs and a painting or two, survived since the late 1940s. Their original location is not certain, although it would seem they were along the western edge of the ridge, on lot 11, not far from Punt Road.

In the absence of such fabric, the only element that can be said to have significance, from a landscape point of view, are the views out – the 'prospect' – from the site. In particular, it is the view, or visual catchment, looking north-west across and along the Hawkesbury River toward Wilberforce and the enclosing Blue Mountains on the horizon from the northern edge of the ridge of lots 11 and 12 that has aesthetic significance. This significance has largely been generated by the fact that three painters, within a decade or so, each painted a very similar depiction of this scene from positions very close to one another. The reason for this is that all painters were struck by the picturesque qualities of that particular scene with its elements of water, cleared and forested land, some tall trees, and distant Blue Mountains, all viewed from an elevation which enabled it all to be appreciated from a semi-birds eye view. It is likely that Bligh deliberately selected this particular site for his farm, rather than others, because it had such a picturesque prospect – something on which the British gentry at that time placed great importance. (Bligh's successor, Governor Macquarie, was much preoccupied with the best siting of gentry villas in the Cumberland Plain, on which he frequently commented in his diaries. He praised Bligh's choice as "a very beautiful situation".)

Because of the repetitive nature of these paintings and their satisfying picturesque quality, they have reinforced each other and collectively created an indelible image that has assumed an almost iconic value. Their significance was of course heightened by their association with a very eminent but controversial person in the early history of New South Wales. Despite the titles of the paintings, stating they were of, or from, Bligh's farm, it was nonetheless the picturesque view which all three painters focused upon, although Evans did depict those of the buildings which were present on the left-hand edge of it. Limited though these buildings were in number, this is the only evidence we have today which provides any pictorial information on what they were like physically, and what their relationship was with the site and one another.

In terms of landscape heritage, therefore, it is the views out from the site along the Hawkesbury River toward Wilberforce and the Blue Mountains which can be said to have aesthetic cultural significance. This view was captured in the first two decades of the 19th century, and is still available today. For that reason, it is important that it remain available into the future.

The site, as a whole, clearly has historical and associational significance as the place on which an early Governor, William Bligh began to establish a 'model farm'. Unfortunately there is virtually nothing there today in terms of physical fabric to demonstrate that fact, and only a little to demonstrate its long period of farming, particularly orcharding. What remains today is of comparatively recent times (since 1950), and has little if any heritage significance.

5.1 Statement of Significance

As the historical and associational heritage values of this north-western section of Governor Bligh's 'model farm' *Blighton* are addressed in the Archaeological Report prepared by Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions, they are not repeated here.

In terms of landscape heritage on the site, there are no items of landscape fabric remaining on it that date back to the time of Governor Bligh's occupation and use of it. It is only the view, or 'prospect' from the northern end of the site - and most particularly from Lot 12 - looking across and along the Hawkesbury River toward Wilberforce and the Blue Mountains that has a high degree of aesthetic value, reinforced by its depiction by three artists in the early 19th century. The fact that these paintings all clearly indicated that they were made of, or from, Governor Bligh's farm, adds substantially to their cultural significance.

As the general public do not have access to the edge of the ridge, and are not able to appreciate the views or prospect from it, it cannot be said that the latter has acquired social significance.

5.2 Elements & Precincts warranting conservation

In *landscape* terms, it is the northern edge of the ridge, close to the Hawkesbury River and principally on Lot 12 - but also Lot 11 - which could constitute a precinct that would warrant conservation so that the prospect from it could continue to be enjoyed into the future. How deep that precinct should be - i.e. how far it should be set back from the edge of the ridge - is a matter for deliberation. The view needs to incorporate the width of the Hawkesbury River below, which is only available within about 30-40 metres from the edge of the ridge. Further back than that the river disappears, and the middleground becomes the rural land to the east of Wilberforce. That remains a pleasing element visually, but without the element of water, is of lesser aesthetic (and historic) value.

There are no existing trees, other vegetation, waterbodies, fences or other landscape items present on the site which would warrant conservation.

5.3 Landscape Heritage Constraints

It follows from the preceding paragraphs that provision should be made to enable people to appreciate the historic views outward from the northern edge of the ridge across the Hawkesbury River.

The three paintings were made from slightly different viewing points, the most easterly being Evans' and the most westerly being Lycett's.

As the Evan's painting provides most detail of the farm itself, it is particularly desirable that an opportunity for a viewing platform on this location be established.

It would be desirable that a second viewing point at the western end of the ridge be established with some form of linkage, perhaps a pathway along the military crest of the ridge, and some interpretation.

There is, however, a number of factors to consider here, including the rights and wishes of present property owners, and the positions and requirements of stakeholders and government. Such matters are a subject for resolution during discussions and negotiations on a future conservation management strategy.

While this consultant has not seen images depicting views *toward* Bligh's farm from the north, and so is not aware that any heritage values may be involved regarding them, the visual analysis contained in this report indicates that the ridge on which *Blighton* was developed is clearly visible from the Wilberforce area. Structures on that ridge, such as the recently built house on Lot 12, and also the old

fruit packing shed, are quite visible from the north, and to a lesser extent from Pitt Town Bottoms. It is a matter for consideration as to how the rural agricultural character of *Blighton* could continue to be interpreted and understood if a substantial number of new buildings were to be erected on it. It needs to be borne in mind that at the height of Blighton's development, there were at least 10-11, possibly more, buildings of various kinds upon it. The issue is to determine just what scale, density and character would be appropriate for any new development that would still allow the site to be interpreted as a very significant early farm site developed by Governor Bligh as a model farm.

The setting aside of a strip of land along the northern edge of the ridge to permit enjoyment of the view toward Wilberforce from it, as suggested above, would assist in allowing at least the front section of the ridge to continue to be regarded as having been farming land. How far back new structures would need to be set, so as not to be too visually intrusive and frustrate the purpose of being able to interpret the ridge as having been Bligh's farm, is a matter for future determination.