

North Penrith Lands Non-Indigenous Archaeology

Assessment report

Summary

Objectives

The aim of the non-indigenous archaeological assessment is to determine whether significant archaeological remains are likely to be present within the study area. This is done by considering the land-use history of the area and whether the identified usage is likely to have left any substantial archaeological resource. The potential resource is then subject to field inspection. Any potential archaeological remains can then be managed in light of impacts associated with future development.

Methods and findings

A detailed analysis of the nineteenth-century land-use history was undertaken to determine what kind of non-indigenous archaeological remains might be present within the study area. These areas were then subject to field inspection. This analysis indicated that the Thornton Hall and Combewood properties and their buildings and outbuildings constituted the main archaeological resource. Remains of these structures were found to have a level of heritage significance at a local level and to have the ability to inform about the development and use of the houses and the layout of the properties. Later nineteenth- and twentieth-century activities, such as those relating to the racecourse and the speedway, as well as the Army Engineering Depot, were likely to have left archaeological remains with little research value.

Conclusions

The main potential non-indigenous archaeological remains are likely to be the demolished sections of Thornton Hall and the demolished outbuildings to the south of Combewood. These remains are considered to have heritage significance at a local level.

Recommendations

The area to the rear of **Thornton Hall**, the site of the demolished bedroom and kitchen wings, should be included as elements of the house's curtilage. Archaeological remains in this area will need to be assessed as part of any future redevelopment of the building or property and impacts on the remains will require appropriate management recommendations.

Any proposed impacts to the south of **Combewood** should be preceded by a program of archaeological recording to be conducted prior to disturbance of this area.

Archaeological investigation and recording of archaeological remains within the areas of impact should be undertaken utilising current best practice methodologies and Heritage Council guidelines. These investigation programs would need to be guided by a **Research Design** and appropriate approvals as required by the statutory process. As the project is

proposed to be a Major Project and will be assessed under Part 3A of the *EP&A Act 1979*, there is no requirement for a separate approval under S139/140 of the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*.

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1. Objectives of assessment

At a glance

As part of the Environmental Assessment of the North Penrith site, a non-indigenous archaeological assessment is required. This present report provides an assessment of the potential archaeological remains and their significance.

Project Background

Casey & Lowe Pty Ltd were commissioned by Landcom to provide an archaeological assessment of the North Penrith lands. The study area is currently mostly vacant land, formerly occupied by the Australian Army. This assessment examines the potential for historic-period remains that might fall under the provisions of the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*. As the land is currently Commonwealth owned, assessment under Commonwealth heritage criteria has taken place previously.¹

The project will develop in stages over approximately five to seven years. The land will need to be rezoned to permit the intended uses. This requires listing the area as a State Significant Site and having it dealt with as a major project under the State's planning laws. Landcom is preparing an environmental assessment for a Project Application to facilitate Infrastructure and Early Works, including site preparation, infrastructure and roads.

The Study Area

The North Penrith project site is around 40 hectares of largely vacant land north of the Penrith CBD (Fig. 1.1). It was previously an army base and is well serviced. It retains one building on a Commonwealth heritage list and has some Aboriginal heritage artefacts. Adjoining land use includes an army depot, a museum, industrial uses, a rail line and residences.

The site is generally flat with a slight rise to the east. It fronts onto, and has access from, Coreen Avenue and The Crescent. The land is largely vacant following demolition and removal of most of the structures on it. Those remaining include:

- Thornton Hall and surrounds – listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and the Register of the National Estate.
- Land in the vicinity of Combewood – listed under the Penrith Local Environmental Plan (Urban Land) 1998 and Penrith Local Environmental Plan (Environmental Heritage Conservation) 1991.
- Former building slabs, a disused oval, and an internal road and services network.

Adjoining land uses include:

¹ Godden Mackay Logan, *North Penrith Defence Site – Interim Heritage Management Strategy – Final Report*, January 2010.

- The Penrith Training Depot (PTD) abutting the railway line to the south east. The site is Commonwealth-owned land and under federal government jurisdiction, having been used as an army base for the Royal Australian Engineers until 1994.
- The Museum of Fire (a locally listed heritage item) and industrial uses to the north and west.
- The main western rail line to the south.
- Residential uses to the east.

There is a temporary commuter car parking area next to the railway station.

Previous Studies

Date	Author	Title
2010	Godden Mackay Logan Pty Ltd	North Penrith Defence Site - Interim Heritage Management Strategy, Final Report.
2009	Godden Mackay Logan Pty Ltd	DEF North Penrith Defence Land (Thornton Park) Heritage Management Plan - Scoping Study, Final Report.
2009	Tanner Architects Pty Ltd	Non-Indigenous Heritage Review North Penrith Defence Lands for Landcom.
2001	Terry Kass	History of Thornton Park Penrith, unpublished report for Mitchell Nethery Associates.
2001	Graham Brooks & Associates Pty Ltd	Thornton Park North Penrith, Heritage Management Plan.
1998	Graham Brooks & Associates Pty Ltd	North Penrith Army Land Heritage Analysis, report for Department of Defence.
1995-6	Graham Edds & Associates	Thornton Hall, Conservation Plan for Defence Housing Authority, Sydney West.
1994	University of Sydney Faculty of Architecture	Combewood Conservation Plan.

The study area has been subject to several studies relevant to non-indigenous heritage:

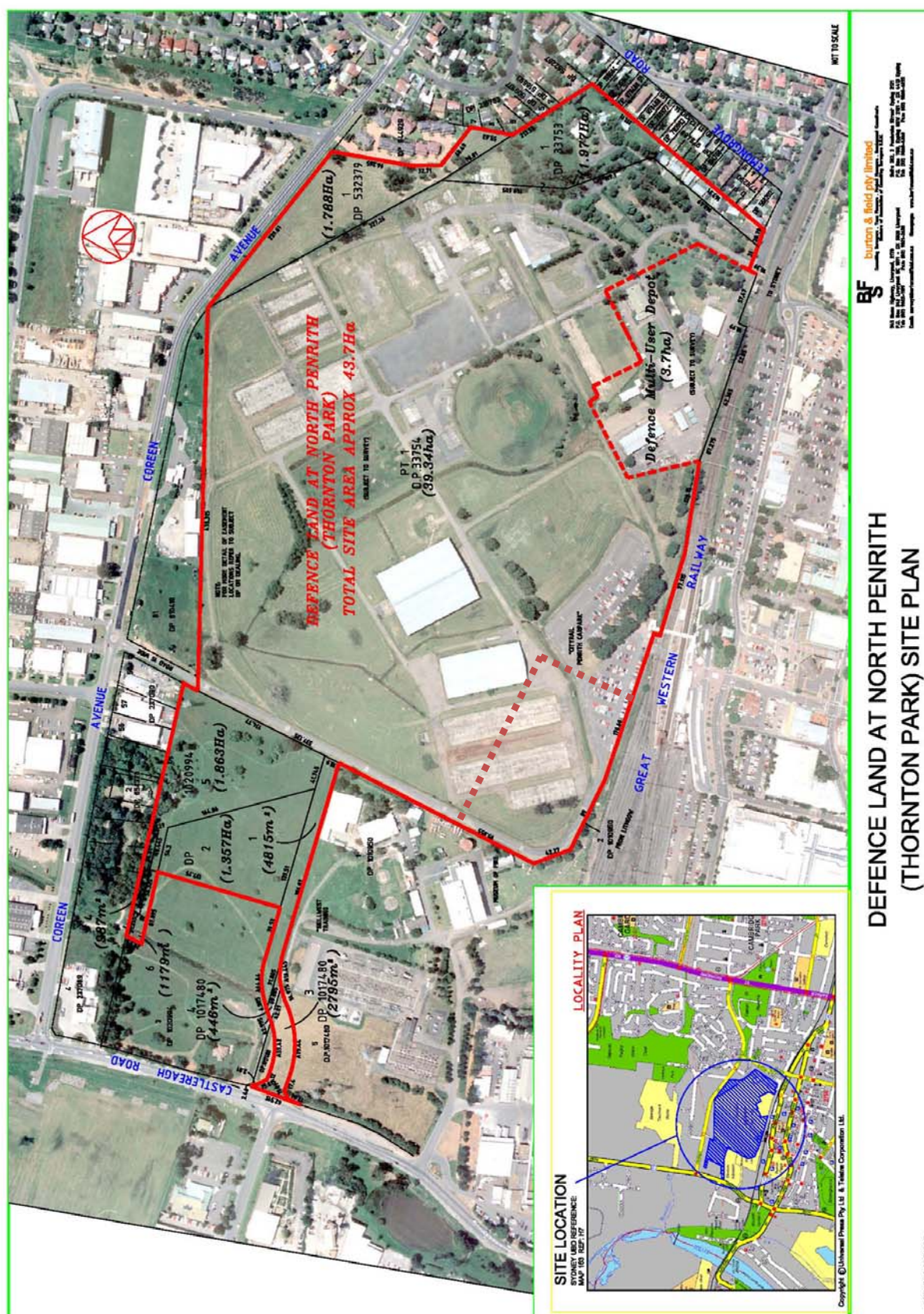


Figure 1.1: The study area.

The project

Landcom proposes a mixed-use development with up to 900 residences including affordable housing. The village centre will have around 3,200m² of retail and 9,300m² of commercial and community use. There will be around 7ha of open space and 2ha for industrial and warehouse use. The project will be a transit-oriented development with high quality urban design. It will create 770 direct and 1,100 flow-on jobs.

Project Planning

Landcom has received confirmation from the Department of Planning that it can submit applications under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* (EP&A Act) to:

- list the North Penrith site as a State Significant Site (SSS) under Schedule 3 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005 (the Major Projects SEPP)
- have the site assessed under Schedule 1 (Classes of development) of State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005 (the Major Development SEPP) as a 'major project' to be determined under Part 3A of the EP&A Act.

As part of the application an overall Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared, of which this current assessment will be part. Landcom has received the Director General's Requirements (DGRs) for both the Concept Plan and the Project Application proposals. The requirements relevant to non-indigenous archaeological remains are:

4. Heritage

(1) The EA shall provide a Heritage Impact Assessment of the site and a Statement of Heritage Impact, that is to include:

- (a) Detailed evaluation of any impacts that the development would have on the heritage significance of the site, in particular the heritage significance and setting of Combewood and Thornton Hall and Surrounds.
- (b) Consideration of the cumulative impacts of the proposed works on all heritage items and their curtilages.
- (c) Awareness of the possible existence of any archaeological relics which may be disturbed during the works that may require an archaeological assessment to be undertaken.

This report is specifically relevant to Condition (c), in that it provides an assessment of the likely archaeological remains within the study area and their level of heritage significance.

Author Identification

This assessment was written by Tony Lowe and reviewed by Dr Mary Casey, Casey & Lowe Pty Ltd. Chapter 2, the history of the study area, was researched and written by Dr Terry Kass, historian. Dr Kass was asked to expand upon his previous 2001 research, focusing on the study area's nineteenth-century land use, to determine whether there was evidence for early occupation prior to that of Thornton Hall and Combewood.

2. Site analysis

At a glance

A detailed history of the study area concentrating on its nineteenth-century land use was undertaken to establish whether the Thornton Park and Combewood properties were the main sites in this period. No earlier occupation has been identified.

A History of Thornton Park & Combewood, Penrith²

Introduction

This analysis is based on a report prepared in February 2001 for Mitchell Nethery Associates. That report focused more heavily on the history of the site after 1900 since it sought to address the aspects of its history which were still evident on the landscape such as the racetrack and the Army Engineers depot. This analysis, which partially reproduces some of the earlier report, omits some of the material dealing with the later historic events that occurred on the site. Instead, it includes additional data about the prior history of the site based on new research as the basis for an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. More detailed research on the history of the Woodriff family and its ownership of the land before Thomas Smith acquired much of the land has also been incorporated.

The original report was assisted by data supplied by Bill Boldiston, Barry Lake, Laura Player, Joe Wilson and Terry Wright, all of whom shared material in their possession or shared their specialised knowledge about the Thornton Hall site and the speedway.

Aboriginal Occupancy

Prior to the entry of white European settlers into the area, the Thornton Park and Combewood sites formed part of the land occupied and utilised by the Aboriginal/Koori peoples. The earliest evidence of Aboriginal occupation of the Sydney basin comes from archaeological evidence in gravel beds of the Penrith Castlereagh area, with artefacts ranging in age from 28,000 years ago to up to 40,000 years ago. This area was attractive to them since it had an abundance of food sources, focussed around the river system. The river provided birds, fish, shell fish, and some plants. Women foraged for food with digging sticks. Fire was used to drive game towards hunters and to clear the undergrowth to make the capture of smaller animals more effective. In addition, the area contained stones, which could be worked to produce sharp edged tools. The Aboriginal occupiers combined their use of this area with seasonal migration to other areas such as the upper Blue Mountains in the warmer summer months.³

² This historic analysis has been researched and written by Dr Terry Kass, BA (Hons), MA (Hons), PhD.

³ J Kohen, *The Darug & Their Neighbours: The Traditional Aboriginal Owners of the Sydney Region*, Darug Link & Blacktown & District Historical Society, Blacktown, 1993, p 4-5

The Darug (various spellings) occupied the area from Botany Bay to Port Jackson north west to the Hawkesbury and into the Blue Mountains. The name for this group was collected by R H Mathews, a surveyor for Parramatta who collected a good deal of material about Aborigines.⁴

Before 1788, there were probably 5,000 to 8,000 Aboriginal people in the Sydney region. Of these, about, 2,000 were probably inland Darug, with about 1,000 living between Parramatta and the Blue Mountains. They lived in bands of about 50 people each, and each band hunted over its own territory. There appear to have been about four such bands totalling 200 people in the Penrith area. The "Mulgowey" lived between Castlereagh and Mulgoa, the Gommerigal-tongarra lived on both sides of South Creek. The Boorooboorongal lived on the Nepean from Castlereagh to Richmond. A fourth band were Gundungara speakers and hunted from the Burragorang Valley to the southern parts of Emu Plains. These bands called the Penrith area Muru-Marak, meaning "mountain pathway".⁵ The Boorooberongal clan had rights to the basalt pebbles which were found on the banks of the Hawkesbury River.⁶ Watkin Tench lead an early expedition into the area in June 1789 when he discovered the Nepean River.

There may have been 100 inland Darug still alive by the 1850s, which seems to tally with what appear to be numbers of non-Christians in the 1856 Census.⁷ In 1857, the blanket returns showed that a mere six blankets had been issued to Aborigines at Penrith.⁸ Jim Kohen has noted that there was little data about Aboriginal families at Penrith. The Murray and Bott families from Mulgoa moved from the area in the 1860s, but some of the South Creek people lived near Penrith.⁹ By the 1870s, Aborigines had become scarce in Penrith area. J C Cox, a collector of stone tools, commented that they had largely disappeared in the past 35 years, and that any evidence of their stone implements was becoming hard to find.¹⁰

Overall, the documentary evidence for Aborigines in the area is thin, and further detailed research is needed. The 1891 Returns of Aborigines showed that there were only eight Aboriginal persons at Penrith.¹¹ One of the last surviving Darug from the Castlereagh group was Nellie (Na Daang). Penrith police received permission to rent a cottage for her in 1896.¹² Martha Everingham, the last known full-blood Darug Aborigine died in 1926.¹³

⁴ J Kohen, *The Darug & Their Neighbours*, p 9

⁵ R Murray & K White, *Dharug & Dungaree: The History of Penrith and St Marys to 1860*, Hargreen, with Penrith City Council, North Melbourne 1989, p 20

⁶ J Kohen, *The Darug & Their Neighbours*, p 6

⁷ R Murray & K White, *Dharug & Dungaree*, p 324

⁸ At 57/3523, in Lands and Public Works, Letters Received, 1857, SRNSW 5/3578

⁹ J Kohen, *The Darug & Their Neighbours*, p. 140

¹⁰ J C Cox, 'Stone Implements of Australia and the South Seas Islands', *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of NSW*, I, 1875

¹¹ J Brook, *Shut out from the World*, 1999, p 9

¹² J Brook, *Shut out from the World*, p 9

¹³ J Brook, *Shut out from the World*, p 8

The Woodriff Estate

Daniel Woodriff, esquire, a captain in His Majesty's Navy, was granted 1000 acres on the Nepean River on 1 February 1804. It was described as "bounded by the marked apple tree on the edge of the gully and river running from thence due east eighty chains then south-west by south (for back line) one hundred and twenty chains west to the river bank ninety-two chains then by river down bearing north north-east eighty chains and north-west forty chains" and would be called Rodley Farm.¹⁴ On 15 February 1804, he leased the property to William Martin who had sailed under him.¹⁵ Martin was obliged to clear the land, plant wheat and improve the property.¹⁶ Daniel Woodriff gave John Palmer power-of-attorney over his property on 2 March 1804.¹⁷

On 18 December 1805, after surveyor George Evans had made an error in measuring Jamison's, Woodriff's and Chapman's grants, Daniel Woodriff's land was re-granted. It was recorded as 1,000 acres 'bounded on the north by Lambridge Farm an east line of twenty two chains on the south east by a line south thirty three and three quarters west one hundred and thirty-three chains on the south by a east line to the river and on the west by the River Nepean'.¹⁸

The Musters of the colony from 1805 to 1822 provide no evidence that can definitely be linked to Woodriff's property or Martin's lease but material in the Woodriff papers held at Mitchell Library show that Martin was in occupation of the land. In 1814, convicts building the Great Western Road under William Cox, camped on Rodley farm.¹⁹ It was possibly for this service that on 1 July 1815, a notice appeared on the *Sydney Gazette* that William Martin and others were to attend the Eastern Creek stockyards to receive cattle as a reward for the donation of their services in constructing the Great Western Road.²⁰ When Governor Macquarie toured the Cowpastures, he camped at 'Captain Woodriff's [sic] Farm on the River Nepean on the side of a pretty Lagoon of Fresh Water' in October 1815.²¹ William Martin of Nepean also was contracted to supply 4,000 lbs of fresh meat to government stores in September 1818.²²

In a memorial of August 1824, William Martin noted that he had arrived free on the *Calcutta* in 1803. For many years, he occupied a farm in District of Evan owned by Captain Woodriff but was forced to give it up due to the high rent. He requested a grant of land. Recommendations as to his character were included from Henry Fulton clergyman and John McHenry, resident magistrate.²³

Meanwhile, Daniel Woodriff's eldest son Daniel James Woodriff married Hannah Berant on 2 March 1808.²⁴ Daniel James Woodriff, the son of Daniel James Woodriff, was baptised on 15

¹⁴ Abstract of Title of Francis Henry Woodriff in RPA 28808

¹⁵ Woodriff Family, Papers 1803-1865, ML.MSS 613

¹⁶ R Murray & K White, *Dharug & Dungaree: The History of Penrith and St Marys to 1860*, Hargreen, with Penrith City Council, North Melbourne 1989, p 51

¹⁷ Captain Woodriff, Papers 1805-1849, ML A3006, p 28

¹⁸ Abstract of Title of Francis Henry Woodriff in RPA 28808

¹⁹ Combewood Conservation Plan, Master of Heritage Conservation Report, Faculty of Architecture, University of Sydney, June 1994, p. 7

²⁰ *Sydney Gazette*, 1 July 1815, p 1

²¹ R Murray & K White, *Dharug & Dungaree*, p 143

²² *Sydney Gazette*, 5 Sept 1818, p 1

²³ Memorial, Aug 1824, CSIL, 4/1838A, No 624

²⁴ Abstract of Title of Francis Henry Woodriff in RPA 28808

September 1823. By his will of 9 December 1828, Daniel Woodriff gave Rodley Farm to his eldest son Daniel James Woodriff.²⁵

On 13 January 1821, a notice inserted in the press by John Oxley, of Macquarie Street, advertised that 1,000 acres, owned by Captain Woodriffe, RN was to let. "This fine Farm is situate on the Nepean River, opposite to Emu Plains, and has the advantage of a most excellent Public Road leading to it from Sydney. If an acceptable offer is not made for the whole before the 30th Instant, the front of the Farm, next the River, will be let in allotments of 30 acres each, on advantageous terms; reserving 500 acres behind the Farms as common grazing ground for the tenants".²⁶ It was later leased to John McHenry for seven years at £140 pa commencing from 1 March 1821.²⁷

On 14 July 1822, John McHenry wrote to Daniel Woodriff offering to extend the term for 14 years. He noted that when he took over the land William Martin was living in it and had "only Cultivated a few acres on the banks successively until it was so completely worn out as to leave it unfit for cultivation for several years to come. All the rest of the farm was in a state of nature without a single tree fallen upon it, nor any other improvement whatever". He proposed that he burn off half the 1,000 acres by 14 years and erect a 3-railed fence plus other improvements if the lease was extended to 14 years. The estate was also 'completely cut up by cross roads from up and down the settlement, which renders it almost impossible to enclose a single paddock'. He also claimed that "when I commenced on your farm it was nothing better than a Common for all the settlement around it, there are one Principal and four cross roads now through your farm none of which has as yet been attempted to be stopped or prevented in any way whatever".²⁸

Woodriff did not accede to McHenry's request to extend the lease but by 1 March 1827 John Oxley's accounts showed that McHenry claimed a deduction of rent of £50 'for building a cottage'.²⁹ Woodriff later queried this since MacHenry had no authority to erect a cottage.³⁰ John McHenry's lease was renewed for another seven years in 1828 at £350 pa.³¹

The Census of November 1828 listed John McHenry, 38, arrived free on *Mary*, 1819, as a landholder in the District of Evan. He held 2,600 acres, 400 of which were cleared, and 300 were cultivated, plus 38 horses, 618 cattle and 620 sheep.³² Since his adjacent grant was only 100 acres, it is likely that this area included the land he was leasing from Woodriff.

A notice appeared in the *Australian* on 8 July 1829 inserted by Mr Bodenham offering the Woodriff property for a 21-year lease.³³ The part of the grant north of the main western road was leased to McHenry on 1 May 1830 for £200.³⁴ John McHenry died on 9 September 1832 but his widow continued in occupation and was "doing very well" according to solicitor James

²⁵ Abstract of Title of Francis Henry Woodriff in RPA 28808

²⁶ *Sydney Gazette*, 13 Jan 1821, p 3

²⁷ Captain Woodriff, Papers 1805-1849, ML A3006, p 29

²⁸ Captain Woodriff, Papers 1805-1849, ML A3006, p 29-30

²⁹ Captain Woodriff, Papers 1805-1849, ML A3006, p 35

³⁰ Captain Woodriff, Papers 1805-1849, ML A3006, p 39

³¹ Combewood Conservation Plan, p. 8

³² M R Sainty & K A Johnson, *Census of New South Wales: November 1828*, Library of Australian History, Sydney, 1980, M0808

³³ *Australian*, 8 Jul 1829, p 4; It did not appear in the *Sydney Gazette*

³⁴ R Murray & K White, *Dharug & Dungaree*, p 147

Norton, who had taken over the management of the Woodriff estate after John Oxley died in 1827.³⁵

Surveyors Hallen and Knapp were engaged to survey the estate boundaries at a cost of £24/2/0 in order to clarify the extent of the land.³⁶ This is the plan that is now in the National Library of Australia (Fig. 2.1). This estate map of May 1833 showed the study area as vacant. Though it was concerned with the boundaries it seems to include all buildings on the land.³⁷



Figure 2.1: The 1833 survey by Hallen and Knapp showed no buildings on the study area. Notation at left reads “Rich alluvium”, while that to the right “Undulating forest lands”. Source: E J H Knapp, Plan of Capt Woodriff’s grant at Penrith, NLA Map Rm 1264.

On 9 December 1837, James Lethbridge wrote a letter to Daniel Woodriff quoting a letter he had received from his brother-in-law Captain P. P. King:

Tell Captain Woodriff that his farm here will be most valuable and not to think of disposing of it by private sale. There are several longing for it when the present lease expires. It is divided into two halves by the road and at present every acre of it would

³⁵ Captain Woodriff, Papers 1805-1849, ML A3006, p 46

³⁶ Captain Woodriff, Papers 1805-1849, ML A3006, p 46

³⁷ E J H Knapp, Plan of Capt Woodriff’s grant at Penrith, NLA Map Rm 1264

let for 20/- and very soon it will be worth double. If divided into allotments with river frontages it would fetch at least £15.000.³⁸

Daniel Woodriff died on 24 February 1842 and Rodley Farm passed to his eldest son Daniel James Woodriff.³⁹ In 1848, Mrs McHenry was badly affected by losses. On 13 July 1850, solicitor James Norton informed Captain R. N. Woodriff that Mrs McHenry still owed him £50 but she had recently had heavy losses. The lease would expire on 1 May 1850 and she would not renew. Norton went on to note that "Part of her Estate she has sold in lots and for other part given Leases (of Allotments in the Twin of Penrith) for 21 years".⁴⁰ This appears to relate to her own land east of the study area.

About this time the Woodriffe [sic] Estate was subdivided for letting. A plan of the Woodriffe Estate prepared by surveyor A. Hallen and dated as 1 June 1851 (Fig. 2.2) showed a large allotment, No 53, where Thornton Park would later be established of 230 acres. The Combewood site was shown as No 55.⁴¹

³⁸ Captain Woodriff, Papers 1805-1849, ML A3006, p 48

³⁹ Abstract of Title of Francis Henry Woodriff in RPA 28808

⁴⁰ Woodriff Family, Papers 1803-1865, ML.MSS 613

⁴¹ Roll Plan 316 now DP 192170 LPMA; Plan notes it is also 2205 (L)

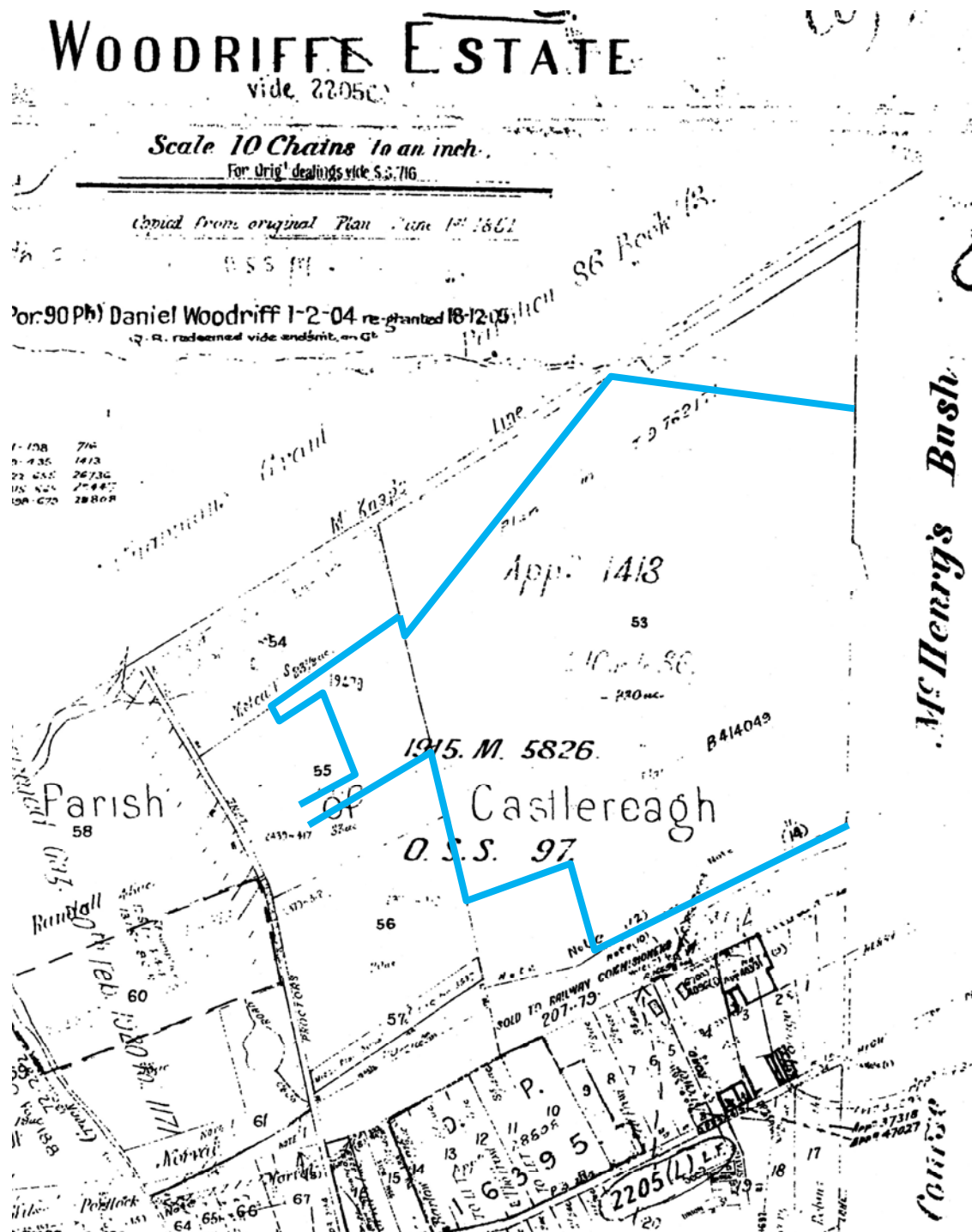


Figure 2.2: Ambrose Hallen's plan of 1851 showed how the estate was divided into lots for leasing purposes. Source: Roll Plan 316 now DP 192170 LPMA. The study area is within Lots 53 and 55. Indicative study area shown.

Attempts were being made by the people of the district to secure a flood free road east of the existing road. On 13 March 1851, A. L. Fraser, the Secretary of the Committee seeking the road, wrote to Daniel James Woodriff seeking approval for a road to pass along the eastern

side of the estate.⁴² Fraser later wrote to Norton on 10 April 1852 seeking help to change Woodriff's opposition to the road.⁴³ On 24 April 1852, Fraser wrote to Woodriff asking the cost for land by the acre if the government resumed it under 4 Wm IV No 11, the act for making parish roads.⁴⁴ A rough sketch dated 30 April 1852 of the land for the proposed road shows no details of buildings.⁴⁵ A similar sketch plan of the proposed road from Penrith to the Nepean River of 1852 in the Surveyor-General's Sketch Books showed the land but no details of buildings (Fig. 2.3).⁴⁶ The road never eventuated.

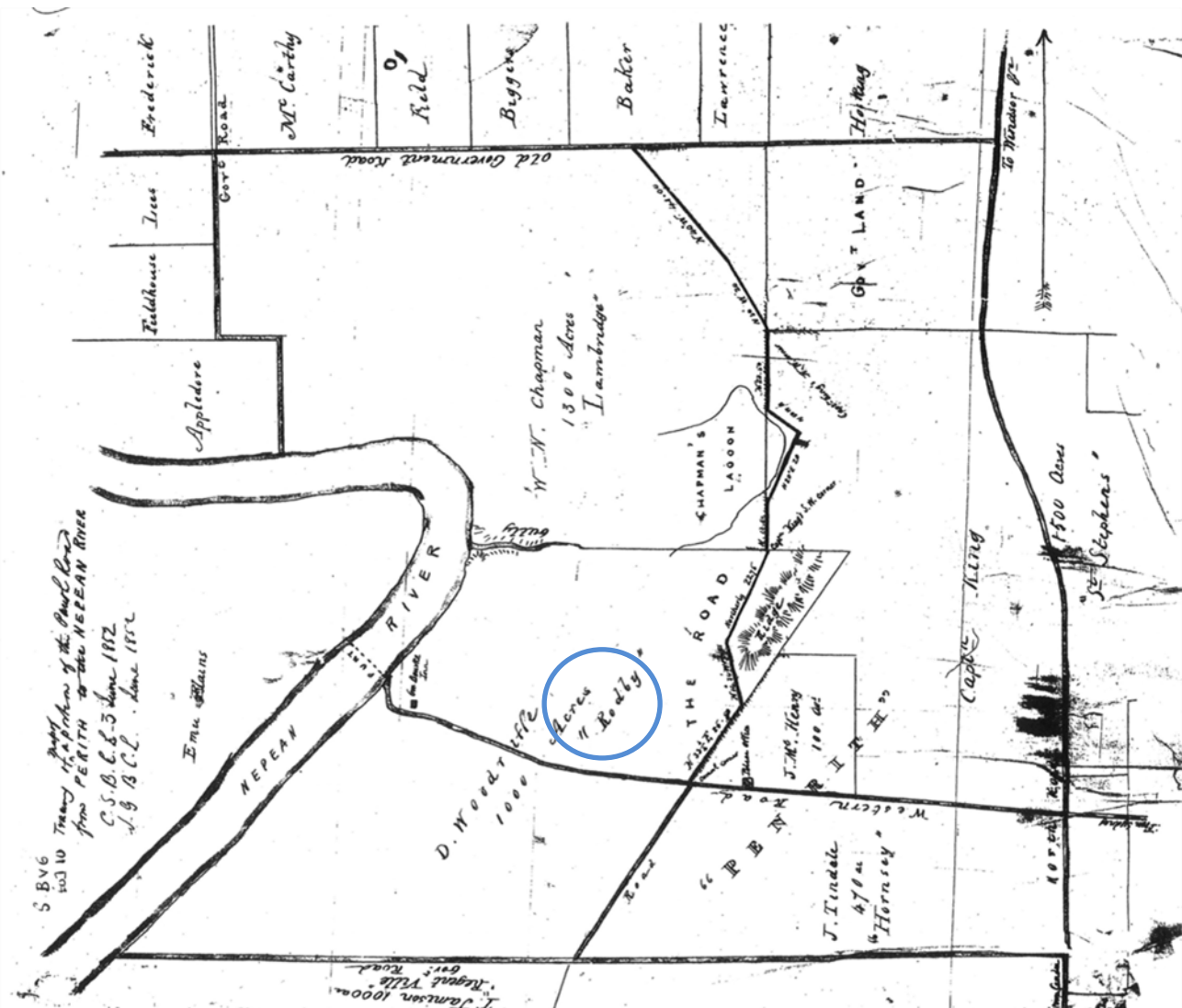


Figure 2.3: This 1852 sketch in the Surveyor-General's sketch books showed no buildings on the site. The general location of the study area is circled. Source: Surveyor-General, Sketch Book, Volume 6, f 10, SRNSW.

⁴² Woodriff Family, Papers 1803-1865, ML.MSS 613. Letters to D J Woodriff, No 1

⁴³ Woodriff Family, Papers 1803-1865, ML.MSS 613. Letters to D J Woodriffe, No 6

⁴⁴ Woodriff Family, Papers 1803-1865, ML.MSS 613. Letters to D J Woodriff, No 7

⁴⁵ Woodruff Family, Papers 1803-1865, ML.MSS 613. Letters to D J Woodruffe, No 8

⁴⁶ Surveyor-General, Sketch Book, Volume 6 f 10, SRNSW

On 1 May 1852, Daniel James Woodriff, of Clifton Lodge Hill, near Southampton, Co Hants, England, esquire, leased lot 53 to Peter Wyche and Andrew Avey for 14 years at £18 pa. It was described as being bounded on the north by Captain King, on the east by McHenry and Captain King, on the south by lots 1-10 and on the west by lots 54-57.⁴⁷ This is the area that was later bought by Thomas Smith. A lease of lot 2 to the south to Peter Wyche gave his address as Penrith.⁴⁸ No data has been located about their use of that land.

A press report of 26 August 1857 that two families were rescued from flood from the Woodriff Estate appears to relate to land close to the river.⁴⁹ A road survey of 1863 only showed occupiers on the western side of the road suggesting there were none on the eastern side.⁵⁰

Sarah, the widow of Daniel Woodriff, was buried on 7 January 1860.⁵¹ On 20 January 1862, Daniel James Woodriff senior, the son of Daniel James Woodriff, died leaving his son Daniel James Woodriff junior as his heir.⁵² Daniel James Woodriff junior made his will on 28 July 1862 devising Rodley Farm to his two sons Frederick Daniel and Francis Henry Woodriff, subject to an annuity of £350 to his widow and £3,000 for the maintenance of his daughters until the youngest son was 21 years old.⁵³

A sketch of 1863 showing buildings near Penrith when residents were seeking better road communications suggested there might have been a dwelling near the road.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ LPMA, No 446 Bk 49

⁴⁸ LPMA, No 463 Bk 49

⁴⁹ *SMH*, 26 Aug 1857, p 2

⁵⁰ R.550a.1603. Crown Plan

⁵¹ Abstract of Title of Francis Henry Woodriff in RPA 28808

⁵² Abstract of Title of Francis Henry Woodriff in RPA 28808

⁵³ Abstract of Title of Francis Henry Woodriff in RPA 28808

⁵⁴ At Rds 97/289, Lands, Roads Branch, Roads Correspondence, SRNSW 10/15432



Figure 2.4: 1873 sketch (not to scale) showing what might be buildings on Castlereagh Road. Source: At Rds 97/289, Roads Correspondence, SRNSW 10/15432. Combewood (left) and Thornton Hall are arrowed.

Daniel James Woodriff junior conveyed the land to Edwin Daintrey on 6 September 1862 to hold the estate to bar the entail created by Daniel Woodriff in his will of 1828.⁵⁵ Daniel James Woodriff junior was ailing soon afterwards but negotiations commenced with Thomas Smith who wanted to buy the large paddock leased to Wyche and Avey. In 1863, the railway station at Penrith was opened. The railway line cut the Woodriff lands into two. Daniel J. Woodriff wrote in reply to Smith on 9 August 1864 with details of his price for the large paddock.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Abstract of Title of Francis Henry Woodriff in RPA 28808

⁵⁶ RPA 1413 SRNSW K 260039

Daniel J. Woodriff wrote in reply to Smith on 9 August 1864 with details of his price for the large paddock.⁵⁷ On 23 October 1865, Jane Woodriff replied on behalf of Daniel James Woodriff to a query from Smith about the sale of the big paddock and also offered Metcalfe's land 'the piece you now rent' for £200.⁵⁸ Thomas Smith replied on 26 October 1865 that he would consider the purchase of "Metcalfe's paddock" and wished Woodriff that "you will soon be restored to your usual good health".⁵⁹ On 27 October 1865, solicitors Daintry and Chapman, Exchange, Sydney wrote to Woodriff noting that Thomas Smith had bought the large paddock for £750 and added that "The property is let to Andrew Henry [Avey – this appears to have been a transcription error] and another".⁶⁰ A memo dated 27 October 1865 from Newlands (Woodriff's Parramatta residence) in the handwriting of Jane Woodriff gave the following dimensions of the land sold, "The Paddock begins at Mr Robin's own house goes by Railway fence, includes the Paddock Henry [Avey – this appears to have been a transcription error] and Wyche broke up, by Chapman's over the Hill back to the starting point".⁶¹ Daniel James Woodriff junior died on 24 November 1865 before the sale was finalised.

When Thomas Smith converted his land to Torrens Title, the plan of 9 March 1866 showed the site where Combewood was later built as leased to 'Dorrington'.⁶² The Real Property Application of 1 September 1866 stated that the occupiers of this land were, starting from the southern end, Doolan, Dorrington and Smith, all of Penrith.⁶³ It is uncertain what use was being made of the land on what was Lot 55 in the 1851 plan.

A press report of 29 June 1867 about heavy flooding along the Nepean River noted that a number of people on the Woodriff Estate especially along Peach Tree Creek (on opposite side of Castlereagh Road) including Poulton, Wilson and Hubbard had lost all their possessions in their houses.⁶⁴ This also related to sites closer to the river.

Jane, the widow of Daniel James Woodriff junior, died on 3 July 1878. Francis Henry Woodriff became 21 years old on 2 May 1879.⁶⁵ In 1880, he married Margaretta Tingecombe and continued to live at Parramatta.⁶⁶

A partition deed of 21 June 1881 formally split the land between the two sons of Daniel James Woodriff junior. The parties to the deed were: 1st Frederick Daniel Woodriff 2nd Francis Henry Woodriff 3rd Robert Stuart. It divided the farm on the basis of a plan drawn by surveyor Samuel Jackson. Francis Henry Woodriff received 503 acres bounded on the north by 105 chains, on the east by the King and McHenry grants, 78 chains, on the south by the Great Western Road and on the west by the Nepean River, except for 224 acres sold to Thomas Smith, 22 acres sold to the Government for the Railway plus various lots in the subdivision

⁵⁷ RPA 1413 SRNSW K 260039

⁵⁸ RPA 1413 SRNSW K 260039

⁵⁹ RPA 1413 SRNSW K 260039

⁶⁰ Woodriff Family, Papers 1803-1865, ML.MSS 613. Letters to D J Woodriff, No 40

⁶¹ Woodriff Family, Papers 1803-1865, ML.MSS 613. Letters to D J Woodriff, No 41

⁶² DP 51413; Measurement from DP 223874 and CT 5944 f 132 shows that Combewood must be on the land leased by Dorrington.

⁶³ RPA 1413

⁶⁴ *SMH*, 29 June 1867, p 5

⁶⁵ Abstract of Title of Francis Henry Woodriff in RPA 28808

⁶⁶ Combewood Conservation Plan, p 9

sold from the estate, leaving a residual area of 244 acres, 3 roods and 10 perches.⁶⁷ The copy of this deed at LPMA does not include the partition map.

Francis Henry Woodriff and Combewood

According to members of the family, a house was constructed for Francis Woodriff and wife Margaretta about 1890. There are plans of a house at Penrith designed by W. Sykes, which has some similarities to the current building known as Combewood, but there are differences. Members of the family believe it was designed by John Sulman.⁶⁸

On 30 April 1894, Francis Henry Woodriff, of Penrith, gent, mortgaged the land he had received in the 1881 partition to Henry Marr, of Stanmore, gent, for £4,500 at 6.5% for 5 years.⁶⁹ Francis H. Woodriff, of Combewood was listed in 1900 as growing maize and oats as well as maintaining an orchard on this land.⁷⁰ There are few maps that give accurate data about this land and the uses of it. An aerial photo on January 1947 shows the land.⁷¹

Francis Henry Woodriff died on 7 March 1950. On 2 April 1958, the executors of his deceased estate conveyed 10 acres 30 3/4 perches to the State of NSW for the Electricity Commission for land resumed on 10 June 1955. Compensation of £6,764/10/1 was paid.⁷² A subdivision plan of the land by J.S. Talbot dated 10 September 1964 showed no details of buildings (Fig. 2.5).⁷³

⁶⁷ LPMA No 132 Bk 222 recited in Abstract of Title of Francis Henry Woodriff in RPA 28808

⁶⁸ Combewood Conservation Plan, p 9

⁶⁹ LPMA, No 787 Bk 535

⁷⁰ *Yewen's Directory of the Landholders of New South Wales, 1900*, Farm & Dairy Publishing Co, Sydney, 1900, p 403.

⁷¹ Windsor, Run 35, Jan 1947, 64-185

⁷² LPMA No 417 Bk 2439

⁷³ DP 223874

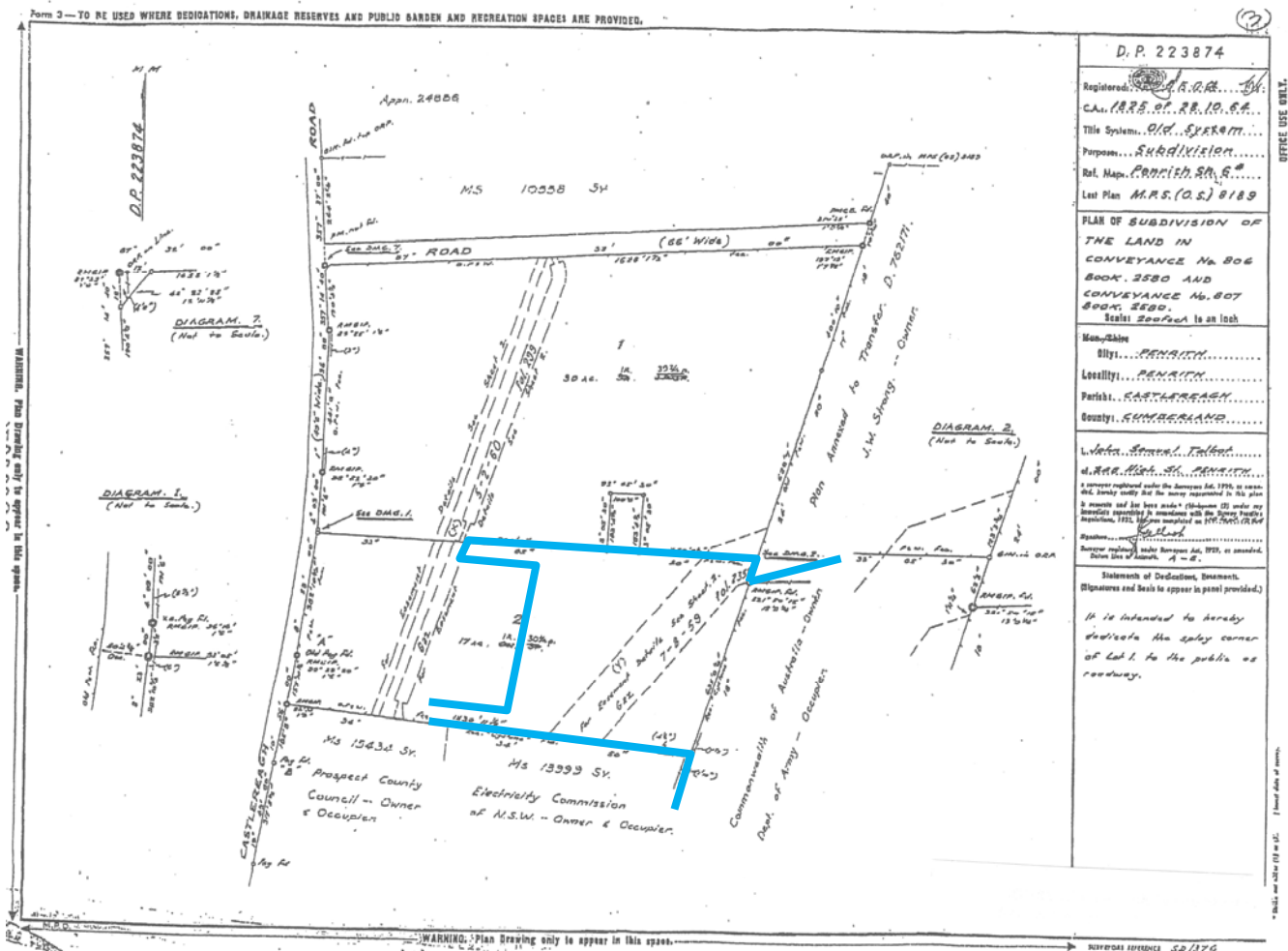


Figure 2.5: The subdivision of September 1964 showed no buildings to the south of Combewood.
Source: DP 223874.

Another survey by W. A. Knowles on 10 August 1967 also showed no buildings etc (Fig. 2.6).⁷⁴

⁷⁴ DP 532378 in Packet RPA 46533

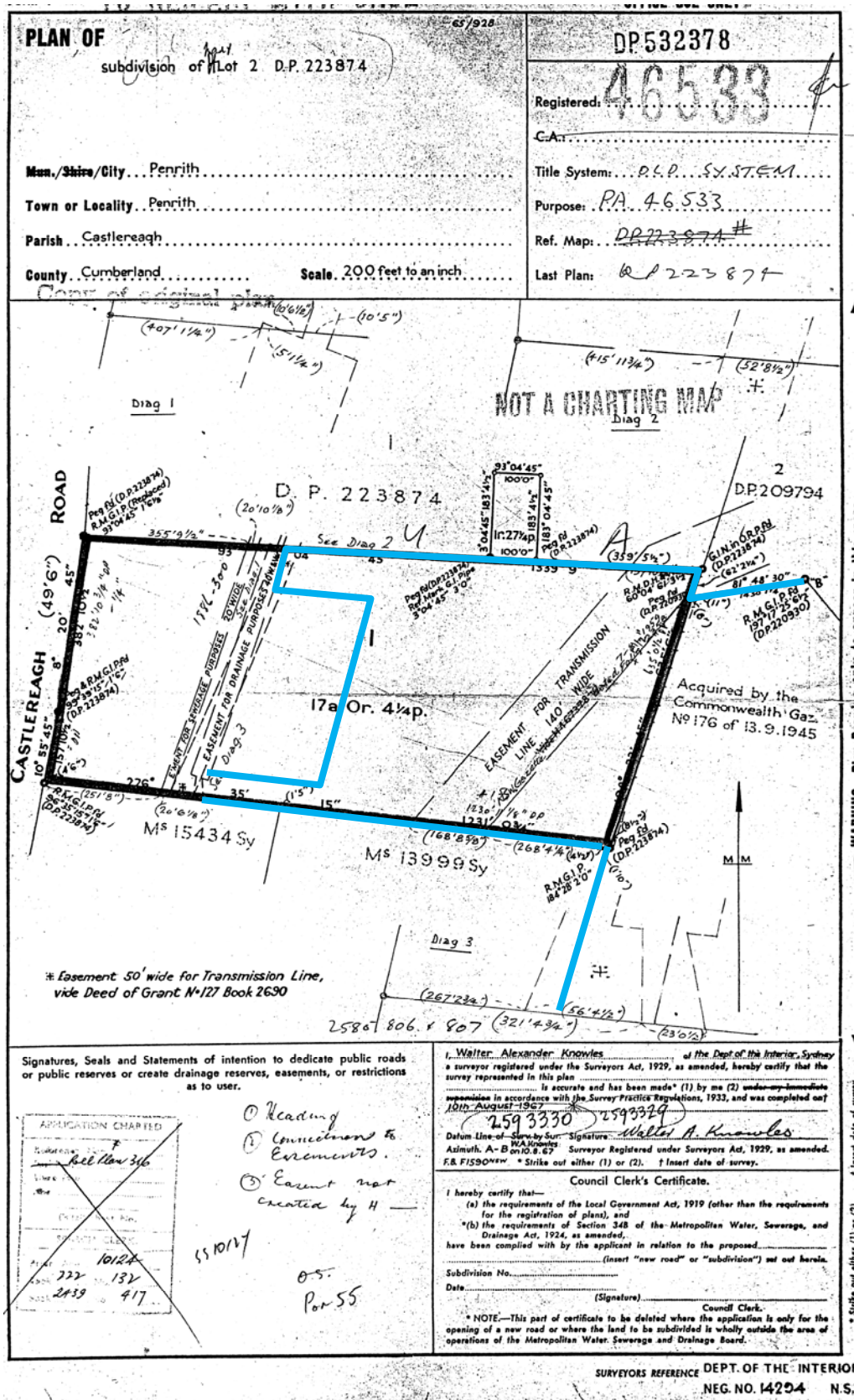


Figure 2.6: The survey of August 1967 also showed no buildings to the south of Combewood. Source: DP 532378 in Packet RPA 46533.

Geigy subdivided the northern part of Combewood into 1/2 acre lots and sold them in the late 1960s.⁷⁵ Penrith Council planned to put Coreen Avenue through Combewood but the road was shifted 90 metres to the north to avoid the house.⁷⁶ Resumption of the land by the Commonwealth was gazetted on 18 January 1968.⁷⁷ On 6 November 1968, the Commonwealth of Australia applied to bring the land under the Real Property Act.⁷⁸ John Woodriff and his sister Mrs Margaret Cox later bought Combewood and the oval garden but could not buy the rest of the lots.⁷⁹ After 1973, Penrith Council bought the carriage loop and 24 trees which preserved them from development.⁸⁰

In 1994, the southern paddock comprised the remnant orchard plus an area of old stables. The orchard consisted of very old fruit trees, either apricots or plums. There were also some macadamia and olive trees.⁸¹ The stables remains were sited under a large olive tree, with its brick foundations visible. It was surmised that there were other farm buildings in this vicinity.⁸²

⁷⁵ Combewood Conservation Plan, p 10

⁷⁶ Combewood Conservation Plan, p 10

⁷⁷ *Commonwealth Government Gazette*, 18 Jan 1968

⁷⁸ RPA 46533

⁷⁹ Combewood Conservation Plan, p 10

⁸⁰ Combewood Conservation Plan, p 10

⁸¹ Combewood Conservation Plan, p 17

⁸² Combewood Conservation Plan, p 18

The Smith Family and Thornton Hall

As noted above, Thornton Hall and Thornton Park were established on an 1804 grant to Daniel Woodriff consisting of 1,000 acres. The Woodriff land remained in the hands of the family after Daniel Woodriff's death. When surveyor Edward Hallen prepared a plan of the Woodriff Estate on 1 June 1851 it showed a large allotment of 230 acres where Thornton Park was established.⁸³

Thomas Smith was a publican in business at Penrith. He was born in Blackpool in England on 6 March 1819 and arrived in the colony about 1840. Due to the commonness of his name, his descendants have not yet determined which Thomas Smith of the many men with this name who arrived about their time, was their ancestor. It is not known if he was a free man or convict. He was employed by Major George Druitt at his property near Prospect. Jane Laimbeer, an immigrant girl, became Thomas Smith's wife at St Bartholemew's Church, Prospect on 6 March 1843. When their first child, Thomas Richard, was born at South Creek in 1844, the father's occupation was recorded as overseer for Major Druitt. Thomas Smith subsequently bought a farm at Ropes Creek and had opened the "Red Cow" inn there by 1848. Smith grew wealthy from servicing the passing parade of gold diggers off to the Bathurst diggings and other gold fields from 1851 onwards. However, the extension of the Sydney to Parramatta railway to Penrith in the late 1850s took away a good deal of his passing trade. About 1860-1, Smith shrewdly moved his inn to a site near the railway in Penrith. By the time that Penrith station was opened, he was ready to service the railway trade. It is reported that his inn was a quality establishment serving a discerning clientele with attractive premises and good service so that he attracted a good deal of custom from thirsty and tired travellers.⁸⁴

In 1863, the railway station at Penrith was opened. This cut the Woodriff lands into two. Smith began negotiations with Daniel J. Woodriff, the current owner, to buy this large parcel of land north of the railway along with other land. Daniel J. Woodriff wrote in reply to Smith on 9 August 1864 with details of his price for the large paddock.⁸⁵ On 27 October 1865, solicitors Daintry and Chapman, Exchange, Sydney wrote to Woodriff noting that Thomas Smith had bought the large paddock for £750 and added that "The property is let to Andrew Henry [Avey – this appears to have been a transcription error] and another".⁸⁶ A memo dated 27 October 1865 from Newlands (Woodriff's Parramatta residence) in the handwriting of Jane Woodriff gave the following dimensions of the land sold, "The Paddock begins at Mr Robin's own house goes by Railway fence, includes the Paddock Henry [Avey – this appears to have been a transcription error] and Wyche broke up, by Chapman's over the Hill back to the starting point".⁸⁷ They came to an agreement about the sale but Woodriff died before the sale was completed.

Thomas Smith was keen to convert this land to the new Torrens Title when the sale was finalised. A Real Property Application Plan of Thomas Smith's property was completed on 9 March 1866, which showed it as measuring 217 a 2 r, and as having no improvements (Fig. 2.7).⁸⁸ On 5 April 1866, the trustees of the deceased estate of Daniel Woodriff conveyed this land to Thomas Smith, licensed victualler of Penrith, plus 6 acres 1 rood 12 perches south of

⁸³ DP 192170 LTO Plans Room

⁸⁴ J Christensen, *The Smiths of Penrith - A reaping of the harvest: An Australian Family History*, pp 6-12

⁸⁵ RPA 1413 SRNSW K 260039

⁸⁶ Woodriff Family, Papers 1803-1865, ML.MSS 613. Letters to D J Woodriff, No 40

⁸⁷ Woodriff Family, Papers 1803-1865, ML.MSS 613. Letters to D J Woodriff, No 41

⁸⁸ DP 51413

the railway for £750.⁸⁹ Thomas Smith formally applied to convert the land to Torrens Title on 1 September 1866.⁹⁰ On 17 January 1867, a Certificate of Title was issued to this land to Thomas Smith in common with Thomas William Shepherd of Sydney.⁹¹ After some of the land was hived off, a new CT was issued to Thomas Smith, publican of Penrith for 214 acres 2.75 perches on 26 February 1874.⁹² This land was mortgaged to Antilla Roxburgh, of Woollahra, widow, for £300 for one year at 8% on 8 August 1874.⁹³ Part of the land was transferred to the railway on 30 August 1879.⁹⁴

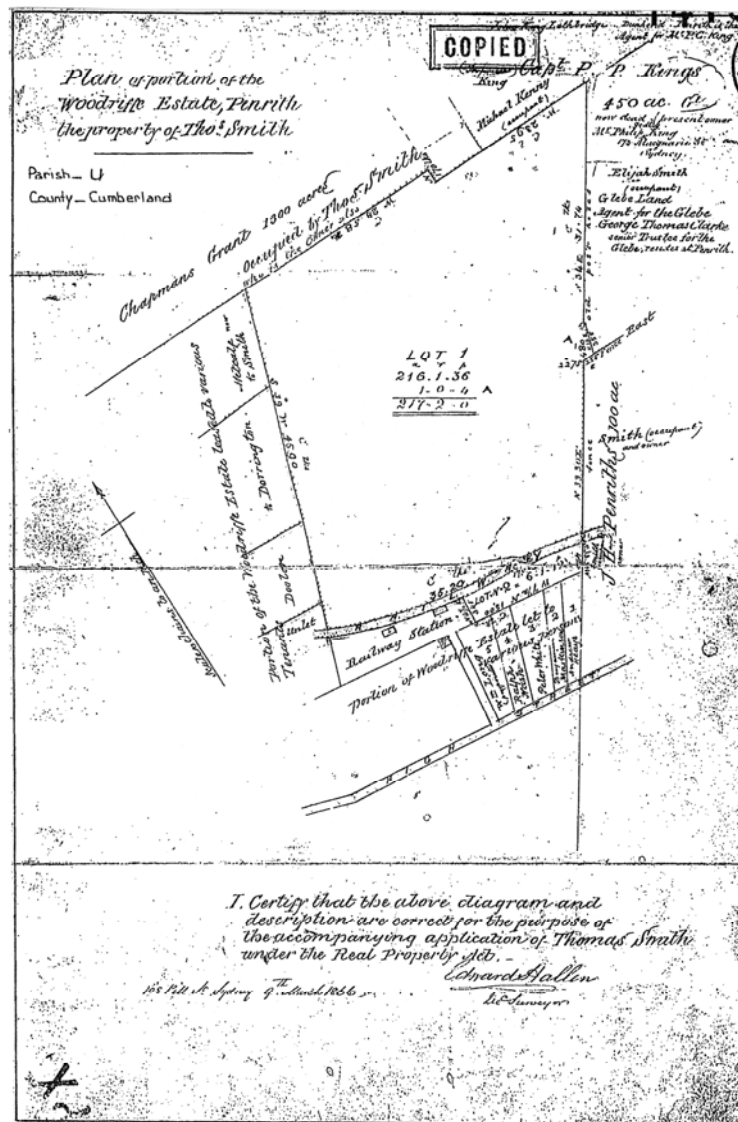


Figure 2.7: The Real Property Application Plan of March 1866 for Smith's land showing adjacent owners. Source: DP 51413.

⁸⁹ LPMA, No 250 Bk 98

⁹⁰ RPA 1413

⁹¹ C T 36 f 205-6

⁹² C T 202 f 48

⁹³ C T 202 f 48; Dealing 12426

⁹⁴ C T 202 f 48

Thomas Smith is believed to have bred horses, cattle, and sheep on his property. However, much of the land was low lying and often swampy so its uses were limited. The northern part of his land, even within living memory, was covered with open forest. It is uncertain when Thornton Hall was built for him. Some estimates reckon that it was the 1870s. Others suggest the 1880s.

There were reports from the early 1880s about his son erecting a new residence. On 31 March 1882, T.R. Smith was reported to be ready to take up residence in a handsome newly built residence, which was almost complete, and had been built by his father, Alderman Smith (i.e. Thomas Smith).⁹⁵ On 28 April 1882, it was reported that T.R. Smith was to take up his abode in Penrith. "He will, as soon as completed, occupy his father's villa, Lemon Grove. He has leased the property for a term, and every endeavour is being now made to complete the building which will form a conspicuous and graceful addition to our local landscape".⁹⁶ Whether this was a description of the house now known as Thornton Hall is uncertain.

Meanwhile, the other son, Sydney Smith was prospering in Sydney. Sydney Smith was elected as an alderman on Leichhardt Council in February 1886. He became Mayor of Leichhardt Council in 1888.⁹⁷ He had joined the railways in 1870 and had worked in the public service until he resigned to work as an auctioneer and land agent. On 1879, Sydney Smith married Sarah Jane Hockey. She died in 1907.⁹⁸ He was elected to the NSW parliament and held the Mines portfolio. He made a successful transition to the Federal sphere and was briefly Post-Master-General from 1904-05. He retired from politics after 1906.

Thomas Smith had died at his residence Thornton Hall on 5 September 1896.⁹⁹ When the probate of Thomas Smith's will was granted, the Thornton Hall property went directly to Sydney Smith.¹⁰⁰ After Thomas Smith's death, a valuation of his property for death duties was completed by his nephew Percy James Johnstone, a Penrith auctioneer on 29 October 1896.¹⁰¹ This valuation included Belmore Park (i.e. Thornton Park) consisting of 214 acres 1 rood and 20 perches with Thornton Hall with an additional 20 acres, all worth £2,500. There were a few cattle and horses also listed but no details were provided about them.¹⁰²

On 22 April 1901, the title to Thornton Hall was formally transmitted to Sydney Smith, esquire.¹⁰³ On 4 May 1901, he mortgaged it to Mary Davies, wife of Egan Alfred Davies, Moss Vale, Clerk of Petty Sessions.¹⁰⁴ Various other mortgages were taken out in later years.

The Thornton Hall property had various uses over the years. These will all be examined in the following sections. Smith sought to benefit from the land, by letting it for various purposes. Often these uses or leases were concurrent so that there were contending users of the site. All were managed so that they clashed as little as possible. These diverging and often

⁹⁵ *Nepean Times*, 31 March 1882

⁹⁶ *Nepean Times*, 28 April 1882

⁹⁷ *Australian Town & Country Journal*, 25 Feb 1888, p 377, 392

⁹⁸ J Christensen, *The Smiths of Penrith - A reaping of the harvest: An Australian Family History*, p 12

⁹⁹ *Nepean Times*, nd

¹⁰⁰ J Christensen, *The Smiths of Penrith*, p 21

¹⁰¹ J Christensen, *The Smiths of Penrith*, p 22

¹⁰² Stamp Duties Office, Deceased Estate Files, Thomas Smith, Red Cow, Penrith, died 5/9/1896, Z 16751 SRNSW 20/7085

¹⁰³ C T 470 f 221

¹⁰⁴ C T 470 f 221

intersecting uses of the site all contribute to its historical significance and the rich patina of its historical evidence and associations.

Sydney Smith died at Croydon on 21 February 1934 and was buried at Rookwood. It was not until 24 March 1938 that the property was formally transmitted to Sydney Smith, Chatswood, civil servant and Amy Howard, wife of Owen James Howard, Manly freeholder.¹⁰⁵

The Sydney County Council had erected a power line along the railway and on 28 December 1937 entered a caveat against the title by virtue of a lease over this strip of land.¹⁰⁶

From the 1940s onwards, the land was acquired by the Commonwealth. For a time, the house was not transferred to the Commonwealth. The upper storey bedrooms appear to have been demolished about the time of the sale of the property to Hugh Read in 1947.¹⁰⁷ On 1 February 1951, after considerable negotiation with the current owners of Thornton Hall, which now stood on a remnant parcel of land of 4 acres 3 roods and 21.75 perches, the property was compulsorily acquired by the Commonwealth.¹⁰⁸ From 1951 until 1994, Thornton Hall was used as the Commanding Officer's Quarters for the Army Engineering Stores Depot on Thornton Park (see below).

Land-use on Thornton Park

Some concept of the various uses of this site can be seen from the 1940 Australian Army Topographical Map attached to the rifle range papers, which shows this site with a speedway, a golf links and a rifle range upon it (Fig. 2.8).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ C T 470 f 221

¹⁰⁶ C T 470 f 221; Dealing C 612452

¹⁰⁷ Graham Brooks & Associates Pty Ltd, North Penrith Army Land Heritage Analysis, 1999, p 14

¹⁰⁸ *Commonwealth Government Gazette*, 1 February 1951

¹⁰⁹ NAA, SP 1008/1, 538/4/81

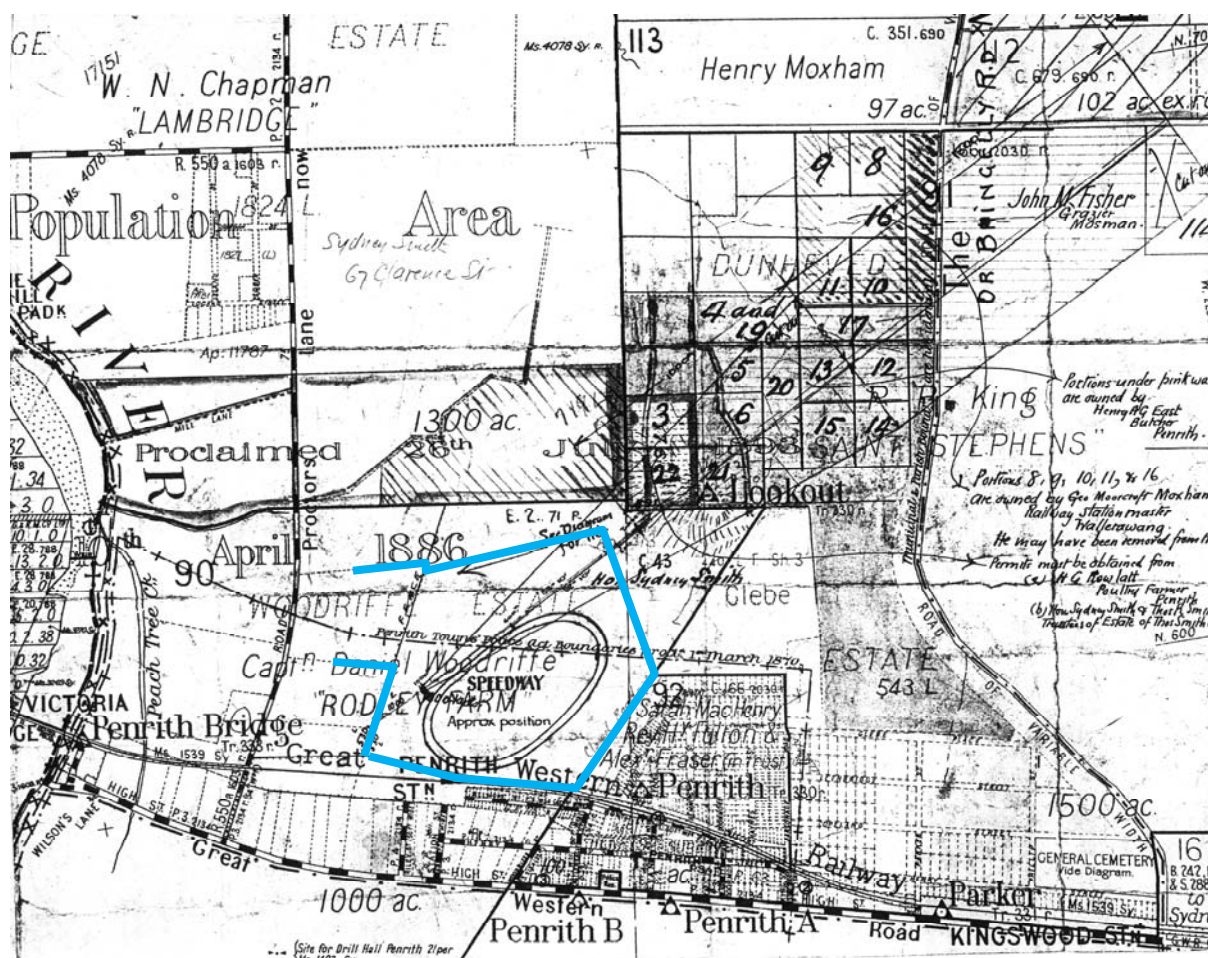


Figure 2.8: The location of the different users of the site can be gauged from this 1940 plan. Indicative study area boundaries are shown. Source: NAA, SP 1008/1, 538/4/81.

Rural land use

There is little definite evidence for the use of this land in the nineteenth century. Thomas Smith is believed to have bred horses, cattle, and sheep on his property. Thomas Smith senior of Penrith was listed in a stock directory on 31 December 1884 as a landholder with 400 acres at Penrith. He had 12 horses, 15 cattle, no sheep and no pigs.¹¹⁰ This was scarcely a massive stock holding in view of the large acreage that Smith held. Sizeable parts of his land retained its tree cover. An undated photograph of people hunting at Smith's Paddock, Penrith, shows them moving through an open dry sclerophyll forest (Fig. 2.9).¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ 'Dept of Mines (Stock and Brands Branch), Report 31 Dec 1884', V & P L A N S W, 1885 (2), III, p 447 (of report).

¹¹¹ GPO 1 5528.



Figure 2.9: This nineteenth-century photo of 'Smith's Paddock' at Penrith shows the area as open forest. Source: GPO 1 5528, ML.

The valuation of Thomas Smith's deceased estate on 20 October 1896 for death duties noted that he had a mere 16 horses and 24 cattle.¹¹² Shortly afterwards, a pastoral directory of 1900 listed "Jane Smyth" with no address as a grazier at Penrith.¹¹³ The Directory was set out to include people with as few as a handful of dairy cows as graziers, so it does not suggest a large stock holding. Similarly, from 1899 until 1906, there were no stock mortgages taken out by Sydney Smith after he inherited the property.¹¹⁴ However, Laura Player has stated that Thomas Smith raised racehorses and had a contract to supply cattle to New Zealand at one stage.¹¹⁵

By the 1910s, there was a dairy at Thornton Hall conducted by the Lack brothers, one of whom was Henry Lack. It is uncertain when this dairy commenced operations. Dairying increased along the Hawkesbury from the 1890s with many farmers moving into fresh milk production and the establishment of butter and dairy factories in the district. An aerial photograph of Penrith published in August 1918 showed Belmore Park with Thornton Hall. It was described on the caption as being let to Harry Lack.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Stamp Duties Office, Deceased Estate Files, Thomas Smith, Red Cow, Penrith, died 5/9/1896, Z 16751 SRNSW 20/7085

¹¹³ *Yewen's Directory of the Landholders of New South Wales, 1900*, Farm & Dairy Publishing Co, Sydney, 1900, p 403

¹¹⁴ Stock Mortgage Indexes, SRNSW

¹¹⁵ Pers comm, Laura Player, 14 April 2000

¹¹⁶ *Nepean Times*, 31 Aug 1918

On 15 December 1941, more information about the dairy was provided by a valuation of the property by S. Eyles & Co Pty Ltd, Sydney in relation to the takeover of the land by the Army for an Engineer's Depot. This report noted that most of the area was used as a dairy farm, including the speedway and golf course on the site. In normal years, the dairy milked 40 cows and had a Milk Board licence. The area then being proposed for resumption was only a small part of that area and it was recognised that it would not have any major adverse impact on the dairy. It would simply decrease the area available for cattle.¹¹⁷

Horse Racing

Thomas Smith was a notable local identity, both as publican and as alderman. Publicans loved horse races and any other festive occasion. The publican's personality was often of the congenial type, or, that is what we are led to believe from various literary sources. In many hotels, the man looked after the bar, a congenial "mine host" to all comers. Meanwhile, the real work of the hotel was done behind doors by his "manager", i.e. wife or daughter who supervised the making of beds, the washing of linen and the mechanics of catering for both food and drink. Like many Australians, publicans also loved horses and racing, which were as necessary to civilised life at that time as cars are to a civilised life in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Publicans also liked horse races because they were a place where they could obtain a "booth licence" under the Liquor Acts, and set up a liquor booth for the duration of any race meeting to service the thirsty punters, riders and spectators. Booth licences were normally only available to holders of a liquor licence for the licensing district in which the race meeting was held.

Whatever was the impetus for Thomas Smith's patronage of a race track we cannot know. In any case, by the early 1890s, he was holding race meetings on his Belmore Park property. In 1892 and 1894, there were horse races recorded at Belmore Park.¹¹⁸ It is likely that they occurred even before then, since a race track of some sort was already in place by 1892.

Nonetheless, facilities were primitive. The 26 January 1892 Anniversary Race meeting at Belmore Park was one such affair. The races were successful, but it was noted by commentators that there was no secretary's office where the owners could register their entries and no place where scratchings could be noted on a board. The liquor booth plied a busy trade.¹¹⁹ By the 26 January 1894 race meetings at Belmore Park, facilities were more salubrious. A grandstand had appeared. Other events on that day included a cricket match.¹²⁰

This track became the nucleus for later development a number of sporting venues catering for a wide assortment of sports.

Cricket

Thomas Smith's Belmore Park was already known as a sporting field often serving as the centre for various sporting matches. During the tour of the cricket team sponsored by Lord Sheffield and captained by the legendary English cricketer W.G. Grace, a match was played on this ground. On 16 and 17 February 1892, Lord Sheffield's team played a Nepean District team at Belmore Park. It has been claimed that a series of horse races was interrupted to

¹¹⁷ NAA unsourced valuation

¹¹⁸ Graham Brooks & Associates Pty Ltd, North Penrith Army Land Heritage Analysis, 1999, p 18

¹¹⁹ *Nepean Times*, 30 Jan 1892

¹²⁰ *Nepean Times*, 3 Feb 1894, p 2

mark out a cricket pitch for W.G. Grace and English players for this match. The ground had also been used for pedestrian races.¹²¹

Balloon flights

The visit to Penrith by the English cricketing team coincided with a series of tours of the colony by visiting hot air balloonists from overseas. It appears that the visits by balloonists were part of a tour around the colony to draw the attention of local citizens away from their everyday round of affairs as well as to draw their purses out of their pockets, rather than any deliberate decision to capitalise on the cricket tour.

On 23 January 1892, an advertisement for T.R. Smith's Anniversary Races in the *Nepean Times* stated that Signor Fernandez would make a balloon flight on 26 January and would make a parachute jump from his balloon. The notice went on to say that "Professor Bass", world champion uni-cycle rider, would also appear "on the elevated platform" as would Mr Daniels, a local amateur.¹²²

Rifle Range

A rifle range operated on the site for many years. Before 1900, the colonial government provided financial assistance to rifle clubs and to their firing ranges, as a way of encouraging shooting skills, which were a vital element in success in war. Often these rifle ranges were associated with the Volunteer Companies of the militia, which were distributed across NSW. After 1900, the Commonwealth government took up this responsibility. Penrith Rifle Range was shown across the site running north-east from the end of speedway on a topographical map of 1940.¹²³

The Penrith Rifle Club was formed in 1895 but it is uncertain when they commenced using the Thornton Park Rifle Range.¹²⁴ However, in 1934, it was noted on a file regarding the range that the rifle range had been in use for almost 35 years, hence suggesting a commencement date of about 1899.¹²⁵ It is quite possible, however, that the club commenced using the range in 1895.

In April 1917, a schedule of works was prepared by the Royal Australian Engineers for upgrading the range on the site. Sydney Smith had been allowing the rifle club free use of the range on his land for many years. Although it is not certain, it appears that use of the range by the Australian Army commenced about this time. A shelter shed, magazines, a firing point and mounds in front of the targets were in place by this time. Users included 50 men from the 9th Light Horse, 80 men from the 41st Infantry, plus 134 senior cadets and 60 members of the rifle club. The range was laid out from the south-western corner of Smith's land and shooters fired in a north-easterly direction towards a small hill which caught any stray bullets which overshot the targets.¹²⁶

In January 1920, dairyman Henry Lack, lost his best mare when she fell into the range pit. He was subsequently paid £30 in compensation. The pit and other parts of the range were

¹²¹ Info from Laura Player

¹²² *Nepean Times*, 23 Jan 1892

¹²³ Australia - Army, One Mile Military Topographical Map, ML Map M Ser 3 804/3, Zone 8, No 416, Windsor, 1940

¹²⁴ *The Rifle*, 9 Oct 1919, p 6

¹²⁵ Penrith rifle range - range papers 1917-38, NAA SP 1008/1 538/4/81

¹²⁶ Penrith rifle range - range papers 1917-38, NAA SP 1008/1 538/4/81

fenced off after this to avoid any further accidents to livestock. Apart from the local rifle club, the range was used by three troops of Light Horse by 1923.

The military authorities made moves to dismantle some of their structures situated near the newly built speedway track after accidents between speedway riders and the range fittings. On 20 December 1924, a motor cyclist came off the track and struck one of a group of rifle shooters practising on the range.¹²⁷ On 28 March 1925, John Henry Stockdale, riding a motor cycle on a practice run, ran off the speedway and hit a mound on the rifle range, which killed him.¹²⁸ Shelter sheds and magazines were to be moved elsewhere away from the speedway circuit.¹²⁹ An inspection of the range was made shortly afterwards. Local land owners were generally tolerant of the rifle range, but one was reluctant to sign the standard permission form speaking of "possible trouble in case he wished to sell the land & he also spoke vaguely about bullets whistling round his ears, in the usual cautious manner of his kind". The inspector also provided photographs with his report showing the range and various buildings and other structures erected upon it.¹³⁰

The range was no longer required for military purposes after April 1926, and it was handed over to the local rifle club (Fig. 2.10). Nonetheless, the Army still maintained a small interest in the range and assisted the club in some matters. On 25 May 1934, after the death of Sydney Smith, senior, his son, Sydney Smith, junior, gave notice to the rifle club that they would have to quit the site. Captain H. J. Neale, the superintendent of the Penrith Rifle Club, was instructed to find another site. He informed the military authorities at Victoria Barracks that no nearby site could be found. In the meantime, he was trying to negotiate a rent or other agreement to use the site with the Smith Estate. Through the lobbying efforts of Warrant Officer Reg Smith, another son of the late Sydney Smith, the trustees of the estate were prevailed upon to leave the rifle club in occupation.¹³¹ This occupation continued until 1942.

¹²⁷ *Nepean Times*, 27 Dec 1924

¹²⁸ *Nepean Times*, 4 April 1925, p 5

¹²⁹ Penrith rifle range - range papers 1917-38, NAA SP 1008/1, 538/4/81

¹³⁰ Penrith rifle range - range papers 1917-38, NAA SP 1008/1, 538/4/81

¹³¹ Penrith rifle range - range papers 1917-38, NAA SP 1008/1, 538/4/81

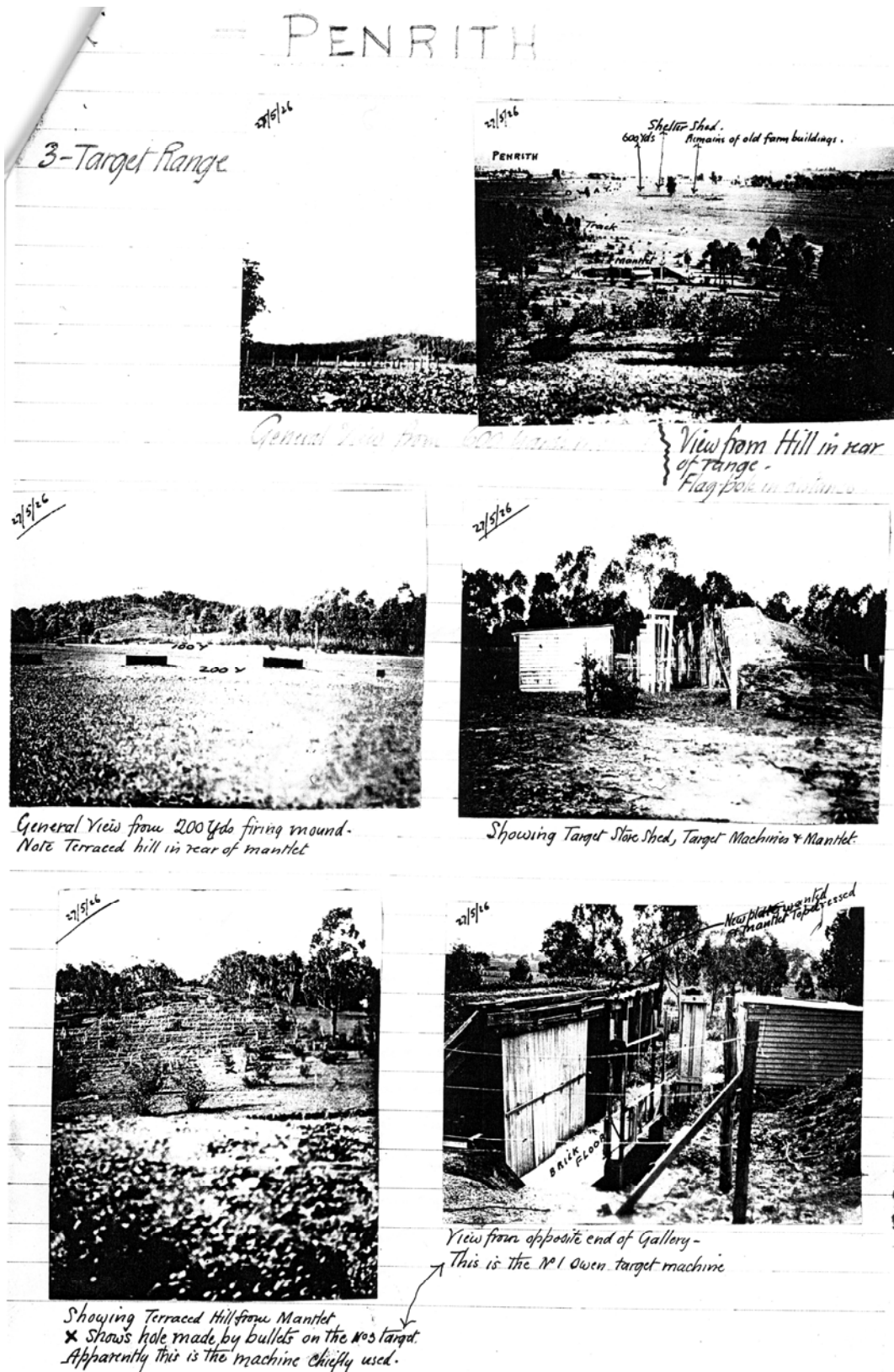


Figure 2.10: These photos taken by the Inspector provide views of the rifle range in 1926. Source: NAA SP 1008/1, 538/4/81.

Once the Thornton Park site came under the direct control of the military in World War Two, the rifle range appeared to be well positioned to assist in the training of troops. However, such a scenario was not to eventuate. An inspection of 18 August 1942 found that the range equipment was old and faulty and that many houses had been built in the danger zone where spent bullets fell. The Bringelly-Richmond Road, a busy route, now traversed the danger zone. A local dairyman testified that he often heard .303 bullets whizzing over his head. There was no question that training with light automatic weapons or machine guns could be carried out. The range was declared unsafe on 21 August 1942 and subsequently closed down.¹³² When another "Penrith rifle range" was put into commission, it was situated near Blackheath in the Blue Mountains.¹³³

Airfield

An important aspect of the history of the site is its association with early flying in Australia since it was used at an embryonic stage of the emergence of powered flight in Australia. The genesis of this notable sequence of events occurred on 28 April 1909, when the first meeting of the Aerial League of Australia was held at the Hotel Australia. The League was to act as an early ginger group seeking to promote aerial activity and the fun of flying as well as the military might of air power.¹³⁴ The League's first Annual Report of 1910 noted that Sydney Smith had offered land for an airfield to the League.¹³⁵ This site was his Belmore Park property at Penrith. On September 1910, the Aerial League was pleased to select this area as a flying ground for its members.¹³⁶ Commentators noted that it was "an ideal flying ground". In addition, it was, "Situated close to Penrith railway station, it is a fine stretch of level ground, with a good take-off at one corner. The wind conditions are always perfect there, the area being enclosed by the great Blue Mountains on the north and south."¹³⁷ Most importantly, it had "a fine stretch of level ground with a good take-off at one corner".¹³⁸ It has been stated by various commentators that this was the first time any area had been set aside for aviation in Australia.¹³⁹

That took care of the landing ground but to make a significant milestone in flying history, aeroplanes are needed. Two Bristol Boxkite aircraft were imported into Australia by the British Colonial Aircraft Co for £1,333 for Joseph Joel Hammond, soon afterwards. The Company sought to promote them to possible purchasers, particularly the Australian government which was showing a marked interest in the potential of flying machines. Hammond, who was to demonstrate the aircraft, left Australia. His mechanic, Lesley McDonald, sold the machines to William Ewart Hart, and taught him to fly from 25 September to 4 November 1911 at Smith's Thornton Park.¹⁴⁰

¹³² Penrith rifle club range, 1942, NAA SP 1008/1 538/45/83

¹³³ Penrith rifle range 1952-3, NAA SP 857/3k PC/1023

¹³⁴ N Parnell & T Boughton, *Flypast: A Record of Aviation in Australia*, AGPS, Canberra, p 9

¹³⁵ D A Craddock, *Feeling the Air*, p 32

¹³⁶ N Parnell & T Boughton, *Flypast: A Record of Aviation in Australia*, AGPS, Canberra, p 9

¹³⁷ *The Motor In Australia*, 1 Oct 1910, p 77

¹³⁸ D A Craddock, *Feeling the Air*, p 105; N Parnell & T Boughton, *Flypast: A Record of Aviation in Australia*, AGPS, Canberra, p 9

¹³⁹ R T Gibson, 'The Penrith Area - A Cradle of Aviation', Paper given to Nepean Historical Society 23/10/1969, p 4; Empire Speedway, *Anzac Day Programme*, 1938; R J Gibson, 'Australian Aviation: The First Hundred Years', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 58, 3, Sept 1972, p 168

¹⁴⁰ D A Craddock, *Feeling the Air*, p 106

Hart arrived at Penrith in late September. On 23 September 1911, Smith leased the airfield to Hart at no cost.¹⁴¹ Hart later stated that he had searched over a large area seeking a suitable airfield within fifty miles of Sydney. He discovered, "an ideal spot situated right at Penrith Railway Station, where the Penrith Speedway is now located. I chose this spot for various reasons. It was right at the Railway Station and handy to Sydney, it was a very large area of nice level ground, almost entirely surrounded by 'emergency' landing grounds, and with but very few trees and other obstructions. Principally, one could nearly always depend upon calm mornings and evenings".¹⁴² As it turned out some of this praise came into the category of "artistic licence", since the conditions were not always so placid, and were to cost Hart his share of mishaps.

On 29 September 1911, Hart's plane was damaged when it hit a stump.¹⁴³ A wind storm damaged the plane by blowing it along the ground on 3 October 1911.¹⁴⁴ Gaining confidence and experience, Hart ventured ever further. On 2 November 1911, he flew solo around Penrith.¹⁴⁵

The next morning, 3 November 1911, Hart flew his plane to Parramatta taking off at 6.45 am with his 16 year old brother, Jack, as a passenger and went to Parramatta for breakfast with his father. The trip took 19 minutes. His return flight back to Parramatta was described in English and Continental press as a world record.¹⁴⁶ On his return, he landed in Best's paddock at Seven Hills since the weather became poor and he left his machine there for a few days until he could return for it.¹⁴⁷ It is reported that his brother Jack vowed he would never go up with Billy again after this flight.

It was this flight from Penrith, more specifically from Thornton Park to Parramatta Park, on 3 November 1911, for which Hart is remembered. This has long been recognised as the first long distance flight in Australia.¹⁴⁸ He followed this up on 18 November 1911, when he flew to Sydney Showground at 6,000 feet in 55 minutes. This was the longest such flight ever made up to that time in Australia.¹⁴⁹ Hart claimed this as a record for the Southern Hemisphere.¹⁵⁰

When Hart withdrew his involvement with Thornton Park, it did not signal the end of its associations with flying. Subsequently, Sydney Smith promoted the site as an aerodrome. On 25 September 1928, it was reported that Penrith Speedway had been recognised by the Department of Civil Aviation as a first class aerodrome.¹⁵¹ Smith proposed to develop the

¹⁴¹ D A Craddock, *Feeling the Air*, p 106

¹⁴² W E Hart, Diary Notes, Copy in possession of Laura Player, Perth

¹⁴³ R T Gibson, 'The Penrith Area - A Cradle of Aviation', Paper given to Nepean Historical Society 23/10/1969, p 7

¹⁴⁴ *Nepean Times*, 7 Oct 1911

¹⁴⁵ R T Gibson, 'The Penrith Area - A Cradle of Aviation', Paper given to Nepean Historical Society 23/10/1969, p 8

¹⁴⁶ This was the claim made by Hart. *The Times* of London did report his flight in its edition of 20 November 1911, on page 11. However, this report only appeared in the early edition of this newspaper. The NSW State Library only holds the late edition. The *New York Times* does not appear to have noted Hart's flight.

¹⁴⁷ W E Hart, 'My First Flight', *Flying*, 1 Dec 1929, p 13-4; R T Gibson, 'The Penrith Area - A Cradle of Aviation', Paper given to Nepean Historical Society 23/10/1969, p 8

¹⁴⁸ S Brogden, *The History of Australian Aviation*, Hawthorne, Melbourne, 1960, p 25

¹⁴⁹ R T Gibson, 'The Penrith Area - A Cradle of Aviation', Paper given to Nepean Historical Society 23/10/1969, p 10

¹⁵⁰ R J Gibson, 'Australian Aviation: The First Hundred Years', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 58, 3, Sept 1972, p 169

¹⁵¹ SMH, 25 Sept 1928, p 7

area as an aerodrome. It appears that this was a response to a campaign being waged by the Aero Club to persuade local councils and other bodies to provide landing grounds in rural areas across NSW.¹⁵²

Penrith Council received a letter sent on 10 October 1928 by Penrith Speedway, of 67 Clarence St, Sydney, owner of the "World's Greatest Dirt Track", informing them that the Aviation Department had approved an Aerodrome within the existing speedway area (see below for speedway). The company's directors wished to erect two hangars and sought council approval to "erect [them] on the strip of land situated between area set apart for Car and Cycle competition and Railway Station".¹⁵³

Development as an aerodrome was seriously being promoted at this time. An undated circular for Penrith Aerodrome, now held by Laura Player, which appears to date from about this time, stated that Penrith aerodrome was right at the station with a goods siding, where goods could be loaded into "the proposed hangars". It also had all-night lighting. The ground was described as being, "Enclosed in the Speedway track, the flying ground is perfectly level and free from obstructions, providing sufficient runway for even the largest planes". It was further stated that, "It is the intention of the Proprietor to immediately commence the construction of hangars, work shops etc for the shelter, erection, and repairs of aircraft".¹⁵⁴

It does not appear that Penrith Aerodrome was incorporated as a company. No entry for such a company could be located in the Companies Office Registers.¹⁵⁵ Whilst it functioned, the so-called Penrith Aerodrome operated from 67 Clarence St, Sydney, who was Sydney Smith's office from which the speedway also operated.¹⁵⁶

It appears that the flooding of the site after 1930, which closed the speedway, also curtailed aerodrome development. Nothing substantial appears to have been constructed for the aerodrome in 1929. The Great Depression made all new investment a risky venture in the early 1930s. By the later 1930s, the proposed market for such an aerodrome may no longer have existed, especially with larger and heavier aircraft needing longer and better prepared landing grounds. The amateur market may already have been well served after 1929. On 6 August 1929, the Annual General Meeting of the Aero Club approved the acquisition of an area of 210 acres near Warwick Farm to develop as an aerodrome.¹⁵⁷ From 1929 into 1930, the Aero Club of New South Wales oversaw the construction of an airfield for their members at this site later named as Hargrave Park. It was operational by July 1930 and after that date, Penrith may no longer have had a viable market amongst amateur pilots in the Sydney Basin.¹⁵⁸

Speedway

A speedway operated at Penrith on the Thornton Hall estate from the early 1920s until the early 1940s. Unlike the usual racing tracks of concrete or some other hard surface or gravel the Penrith track was a special type of dirt track or speedway, which developed from the 1920s onwards, and still attracts a passionate following from its devotees in Australia, the USA

¹⁵² Aero Club of NSW, *Annual Reports*, 1927-8

¹⁵³ Council In-letter, received copy from Laura Player

¹⁵⁴ Information from Laura Player

¹⁵⁵ Listing held at SRNSW

¹⁵⁶ Information from Laura Player

¹⁵⁷ Aero Club of NSW, *Annual Reports*, 1928-9

¹⁵⁸ *Flying*, 1 Aug 1930, pp 4-7

and other parts of the world. Apart from the speed at which vehicles traverse the speedway, added thrill is added by the loose nature of the surface which makes the motor-cycles and cars slide about especially at turns. Though this style of racing evolved as a special type of competition in the early 1920s, the first true speedway was in 1907 when a race was held on a loose dirt track in Pietermaritzburg in Natal.¹⁵⁹

The Penrith Speedway grew out of the existing race events that had been held there, just like speedway did in other venues. There was already a circular track at Penrith. An aerial photograph of Penrith published in August 1918 showed Belmore Park with Thornton Hall, then let to dairyman Harry Lack, which had a circular track on the ground.¹⁶⁰

According to the Smiths themselves, the Penrith Speedway was erected in 1920 at a cost of £8,000 to £10,000 and the first meeting was held by the Western Suburbs Motor Cycle Club who had four to five meetings annually and had gate takings were £4,000 to £5,000.¹⁶¹ The accuracy of this description is open to doubt. A search of the Nepean press from 1920 into 1921 yielded no data about the building or development of a track.

A date of 1924 for the commencement of a speedway at Thornton Park seems to be the most likely. On 8 March 1924, the *Nepean Times*, which had not reported motor cycling or car races at Thornton Park previously, noted that W. Gordon of the Western Suburbs Motor Cycle Club had made arrangements with H. Lack, the dairyman leasing Thornton Park, to allow motor cycle races. Penrith Council had been approached about the loan of their grader to level and bank the track as well as to spread ashes upon it. Unnamed "expert riders" were quoted as saying that this work would make it the best track in Australia and that "No Sydney track will compare with it".¹⁶² By late September 1924, track work was almost complete. Local people had been hired to work on race days and a fence along the railway had been erected to bar non-paying spectators from getting a free vantage point.¹⁶³

In 1933, a golf course commenced operation on the Thornton Park site, which had principally been used by speedway racers. However, the speedway was not removed. With the land available for speedway use again, it was possible to resurrect the "world's greatest dirt track". Sydney Smith senior died on 21 February 1934, so it was left to the trustees of his deceased estate under the terms of his will to manage the site.

The track was useable but his sons had their own careers, and were not interested in direct management of the speedway. On 25 May 1934, Sydney Smith gave formal notice to the military authorities to vacate the rifle range on this land. The property was surveyed in preparation for the sale of 200 acres, which included the rifle range and the speedway site. The Australian Army had no interest in buying the land on which the rifle range was sited.¹⁶⁴ In the end, no successful sale was concluded with any buyer and the land remained in the hands of the Smith Estate.

A report of 5 September 1947 by G. H. Pike, valuator for the Department of the Interior, stated that this site was on 50 acres. A speedway was built near the railway and a nine-hole golf

¹⁵⁹ T Stenner, *Thrilling the Millions; The Lure of the Speedway*, James Mills, London, 1934, p 15

¹⁶⁰ *Nepean Times*, 31 Aug 1918

¹⁶¹ Penrith - Military Stores Depot, Claim of Smith Estate, 1941-53, NAA SP 126/1, CL 12771

¹⁶² *Nepean Times*, 8 March 1924

¹⁶³ *Nepean Times*, 27 Sept 1924

¹⁶⁴ Penrith rifle range - range papers 1917-38, NAA SP 1008/1, 538/4/81

course was also laid down, while the whole area was used as a dairy farm. On 13 September 1945, the Australian government had acquired the whole of the speedway and most of the golf course with an area of 99 acres 2 roods and 9.25 perches. The owners claimed £5,775 for the land, £8,000 for the speedway, £600 for the golf course and £705 for clearing, fences and shed plus £200 for severance, making a total claim of £15,280. It had four to five meetings annually and gate takings were £4,000 to £5,000. When taken over, the track was one mile in circumference, 30 yards wide with a depth of 5 feet and was known as one of best dirt tracks in the world. In 1928 Penrith Speedway was dissolved due to dissatisfaction with management and Smith resumed management of the track. He provided the following gate takings:

4 April 1929	£661
3 June 1929	£705
7 October 1929	£488
1 January 1930	£458
26 January 1930	£315
21 April 1930	£431 ¹⁶⁵

Golf course

For most of the 1930s, a golf course also operated on the site, so that cows, cars and golf clubs all shared the site. Thornton Hall Golf Club was established in 1933, with nine greens.¹⁶⁶ From 1912, according to an article in the local press, golf had been played in Penrith. That club moved to Glebe Place, north of the railway on land owned by the church in 1920. The creation of the Thornton Hall golf course caused the original club to wither just before the war.¹⁶⁷

Thornton Hall Golf Club had clubhouses for both men and women. Mrs Hudson and Mrs Bishop, grand daughters of Smith, allowed members to use the large glassed in verandahs on Thornton Hall for after match refreshments. There are also reports that the nearby railway yards were a problem because trains showered players with soot and smoke.¹⁶⁸

Thornton Hall Golf Club and its course was one of a number in the County of Cumberland before the war. It only operated for a short time before war broke out and the resumption of its course caused it to cease. However, by 1939, according to a later claim, there was a shortage of golf courses in the County of Cumberland and the Thornton Hall course was coming into its own when war broke out. It had nine grass greens with water to seven of them, and club rooms for both men and women, with afternoon tea facilities. Net takings before the war were £125 per annum from 1936 until 1939.¹⁶⁹

Despite some claims that the course was mediocre in quality, it was steadily being improved. In May 1939 alterations had been made to the course, which would make it "more interesting".

¹⁶⁵ Penrith - Military Stores Depot, Claim of Smith Estate, 1941-53, NAA SP 126/1, CL 12771

¹⁶⁶ *Golden Jubilee - The Nepean-Illawarra Associates Golf Association, 1933-1983*, p 34

¹⁶⁷ *Penrith District Star*, 24 Sept 1980, p 20

¹⁶⁸ *Golden Jubilee - The Nepean-Illawarra Associates Golf Association, 1933-1983*, p 34

¹⁶⁹ Penrith, advance engineers depot, acquisition of land 1941-1948, NAA, SP 857/3 PC/235

Plans were in place to improve course fences. The greens were reported to be in good condition as were the fairways.¹⁷⁰

A valuation of the golf course on 15 December 1941 for the Commonwealth noted that the golf course consisted of nine holes with a total length of 2,900 yards. It was described as comparing favourably with metropolitan golf courses. All greens had water except two. The proposed resumption by the Commonwealth cut away some of the course, notably the first and second tees and the first hole.¹⁷¹ Full resumption of the site in 1943 ensured that the golf course was no longer functional.

According to data obtained from Smith's own books in 1947, the golf course had been laid out around the speedway at a cost of £879. It had made a total of £125 per annum. Smith estimated the total value of the course at £8,000.¹⁷²

Army Engineering Depot

From about 1941 until the present day, the site has been occupied by the Australian Army who used Thornton Park as an engineers' stores depot. The same features of the site which made it suitable as an aerodrome for Billy Hart and as a speedway and golf course - its level surface and its proximity to the major railway line running westwards from Sydney - also made it a prime site for acquisition by the Commonwealth during a period of national emergency.

The Australian Army's Engineer Services Branch consisted of three sections in 1939. These sections were works, engineer stores and hirings. During peace time, only works was very active. The other two sections consisted primarily of militia officers stationed at Army Headquarters in the various military districts. When war occurred the other two sections, engineer stores and hirings, were suddenly very busy and had to expand rapidly.¹⁷³

The Penrith Speedway met many requirements of the military for a large area of land for storage accessible to the main railway line. In 1941 the Army occupied 20 acres adjacent to the railway line and utilised a siding (Fig. 2.11). The Japanese attack on the United States Pacific fleet anchored in Pearl Harbour in Hawaii on 7 December 1941 was coupled with the rapid advance of Japanese forces south through Malaya followed by their swift capture of the British bastion of defence at Singapore. Although the United States was in the war on the Allied side, Australia was soon under direct threat of invasion from the Japanese as they relentlessly surged southwards taking all of the islands of the Pacific north of Australia as well as the US military strongholds in the Philippines and began to advance south through New Guinea towards Australia. Between January 1942 and August 1942, a railway siding was put in to service the Penrith speedway site to serve the engineering depot being erected there. Two large sheds and a barracks were also built as was a road from the front gate (Fig. 2.12).¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ *Nepean Times*, 18 May 1939

¹⁷¹ NAA unsourced valuation

¹⁷² Penrith - Military Stores Depot, Claim of Smith Estate, 1941-53, NAA SP 126/1, CL 12771

¹⁷³ R McNicoll, *The Royal Australian Engineers 1919 to 1945: Teeth and Tail*, Corps Committee of RAE, Canberra, 1982 p. 282

¹⁷⁴ Penrith - Military Stores Depot, Claim of Smith Estate, 1941-53, NAA, SP 126/1 CL 12771

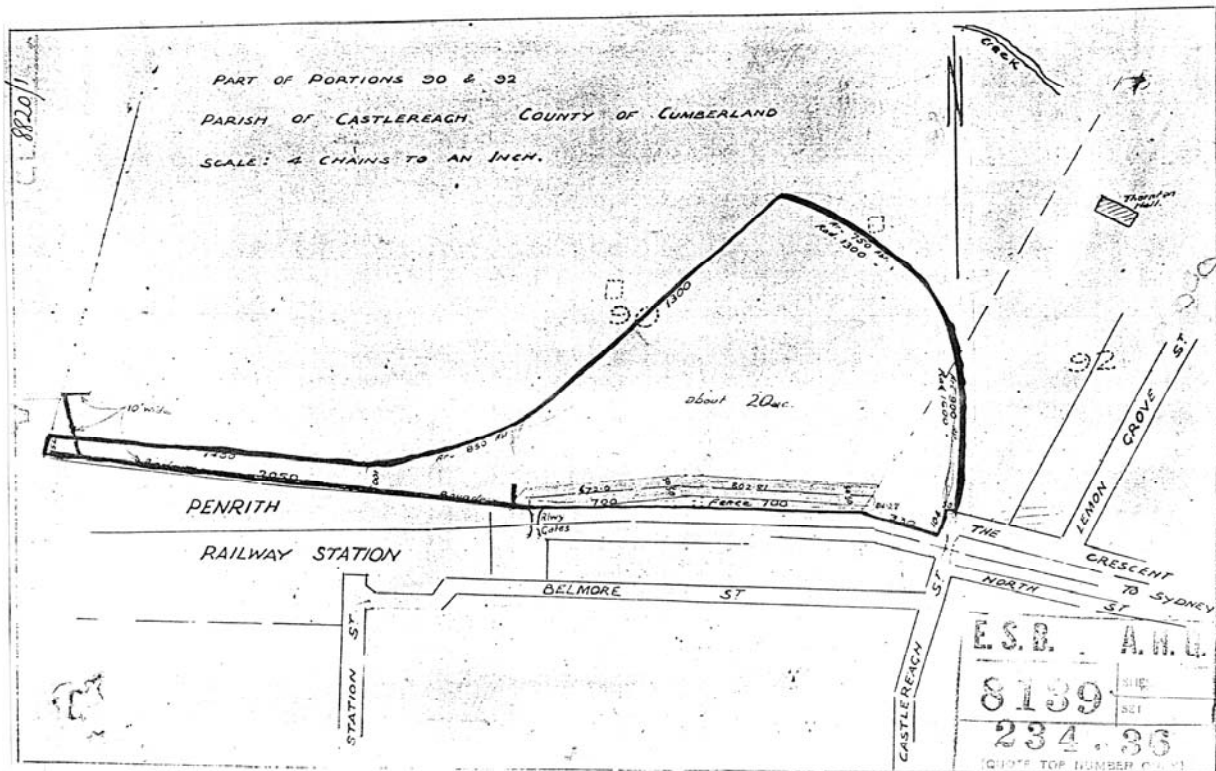


Figure 2.11: The original occupation of the site in 1941 by Army Engineers was sketched in this plan. Source: NAA CL 8820/1.

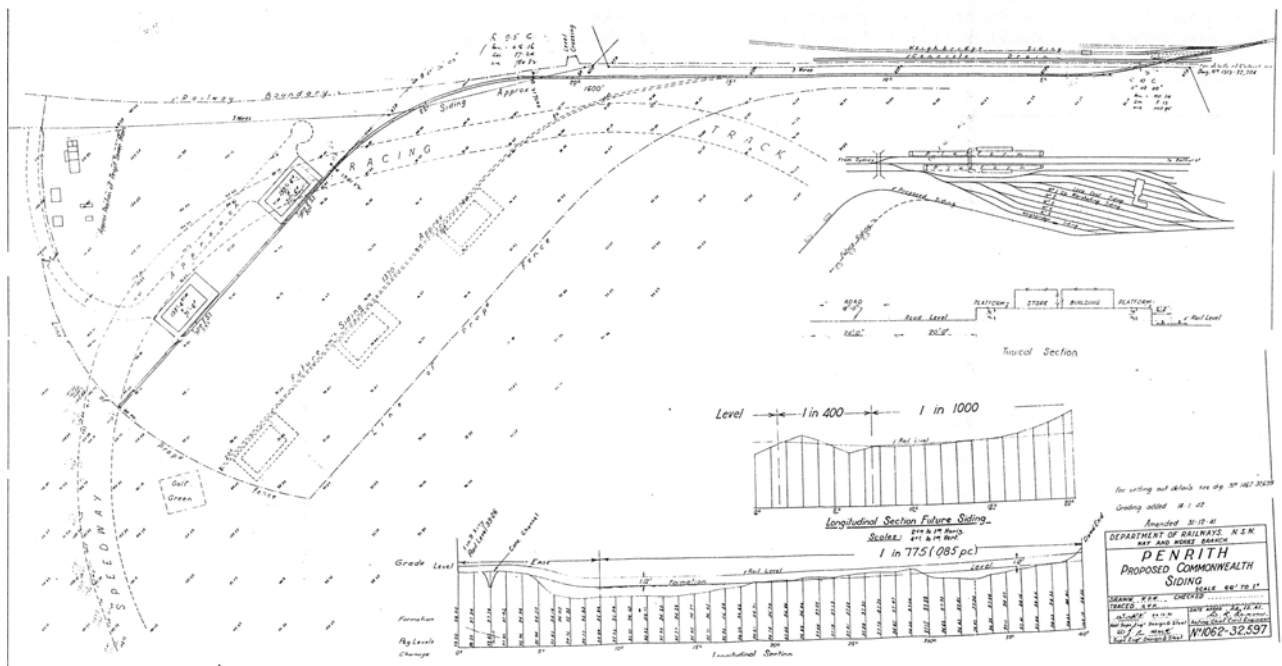


Figure 2.12: Further details of the original occupation of the site by Army Engineers were sketched on this plan from December 1941. Source: NAA.

In March 1943 the area occupied by the army was increased to 67 acres. A second siding and a loading platform were added. By this time, the army occupied the southern half of the speedway and golf course. A plan of 1943 showed a curved road leading to galvanised iron stores on the site. This plan also showed the location of proposed dumps and magazines.

How did this fit into the major mobilisation of Australian society to fight off the very real threat of invasion from the Japanese? In October 1943, a significant re-arrangement of the command structure of Army Engineering was completed when the Engineer Services Branch was abolished. The Works Service and Engineer Stores Service were brought directly under the Engineer-in-Chief's control.¹⁷⁵ Many officers with recent experience came into the Stores Services as a result of this re-arrangement.¹⁷⁶ The Directorate of Engineer Stores was made responsible for the acquisition, storage and distribution of all engineering stores and earth moving equipment.¹⁷⁷

By the end of 1943, according to P.B. Taylor, there were 52 engineering dumps in Australia. The main engineering depot had been established at Springhill near Bathurst, situated away from the coast to protect it against invasion. However, when the threat of invasion receded, the location at Springhill became more inefficient and more of a problem. The main engineering depot was then moved to the former speedway site at Penrith. In the words of P. B. Taylor:

When the site was taken over in the autumn of 1943, there were no roads and the area enclosed by the race track resembled a small lake. Slowly but surely the depot was developed with roads, rail sidings, workshops and storehouses. Eventually the Penrith depot absorbed all the stores from the Goulburn Bulk Depot and the Liverpool Camp Store and was renamed the 2nd Australian Engineer Stores Company. Later it became the 2nd Engineer Stores Base Depot.¹⁷⁸

There were three engineer stores base depots in Australia. The 1st at Cooper's Plains, south of Brisbane, the 2nd at Penrith and the 3rd at East Oakleigh in Melbourne.¹⁷⁹ In other words, the Penrith depot was the main engineering supply depot for Eastern Command.

As a major engineering supply depot, the 2nd Engineer Stores at Penrith oversaw a vast quantity of equipment and supplies. On 1 July 1944, a listing was completed by the Army Engineers of the capacities of the various depots around Australia. Amongst the supply depots, three major depots stood out. Rocklea in Queensland held a total of 24,000 tons. Darwin also held 24,000 tons. Yet, larger still and the biggest in Australia was Penrith, which held 36,000 tons.¹⁸⁰

The impact of this massive storage on the site was marked. By May 1944, numerous dumps had been constructed. An aerial photograph of 1947 (Fig. 2.14) shows the site occupied by a

¹⁷⁵ R McNicoll, *The Royal Australian Engineers 1919 to 1945: Teeth and Tail*, Corps Committee of RAE, Canberra, 1982, p. 293

¹⁷⁶ R McNicoll, *The Royal Australian Engineers 1919 to 1945: Teeth and Tail*, p 294

¹⁷⁷ *The Corps of Royal Australian Engineers in the Second World War 1939-45*, Speciality Press, Melbourne 1945, p 22

¹⁷⁸ R McNicoll, *The Royal Australian Engineers 1919 to 1945: Teeth and Tail*, p 294

¹⁷⁹ R McNicoll, *The Royal Australian Engineers 1919 to 1945: Teeth and Tail*, p 295

¹⁸⁰ Engineer stores dumps, 1944, NAA SP1048/7, S 18/2/376

number of large warehouses and hangar-like structures used for storing some supplies. Other materials were stored outside as could be seen from this aerial view.¹⁸¹

On 13 September 1945, the Commonwealth Government resumed 99 acres 2 roods and 9.25 perches consisting of Smith's estate.¹⁸² The initial valuation date for the site was set at 1 January 1945, which did not take into account the value of restoring any damage to the speedway. By March 1945 it was decided to offer £9,300 for the whole area so as to not incur any restoration costs (Fig. 2.13).¹⁸³

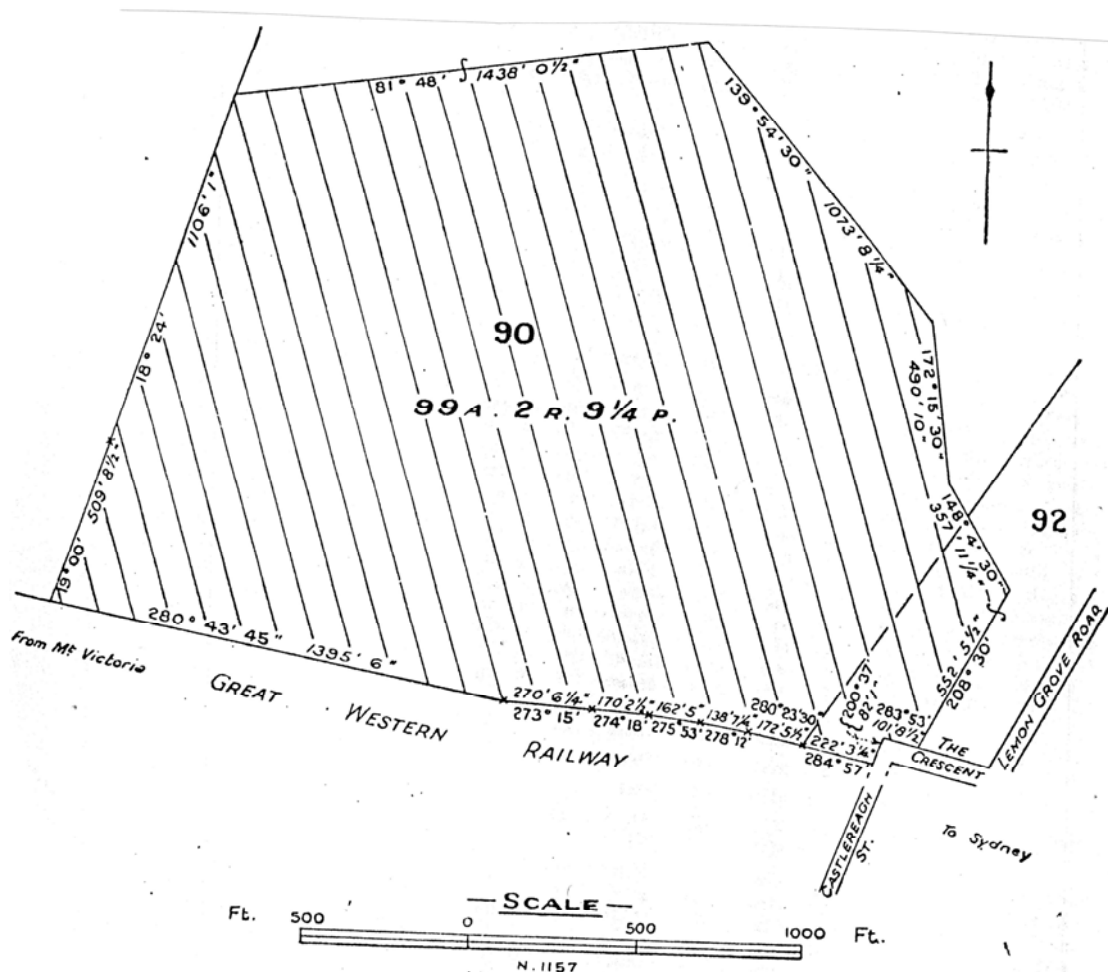


Figure 2.13: The resumed area was shown in this plan in 1945. Source: *Commonwealth Government Gazette*, 13 Sept 1945.

¹⁸¹ Aerial photo, Windsor, Run 35, Jan 1947, 64-185, LPMA

¹⁸² *Commonwealth Government Gazette*, 13 Sept 1945

¹⁸³ Penrith - Military Stores Depot, Claim of Smith Estate, 1941-53, NAA, SP 126/1, CL 12771

A number of photographs were taken of the depot in 1945-6, which was still occupied by No. 2 Engineer Stores. These photos showed boats, pontoons, warehouse interiors, a pre-fabricated hospital and materials stored out of doors such as large rolls of sisalkraft.¹⁸⁴

A report prepared by G.H. Pike, valuator for the Department of the Interior on 5 September 1947 seeking to estimate a value for the site arrived at an estimated total value of £8,000.¹⁸⁵ On 23 February 1948, the Commonwealth offered £9,300 to the Smith Estate plus interest for the land acquired from them.¹⁸⁶ On 17 March 1948, F.M. Johnston, the Commonwealth Surveyor-General recommended that a sum of £9,300 be offered for land. This was later approved by the Minister.¹⁸⁷

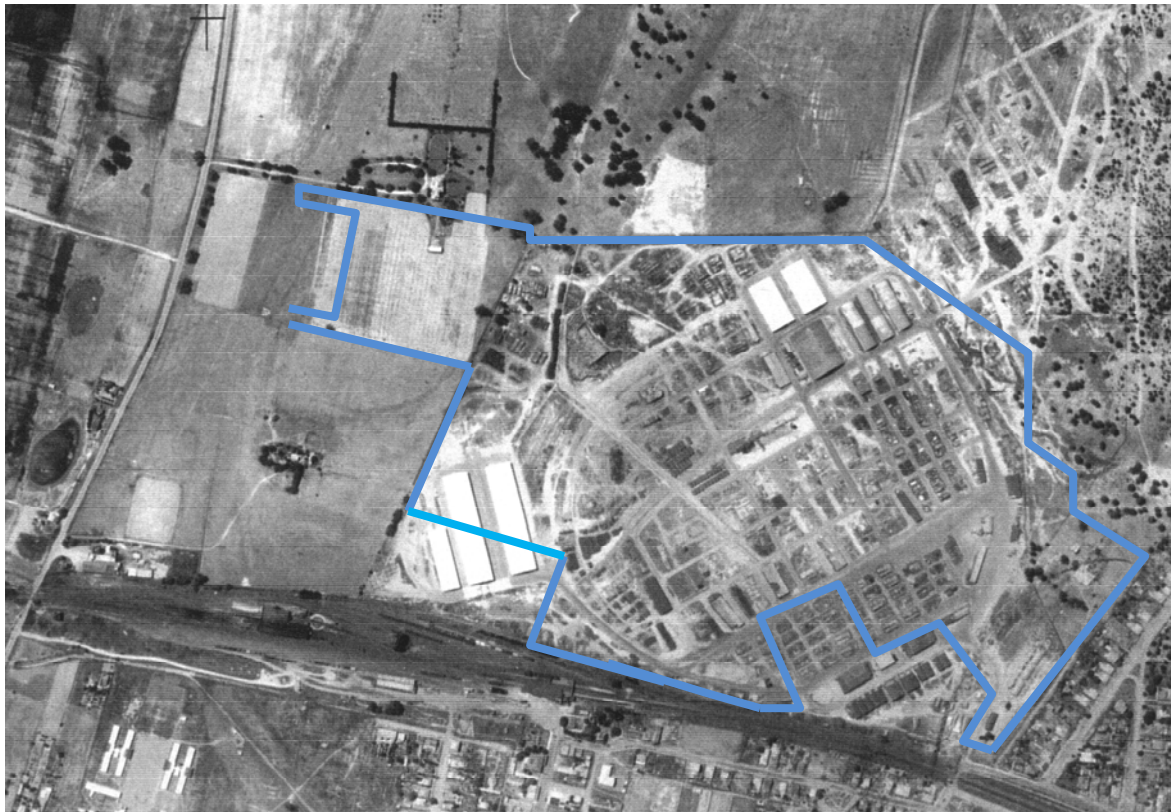


Figure 2.14: Aerial photograph, January 1947. The overall study area is indicated, with the PTD area at lower right.

The Penrith Engineering Stores Depot remained as the principal stores depot for engineering supplies. From about 1965 onwards, there was a major phase of construction of new engineer buildings, possibly associated with the Vietnam War then in progress.¹⁸⁸

By the 1990s, the site was coming under pressure from the development of the surrounding locality. In June 1990, a report in the local press stated that car parking for commuters north of Penrith Station was to be boosted by the purchase of additional land from the army base. The depot itself was reported to be ready for relocation late in 1992. The facility on the site

¹⁸⁴ AWM photo collection

¹⁸⁵ Penrith - Military Stores Depot, Claim of Smith Estate, 1941-53, NAA SP 126/1, CL 12771

¹⁸⁶ Penrith - Military Stores Depot, Claim of Smith Estate, 1941-53, NAA SP 126/1, CL 12771

¹⁸⁷ Penrith - Military Stores Depot, Claim of Smith Estate, 1941-53, NAA, SP 126/1, CL 12771

¹⁸⁸ Graham Brooks & Associates Pty Ltd, North Penrith Army Land Heritage Analysis, 1999, p 34

included engineering stores, army disposal and army reserve.¹⁸⁹ In 1992, the Federal government agreed to build car parking on the army land north of railway at a cost of \$2,200,000.¹⁹⁰ In 1994, the 176th Squadron vacated the site. At that time, it appears that the 5th Field Squadron was still on the site.

¹⁸⁹ *Penrith City Star*, 26 June 1990, p 1

¹⁹⁰ *Penrith City Star*, 8 Sept 1992, p 5

3. Regulatory context

At a glance

Once the study area leaves Commonwealth ownership, State heritage legislation will become the relevant criteria for addressing non-indigenous archaeological values and constraints. This section discusses this legislation.

Heritage Listings

The following covers the formal heritage listings current for the study area, both Commonwealth and State legislation. As the study area will soon leave Commonwealth ownership, this report concentrates on assessing the site's potential non-indigenous heritage remains using State heritage criteria. A full discussion of its significance based on Commonwealth heritage criteria is given in Godden Mackay Logan, *North Penrith Defence Site – Interim Heritage Management Strategy – Final Report*, January 2010. This discussion is not repeated here.

Commonwealth Heritage List

Thornton Hall and the eastern section of the adjacent Thornton Park area are covered by a listing for its historic values. A full discussion of this listing is contained in Godden Mackay Logan, *North Penrith Defence Site – Interim Heritage Management Strategy – Final Report*, January 2010.

Department of Defence Heritage Register

Thornton Hall and its surrounds are listed on this register.

Register of the National Estate

Thornton Hall and its surrounds are listed on the Register of the National Estate (RNE). The citation for the RNE is identical to the Commonwealth Heritage List citation.

Penrith City Council Heritage Local Environmental Plan

Combewood and its garden, plantings and driveway are listed under Schedule 2 - Heritage Items of the Penrith City Council's Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 1991 as item P6(a). Thornton Hall Lot 1, DP 33753, The Crescent and area to its west including the oval is also listed as a heritage item under Schedule 2 - Penrith City Council's Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 1991 as item P6(b).

Statutory Constraints

Once the study area is transferred into State ownership, the main heritage constraint will be the *Heritage Act 1977*. The provisions of the Act, especially the “relics provisions”, are relevant to the management of potential archaeological remains within the study area.

Heritage Act 1977

Division 9: Section 138-146 - Relics Provisions - Excavation Permit.

The main legislative constraint on archaeological remains in NSW is the relics provisions of the *Heritage Act 1977*.

According to Section 139:

- (1) A person must not disturb or excavate any land knowing or having reasonable cause to suspect that the disturbance or excavation will or is likely to result in a relic being discovered, exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed unless the disturbance or excavation is carried out in accordance with an excavation permit.
- (2) A person must not disturb or excavate any land on which the person has discovered or exposed a relic except in accordance with an excavation permit.
- (3) This section does not apply to a relic that is subject to an interim heritage order made by the Minister or a listing on the State Heritage Register.
- (4) The Heritage Council may by order published in the Gazette create exceptions to this section, either unconditionally or subject to conditions, in respect of any of the following:
 - (a) any relic of a specified kind or description,
 - (b) any disturbance or excavation of a specified kind or description,
 - (c) any disturbance or excavation of land in a specified location or having specified features or attributes,
 - (d) any disturbance or excavation of land in respect of which an archaeological assessment approved by the Heritage Council indicates that there is little likelihood of there being any relics in the land.

A ‘relic’ is an item of ‘environmental heritage’ which is defined by the *Heritage Act 1977* (amended) as:

those places, buildings, works, relics, moveable objects, and precincts, of State or local heritage significance.

A relic as further defined by the Act as:

....any deposit, artefact, object or material evidence that:

- (a) relates to the settlement of the area that comprises New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement, and
- (b) is of State or local heritage significance.

State and Local heritage significance is defined as:

- "State heritage significance", in relation to a place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct, means significance to the State in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of the item.
- "local heritage significance", in relation to a place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct, means significance to an area in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of the item.

An item can be both of State heritage significance and local heritage significance. An item that is of local heritage significance may or may not be of State heritage significance.

Any item identified as an historical archaeological site or relic cannot be impacted upon without an **excavation permit** or other approval. An excavation permit forms an approval from the Heritage Council for permission to 'disturb' a relic.

An application for an excavation permit (Section 140) must be made to the Heritage Office of NSW, Department of Planning and it will take approximately eight weeks to be processed. The application for a permit must nominate a qualified archaeologist to manage the disturbance of the relics. There is a processing fee attached to each excavation permit application. Where an excavation permit is not required due to the assessed nature of possible relics, application can be made for a S139(4) exception where the site is not listed on the State Heritage Register. It is noted that should the project be approved under Part 3A of the EP&A Act 1979, then a separate approval under S139 would not be required.

Director-General's Requirements

The Director-General of the Department of Planning has issued requirements for the Environmental Assessment of the subject lands. The requirements relevant to non-indigenous archaeology are:

4. Heritage

- (1) The EA shall provide an archaeological and Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment in line with the draft *Guidelines for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Community Consultation 2005*; and
- (2) The EA shall provide a Statement of Heritage Impact, that is to include:
 - (a) Detailed evaluation of any impacts that the development would have on the heritage significance of the site, in particular the heritage significance and setting of Combewood and Thornton Hall and Surrounds
 - (b) Intended future use of the Thornton Hall and public benefit to be derived
 - (c) Consideration of the cumulative impacts of the proposed works on all heritage items and their curtilages;
 - (d) Awareness of the possible existence of any archaeological relics which may be disturbed during the works that may require an archaeological assessment to be undertaken.

4. Methods and results

At a glance

The process whereby non-indigenous archaeological assessments are carried out is described, being the comparison of an area's historic land use and the likely nature of remains with the impact that later land use may have had on these remains. A field inspection is also undertaken.

Methodology

The production of an Archaeological Assessment is a systematic methodological process that involves a series of phases:

1. Historical research utilising primary material such as maps, pictorial material, directories and council records, and secondary sources. Through this process sub-surface remains may be located on plan and an analysis made of their historical development, construction and use. This provides a picture of the likely extent of archaeological remains and a mini-picture of land use for the site within the context of a wider land use scenario.
2. This analysis is then compared to the extant buildings and vacant spaces of the site. From this synthesis an assessment can be made of the nature and extent of existing archaeological deposits. In addition archaeological deposits associated with extant structures can be identified. This leads into a discussion of the archaeological potential of the site.
3. The heritage significance of the site's archaeological deposits is addressed through criteria listed in the *NSW Heritage Act 1977* (amended) and implemented through the *Burra Charter* and the *State Heritage Inventory Program*. They include the nature and degree of heritage significance such as historical, social, research potential, rarity and representativeness and other types of significance.
4. Based on this assessment of archaeological potential and significance, policy and recommendations are produced regarding the management of the archaeological deposits and mitigating actions in light of a proposed development.

The above process is based on the *Burra Charter* guidelines and the *Archaeological Assessment Guidelines* for the establishment of heritage significance. Through this methodology the archaeological resource can be identified and managed.

In the present case, although some studies had been undertaken previously, they had concentrated on the twentieth-century history of the study area. It was felt that additional research was warranted on the nature of the nineteenth-century land use history, with particular focus on identifying whether there were other buildings in the landscape, other than the known ones associated with Coombewood and Thornton Park. The use of the area associated with the Army occupation also needed to be considered in terms of what physical remains may have been left behind.

A site inspection of the Coombewood and Thornton Hall properties and the Army Engineering Depot was conducted on 18 August 2010.

Results

The main result of this assessment is that apart from the Combewood and Thornton Hall houses and outbuildings, and the use of the land for grazing and agriculture, no other land use has been identified until the establishment of structures such as grandstands and other spectator venues associated with later activities such as horse racing in the 1890s and the speedway in the 1920s. Most of the archaeological remains to be associated with these activities are likely to be ephemeral or of limited research value. Remains associated with the Army Engineering Depot are also regarded as having little research value.

The main archaeological remains connected to the early properties of Combewood and Thornton Hall are their demolished outbuildings and the demolished kitchen and bedroom wings at Thornton Hall.

5. Assessment

At a glance

The assessment indicates that the main areas of archaeological potential are the areas to the south of Combewood, being the area containing the stables and possibly other outbuildings, and the area around Thornton Hall including the demolished bedroom and kitchen wings. Although the Thornton Park property will contain many elements of various land use (eg. dairy, rifle range, airfield, speedway) most of the remains will be ephemeral or have limited archaeological research value (see below under discussion of significance). The Army Engineering Depot period is not regarded as likely to retain substantive archaeological remains, the bulk of the remains consisting of the concrete bases of storage areas and recently demolished buildings.

Assessing Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of the study area can be determined through analysing its land-use history as set out in Section 2 above, to determine the sites which are likely to retain archaeological remains and by assessing the affects of past impacts on these remains.

Archaeological Assessment Report

Aboriginal Land Use

This is being considered in a separate report.

Nineteenth-Century Land Use

This period can be divided into several sections:

- Woodriff Estate
- Combewood
- Thornton Park
- Army Engineering Depot

Woodriff Estate

The 1000 acres granted to Daniel Woodriff encompassed most of Penrith, with the present study area occupying part of the northern section of the grant. The analysis of the historic sources and plans in Section 2 did not reveal any specific evidence for early nineteenth-century occupation of the land, other than what was required to clear it for agricultural uses. No buildings earlier than Thornton Hall have been identified. If structures used by farm workers while they laboured some distance from their main accommodation were present within the study area, they are not likely to have been substantial structures and therefore are unlikely to have left substantial remains. Remains from this period are likely to be ephemeral and would be difficult to recognise.

Combewood

A house was built c1890 for Francis Woodriff and his wife Margaretta. While the house is on land to the north of the current study area, an orchard and outbuildings were present to the south of the house, including stables which are shown on the 1947 aerial photograph (Fig. 5.1). When the Combewood Conservation Plan was produced in 1991, brick foundations, identified as belonging to the stables, were noted under a large olive tree and other farm buildings were expected to be in the vicinity (referred to in Kass above). This general area may also have rubbish pits or machinery connected to the use of the house and property.



Figure 5.1: Detail of 1947 aerial photograph showing large outbuilding (circled) to south of Combewood (arrowed). The study area curtilage is indicated.

Thornton Park

The Thornton (Belmore) Park property was at first used for breeding small numbers of horses, cattle and sheep. At least some of the northern part of the property remained uncleared into the twentieth century. The Thornton Hall residence was built c1880. The house had two-storey bedroom wings and a single-storey kitchen wing extending out from the northwestern corner, all since demolished. There are likely to be privies and rubbish pits in the vicinity of the house, as well as the sites of various outbuildings.

The Thornton Park property saw a number of activities:

- **Dairy Farm**

There is reference to a dairy farm on the property, which would have meant that fenced yards and buildings with milking equipment would have been located in some unknown part of the property.

- **Horse Racing**

Horse racing occurred from 1892, with obvious need for a track, and by 1894 a grandstand had been provided. The location of the grandstand and the alignment of the original racecourse are unknown but are unlikely to have left substantial remains.

- **Cricket**

Cricket was played from 1892. No substantial remains are expected to have survived.

- **Balloon Flights**

Conducted from about 1892 but unlikely to have left any evidence.



Figure 5.2: Detail of 1929 topographic plan showing location the speedway and rifle range. Apart from Combewood's stables (circled) and Thornton Hall (arrowed), there are no other buildings within the study area (shown by hatched line).

- **Rifle Range**

Begun around 1900, the rifle range would have been basic in the early years but there are later references to sheds, magazines and mounds, and photos show timber and brick structures, both targets and facilities. These remains would be hard to recognise in the landscape, particularly considering the amount of Army activity in subsequent years.

- **Airfield**

Despite references to proposed hangers and landing areas, there appears to have been little in the way of infrastructure apart from the cleared ground. This phase is not expected to retain any substantive remains.

- **Speedway**

Operating from the early 1920s to the early 1940s, the speedway was a substantial undertaking with elements of the track still visible in the much altered landscape. Said to be dug to a depth of five feet (1.5m), the installation and grading of the dirt track would have involved major earthworks. There is no reference to buildings although some kind of shelter with facilities and seating must have been available for spectators. Apart from the track, the sub-surface remains of which should be clearly discernible, this phase is unlikely to retain any archaeological remains.

- **Golf Course**

A golf course operated on the site in the 1930s. Clubhouses were provided for men and women players and greens and fairways laid out. Traces of the golf course and its elements would be extremely difficult to discern in the altered landscape.

Army Engineering Depot

By far the greatest changes wrought on the landscape of the Thornton Park property were as a result of the occupation by the Army. The 1947 aerial photograph shows the amount of buildings and storage areas, with their focus around what had been the speedway. There were also a number of large warehouse-type structures, as well as the railway siding on the southern side of the site. Most of these appear to have left little in the way of physical remains, apart from large areas of concrete ground slabs.



Figure 5.3: Modern aerial photograph showing modification of the study area with the removal of the Army Engineering Depot. Source: Google.

Review of Existing and Proposed Impacts

The above review of land-use phases indicates that the main impact on the Thornton Park section of the study area was the creation from the 1940s and recent removal of the Army Engineering Depot. While chiefly above ground, the depot's buildings and storage areas modified the existing landscape while leaving little other than concrete ground slabs behind.

The area to the south of Combewood, part of which is to be used for a proposed water detention basin, will contain remains of the large outbuilding, possibly stables, shown on the 1947 aerial photograph. Inspection of this area showed sections of disturbed sandstock-brick walling, which have been noted by others previously, indicating the site has been disturbed. Remains in this area may also have been affected by ploughing and recent adjacent earthworks.



Figure 5.4: Plantings and location of stables at rear of Combewood. 18/8/10.



Figure 5.5: Brick debris at site of stables at rear of Combewood. 18/8/10.



Figure 5.6: Concrete siding in Army depot. 18/8/10.



Figure 5.7: Oval with seating in Army Depot area. 18/8/10.



Figure 5.8: Concrete ground slabs in Army Depot area. 18/8/10.



Figure 5.9: Concrete ground slabs in Army Depot area. 18/8/10.



Figure 5.10: Curve of speedway in Army Depot area. 18/8/10.



Figure 5.11: Rear of Thornton Hall. 18/8/10.



Figure 5.12: Section of front driveway to Thornton Hall looking towards Army Depot area. 18/8/10.

Likely Nature of Archaeological Remains

Phase	Likely Remains	Likely Integrity
Woodriff Estate (1804 - c1880)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of land clearing (evidence for tree stumps, original landform etc) ▪ Evidence for fence posts, property boundaries 	Poor Poor
Combewood (1890 – c1940)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Site of stables and other outbuildings ▪ Orchard, evidence for plantings/agriculture 	Fair to good Fair
Thornton Hall (1880 – c1940)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence for demolished wings (footings, occupation deposits, cisterns) ▪ Evidence for outbuildings (stables, sheds), privies ▪ Evidence for earlier driveway and turning circle 	Good Good Fair
Thornton Park (1890 – c1940)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dairy ▪ Horse Racing ▪ Cricket ▪ Balloon Flights ▪ Rifle Range ▪ Airfield ▪ Speedway ▪ Golf Course 	Poor Poor Poor Poor Poor Poor Fair/Good Poor
Army Engineering Depot (1941 -)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building sites and platforms, concrete slabs, brick footings, storage areas ▪ Roadways, pathways 	Poor/Good Poor

Combewood outbuildings

Thornton Hall outbuildings

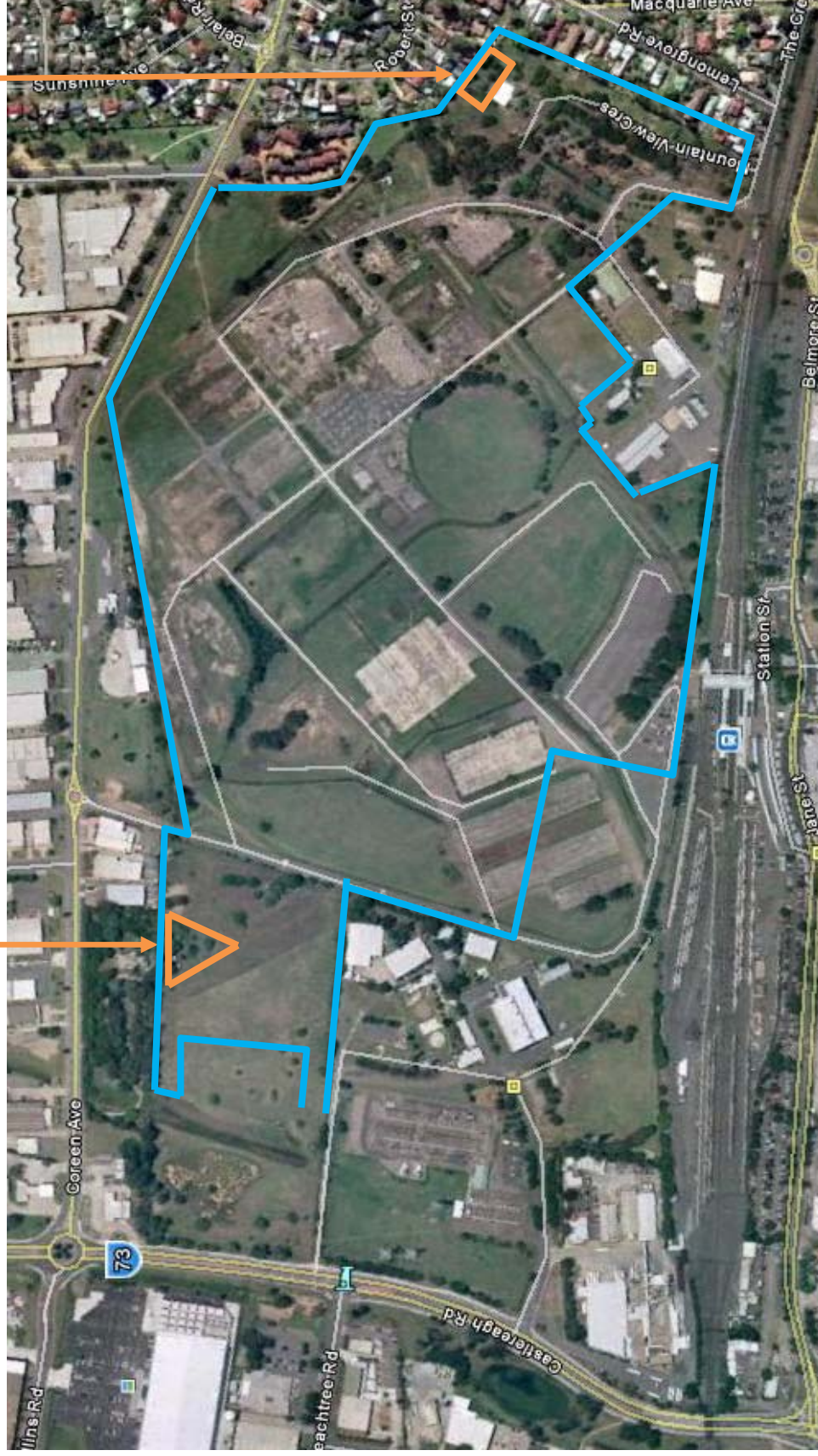


Figure 5.13: Plan indicating the two main areas of archaeological potential: the outbuildings south of Combewood and Thornton Hall. Source: Google.

Summary of Archaeological Potential

The above summary indicates that the main areas of archaeological potential are the areas to the south of Combewood, being the area containing the stables and possibly other outbuildings, and the area around Thornton Hall including the demolished bedroom and kitchen wings, deposits of artefacts and evidence for activity areas and layout (Fig. 5.13). Although the Thornton Park property will contain many elements of various land use (eg. dairy, rifle range, airfield, speedway) most of the remains will be ephemeral or have limited archaeological research value (see below under discussion of significance). The Army Engineering Depot period is not regarded as likely to retain substantive archaeological remains, the bulk of the remains consisting of the concrete bases of storage areas and recently demolished buildings.

Assessment of Heritage Significance

Assessment of Significance

In order to assess the archaeological significance of the study area, the criteria for assessing heritage significance can be applied:

Criterion (a): Historic Significance - (evolution)

an item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

Criterion (b): Associative Significance - (association)

an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, or importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

Criterion (c): Aesthetic Significance - (scenic qualities / creative accomplishments)

an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

Criterion (d): Social Significance - (contemporary community esteem)

an item has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW for social, cultural or spiritual reasons (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

Criterion (e): Technical/Research Significance - (archaeological, educational, research potential and scientific values)

an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

Criterion (f): Rarity

an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

Criterion (g): Representativeness

an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places of cultural or natural environments (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

Integrity/Intactness

An item retains its key attributes.

An item's significance can be determined to be either being of Local or State heritage significance. This is defined as:

- "local heritage significance", in relation to a place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct, means significance to an area in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of the item.
- "State heritage significance", in relation to a place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct, means significance to the State in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of the item.

Criterion (a): Historic Significance - (evolution)

The study area was part of a 1000 acre grant to naval captain Daniel Woodriff in 1804 although the land, which he called Rodley Farm, was not occupied by him. The first main occupation of the land was associated with Thomas Smith, an early leaseholder and later owner of the Thornton Hall property from 1862 who was also a well-known Penrith publican (of the Red Cow Inn) and entrepreneur. He had the Thornton Hall residence built in c1880 and established horse, cattle and sheep farming on his lands. The property is also connected to Smith's son, Sydney Smith, who inherited the property in 1892 and became mayor of Penrith.

The land to the west of the house, known as Smith's Paddock and Belmore Park, was the scene of numerous local cultural and sporting events, such as early ballooning and aviation, including the first cross-country airplane flight in Australia, Sheffield Shield cricket, horse racing and speedway activities.

The land was resumed by the Commonwealth in 1942 to become the Penrith Engineers Stores Depot which became the largest engineering depot in the Eastern Command region. While most of the depot has now been closed and the buildings and structures demolished, this use continues with the Defence Multi-User Depot.

The Thornton Hall house, as well as being the Smith family home, was also the residence of the Engineers Depot's Commanding Officer until about 1994. Remains of demolished bedroom and kitchen wings should be present at the rear of the house.

The Combewood property was held in the Woodriff family until the 1950s as farming lands with different lessees. The house was built c1890.

Thornton Hall and Combewood are considered to have a Local level of heritage significance. Thornton Park (Belmore Park) has a State level of heritage significance through its connections to the Smith Family, several major early sporting and cultural activities, and the use of the site by the Royal Australian Engineers as the largest engineering depot in the Eastern Command region.

Criterion (b): Associative Significance - (association)

Thornton Hall is associated with Thomas Smith, an early leaseholder and later owner of the property from 1862 who was also a well-known Penrith publican, entrepreneur and early landowner. He built the residence in c1880 and established horse, cattle and sheep farming on his property. His son, Sydney Smith, was a Penrith mayor and NSW politician who inherited the property in 1892 and used it as his country retreat until his death in 1934. Both men were important figures in the economic and cultural development of the Penrith municipality.

Thornton Hall and Belmore Park are associated with the Royal Australian Engineers (RAE) who occupied house as officers' quarters and the large area to the west of the house as the Penrith Engineers Store Depot from 1942.

Combewood is associated with the Woodriff family who retained ownership until the 1950s.

Archaeological remains at both the Thornton Hall and Park and Combewood properties would be associated with important local families and therefore meet this criterion at a Local level.

Criterion (c): Aesthetic Significance - (scenic qualities / creative accomplishments)

The potential archaeological remains within the study area are unlikely to have aesthetic qualities. While the Thornton Hall residence's aesthetic qualities may have been reduced by the demolition of the rear wings, the archaeological remains of these are unlikely to retain any aspect of this particular criterion. This is likely to be true also of the remains of the demolished outbuildings to the south of Combewood. Any archaeological remains within the Army Engineering Depot area would not have aesthetic value.

Archaeological remains within the study area are considered not likely to have aesthetic value.

Criterion (d): Social Significance - (contemporary community esteem)

Although no consultation has been undertaken on this issue, the properties of Thornton Hall and Combewood and their connections to the Smith and Woodriff families would have obvious interest and significance to the wider Penrith community, especially those interested in the history and development of the local area. The Thornton Park (Belmore Park) has significance as a major place of late nineteenth to the mid twentieth century recreation and sporting activities, and then for its role in the defence of the country during World War II and later as the main supply depot in the Eastern Command region.

Archaeological remains within the study area are likely to share the community's sense of connection to the historic properties and would have significance at a Local level.

Criterion (e): Technical/Research Significance - (archaeological, educational, research potential and scientific values)

The archaeological remains of the outbuildings to the south of Combewood and of the demolished sections of Thornton Hall would contribute to the knowledge of the development of these houses and their properties, including their occupation, information about their occupants' lifeways, consumption practices and a range of archaeological research questions. No substantial archaeological remains relating to the Army Engineering Depot are expected.

The archaeological remains connected to the historic houses are considered to have a Local level of significance.

Criterion (f): Rarity

The archaeological remains belonging to the Combewood and Thornton Hall properties are considered to be typical of nineteenth-century rural properties around the periphery of Greater Sydney and Parramatta and are not considered to be rare. Any archaeological remains within the area formerly occupied by the Army Engineering Depot would be typical of army sites of the period.

The potential archaeological remains do not meet this criterion.

Criterion (g): Representativeness

Any archaeological remains on the Combewood or Thornton Hall properties would be representative of later nineteenth-century rural sites. The properties would contain a range of archaeological remains that would inform about how the middle class lived in this area at that time. The remains of the Army Engineering Depot would be representative of other large-scale storage areas.

The potential archaeological remains within the study area would meet this criterion at a Local level of significance.

Level of Heritage Significance

New criteria have recently been developed to identify whether the archaeological resource is of Local or State significance.¹⁹¹ In terms of this site the assessment of levels of significance the following criteria were seen as the most relevant:

- Archaeological Research Potential (current NSW Heritage Criterion E).
- Aesthetic or technical significance (NSW Heritage Criterion C).
- Ability to demonstrate the past through archaeological remains (NSW Heritage Criteria A, C, F & G).

The new guidelines identified a series of questions that could be asked to assess significance:

- **To which contexts (historical, archaeological and research-based) is it anticipated that the site will yield important information?**

The majority of the study area generally is considered to have only low ability to yield archaeological information with the exception of the remains to the south of Combewood and around Thornton Hall.

- **Is the study area likely to contain the mixed remains of several occupations and eras, or is it expected that the site has the remains of a single occupation or a short time-period?**

While the study area was used for a number of different activities other than as farming properties, few of these activities or phases are likely to have left substantial archaeological remains with research value.

- **Is the site rare or representative in terms of the extent, nature, integrity and preservation of the deposits (if known)?**

The archaeological remains associated with Combewood and Thornton Hall will be representative of rural properties and those associated with the Army Engineering Depot will be representative of a large-scale storage site. None of these remains or other remains connected to the use of the Thornton Park area are likely to be considered to be rare.

¹⁹¹ Heritage Branch, Department of Planning 2009.

- **Is this type of site already well-documented in the historical record?**

Later nineteenth and twentieth-century rural properties are reasonably well documented in newspaper accounts, general records and local histories although archaeological remains that provide information about the lifeways of their occupants may contribute information not available in the formal historical record.

- **Has this site type already been previously investigated with results available?**

Limited archaeological investigation of middle-class rural sites of this period has been undertaken.

- **Is the excavation of this site likely to enhance or duplicate the data set?**

Due to the limited amount of investigation of middle-class rural sites, any information gained is unlikely to duplicate existing data.

Another set of questions were developed in relation to Criterion c – technical or aesthetic significance:

- **Is the study area likely to have aesthetic value?**

While all archaeological sites can have incidental aesthetic values, notably in relation to the process of ruination, this cannot be determined until a site is excavated.

- **Does the site/ is the site likely to embody a distinctive architectural or engineering style or pattern/layout?**

This would not seem likely.

- **Does the site demonstrate a technology which is the first or last of its kind?**

No, this is not the case with the study area.

Statement of Significance (Non-Indigenous Archaeological Remains)

The main potential non-indigenous archaeological remains are likely to be the demolished sections of Thornton Hall and the demolished outbuildings to the south of Combewood. Remains of these structures, found to have a level of heritage significance at a local level, have the ability to inform about the development and use of the houses and the layout of the properties. The archaeological investigation of these remains, such as outbuildings, archaeological deposits and artefacts would address a range of research questions relating to middle class rural lifeways and consumption.

The potential remains in the Thornton Park (Belmore Park) area, such as elements belonging to the speedway and racecourse, are likely to be largely ephemeral, apart from the physical evidence for the route of the speedway, and with little research value.

Remains connected to the Army Engineering Depot are likely to have a low level of research value, being mainly structural elements associated with the storage of military materiel.

All non-indigenous archaeological remains within the study area are assessed as having a Local level of heritage significance.

6. Management

Results

The results of this assessment indicate that the main non-indigenous archaeological resource is likely to be in the southern area of the Combewood property, where the stables and possibly other outbuildings were located, and at the rear of the Thornton Hall, where the bedroom and kitchen wings were located. The potential remaining study area is found to have a low level of archaeological potential and, where remains may be present, for these remains to have low research value and a low level of significance and unlikely to be of Local heritage significance.

This report complies with the Archaeological Assessment guidelines as issued by the NSW Heritage Council.

Recommendations

The area to the rear of **Thornton Hall**, the site of the demolished bedroom and kitchen wings, should be included as elements of the house's curtilage. Archaeological remains in this area will need to be assessed as part of any future redevelopment of the building or property and impacts on the remains will require appropriate management recommendations.

Any proposed impacts to the south of **Combewood** should be preceded by a program of archaeological recording to be conducted prior to disturbance of this area.

Archaeological investigation and recording of archaeological remains within the areas of impact should be undertaken utilising current best practice methodologies and Heritage Council guidelines. These investigation programs would need to be guided by a **Research Design** and appropriate approvals as required by the statutory process. As the project is proposed to be a Major Project and will be assessed under Part 3A of the *EP&A Act 1979*, there is no requirement for a separate approval under S139/140 of the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*.

Should archaeological features or remains be unexpectedly uncovered during future subdivision or other works, the remains should be inspected by an experienced historical archaeologist to determine whether they are of Local or State heritage significance. Their significance will determine appropriate recommendations for approvals and management.

All archaeological investigation and recording will require the production of a report presenting the results of the recording program. Any artefacts recovered from such investigations will need to be catalogued and analysed. Any artefacts will need to be stored in perpetuity.

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Appendix 1: Glossary

Term	Meaning
Historical Archaeology	Historical Archaeology (in NSW) is the study of the physical remains of the past, in association with historical documents, since the European occupation of NSW in 1788. As well as identifying these remains the study of this material can help elucidate the processes, historical and otherwise, which have created our present surroundings. It includes an examination of how the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century arrivals lived and coped with a new and alien environment, what they ate, where and how they lived, the consumer items they used and their trade relations, and how gender and cultural groups interacted.
Archaeological Sites	<p>The material remains studied include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • below ground: these contains relics which include building foundations, occupation deposits, rubbish pits, cesspits, wells, other features, and artefacts. • above ground: buildings, works, industrial structures and relics that are intact or ruined. <p>* Cultural Landscapes</p>
Archaeological Potential	Archaeological potential is here used and defined as a site's potential to contain archaeological relics which fall under the provisions of the <i>Heritage Act 1977</i> (amended). This potential is identified through historical research and by judging whether current building or other activities have removed all evidence of known previous land use.
Archaeological Investigation or Excavation	The manual excavation of an archaeological site. This type of excavation on historic sites usually involves the stratigraphic excavation of open areas.
Archaeological Monitoring	Archaeological monitoring is recommended for those areas where the impact of the works is not considered to mean the destruction of significant archaeological fabric. Nevertheless the disturbance of features both suspected and unsuspected is possible. In order to provide for the proper assessment and recording of these features an archaeologist should inspect the works site at intervals they consider to be adequate and to be 'at call' in case the contractor uncovers remains that should be assessed by the archaeologist.
Excavation Permit	A permit to disturb or excavate a relic issued by the Heritage Council of New South Wales under Section 60 or Section 140 of the NSW <i>Heritage Act 1977</i> .
Research Design	A set of questions which can be investigated using archaeological evidence and a methodology for addressing them. A research design is intended to ensure that archaeological investigations focus on genuine research needs. It is an important tool that ensures that when archaeological resources are destroyed by excavation, their information content

	can be preserved and can contribute to current and relevant knowledge.
Research Potential	The ability of a site or feature to yield information through archaeological investigation. The significance of archaeological sites is assessed according to their ability to contribute information to substantive research questions.

Abbreviations

ADB	Australian Dictionary of Biography
Bk	Book
CT	Certificate of Title
DP	Deposited Plan (LTO)
ML	Mitchell Library
LPMA	Land and Property Management Authority
LTO	Land Titles Office
LTOD	Land Titles Office, Deed
NLA	National Library of Australia
No	Number
OS	Old System
RPA	Real Property Application
<i>SMH</i>	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>
SRNSW	State Records, New South Wales