

Illawarra Regional Business Park, 78 Tongarra Road, Albion Park—Heritage Report

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Godden Mackay Logan has been commissioned by Ashe Morgan Property, acting on behalf of Delmo Albion Park Pty Ltd, to advise on additional mitigative measures to deal with impacts of the proposed Illawarra Regional Business Park on:

- Wanalama Archaeological Site, 78 Tongarra Road; and
- Ravensthorpe, grounds and adjoining workers' cottages located at 52–56 Tongarra Road, Albion Park.

This Heritage Report has been prepared to accompany the Preferred Project submission to the Department of Planning. It should be read in conjunction with the Response to Submission Matters prepared by the proponent.

The report does not deal with Aboriginal heritage issues. These were dealt with in the initial submission, in the report 'Aboriginal and Historical Assessment of the Illawarra Regional Business Park Site, Albion Park, NSW', prepared by HLA-Envirosciences Pty Ltd for Delmo Albion Park Pty Ltd in May 2007. No additional Aboriginal heritage issues have been raised in the submissions.

The masterplan, documentation and submissions received during the exhibition of the proposal were reviewed and the site was inspected on 19 September 2007. This included an inspection of Ravensthorpe, the adjacent heritage-listed property.

A number of recommendations made subsequent to the site inspection have resulted in changes to the proposed zoning plan, masterplan and design guidelines. These changes are dealt with in the following sections.

1.2 Methodology, Sources and Authorship

This report has been prepared consistent with the relevant principles and guidelines of *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999*, Australia ICOMOS Inc 2000.

This report has drawn upon the following reports:

- 'Aboriginal and Historical Assessment of the Illawarra Regional Business Park Site, Albion Park, NSW', prepared by HLA-Envirosciences Pty Ltd for Delmo Albion Park Pty Ltd in May 2007;
- 'Statement of Heritage Impact, Proposed Industrial Development & Rezoning Adjacent to Ravensthorpe, 52–56 Tongarra Road, Albion Park', prepared by Rappoport Pty Ltd for the owners of Ravensthorpe, September 2007; and
- extracts from 'Historic and Archaeological Map, Shellharbour City, 1830–1930', prepared by Tamara Hynd for The Tongarra Heritage Society Inc, 2003–4.

This HIS has been prepared by Susan Duyker, Senior Consultant of Godden Mackay Logan, Heritage Consultants. David Logan, Director, Godden Mackay Logan provided input and review.

1.3 Site Description and Heritage Context

The subject site, known as 78 Tongarra Road, is within the Shellharbour City Council local government area. The site is bounded by:

- a property addressing Croome Lane to the north;
- Tongarra Road, Ravensthorpe, associated workers' cottages and another house to the south;
- the north–south runway of Albion Park Airfield to the east; and
- Frazers Creek to the west.

The subject site is not located in, or in the vicinity of, any Heritage Conservation Areas.

Elements of Heritage Value on the Site of 78 Tongarra Road

The site contains no listed heritage items. However, it does contain a number of elements of some heritage value.

Wanalama Archaeological Site

The Wanalama archaeological site is not identified in the Shellharbour Local Environmental Plan 2000 (SLEP 2000). However, it has been identified by the Tongarra Historical Society as having potential educational value to the local community.

Wanalama Homesteads and Rural Buildings

The Wanalama homesteads and associated rural buildings are not heritage listed in the SLEP 2000. The homesteads of Wanalama 1 (also known as Marks Villa) and Wanalama 2 were relocated to their current sites during the construction of the Albion Park airfield during World War II. There is a third homestead of more recent date and a number of rural buildings.

The most significant element of the group is Wanalama 1 (Marks Villa), located to the rear of neighbouring Ravensthorpe. It is the oldest building on the site; the internal joinery is consistent with a construction date of c1880 or earlier. However, the house has been much changed, with chimneys and footings dating from the 1940s, reconfigured verandah roofing, enclosed verandahs and many recent additions. It is significant for its association with Samuel Marks, John Russell and the Johnson family and as a representative example of a Victorian farmhouse. However the significance of the structure has diminished due to its relocation and later changes.

The remaining buildings on the site are of a much lower level of significance.

Heritage Items in the Vicinity of 78 Tongarra Road

‘Ravensthorpe’, Including Grounds and Adjoining Workers’ Cottages

‘Ravensthorpe’, including grounds and adjoining workers’ cottages, Lots 91–93, DP 1069273, 52–56 Tongarra Road, Albion Park, is identified in Schedule 3 of the SLEP 2000.

The statement of significance for Ravensthorpe reads as follows:

Impressive late 19th century house set on prominent rise. Good late example of a Victorian Georgian style, rare locally. Important historical associations with its original builder, Dr A W Bateman (irhs). Exceptional Significance, in a number of areas as identified above, and serves as an excellent example of the beauty of late-Victorian architecture (shs).

Criterion a) Historical Significance: This item has links with the first resident physician in the area, Dr Bateman and has further significance as an excellent remnant farmstead grouping from the late Victorian period.

Criterion b) Associative Significance: Of local significance for its association with Dr Bateman, the first physician in the area and the early development of Albion Park.

Criterion c) Aesthetic Significance: Of local significance as an excellent example of the Victorian Georgian style and for the cohesive grouping of main homestead and workers' cottages.

Criterion d) Social Significance: Of local significance for its association with the first provision of proper medical services in the district and its association with the early development of Albion Park.

Criterion e) Research Potential: Provides some insights into the layout of a small farm of the late 19th century period.

Criterion f) Rarity: Rare within a local context as one of few examples of Victorian period timber homesteads and worker's cottages in a cohesive grouping.

Criterion g) Representativeness: An excellent example of late 19th century farm groups.

1.4 Documentation

The assessment of heritage impacts is based on drawings prepared by Julius Bokor Architect Pty Ltd for the Preferred Project Submission, dated November 2007. These are:

- Height Restriction Surface Plan
- Concept Plan
- Sections Sheet 1

2.0 Assessment of Heritage Impacts

2.1 Identification and Assessment of Impact on Ravensthorpe

Views

Godden Mackay Logan has identified a number of views to and from the house and gardens as being important to the historic setting of Ravensthorpe. These views included:

- the view of Ravensthorpe on approach from the west along Tongarra Road (see Figure 1)¹;
- views of the escarpment to the west and northwest from the house and gardens (see Figures 3 and 4); and
- narrow framed views of the escarpment to the north from the entrance driveway and the adjacent garden, along the eastern side of Ravensthorpe (see Figures 2 and 5). This view was not identified by Rappoport (2007).

The concept plan has been modified as follows to respect these views.

Western Views

The proponent has agreed to include the area to the west of the site, between Ravensthorpe and Frazers Creek, in the environmental management zone shown on the Concept Plan. This land will be planted as grassland and could be managed by the Shellharbour Council. This will keep clear the view of Ravensthorpe from the west and will preserve the visual connection between the property and the escarpment, in particular views towards the west from the front garden area.

Northwestern Views

Further, the proponent has agreed to establish a building line in the Development Control Plan (design guidelines) to limit the intrusion of built form into the view from Ravensthorpe to the northwest. This area may be used for landscaping and parking. The building line is established by the northwestern extension of a line joining the corner of the Ravensthorpe homestead with the northwestern boundary corner. This angle of view is similar that identified in the report by Rappoport (2007, p25). Appropriately scaled and selected planting in a strip immediately to the north of the northern boundary of Ravensthorpe and the extension of this screening to the west will screen views of the proposed development to the north from less historically and aesthetically important parts of Ravensthorpe's garden.

Northern View

An analysis of the view lines from the garden of Ravensthorpe to the escarpment to the north informed the final design heights for proposed development (see Section A and the Height Restriction Surface Plan). This analysis assumed a 2100mm high—RL18.1—acoustic wall on the boundary which was a condition of a previous DA approval but has not yet been constructed by Ravensthorpe. The existing Colorbond and lattice fence is approximately 1800mm high (RL17.8). The height of the development for the first 100 metres to the rear of Ravensthorpe will be limited to RL18 (ie just below the height of the acoustic wall and only 200mm above the current fence). This will mean that none of these proximate buildings would be visible from within the garden.

In order to maintain the narrow view of the escarpment to the north from the entrance driveway and adjacent garden to the east of Ravensthorpe, a view corridor of 21.7 metres in width will be established in the DCP (design guidelines) which limits building heights to RL18 in the view corridor between 100 and 230 metres distant from the northern boundary of Ravensthorpe. In the next approximately 130 metres of the view corridor, building heights will be limited to RL21. In the final 90 metres of the view corridor (up to the airport), heights will be limited to RL23. These heights were established from the Section drawings to ensure that no building would intrude above the view plane. They are shown on the Height Restriction Surface Plan, November 2007.

In addition, the height of screen planting along Ravensthorpe's boundary in the vicinity of this view corridor will also need to be carefully managed through choice of species and placement, to retain views of the escarpment.

Other Views from Ravensthorpe

The maximum height of proposed buildings for the remainder of the development will be RL 26 (approximately 16 metres above the excavated ground level). Buildings of this height will not be visible in the identified view corridor. Elsewhere, there may be occasional glimpses of buildings

from Ravensthorpe but the majority of these views will be adequately screened by introduced planting.

Building Setbacks

As well as the above measures, it was considered important to achieve an adequate separation between Ravensthorpe and the proposed development along the northern boundary for the maintenance of 'breathing space' for the homestead. Although the setting to the rear of Ravensthorpe was originally of a rural character, the perception of this character has been degraded by the erection of a marquee, pool enclosure and amenities block. Nevertheless, the proponent has agreed to a building setback line of 25 metres to the north of the existing Ravensthorpe boundary. This is roughly equivalent to the distance of the existing dwelling (Wanalama 1), to the north of Ravensthorpe. There will be landscaping and parking within this zone but no buildings. The 12 metre wide landscaped batter immediately to the rear of Ravensthorpe remains part of the landscape proposal.

2.2 Identification and Assessment of Impact on Wanalama Archaeological Site

Interpretation is now considered to be an essential part of the heritage conservation process. The active interpretation of heritage places supports community recognition and understanding of a site's values and significance.

The proposed new development provides an opportunity to interpret the story of Wanalama at the original site of the homestead which is now an archaeological site, with footings of the original structures evident plus early fig tree plantings. Interpretation will benefit the new owners and users of the site as well as the local community.

The timber-framed homesteads and outbuildings of Wanalama, relocated to the southern part of the site during World War II and added to over the intervening years, are in a generally poor condition. The heritage significance of the buildings has been diminished by their relocation in the 1940s. Because of restrictions imposed by the functioning of the airport, the buildings cannot be relocated to their original site. In any case, there is evidence that the structures are in a fragile condition due to termite damage and/or rot and this may make any relocation impractical.

Notwithstanding the above, there would be some interpretive value in relocating one of these early farm dwellings closer to its original location. The proponent is willing to seek advice from a house relocation contractor and, if feasible, relocate the earlier of the two dwellings to the southwestern part of the Wanalama archaeological site. The earliest homestead (Wanalama 1—Marks Villa) has had its verandahs enclosed and has been further added to over time but the core of the building retains some intact joinery (French windows, lining boards, etc). If it is able to be moved successfully, this could serve as a café in association with the archaeological site which, together with the surviving fig trees could become an interpretive park. However, it is noted that there is a strong chance that, due to its current poor condition, the building may not survive the relocation attempt. If this proves to be the case, then a purpose-built café/interpretive centre would be built providing interpretation of the history of Wanalama and the precinct.

An interpretation plan would be formulated during the design development.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The refinement of the proposal for the Illawarra Regional Business Park has included further consideration of the setting of Ravensthorpe and its workers cottages and has led to amendments which will conserve significant views to and from the heritage item and will retain the open nature of Ravensthorpe's setting.

Careful selection of species to be used in the landscaped areas in the vicinity of significant views will be important for the retention of the quality of these views. Less important views from less important parts of Ravensthorpe will be softened with landscaped buffers along the boundary and tree planting along roads within the development. Arrangements for the ongoing care and management of the landscaping will be established and formalised.

Interpretation of the historic Wanalama site as part of an 'archaeological park' will provide a benefit to owners and users of the Regional Business Park and the wider community.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to further mitigate impacts of the development.

Archival Recording

Prior to the commencement of demolition and/or relocation work, the existing farm buildings of Wanalama should be archivally recorded in accordance with the NSW Heritage Offices guidelines for photographically recording items of local heritage significance.

Relocation of Wanalama Homestead

A suitably qualified built heritage expert should be involved in the planning and relocation works of the Wanalama Homestead.

Interpretation Plan for Wanalama Archaeological Site

An Interpretation Plan for the Wanalama site, detailing the content and location(s) of this interpretive media, should be prepared prior to the issue of a construction certificate. The interpretive works should be implemented by the time of completion of the works.



Figure 1 View of Ravensthorpe from the west, looking along Tongarra Road with the subject site to the left.



Figure 2 View along the entrance driveway of Ravensthorpe from Tongarra Road.



Figure 3 View of the escarpment across the Ravensthorpe garden towards the northwest.



Figure 4 View of the escarpment from the Ravensthorpe verandah towards the west.

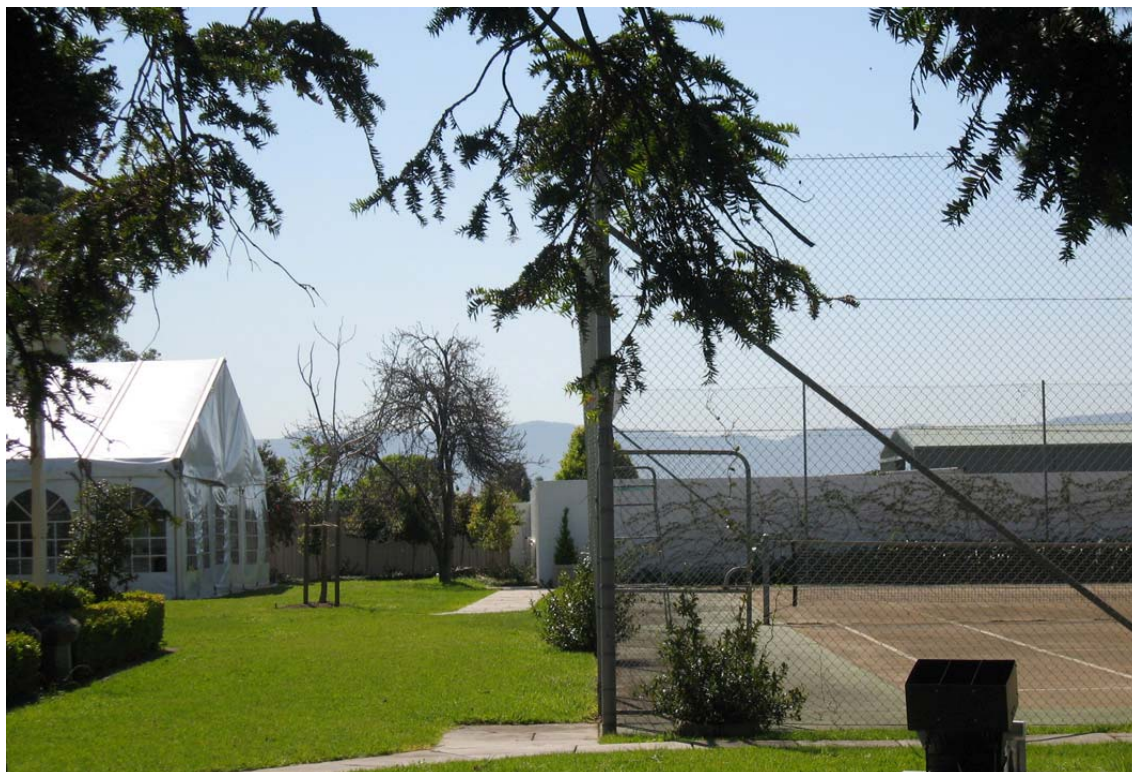


Figure 5 View of the escarpment to the north from the Ravensthorpe garden past the eastern side of the house. This has been identified as a significant view corridor. A pool enclosure is beyond the tennis court and the temporary function tent is on the left.



Figure 6 The workers' cottages associated with Ravensthorpe are part of the heritage listing on the SLEP 2000.



Figure 7 The existing rear boundary of Ravensthorpe consists of (from left) block wall around pool enclosure, Colorbond and lattice fence, low block wall and rural fence (out of picture). The commercial kitchen is on the right and the temporary function tent is in the centre.



Figure 8 The original site of Wanalama homestead (fig trees and silo) can be clearly seen from Illawarra Road. The hangars of the Albion Park Airport are on the left.



Figure 9 The relocated Wanalama 1 homestead (also known as Marks Villa). It has been divided into two homes and the verandah has been replaced and largely enclosed. Some original joinery remains in the core of the house.



Figure 10 The relocated Wanalama 2 homestead. This is a more recent, late nineteenth–early twentieth century building. It was this building that became bogged during the move and was left further down the hill.

6.0 Endnotes

¹ It is noted that a road corridor has been set aside in this location. If constructed as an elevated road this has the potential to impact on this significant view of Ravensthorpe.