‘Abbotsford’, Picton
Archaeological Management Plan
Report prepared for Abbotsford Group Pty Ltd
November 2019
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1. Introduction

1.1 Project background

Mountains Heritage was engaged by Abbotsford Group to prepare an Archaeological Management Plan (AMP) to inform the proposed subdivision of 1 Abbotsford Road, Picton (Lot 1 DP 1086066), which includes the State significant heritage complex known as ‘Abbotsford’. The heritage complex is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR No. 00073) for its associations with the early settlement of Picton, prominent Colonial figure, George Harper, and later, the Antill family. The homestead was constructed in the 1820s but was partially destroyed by fire in the 1980s. Despite its ruinous state, the complex has considerable archaeological research potential.

A Development Application (DA) for the proposed subdivision has been submitted to Wollondilly Shire Council (Council) with a Statement of Heritage Impact (SoHI) report prepared by NBRS Architecture Pty Ltd (2017). Following an initial review of the DA, Council and Heritage, Department of Premier and Cabinet (Heritage, DCP) have requested that, due to the complex’s archaeological potential, an AMP be prepared and submitted to Council for its consideration. As outlined by Council, the AMP is required to:

- Identify areas of archaeological potential within and surrounding the current State Heritage Register (SHR) curtilage of Abbotsford;
- Assess the significance of potential archaeological relics identified on the property;
- Identify a suitable buffer to protect areas of archaeological potential within the proposed subdivision;
- Inform the proposed layout of the subdivision to ensure that significant archaeology is retained within one lot, if possible; and
- Provide recommendations to ensure archaeological relics are conserved and determine if further archaeological test excavation is required to confirm the absence or presence of relics in specific areas.

Once the DA is approved, Abbotsford Group intends to undertake the conservation and stabilisation works of the Abbotsford ruins in accordance with a Section 60 permit issued by the NSW Heritage Council in December 2015.

1.2 Site location

1 Abbotsford Road, Picton is situated on the western outskirts of the town of Picton, which is situated roughly 93 km south west of Sydney CBD. Its property description is Lot 1 DP1086066 (Figure 1.1).

Abbotsford Group wish to subdivide the large allotment into three (3) smaller parcels, one of which would encompass the ruins of Abbotsford (the Project). To fulfil Council’s requirements, the ‘study area’ is comprised of the southern portion of Lot 1 DP1086066, which includes the proposed Lots 101 and 102 (see Figure 1.2). This area includes the archaeological site listed in Schedule 5 of the Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011 (Wollondilly LEP; Item A7; see Section 2.3 for further details).
1.3 Aims and scope

The following report has been prepared to fulfil Wollondilly Shire Council and Heritage DCP’s requirements and follows the ‘Guidelines for the preparation of Archaeological Management Plans’ published by the NSW Heritage Council in 2009. Preparation of the AMP involved the following tasks:

- Reviewing legislation and planning instruments relevant to the Project;
- Summarising the history of Abbotsford from recent studies;
- Analysing historical records, including aerial photographs, maps and plans;
- Conducting a detailed archaeological survey and documenting the results;
- Preparing a zoning plan that identifies areas of high, moderate and low archaeological potential based on desktop analysis and archaeological survey results;
- Assessing the significance of potential archaeological relics in the areas of high and moderate potential;
- Assessing the potential impact of the subdivision on potential archaeological relics; and
- Providing recommendations to manage areas of archaeological potential.

1.4 Report outline

The following report includes:

- a statutory context (Section 2);
- a summary history (Section 3);
- an analysis of historical records (Section 4);
- the results of the archaeological survey (Section 5);
- An archaeological zoning plan (Section 6);
- A significance assessment of potential archaeological relics (Section 7);
- Assessment of the potential impact of the subdivision on potential relics (Section 8); and
- Conclusions and recommendations (Section 9).

1.5 Authorship and acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by Fiona Leslie (Principal Archaeologist, Mountains Heritage). I would like to acknowledge the assistance provided by Kerry Dunn (Project Manager, Abbotsford Group), Neil Arber (property owner) and Brad Vale (Senior Heritage Consultant, NBRSArchitecture Pty Ltd).
Sydney

Picton

Abbotsford, Picton - AMP

Figure 1.1: Location of study area

Study Area
Lot 1 DP 1086066

Legend

Map Source: NSW Six Maps (NSW Spatial Data)
Figure 1.2: Study area

Legend
- Study Area

Map Source: NSW Six Maps (NSW Spatial Data)
2. Statutory Context

The following subsections provide a summary of legislation and planning instruments relevant to Abbotsford and the Project. The results of a search of heritage registers is also presented.

2.1 Heritage Act 1977

The Heritage Act 1977 (Heritage Act) is a statutory tool designed to conserve environmental heritage in NSW. It is used to regulate development impacts on the State’s historical heritage assets. The Act defines a heritage item as ‘a place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct’.

To assist management of the State’s heritage assets, the Act distinguishes between items of Local and State heritage significance.

‘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’.

State Heritage Register

Under Part 3A of the Heritage Act, the NSW Heritage Council is required to keep a State Heritage Register (SHR). This register lists items of State heritage significance, as determined by the Heritage Council and/or the Minister. To list an item on the SHR, the Heritage Council must consider that the item satisfies more than one of the heritage assessment criteria in Section 4A of the Act.

Listing on the SHR controls activities such as alteration, damage, demolition and development. When a place is listed on the SHR, the approval of the Heritage Council of NSW is required for any major work.

In some circumstances a s 60 permit may not be required if works are undertaken in accordance with the Standard Exemptions for Works Requiring Heritage Council Approval (NSW Heritage Council 2009). For example, Standard Exemption 7 covers works that would have little or no adverse impact on the heritage significance of the heritage item. An Exemption Notification Form (s57(2)) is required to be submitted to the NSW Heritage Division with appropriate supporting information (such as a SoHI).

Archaeological relics

Archaeological relics are 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’

Relics associated with items listed on the SHR are protected under Section 57 of the Act. Relics not listed on the SHR are afforded automatic protection under Section 139 of the Act. Approvals are ordinarily required when excavating any land in NSW that may contain an archaeological relic. Section 139[1] of the Heritage Act states that:
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 the excavation permit.

Section 146 of the Act requires any person who is aware or believes that they have discovered or located a relic must notify the NSW Heritage Council providing details of the location and other information required.

Development of SHR listed items

Part 4, Section 57(1) of the Heritage Act identifies works for which Heritage Council approval is required. These include:

a) demolition of the building or work
b) damaging or despoiling the place, precinct or land, or any part of the place, precinct or land.
c) Moving, damaging or destroying the relic or moveable object.
d) Excavating of any land for the purpose of exposing or moving the relic.
e) Carrying out any development in relation to the land on which the building work or relic is situated, the land that comprises the place, or land within the precinct.
f) Altering the building, work, relic or moveable object.
g) Displaying any notice or advertisement on the place, building, work, relic, moveable object or land, or in the precinct.
h) Damaging or destroying any tree or other vegetation on or removing any tree or other vegetation from the place, precinct or land.

Under the Heritage Act, all NSW Government agencies must also create and maintain a register of items of heritage significance that they own, control and operate. These registered are called Section 170 Heritage and Conservation Registers. They do not include items of Aboriginal, natural, maritime or movable heritage significance. If a place is listed on a S170 register, the managing agency must have delegation to approve some of its own work under the Heritage Act. Works could include those deemed to have only minor impacts to heritage items and archaeological sites.

2.2 Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979

The NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) establishes the framework for cultural heritage values to be formally assessed in the land use and development consent process and requires that environmental impacts are considered prior to land development; this includes impacts on heritage items. The Act also requires that local governments prepare planning instruments (such as Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) and Development Control Plans (DCPs), in accordance with the principles of the legislation to provide guidance on the level of environmental assessment required.

The study area is located within Wollondilly Shire Council and the DA submitted to Council must be considered under the provisions of the Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011 (Wollondilly LEP) prepared under the EP&A Act.

Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011

The Wollondilly LEP follows the format of a Standard Instrument LEP developed following amendments to the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation in 2008. The conservation of heritage items, including archaeological sites is addressed under Section 5.10 of the LEP.
Under Section 5.10 of the LEP development consent is required when:

(c) disturbing or excavating an archaeological site while 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.

Development consent is also required when:

(f) subdividing land:

(i) on which a heritage item is located or that is within a heritage conservation area, or
(ii) on which an Aboriginal object is located or that is within an Aboriginal place of heritage significance.

Under Section 5.10 (5) of the LEP Wollondilly Council may request a heritage management document to be prepared to assess the extent to which the development would affect the heritage significance of a heritage item, including an archaeological site.

Wollondilly Development Control Plan 2016

The Wollondilly Development Control Plan 2016 (Wollondilly DCP) was prepared by Council to realise the aims of the Wollondilly LEP. The DCP includes eight (8) volumes which deal with specific controls and objectives. Volume 3 provides controls for the subdivision of land and is relevant to the Project. Section 3.13 of the DCP deals specifically to the Abbotsford Road Planning Proposal site, which includes the study area.

As outlined by Section 3.13, Council’s objectives for subdivision of this site are to:

1. Facilitate development of the site to achieve a high-quality built form.
2. Encourage adaptive reuse of heritage items.
3. To ensure that new developments are designed and located so that they do not have an adverse impact on heritage items, the cultural landscape of the early pastoral property, historical archaeology and significant views and vistas.
4. To ensure hazards such as flooding are managed effectively to reduce the risk of damage to property and human life.
5. To protect scenic landscapes and ability to interpret the site as an early pastoral property

Under 3.13 (9) of the DCP:

Council will not grant consent to carry out a development unless the development is accompanied by an Archaeological Management Plan (AMP) prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced professional and should address the following matters:

a) The Archaeological Management Plan should clearly outline the areas of archaeological potential and significance in relation to the State Heritage Register curtilage of ‘Abbotsford’;

b) It shall include clear provisions outlining how the subdivision will protect and retain significant archaeology;

c) If no archaeological testing program has occurred to inform this process, include an appropriate buffer to protect the State significant items within the subdivision;

 d) Any further subdivision of the land shall ensure that significant archaeology is retained within one lot if possible;

e) The significant views and heritage character of the site should not be compromised by any proposed infrastructure such as sewerage, water, gas or electricity; and

f) Areas with significant historical archaeology identified in the Archaeological Management Plan and confirmed through archaeological test excavation shall be
identified and protected within a Section 88B instrument to accompany any application for a subdivision certificate and shall be registered on the title of the affected lot(s).

The following report aims to fulfil this requirement for an AMP specified by Council.

2.3 Heritage register searches

Heritage items and places are recorded on statutory and non-statutory registers held at the federal, State and local level, depending on their level of significance. Federally managed heritage includes the National Heritage List (NHL) and the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL), both administered by the EPBC Act. The NHL comprises natural, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal items of National heritage significance, while the CHL contains natural, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal items of National, State and local heritage significance either located on Commonwealth land or owned by the Commonwealth. Items on the NHL and CHL, as well as World Heritage items in Australia, are recorded on the Australian Heritage Database, currently administered by the Federal Department of Environment and Energy.

State heritage places and items are registered on the SHR. The SHR is a searchable online database that records all State heritage items and places and their curtilages. Associated with the SHR is the State Heritage Inventory (SHI), an online database that records some local heritage items and items owned by State statutory authorities. Section 170 of the Heritage Act 1977 requires all statutory authorities to advise OEH of their heritage assets for recording on the SHI.

Items of local heritage significance are recorded in Local Environmental Plans (LEP) for the relevant LGA.

World, National and Commonwealth Heritage Lists

A search of the Australian Heritage Database was undertaken on 11 November 2019. No items of World, National or Commonwealth heritage were identified in, or within the immediate vicinity of, the study area.

- Abbotsford Homestead and Curtilage, Abbotsford Road, Picton is listed on the Register of the National Estate (Place ID 3312), which is a non-statutory archive of places.

  The description of the homestead ruins is as follows: A colonial Georgian brick house with front verandah, the main block being flanked by slightly later one which at the rear forms a U-shaped verandah court with the centre block. The whole is raised on a terrace at the front which is unusual. The main block is double pile plan and the elevation is five bays wide under a hip roof of shingles covered with corrugated galvanised iron. Internal detailing is intact. The listing includes all trees and buildings on the land from road to hill top.

NSW State Heritage Register

A search of the SHR was undertaken on 11 November 2019. One heritage item was identified within the study area:

- ‘Abbotsford’ at Oaks Road, Picton is listed on the SHR (Item No. 00073) as a homestead complex. A copy of the listing is included as Annexure A. Figure 2.1 overleaf shows the current heritage curtilage for the heritage item.
A search of the State Heritage Inventory for items registered under s170 of the Heritage Act 1977 was undertaken on 11 November 2019. No heritage items listed on s170 Heritage and Conservation Registers were identified in, or within the immediate vicinity of, the study area.

Wollondilly LEP

A search of Schedule 5 of the Wollondilly LEP identified one archaeological site within the study area.

- ‘Abbotsford – house ruins, trees, garden and grounds, underground tank, cottage, outbuildings, tree on summit’ at 15 Fairleys Road, Picton. Part Lot 1 DP1086066. Item A7. The boundary of this archaeological site is shown in Figure 2.2 overleaf.
- ‘Abbotsford Silos’, 15 Fairleys Road, Part Lot 1 DP1086066. Item I297.
- ‘Byrne’s Exhibition Dairy’ (2 buildings), 15 Fairleys Road, Part Lot 1 DP1086066. Item I298.
Figure 2.2. Archaeological site of ‘Abbotsford’ (Item A7) listed on Schedule 5 of the Wollondilly LEP.

3. Summary Site History

The following chronology provides a summary of significant events in the history of Abbotsford. It is largely based on historical information presented in the SoHI reports prepared for Abbotsford by NPRS Architect Pty Ltd (2017) and NBR+Partners Pty Ltd (2015). The historical research for these reports was conducted by Leonie Masson, Historian of NBRS Architecture Pty Ltd.

3.1 Chronological summary

1821 - 1822 George Harper arrived in the Colony in 1821 and was appointed a storekeeper of the Commissariat. A year later, Harper was granted 400 acres in the Parish of Picton, County of Cumberland granted on 1 November 1822. Harper called the property ‘Abbotsford’ in recognition of patronage from Sir Walter Scott (see Figure 3.1).

1824 – 1829 It is unclear when the house was built, but it may have been as early as 1824 and as late as 1829. Very little historical information is available to establish a firm date of construction or occupation of the property.

1826 Harper was charged with larceny, but later acquitted, for irregularities in the bonded store under his control. “It was clear that there had been, at best, considerable laxity in his conduct of the store” (Fitzhardinge, Australian Dictionary of Biography).

1829 Harper resigned from his position shortly after being acquitted and left for England on the Portland on 7 February 1829. Harper returned to Australia on the Camden on 29 December 1829 and took residence at ‘Abbotsford’ with his wife. His first child was born in that same year.

By 1830, Harper had developed a reputation as a horse breeder, dairy farmer and for cultivated wheat. In that same year, Harper advertised in the Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser for a “dairyman who understands his business” (Sydney Monitor, 1832: p3).

1832 – 1840 Harper added to his property by purchasing 100 acres from Robert Crowford (‘Milton’, Portion 138) in January 1832 and 1630 acres (Portion 144) in July 1840 from John Werge Howely (Primary Application 17758, NSW Land & Property Information).

1840 Harper attempted to auction ‘Abbotsford’. The sale, however, was unsuccessful and several newspapers reported that Harper was to leave for England shortly, anticipating the impending sale of “the beautiful estate of Abbotsford”, Stonequarry comprising 7,000 acres of land, with the whole of the livestock, numerous buildings and improvements thereon” (Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser, 14 September 1841: p3).

1841 George Harper died on 23 March, the following year, at the age of 38, leaving behind his wife, Margaret Eleanor Harper, and their five children. Harper’s estate was left in equal share to his five children

Following Harper’s death, Margaret auctioned the sale of her husband’s horse stock comprising “first rate mares, fillies and colts” (Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 20 July 1841: p3). She also advertised the property for lease. A description of the property in a subsequent advertisement of the property state the following:
“The establishment consists of a commodious brick cottage of ten rooms, with kitchen, wash house, fowl-house, piggeries and all other necessary conveniences; an orchard of choice fruit trees, two and a half acres with a large and productive vegetable garden’ three thousand two hundred acres of land commanding an extensive back run, three hundred cleared and fenced into convenient paddocks and fifty acres now under wheat; there is a large and substantial barn with plough, harrows, drays and every requisite for carrying on a large agricultural establishment; also, fifty-three milk cows and thirty-six working bullocks….there are also thirty first-rate breed mares and forty-five colts and fillies…” (Sydney Herald, 15 July 1841: p4, see Figure 3.2).

In October of the same year another advertisement to lease Abbotsford for seven (7) years was posted in the Sydney Morning Herald. The advertisement described the property as follows:

“The house contains ten rooms, with all convenient outhouses, a very large barn, six-stalled stable, coach-house &c; also a large garden well stocked with the most choice fruit trees. Thirty working bullocks and fifty cows with small stock and farming implements, drays ec, may be taken by the tenant at a valuation” (Sydney Morning Herald, 25 October 1841, p3, see Figure 3.3).

1842–1863 The property was leased to a number of different farmers, including James Templeton and George Beresford Christmas. Captain Christmas, was resident from around 1852 and appointed to revise the electoral lists for Picton and simultaneously involved in the maintenance of roads to and from the district.

In 1857 and 1858 Abbotsford was advertised to let again, however no information on the tenants of the property is available. The following year Abbotsford House was offered to let “furnished or unfurnished…10 good rooms, kitchen, stable, etc. detached, large and well stocked garden, and about 10 acres of grass paddocks” (Sydney Morning Herald, 23 March 1860: p8). The tenant at this time was Mr Meymott, as the following January there was an auction sale at Abbotsford House Picton, [of] the whole of Mr F.W Meymott’s household furniture and effects, horses, pigs, poultry, etc (Sydney Morning Herald, 4 January 1861: p7).

1865 By 1863 George Gibson Harper purchased his sibling’s shares and two years later he sold Abbotsford to William Redfern Antill. Additional land, 1000 acres and 1630 acres were sold to Antil later in December (Primary Application 17758, NSW Land & Property Information).

1865–1905 Antill moved in to Abbotsford immediately and he continued to lease parts of the estate to farmers, including: A. Bateup, M. Cunningham, T.M. Dunn, H. Evans and William Fairly and M. Junr Mulholland and B. Neil. Antil is listed in the 1872 Greville Post Office Directory, as a grazier (Figure 3.4; Figure 3.5).

1905 Antill and his family continued to live on the property until his death on 5 September 1905, aged 77 years. Antill left his estate in equal portions to his seven daughters. The daughters agreed to let the property, which was converted to Torrens title in 1912. The property at this time was valued at £29,372 and occupied by several tenants, including Walter and Percy Hanger (621 acres), Fairley (583 acres), Dunn (189 acres), Dymock (196 acres), Stace (201 acres), McKinnon (397 acres), Brookes
Abbotsford (157 acres), Larkin (278 acres), O’Brien (18 acres), Boardman (11 acres) and Wedlock (562 acres).

1906 – 1919 By 1906, Abbotsford house and adjoining land at this time was occupied by Alfred Wedlock, a dairyman, who moved his family and dairy to the estate from Marrickville. Wedlock was successful in winning the annual Royal Champion Butter Fat prize several years in a row, with his Ayrshire dairy cows. Abbotsford was described by the Sydney Morning Heritage on 21 February 1908, as follows:

“The homestead at Abbotsford, the residence of the late William Antill, is comfortable and nicely situated, looking towards Picton over a pleasant prospect of rich flats. The property is well watered, and cleaned up. Some of the steading is on the old side, although there is probably sufficient accommodation for carrying on the farm. The dairy and bails are cool and clean.” (Sydney Morning Herald, 21 February 1908: p4, See Figure 3.6)

By 1919, Wedlock vacated Abbotsford and on 29 November sold “building material, wire netting, plats of a most up-to-date, poultry farm, choice poultry, and sundries” (Sydney Morning Herald, 22 November 1919: p10). The subsequent tenant of the house and lands is not known.

1937 Abbotsford was leased to the NSW Fresh Food and Ice Company Limited and a newly formed subsidiary company formed to purchase the business of H. Byrne Pty Ltd, which was relocated to the estate from Rosebery to Abbotsford (Figure 3.7).

Abbotsford house underwent maintenance at this time, including painting, wallpapering and the connection of electricity. Edgar Davies was appointed to by the manager in 1939 and supervised the repair of the front verandah, picket fences and painted the metal ceilings of the house (Figure 3.8).

1951 The NSW Fresh Food and Ice Co Ltd vacated Abbotsford following the expiry of the lease. The trustees advised surviving members of the Antill family to sell the property, due to increased maintenance and upkeep costs. In 1951, following the near drowning of a child who fell through the rotting floor of the old gaol building, Council ordered demolition of the gaol. It is thought that the homestead was abandoned not long after the incident.

1952 On 16 August, the trustees of the property subdivided the estate into five blocks and offered them for sale at auction. The homestead block (Block 3) was described as follows:

“Undulating with rich creek flats. Watered by creeks and bore. Improvements, brick stone house, electricity, telephone, town water. 2 men’s cottages, 4 and 5 roomed brick milk factory, brick dairy, 12 double bails and 4 single. Concrete yard. Horse boxes etc., machinery shed, 2 hey sheds – 4 bull paddocks and houses. 8 subdivisions” (Sydney Morning Herald, 18 July 1952: p9, See Figure3.9).

1952– 1976 Arthur Thurston Ziem, Charles Julius Ziem and Benjamin Robert Ziem, all of Corrimal, master butchers, purchased several blocks at this date “and later on, the house and further 500 acres” (Borst and Jones, 1981: p35).
The Monds share-farmed the dairy until 1976-77, when Charles, the surviving Ziems brother, closed the dairy. The property continued in operation as a beef, cattle and pig run for the R & F Ziems Butchery, Corrimal.

1981

A fire on 5 July partly destroyed the roof leaving the joinery in the rooms quite intact. This is the time that Borst & Jones investigated the fabric.

1983

A second fire on 14 April burnt down the flooring and most of the interior joinery, leaving the remains exposed to the elements.

Figure 3:1. Extract from the Parish of Picton, County of Cumberland, 1886 edition. The extract shows Portion 136 granted to George Harper, ‘Abbotsford’ (Source: NLA: MAP RM 3033).
Figure 3.2. To let advertisement for estate of Abbotsford. (Source: Sydney Herald, 15 July 1841, p4).

Figure 3.3. To let advertisement for Abbotsford. (Source: Sydney Herald, 25 October 1841, p3).
Figure 3:4. Extract from Plan of Road from the main Southern Road within Charles Rumkin’s 1000 acres near the Bridge over Stonequarry Creek at Picton to the west boundary of E.I. Moore’s….County of Cumberland, NSW, 1874. (Source: Crown Plan R277A-1603, NSW Land & Property Information).

Figure 3:5. Abbotsford, Picton, 1891. (Source: State Library of NSW: PXA 1380, Pockley and Antill Family Photo Albums).
Figure 3.6. Abbotsford, Picton, about 1910. (Source: Wollondilly Library, Picture Wollondilly, Poo\P00001).
Figure 3.7. Byrne’s Exhibition Diary Moves to Rich Pastures at Picton. (Source: Sydney Morning Herald, 12 April 1939, p10).
Figure 3.8. Extract from the 1948 aerial survey of Picton showing ‘Abbotsford’ (circled RED). (Source: Geoscience Australia via United Photos and Graphics Services: Camden NSW SVY 547 Run 5 Print 5093).
Figure 3:9. Auction sale notice. (Source: Sydney Herald, 18 July 1952, p9).
4. Analysis of Historical Records

The following subsections review historical information about Abbotsford presented in Section 3 to develop an understanding of the original layout of the property and its evolution over time following changes in ownership and use. This information can then be used to provide a context for the archaeological survey results presented in Section 5.

4.1 Advertisements

The earliest information available about the original layout and use of Abbotsford comes from descriptions of the property in advertisements dating from 1830 to 1841. In 1830, as advertised in the Sydney Gazette, Harper was searching for a dairyman at Abbotsford and at that stage he had developed a reputation as a horse breeder, dairy farmer and cultivated wheat.

In 1840, when Harper attempted to auction the estate, it was described as including livestock, numerous buildings and improvements. Following his death, the property was advertised for lease and described in further detail. At this time, the property was described as including:

- A commodious brick cottage of ten rooms, with
  - a kitchen, wash house, fowl-house, piggeries; and,
  - an orchard.
- Two and half acres of vegetable gardens.
- 3200 acres of land with fenced paddocks, including
  - 50 acres of wheat; and’
  - a large and substantial barn with plough, harrows, drays.
- 53 milking cows, 36 working bollocks, 30 breed mares and 45 colts and fillies.

A subsequent description of the property the same year described the property as follows:

- A house containing 10 rooms, with
  - All convenient outhouses;
  - A very large barn;
  - Six stalled stable;
  - Coach house;
  - Large garden and orchard;
  - 30 bullocks and 50 cows; and,
  - Farming implements including drays.

From these descriptions it is clear that, by 1840, Abbotsford was a substantial rural property used for dairying, horse breeding and cultivating wheat. It included a main brick house consisting of 10 rooms, a kitchen, wash house, fowl-house, piggeries, a large barn, six-stalled stables, coach house, large vegetable garden and orchard.

4.2 Historical photographs

Sadly, very few early photographs of Abbotsford were taken. The earliest photograph of the property dates from 1891. This photograph shows only the front of the main house and a circular garden bed, which included low bushes and ornamental grasses. It confirms that the house featured two chimneys and the front verandah was supported by timber posts with a low timber picket fence. The windows at the front of the house also featured shutters at this time and a semi-circular window was present above the timber front door.

Another early photograph dating to 1910 shows the front of the main house. This photograph appears to have been taken from further back along the driveway. It clearly shows three chimneys,
two for the main house and one associated with the north pavilion. The photograph also indicates that the driveway was likely gravel, edged with brick or stone to assist drainage. A timber and wire fence is evident on one side of the driveway. The circular driveway features a garden bed at its centre, which appears to correlate with the garden bed shown in the earlier photograph.

Additional historical research identified a third photograph of Abbotsford taken in 1947 (Figure 4.1). This photograph clearly shows the main house and north pavilion, confirming the brickwork was painted at this time and the verandah featured a timber picket fence and timber supports.

![Figure 4.1. Historic ‘Abbotsford’ 1947. (Source: The Picton Post, 23 January 1947, page 5).](image)

### 4.3 Historical plans and aerial photographs

Very few plans showing the layout of Abbotsford have been found. The 1874 Crown Plan clearly shows the boundary of the estate and confirms that many of the paddocks near Abbotsford Road were used to cultivate wheat and grass. No buildings within the estate, however, are drawn on this plan.

The 1948 aerial photograph is perhaps the most useful plan showing the layout of the estate. At this time the property was being leased by the NSW Fresh Food and Ice Company, which purchased the business of H. Byrne Pty Ltd. The property was largely a dairy farm used by the Byrne Exhibition Dairy Pty Ltd to produce high-quality raw milk used by doctors and hospitals.

A closer inspection of the 1948 photograph shows the configuration of buildings and orientation of the original driveway from Abbotsford Road (see Figure 4.2). The main house features two pavilions or wings and three outbuildings at its rear. Smaller barns and sheds are shown further to the rear of the complex. The Model Dairy building is clearly shown to the north west of the main house. Large silos and feeding complexes are shown to the north.
4.4 Borst and Jones Conservation Report 1981

In 1981 a Conservation Report was prepared by Geoff Borst and Steve Jones for the University of New South Wales, School of Architecture. The report includes a detailed set of measured drawings of Abbotsford, as the property existed in 1981. It should be noted that the report was prepared after the first fire that only partly destroyed the roof but left the joinery in the rooms intact. Two years after the report was prepared the property was seriously damaged by a fire that burnt the flooring and joinery and left the building exposed to the elements. A copy of the drawings is included as Annexure B.

The drawings clearly show the original layout of Abbotsford and include detailed floor plans and elevations, showing construction details, including details of the windows and doors. The plans also show the location of a number of plantings, including the avenue of trees that once lined the driveway.

The location plan shows that the homestead at the time was ‘U-shaped’ with a main house flanked by two pavilions. A separate maids’ quarters, smoke house, the site of the former gaol and a well are shown in the courtyard at the rear of the main house. At the rear of the property two barns are drawn near the dairy (See Figure 4.3).

The plans confirm that the main house was constructed on sandstone and brick footings that supported butted timber floors and brick walls (Figure 4.4). At the front of the house, a brick retaining wall supported the raised verandah which featured timber support posts, a timber picked fence and was paved with sandstone. The pavilions on each side of the main house were also supported by sandstone footings. The sandstone was rendered on the outside and on the inside a lime ‘plaster’ reinforced with cow hair was present on the walls. The roof was constructed of
shingles supported on a timber frame. The main house featured pressed metal ceilings, lath and plaster ceilings and walls, timber sash windows and french doors.

The rear courtyard was paved with stone and featured a well and the site of the former gaol. The maids’ quarters was also constructed on sandstone footings supporting brick walls and a timber floor. A small smokehouse is also drawn directly adjacent to the maids’ quarters.

The set of plans drawn by Borst and Jones is an invaluable record of Abbotsford, showing its layout and construction details.

Figure 4:3. Extract from the location plan of Abbotsford. (Source: Borst and Jones, 1981: Dwg No. 2).
4.5 Section 141 Inquiry Report 1983

Following a proposal to make a Permanent Conservation Order on Abbotsford, an inquiry under Section 41 of the Heritage Act was requested by the owners at the time, who argued that the orders would result in undue financial hardship. The inquiry was held on the ground of Abbotsford on 12 July 1983 and the report prepared by Dr Alan Gilpin, Commissioner of Inquiry. It was found that the main house and outbuildings, including the small cottage, brick out houses and well and the immediate garden and grounds were found to be an item of ‘environmental heritage’ as defined under the Heritage Act, despite their ruined condition. Conservation of the buildings and site was found to be necessary and that the building and their immediate surrounds should be subject to a Permanent Conservation Order under Section 44 of the Heritage Act. The surrounding land, however, was not included in the curtilage.

Of relevant to this report, the inquiry includes information on the history of Abbotsford and an archaeological report by Ms Helen Temple, Archaeologist at the (then) Department of Environment and Planning. Ms Temple identified six (6) archaeological features at Abbotsford at the time. These are shown in Figure 4.5 overleaf and included:

1. An underground water storage tank. The tank is in the courtyard at the rear of the house, is constructed of brick, measured roughly 3 metres in diameter, is internally rendered and capped with a brick dome. The internal render and nearby sump suggest the tank was used to store water accumulated from the roofs of the buildings rather than a well tapping a natural spring.
2 Site of the old gaol or convict barracks. The building was first recorded by Borst and Jones at the southern edge of the domestic courtyard at the rear of the house. It was reportedly a two-storey masonry building with a tin roof and a single central door.

3 Line of stones adjacent to the existing timber barns. The feature comprises a line of roughly cut stones running north / south approximately six metres long. This is cut by another line of similar stones at right angles. Ms Temple interpreted this feature as the possible foundations of an outbuilding that pre-dates the timber sheds.

4 Remains of a floor surface. Just south of the line of stones, the remains of a floor surface and a levelled area about 2 metres square was identified. The floor has a concrete surface with brick and stone aggregate. It is unclear when the building was constructed.

5 Large rectangular feature in the front of the domestic garden to the south east of the house. This feature measured approximately 5 x 15 metres with distinct right-angled corners. No visible structural remains were identified, although mature trees had been planted along its eastern edge. This area may have been a croquet lawn.

6 Original access road or carriageway, which was clearly visible as a regular linear depression in the grass. The carriage way ran in a straight line from Abbotsford Bridge between the planted exotic trees to the main house. Its relationship with the outbuildings behind, one of which must have been a stable, was unclear.

Ms Temple concluded that numerous archaeological sites are present within the Abbotsford estate and that those sites contribute to its heritage significance. Further archaeological research and investigation would provide more insight into the occupation of the estate, its layout and use of the former outbuildings. Analysis of fences and spatial relationships between ancillary buildings would also provide further insight into early agricultural uses of the property (Gilpin, 1983: p25).
Figure 4.5. Archaeological features (Nos 1 – 6) identified by Helen Temple (Source: Gilpin, 1983: p5).
5. **Archaeological Survey**

5.1 **Timing and personnel**

An historical archaeological survey of Abbotsford was conducted by Fiona Leslie (Principal Archaeologist, Mountains Heritage) and an assistant on 16 November 2019. The survey aimed to document the layout of Abbotsford and locate areas of historical archaeological potential within the study area. The locations of potential archaeological features were marked using a hand-held Garmin GPS and observations on the size, nature and extent of the features were recorded.

5.2 **Topography and setting**

Abbotsford is located roughly 1.5 km north west of the town of Picton in the narrow valley of Stonequarry Creek, which is surrounded by rolling hills. The topography of the study area is variable, with the ruins of the main house sited mid-slope on a steep rise facing east. At the rear of the homestead complex the land rises steeply to a crest, where a lone hoop pine is present.

The study area is largely cleared land, with some remnant exotic trees present around the ruins and along the former driveway. A few native trees have survived on the hill tops. Exotic weeds have invaded the footprint of the main house and large overgrown bushes at the rear of the former courtyard blocking access.

Surrounding the ruins, the property is cleared paddocks, used for grazing sheep and cows. Post and wire fences define holding yards and cattle yards. All of the more recent buildings, which include the feeding shed, former milk factory and concrete silos are disused and vacant.

5.3 **Buildings and landscapes**

The study area is comprised of the following buildings, which relate to the different phases of its use:

- The ruins of Abbotsford house and outbuildings
- The brick dairy, milk factory, holding yards, hay barn, silos and feeding sheds.

The location of these buildings is shown in Figure 5.1 overleaf. Archaeological features are also shown in this figure and discussed in Section 5.4.
Figure 5.1: Buildings and archaeological features

Legend

- Buildings
- Archaeological Features

Map Source: NSW Six Maps (NSW Spatial Data)
The Abbotsford house ruins, outbuildings, landscape and garden remnants

In 1978, prior to its damage by fire, Abbotsford house was described by Clive Lucas for the National Trust, as follows:

“Abbotsford is a Colonial Georgian homestead in its traditional form with front veranda, the main block being flanked by a slightly later gable pavilions which at the back form a U-shaped verandered court with a centre block. The whole is raised on a high terrace which is unusual. The main block is a double pile plan and the elevation is 5 bays wide all under a hipped roof. There are pairs of French doors under the gables of the side pavilions. The entrance hall and verandas are flagged. The doors are 6-paneled, the windows 12-paned and once shuttered; all chimney pieces are Georgian in character and in the main 3 rooms there are dado rails. The house is of face brick now painted on a rubble foundation and the shingled roof has long been covered with corrugated iron. Behind the house is a small weatherboard cottage and brick outhouse of mid nineteenth-century date. In the area around the house are many mature trees. The listing includes the land from the road to the hill behind”. (NBRS Architecture, 2017: p14)

The survey confirmed physical evidence of the following buildings and landscape features, which are described in further detail overleaf:

- main house, pavilions and courtyard;
- underground water storage tank;
- maids’ quarters;
- smoke house;
- timber barns;
- original driveway, landscape and plantings.

**Abbotsford house, pavilions and courtyard**

At the front of the main house, the external brick walls are visible and remnants of the original brick retaining wall that supported the front verandah survive in places, with the original sandstone steps dislodged (Figures 5.2 and 5.3). Evidence of the former sandstone paving on the verandah can be seen. The north pavilion is the most intact façade of the house, with remnants of the original paint and render evident covering the sandstone foundations (Figure 5.4). The south pavilion walls are less stable and in poor condition (Figure 5.5).

From the rear of the house, it is clear that only the brick shell of the main house and its pavilions survive, overgrown with privet and allamanda (Figure 5.6). The chimneys of the main house and its wings are still standing, but the brick supports are starting to fail in places (Figure 5.7). Remnants of internal render and broken window frames, doors and window sills have survived but are fragmented (Figures 5.8 and 5.9). Without protection from a roof, the brick walls are crumbling and cracking, with large portions of walls collapsed and brick spread across the building footprint. Some of the internal footings are discernible below and between the piles of bricks.

At the rear of the main house and its wings, remnants of the U-shaped courtyard can be seen, with the sandstone paving intact and visible in places, particularly within the raised central portion (Figures 5.10 and 5.11).
Figure 5:2. Abbotsford house, front façade, facing west (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019).

Figure 5:3. Abbotsford house, front façade. Note: stone steps and brick retaining wall, facing west (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019).

Figure 5:4. Abbotsford house, north pavilion, facing south (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019).

Figure 5:5. Abbotsford house, south pavilion, facing north west. Note: sandstone foundations and brick walls (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019).

Figure 5:6. Abbotsford house, footprint of the main house, facing east: Note overgrown vegetation and bricks (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019).

Figure 5:7. Abbotsford house, south pavilion, facing south: Note: chimney supports (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019).
Figure 5:8. Abbotsford house, internal view of a room within the north pavilion, facing north (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019).

Figure 5:9. Abbotsford house, north pavilion, extant window frame and sill, facing south (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019).

Figure 5:10. Abbotsford house, courtyard and south pavilion, facing south (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019).

Figure 5:11. Abbotsford house, courtyard and north pavilion, facing north (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019).
Underground water storage tank

Within the courtyard the brick and cement rendered water storage tank and its concrete capping is clearly visible and appears to be in fair condition (Figure 5.12). A rectangular sump is present on its east side (Figure 5.13). The tank was clearly used to store water captured from the former roofs of the house.

Maids’ quarters

The maids’ quarters is in slightly better condition than the main house and its pavilions (Figures 5.14 and 5.15). The building is constructed of brick external walls, with timber internal walls, brick chimney and iron roof. Remnants of its timber floor boards and verandah have survived but the roof of the building has collapsed (Figures 5.16 and 5.17).
Smoke house

The smoke house sits directly adjacent to the maids’ quarters and is a small rectangular brick building in fair condition, with roof and chimney intact (Figures 5.18 and 5.19). The smoke house appears to have been constructed later, using a different brick although the roof was originally shingles and later replaced with iron (Figure 5.19).
**Timber barns**

Two timber barns were recorded to the rear of the main house by Borst and Jones in 1981. Inspection of this area revealed that one of the barns is still standing, but the other collapsed (Figures 5.20 and 5.21). Both barns appear to have been constructed in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, using a mix of timber slabs, timber log supports and corrugated iron (Figure 5.22). The timber slabs have been machine-cut and bolts used to fix the timbers (Figure 5.23).

![Figure 5:20. Timber barn (north), east façade, facing west. (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)](image1)

![Figure 5:21. Site of the former timber barn (south), facing north. (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)](image2)

![Figure 5:22. North Timber barn, internal view, facing west. (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)](image3)

![Figure 5:23. North Timber barn, west façade, facing east. Note: machine cut timber slabs. (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)](image4)

**The original driveway, landscape and plantings**

The Abbotsford homestead complex, including the maids’ quarters and smoke house, is situated on a levelled terrace cut into the natural hillslope (Figure 5.24). Above this lower terrace, a levelled driveway leading to the dairy has been created (Figure 5.25). This sits below an upper terrace, where the two timber barns were built.

Numerous exotic trees, many of which appears to be of a considerable age, were noted. Some of the trees noted include: a Chinese funeral cypress (*Cupressus fenubriss*) south of the current gate, a kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*), a large field elm (*Ulmus minor*), a Bunya pine (*Aracuria bidwillii*). A Norfolk Island Pine is also present at the summit of the hill.

Some of these trees appear to line the original driveway leading from Abbotsford Road to the house (Figure 5.26). The alignment of the original driveway is clearly evident, as a wide cutting into the surrounding slope (Figure 5.27). This cutting sits directly south of the current driveway, which has been upgraded and includes drainage.
The cutting for the rectangular croquet lawn is clearly discernible (Figure 5.27). This is situated to the south of the original driveway and measures roughly 25 m by 18 m.

More recent changes to the landscape include a wide cutting along the southern boundary and the excavation for a large dam near the south west corner of the property (Figure 5.28).

Figure 5:24. Abbotsford homestead complex showing the lower terrace cut into the hillslope, facing north. (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)

Figure 5:25. Abbotsford homestead complex, showing the driveway leading to the dairy, and upper terrace where the timber barns are located, facing north. (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)

Figure 5:26. Cutting for the original driveway leading to Abbotsford house, facing west. Note: the bunya pine and other remnant trees planted. (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)

Figure 5:27. Cutting for the original driveway leading to Abbotsford Road, facing east. (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)

Figure 5:28. Cutting for the former croquet lawn, facing south. (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)

Figure 5:29. Dam in the south west corner of the study area. (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)
Dairy, silos, yards, feeding shed and former milk factory

The other buildings within the study area were added to the property during the mid-twentieth century, when the property was purchased by the NSW Fresh Food and Ice Company Ltd which it operated the ‘Byrnes Exhibition Dairies’. These buildings include:

- A brick dairy constructed in the late 1930s;
- Milking shed and former milk factory, later converted for engineering work (C.R. Cavanagh & Sons Pty Ltd);
- Feeding sheds, 2 concrete silos and a hay shed;
- Bull stalls, holding yards and cattle yards;
- Two timber feeding sheds.

These buildings are shown in Figure 5.30 – 5.35.

Figure 5:30. Dairy building in the 1930s, facing north. Note: the sign is still visible and reads “Byrnes Exhibition Diary Pty Limited”. (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)

Figure 5:31. Diary, milk factory and milking shed, facing north east. (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)

Figure 5:32. Milking shed, facing west (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)

Figure 5:33. Feeding sheds, silos and hay barn, facing north. (Source: Mountains Heritage, 2019)
5.4 Assessment of archaeological potential

Detailed archaeological survey confirmed the presence of a number of archaeological features associated with the Abbotsford homestead complex (See Figure 5.1). Combined with the presence of the standing ruins and our knowledge and understanding of the layout of the complex, these features allow for the definition of areas of high, moderate and low archaeological potential. These areas, and the features associated with each, are described in the following subsections.

Area of high archaeological potential: Abbotsford house and its immediate surrounds

Given the age, materials and methods used to construct Abbotsford house and its pavilions the homestead has very high archaeological potential. As demonstrated by Borst and Jones’ drawings, the house and pavilions originally featured butted timber floorboards. The potential for artefacts to have dropped between the boards and accumulated within the footprint of the house and its pavilions is therefore very high. During the archaeological survey it was clear that, below the brick debris, the layout of the rooms of the main house is legible and the pavilion external walls and some internal walls are still standing. Archaeological investigation of structural features and the recovery and analysis of artefacts from deposits within the building footprint is likely to provide significant information about construction of the house, changes to its original layout and the use of individual rooms by its former occupants.

The courtyard area has high archaeological potential, as evidenced by a number of intact features. These include:

- The sandstone paving, which was visible below the grass in places. Archaeological excavation would expose the full extent of the sandstone paving and further define its extent and associated drainage.
- The underground water storage tank, which is intact. This storage tank may contain artefact rich deposits.
- The site of the former gaol, which was drawn by Borst and Jones directly adjacent to the south pavilion of the house (AB 1). A building is clearly visible in this location in the 1948 aerial photograph (see Figures 5.36) and, as historical records confirm, the gaol was still standing at the site until 1951 when Council ordered its demolition. In her report for the inquiry, Temple describes the goal as being a two-storey masonry building with a tin roof and a single central door. Whist only two sandstone blocks embedded in the grass are now visible in this location, the area has clearly been levelled and debris present and likely associated with its demolition (Figure 5.37). Further archaeological investigation in this location would confirm the size, construction methods and materials used and provide further clarity on its use.
Figure 5:36. Extract from the 1948 aerial photograph showing the building likely to have been the former gaol (circled BLUE).

Figure 5:37. Area where debris and sandstone were noted (AB1), facing south. This may be the location of the former gaol. (Source: Mountains Heritage Pty Ltd, 2019)

Observation of the maids’ quarters confirms the floorboards were also butted (rather than tongue-and-groove). This building therefore has high potential for underfloor deposits. The smoke house likely featured an earthen floor, but rubbish pits and miscellaneous artefacts associated with its use are likely to be present. Archaeological investigation and analysis of deposits within the footprint of each of these buildings would provide significant insight into the use of the buildings and the lives of the servants that occupied and used them. This could provide an interesting comparison with the assemblage recovered from the main house and show differences in the wealth, diet and the lifestyles of the owners and tenants of Abbotsford and their staff.
In addition to the extant ruins, historical records suggest that by 1840 Abbotsford including the following outbuildings:

- Outhouses (i.e. privies);
- A six-stalled stables;
- Coach house; and
- A very large barn.

Based on our knowledge of the typical layout of Colonial homesteads, the original privies were either located within one of the pavilions, or situated to the rear of the courtyard. This area, however, was found to be significantly overgrown with thick bushes making access difficult (Figure 5.38). Further archaeological investigation of this area and the pavilions would be necessary to determine the location of the former privies. Wherever the privies are located, they will feature deep below-ground brick cesspits and may contain artefact-rich deposits. Artefacts recovered from these features are often associated with occupation of the house and can provide significant insights into the diet, wealth and lifestyle of the occupants.

**Figure 5.38. Overgrown area at the rear of the former courtyard, facing north. It is possible that the original privies were located in this area, or within one of the pavilions. (Source: Mountains Heritage Pty Ltd, 2019)**

Modifications to the landscape, including terracing to create level building platforms for the homestead complex, provide clues to the location of the former stables and coach house. As evidenced by various landscape features, it is clear that access to the main house was via a carriageway from Abbotsford Road. This carriageway ended in a circular loop in front of the house. It is unlikely that the stables or coach house were situated in front of the house, as this would have obscured views to and from the house from Abbotsford Road. It is more likely that a side road would have been present, likely on the south side of the house, leading to the stables and coach-house at the rear.

Based on landform observations, it is possible that the area in front of the dairy, once housed the former stables and coach house (Figure 5.39). This area features a levelled driveway with ample room for two large buildings. Whilst no evidence of any structural remains was found in this location, this area is considered to have high archaeological potential.
On the upper terrace, to the south of the timber barns, two archaeological features (AB2 & AB3) were identified and may be associated with a former building shown in the 1948 aerial photograph (Figure 5.40). The features included:

- A line of sandstone, sandstone rubble and associated levelled area (AB2; Figure 5.41). This may be part of the line of sandstone boulders recorded by Temple (in Gilpin, 1983). No evidence of the concrete floor recorded by Temple, however, was found; and

- A circular feature, constructed of brick and concrete with a metal cap (Figure 5.42). This feature may represent the remains of a second underground water storage tank (AB3).
Given the size and orientation of this building it is possible that it may have been the barn mentioned in earlier descriptions of Abbotsford. The absence of a driveway or access road, suggests it is unlikely to have been the stables or coach house. Further archaeological investigation would confirm the size, construction methods and materials and may assist understanding its former function and use. Archaeological investigation of the two barns located directly to the north would also provide similar details and insight.
Area of moderate archaeological potential: Abbotsford homestead ancillary features

Archaeological survey of the study area confirmed the location and orientation of the original driveway, circular loop and raised garden bed at the front of the house and a levelled area documented as the former croquet lawn. All of these landscape features have moderate archaeological potential. Archaeological excavation would likely provide some limited information about the size, materials and method of construction associated with these features but is unlikely to provide significant insights into former occupation and use of Abbotsford by its occupants.

In addition to these features, a small scatter of brick and debris (AB4) was noted below the dam in the south west corner of the property (Figure 5.43). This area has been disturbed by dam construction but may indicate the presence of a former shed. As with the other landscape features listed above, further archaeological investigation of this feature may provide some additional information but is unlikely to provide significant insights into the early use and occupation of the property.

Figure 5.43. Sandstone block and brick debris (AB4) identified near the dam, facing south west. This may be the remains of a former shed (Source: Mountains Heritage Pty Ltd, 2019)

Areas of low archaeological potential

Archaeological survey of the remainder of the study area confirmed the absence of other archaeological features or areas of archaeological potential associated with nineteenth century Abbotsford. The 1930s dairy, milking sheds, factory, feeding lots and associated sheds and silos have limited archaeological potential. Their investigation is unlikely to provide any additional information about early occupation and use of the estate.
6. Archaeological Zoning Plan

Based on a review of previous studies, analysis of historical records and detailed archaeological survey of the study area, zones of high, moderate and low archaeological potential have been identified and are shown in Figure 6.1 overleaf. Table 6.1 below defines each of these zones and summarises their archaeological potential.

Table 6.1: Description of zones of historical archaeological potential identified at Abbotsford, Picton.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archaeological Zone</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Potential Relics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Archaeological Potential</td>
<td>This zone encompasses Abbotsford house and pavilions, the maids’ quarters, smoke house, site of the former gaol, the levelled area at the rear of the complex and the barns and associated archaeological features on the upper terrace.</td>
<td>This zone has high potential for a range of historical archaeological relics including structural remains (brick and sandstone footings, post holes), underfloor deposits within the building footprints, rubbish pits, privy and well fills and yard deposits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Archaeological Potential</td>
<td>This zone includes the broader area surrounding the homestead complex and captures ancillary landscape features, including the former driveway and circular loop, garden beds, croquet lawn and a possible site of a shed disturbed by dam construction.</td>
<td>This zone has moderate potential for historical archaeological relics, including evidence of landscape modification, former driveway surfaces and drainage and structural remains associated with the possible shed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Archaeological Potential</td>
<td>Remaining land within the study area has low archaeological potential. These areas include twentieth century modification and additions to the property, including construction of the brick dairy, milk factory, milking sheds, feeding sheds, silos and associated barns.</td>
<td>This zone has low potential for historical archaeological relics associated with the early occupation and use of Abbotsford. The more recent modification and additions have modified the original landscape and these twentieth century buildings have limited archaeological potential.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6.1: Zones of archaeological potential within the study area

Legend
- High Archaeological Potential
- Moderate Archaeological Potential
- Study Area

Map Source: NSW Six Maps (NSW Spatial Data)
7. Significance Assessment

This section outlines the criteria used to assess the heritage significance of heritage items in NSW and present a significance assessment for the areas of high and moderate archaeological potential identified at Abbotsford.

7.1 Significance assessment criteria

The following assessment of heritage significance has been prepared with reference to Assessing Heritage Significance (NSW Heritage Office, 2015) and Assessing Significance for Historical Archaeological Sites and ‘Relics’ (NSW Heritage Branch, Department of Planning, 2009). Both guidelines incorporate the five aspects of cultural heritage value identified by the Burra Charter: The Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999 (Burra Charter) into a framework currently accepted by the NSW Heritage Council. The following specific criteria specified in the Heritage Act are used to assess heritage significance:

- **Criterion (a)** an item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the local area);
- **Criterion (b)** an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the local area);
- **Criterion (c)** an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area);
- **Criterion (d)** an item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW for social, cultural or spiritual reasons (or the local area);
- **Criterion (e)** an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the local area);
- **Criterion (f)** an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the local area); and
- **Criterion (g)** an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s cultural or natural places or cultural or natural environments (or the local area).

Assessing Significance for Historical Archaeological Sites and ‘Relics’ (2009) clarifies how the above criteria relate to historical archaeological sites and provides a series of questions for each criterion that assist the assessment of ‘relics’. By using this guideline archaeological sites or ‘relics’ can more easily be assessed in their own right and compared with other sites.

7.2 Statement of Significance for Abbotsford

The Statement of Significance below is reproduced from the SHR listing for Abbotsford:

*The Abbotsford property is significant because of its associations with the early settlement of the Picton area and its links with prominent colonial figure, George Harper and later, the Antill family. In addition to its historical significance the site has the potential to yield further evidence of the working of this important pastoral estate through archaeological investigation. The Abbotsford cottage and brick outbuilding are significant for their contribution to the understanding of the function and layout of the group as a whole (Heritage Study, 1992; LEP, 1991).*

*The ruins of the main farmhouse are significant for their associations with the settlement of the area and the links with the Harper and Antill families. The architectural value and intactness of the house*
as an early homestead has been lost. The ruins, together with the other components of the property, provide an opportunity to interpret an early pastoral property through archaeological investigation. The ruins are also an evocative part of the Abbotsford group which is a landmark in the rural surrounds of Picton.

The mature trees and remnants of the gardens and grounds of the Abbotsford property have scientific significance as a collection of rare species of horticultural interest and their association with George Harper who was a noted natural history collector. Together with the other components of the Abbotsford group, the plantings provide evidence of the structure and layout of the farm estate. In a wider context, the surviving plantings also illustrate the horticultural practice of plant collecting which was to remain an important influence in the development of gardens of the colony for a substantial period of time.

Today, the trees are a landmark and contribute to the character of the rural landscape north-west of Picton. The mid-19th century cottage and brick outbuilding are significant from their contribution to the understanding of the function and layout of the homestead group (LEP, 1991).

The underground water tank at Abbotsford is significant through its contribution to our understanding of the group as a whole. It is considered to be a potential source for archaeological research into the occupation phases of the site as domestic artefacts are often dropped into wells. Other sites are also considered to have archaeological significance, particularly into the earliest phases of the development of the property and the role of convicts (LEP, 1991).

The location of the earlier Abbotsford bridge and crossing is significant because knowledge of its position contributes to the understanding of the siting of Abbotsford House and its driveway avenue plantings in relation to the Oaks Rd and Abbotsford Rd. (Heritage Study, 1992).


7.3 Significance assessment of potential ‘relics’ at Abbotsford

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

Abbotsford is a State significant heritage complex recognised for its associations with the early settlement of the Picton area and its links with prominent Colonial figure, George Harper and later, the Antill family. Following two fires in the 1980s, the impressive homestead complex is now in ruins. The ruins include remains of the former main house built by Harper in c1826, two pavilions or wings built by 1829, a brick and timber maids’ quarters, a brick smoke house, an underground water storage tank and two timber barns, one of which is still standing. In associate with the ruins, a zone of high archaeological potential has been identified. Within this zone there is a very high potential for underfloor deposits, privy and well fills, rubbish pits and structural features associated with the standing and former buildings including: the Convict gaol, privies, coach house, stables and barn. The alignment of the original driveway, a former croquet lawn and raised circular garden bed at the front entrance of the main house is also legible. Later modifications to the property include the addition of a dairy, milk factory, milking sheds, feeding sheds, two concrete silos and timber feeding sheds. Despite its ruinous state, Abbotsford is one of Picton’s earliest historic properties reflecting the pattern of early land grants and their use following European settlement. Despite its ruinous stage, the homestead complex retains a high degree of integrity and potential archaeological relics within the zone of high archaeological potential would be considered to be State significant for their historical heritage value.
Criterion (b) - an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the local area);

Abbotsford ruins, associated archaeological relics and remnant plantings on the property are significant for their association with George Harper, who arrived in the Colony in 1821 and was appointed a storekeeper of the Commissariat. Following his settlement at Abbotsford, Harper developed a reputation as a horse breeder, dairy farmer and cultivated wheat. He was also a noted natural history collector with a horticultural interest in rare plant species. A wide variety of plantings were introduced to Abbotsford and some of the specimens still survive, providing evidence of the former structure and layout of the farm including the alignment of the original driveway.

Abbotsford ruins and its potential archaeology also has a strong association with William Redfern Antill, who purchased the property in 1865 and occupied the main house with his family. William Redfern Antill was a senior magistrate, chairman of the licensable board and a leader in Church matters in Picton. He was also the son of Major Henry Colden Antill, who received one of the first land grants in Picton in 1822 and subdivided his allotment into the private town of Stonequarry, later renamed Picton. Given their involvement in the creation of the town and local matters, the Antill family has a very strong association with the town, its history and development.

Potential archaeological relics within the zone of high archaeological potential at Abbotsford would be considered to be State significant for these associations.

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

Whilst much of the architectural detail and associated value of the early buildings at has been lost, the complex has considerable aesthetic appeal as a ruin. The ruined buildings evoke the history and original layout of the place and many of the surviving plantings are considered landmarks within the rural setting of Picton. The potential archaeological relics associated with the complex would contribute to this aesthetic appeal and, combined with the ruins, would have local heritage significance under this criterion.

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

Potential archaeological relics within the zone of high archaeological potential at Abbotsford may have some association with Convicts who were assigned to Abbotsford during the mid-nineteenth century. Archaeological features and deposits associated with the former Convict gaol may survive at the rear of the main house. If relics of the Convict gaol have survived, they would be significant at a State level for this association.

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

The Abbotsford homestead complex and its immediate surrounds have very high potential for historical archaeological relics associated with its construction and former use during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

A zone of high archaeological potential has been identified at the site. This zone encompasses the homestead building complex, a levelled area at the rear of the complex and an upper terrace, where timber barns are present. Archaeological relics in this zone are likely to include: structural remains and underfloor deposits within the footprint of standing and former buildings, including the main house, pavilions, maids’ quarters, the smoke house, the former coach house, Convict gaol, the stables and former barns; artefact-rich fills within the underground water storage tank and in the location of the former privies; yard deposits and rubbish pits associated with early occupation and use of the property. The archaeological investigation of relics within this zone would have the
potential to yield significant information on the construction and occupation of Abbotsford and would make a significant contribution to our understanding of its history and the lives of its occupants. Archaeological relics within this zone would be considered to be State significant for their research potential.

A zone of moderate archaeological potential has also been identified at Abbotsford and includes the broader area surrounding the homestead complex. This zone captures ancillary landscape features, including the former driveway and circular loop, garden beds, former croquet lawn and the site of a possible shed disturbed by dam construction. Archaeological relics within this zone are likely to include: deposits showing evidence of landscape modifications, former driveway surfaces and drainage and structural remains associated with the possible shed. Archaeological investigation of relics within this zone would likely contribute to our understanding of the history of Abbotsford but is unlikely to provide significant insights into its occupation and use. Relics within this zone are likely to be significant at a local level for their research potential.

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

Abbotsford is a rare example of an early-to-mid nineteenth century ruin in the Picton area. More broadly, across NSW, other more intact examples survive and have equally high archaeological potential. Abbotsford is therefore not uncommon and its archaeological relics would be significant at a local level only under this criterion.

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

Despite its ruinous state, the Abbotsford homestead complex has a high level of integrity. Very few later modifications have affected the complex itself, although further archaeological investigation may provide further evidence of its evolution and change in use. Archaeological investigation and further comparative analysis with other estates of a similar age in NSW would be necessary to determine the significance of Abbotsford under this criterion.

### 7.4 Revised Statement of Significance for Abbotsford

The Statement of Significance listed on the SHR for Abbotsford can be revised, as follows (indicated by the use of **BOLD** text).

The Abbotsford property is significant because of its associations with the early settlement of the Picton area and its links with prominent colonial figure, George Harper and later, the Antill family. In addition to its historical significance the site has the potential to yield further evidence of the working of this important pastoral estate through archaeological investigation. The Abbotsford cottage and brick outbuilding are significant for their contribution to the understanding of the function and layout of the group as a whole (Heritage Study, 1992; LEP, 1991).

The ruins of the main farmhouse are significant for their associations with the settlement of the area and the links with the Harper and Antill families. The architectural value and intactness of the house as an early homestead has been lost. The ruins, together with the other components of the property, provide an opportunity to interpret an early pastoral property through archaeological investigation. The ruins are also an evocative part of the Abbotsford group which is a landmark in the rural surrounds of Picton.

The mature trees and remnants of the gardens and grounds of the Abbotsford property have scientific significance as a collection of rare species of horticultural interest and their association with George Harper who was a noted natural history collector. Together with the other components of the Abbotsford group, the plantings provide evidence of the structure and layout of the farm estate. In a
wider context, the surviving plantings also illustrate the horticultural practice of plant collecting which was to remain an important influence in the development of gardens of the colony for a substantial period of time.

Today, the trees are a landmark and contribute to the character of the rural landscape north-west of Picton. The mid-19th century cottage and brick outbuilding are significant from their contribution to the understanding of the function and layout of the homestead group (LEP, 1991).

The homestead complex and its immediate surrounds (defined as a zone of high archaeological potential) has the potential for substantially intact archaeological relics, including: structural remains and underfloor deposits within the footprint of standing and former buildings, including the main house, pavilions, maids’ quarters, smoke house, former coach house, Convict gaol, stables and former barns. Artefact-rich fills within the underground water storage tank and former privies, yard deposits and rubbish pits may also be present. Archaeological investigation of such relics has the potential to yield significant insight into the construction and early occupation of Abbotsford (i.e. high research potential). Such an investigation would likely make a significant contribution to our understanding of the history of Abbotsford and the lives of its occupants, development of the property and the role of Convicts.

The location of the earlier Abbotsford bridge and crossing is significant because knowledge of its position contributes to the understanding of the siting of Abbotsford House and its driveway avenue plantings in relation to the Oaks Rd and Abbotsford Rd. (Heritage Study, 1992).
8. Impact Assessment

8.1 The Proposal

Abbotsford Group wish to subdivide Lot 1 DP108 6066 into three (3) smaller parcels. The proposed Lot 101 would encompass the ruins of Abbotsford, its original driveway and significant plantings but would not include the Norfolk Island pine on the crest above the complex. This tree and surrounding land would be included in Lot 102 but with restrictions on its use (see Figure 8.1 attached).

The proposed Lot 101, which includes almost all of Abbotsford and the Byrne Exhibition Dairy building, would be retained for the purposes of heritage conservation and the heritage complex protected under a Section 88B instrument registered to the title of that allotment. No works would take place within Lot 101, with the exception of the conservation and stabilisation works approved by the NSW Heritage Council under a S.60 Permit (Permit No. 2015/s60/106).

Within the proposed Lot 102, all of the ancillary farm buildings with the exception of the Silos and the milk factory, would be demolished. Lot 102 has been ear marked for further subdivision into 42 large residential allotments, however, this is the subject of a subsequent development application to Wollondilly Council and would be subject to specific controls under the Wollondilly Development Control Plan 2016.

8.2 Potential impact on relics

As seen in Figure 8.2, Lot 101 would conserve both the zones of high and moderate archaeological potential identified at Abbotsford. This revised curtilage for Abbotsford, within the new Lot 101, would ensure that all potentially State significant historical archaeological relics would be conserved and protected. It would also ensure that significant views and most landscape elements, including the original driveway, croquet lawn and surviving plantings would be retained and the original layout of the property preserved.

When compared with the current SHR listed curtilage assigned to Abbotsford, the proposed allotment boundary for Lot 101 and revised heritage curtilage is a significant improvement, conserving potential archaeological relics within one single allotment. This would result in a positive heritage outcome for Abbotsford. Not only would potential archaeological relics be retained in association with the ruins, landscape features and significant views would be conserved.

The demolition of the ancillary farm buildings and subsequent subdivision and future residential development of Lot 102 is highly unlikely to disturb any potential historical archaeological relics associated with Abbotsford. This area has been assessed to have low archaeological potential. If any relics were identified during excavation within this allotment, it would be considered an unexpected find and managed accordingly.
Figure 8.1. Proposed subdivision plan for Lot 1 DP108 6066 (Source: Abbotsford Group 2019).
Figure 8.2: Proposed Lot 101 and zones of archaeological potential

Legend
- High Archaeological Potential
- Moderate Archaeological Potential
- Lot 101
9. Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 Conclusions

- Abbotsford homestead ruins is a State significant heritage complex recognised for its historical heritage values, significant associations and archaeological research value.

- The homestead was constructed c1826 by George Harper, a noted natural history collector, reputed horse breeder and dairy farmer. Following Harper’s death the property was sold in 1865 to William Redfern Antill, a senior magistrate, chairman of the licensable board and a leader in Church matters in Picton. The property subsequently has strong associations with both the Harper and Antill families.

- The homestead was partially destroyed by fire in the 1980s. Ruins of the homestead complex include: the main house, two pavilion wings, maids’ quarters, smoke house, two timber barns and an underground water storage tank in the rear courtyard. The alignment of the original driveway, circular driveway loop, raised garden bed and a former croquet lawn are also still legible. Some original plantings have also survived.

- Following an analysis of historical records and detailed archaeological survey, a zone of high archaeological potential has been defined at Abbotsford. This zone encompasses the core of the homestead complex and includes the levelled area at the rear of the complex and upper terrace. This zone has high potential for structural remains and underfloor deposits associated with current and former buildings, rubbish pits, privy and well fill and yard deposits. Such relics would be of State heritage significance for their research potential.

- A zone of moderate archaeological potential has also been defined. This zone includes the broader area surrounding the homestead complex and captures ancillary landscape features, including the former driveway and circular loop, garden beds, croquet lawn and a possible shed site. This zone has moderate potential for historical archaeological relics, including former driveway surfaces and drainage and structural remains associated with the possible shed. Such relics are likely to be locally significant for their research potential.

- All other areas of the property are considered to have low archaeological potential. These areas include twentieth century modification and additions to the property, including a brick dairy, milk factory, milking sheds, feeding sheds, silos and associated barns.

- The proposed Lot 101 would conserve both the zones of high and moderate archaeological potential identified at Abbotsford. This would ensure that all potentially State significant historical archaeology would be conserved and protected within one single allotment. This would result in a positive heritage outcome for Abbotsford.

9.2 Recommendations

Based on the results of this assessment, it is recommended that:

- No further historical archaeological investigation of the study area, including archaeological test excavation, is necessary prior to the proposed subdivision of Lot 1 DP1086066. The proposed Lot 101 would conserve both the zones of high and moderate archaeological potential identified at Abbotsford.

- In the unlikely event of an unexpected find during excavation on Lot 102, a suitably qualified historical archaeologist should be engaged to assess the find and its significance. If the find is confirmed as an archaeological relic Heritage, DCP must be notified of the discovery under Section 146 of the Heritage Act.
- Following Council approval of the DA, archaeological supervision of proposed stabilisation and conservation works at Abbotsford is recommended to ensure significant features and deposits within the zone of high archaeological potential remain undisturbed.

- If any excavation or ground disturbance works are proposed within the zones of high and moderate archaeological potential identified at Abbotsford (Lot 101) further archaeological assessment would be required. Such an assessment would need to determine the potential impact of the works on relics and the type of approval required under s.57 of the Heritage Act.

- Any future archaeological investigations at Abbotsford (Lot 101) would need to be guided by an Archaeological Research Design (ARD) prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced historical archaeologist. Such an investigation could only be conducted following the issue of an approval by the NSW Heritage Council under the Heritage Act.
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Vincent, Liz, A brief history of Picton, Picton and District Historical Society, 1996


Colleen Morris and Geoffrey Britton 2000 Colonial Landscapes of the Cumberland Plain and Camden, NSW


Internet Sources

National Library of Australia – Trove databases


Other

Wollondilly Library Local Studies Collection

National Trust of Australia (New South Wales)

Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
Annexure A: State Heritage Register Listing for Abbotsford
Abbotsford

Item details

**Name of item:** Abbotsford

**Type of item:** Complex / Group

**Group/Collection:** Farming and Grazing

**Category:** Homestead Complex

**Location:**
- Lat: -34.1618591767
- Long: 150.5990815400

**Primary address:** Oaks Road, Picton, NSW 2571

**Parish:** Camden

**County:** Picton

**Local govt. area:** Wollondilly

**Local Aboriginal Land Council:** Tharawal

**Property description**

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**Statement of significance:**

The Abbotsford property is significant because of its associations with the early settlement of the Picton area and its links with prominent colonial figure, George Harper and later, the Antill family. In addition to its historical significance the site has the potential to yield further evidence of the working of this important pastoral estate through archaeological investigation. The Abbotsford cottage and brick outbuilding are significant for their contribution to the understanding of the function and layout of the group as a whole (Heritage Study, 1992; LEP, 1991).

The ruins of the main farmhouse are significant for their associations with the settlement of the area and the links with the Harper and Antill families. The architectural value and intactness of the house as an early homestead has been lost. The ruins, together with the other components of the property, provide an opportunity to interpret an early pastoral property through archaeological investigation. The ruins are also an evocative part of the Abbotsford group which is a landmark in the rural surrounds of Picton.

The mature trees and remnants of the gardens and grounds of the Abbotsford property
have scientific significance as a collection of rare species of horticultural interest and their association with George Harper who was a noted natural history collector. Together with the other components of the Abbotsford group, the plantings provide evidence of the structure and layout of the farm estate. In a wider context, the surviving plantings also illustrate the horticultural practice of plant collecting which was to remain an important influence in the development of gardens of the colony for a substantial period of time. Today, the trees are a landmark and contribute to the character of the rural landscape north-west of Picton.

The mid-19th century cottage and brick outbuilding are significant from their contribution to the understanding of the function and layout of the homestead group (LEP, 1991).

The underground water tank at Abbotsford is significant through its contribution to our understanding of the group as a whole. It is considered to be a potential source for archaeological research into the occupation phases of the site as domestic artefacts are often dropped into wells. Other sites are also considered to have archaeological significance, particularly into the earliest phases of the development of the property and the role of convicts (LEP, 1991).

The location of the earlier Abbotsford bridge and crossing is significant because knowledge of its position contributes to the understanding of the siting of Abbotsford House and its driveway avenue plantings in relation to the Oaks Rd and Abbotsford Rd. (Heritage Study, 1992).

Date significance updated: 27 Mar 12

Note: The State Heritage Inventory provides information about heritage items listed by local and State government agencies. The State Heritage Inventory is continually being updated by local and State agencies as new information becomes available. Read the OEH copyright and disclaimer.

Description

Construction years: 1822-1908

Physical description:

Site / Grounds / Garden:

The main components of the group are:

House (now ruins) (WO0108)

Trees, Gardens & Grounds (WO0109)

Underground Water Storage Tank (WO110)

Cottage & Brick Outhouse (now ruins) (WO0111)(LEP).

________________________________________________________________________

Site / Grounds:

The original access or carriageway probably started at the Chinese funeral cypress (Cupressus funebris) south of the present entrance gate and continued in a line parallel to the present drive. This old line is marked by a regular linear depression in the grass and a double line of European trees, two Lombardy poplars (Populus nigra 'Italica'), a hoop pine (Araucaria cunninghamii), a kurrajong (Brachychiton populneus), another cypress and Bunya pine (Araucaria bidwillii). Other European trees mark sites such as a possible former croquet lawn and orchards. The ornamental plantings include relatively rare species of horticultural interest and are thought to have been planted by George Harper.

A line some 600m long remains, containing a number of exotic species: a discontinuous series of fairly random plantings, including a Chinese funeral cypress (Cupressus funebris), bunya pine (Araucaria bidwillii), field elm (Ulmus campestris), kurrajong (Brachychiton
populneum), cypress (Cupressus sp.) and a hoop pine (Pinus pinea) A solitary specimen of Photinia x serrulata (a Chinese hedging shrub) also remains (Brad Vale, pers.comm., 14 & 20/11/3012).

Abbotsford Bridge Site:

Site of original timber trestle bridge over Racecourse Creek, at site of Abbotsford crossing. Timber bridge replaced with present concrete road bridge c1986. Site of original timber trestle bridge over Racecourse Creek, at site of Abbotsford crossing. Timber bridge replaced with present concrete road bridge c1986. The location of the earlier Abbotsford bridge and crossing is significant because knowledge of its position contributes to the understanding of the siting of Abbotsford House and its driveway avenue plantings in relation to the Oaks Rd and Abbotsford Rd. (Heritage Study, 1992).

Grounds / Garden (see above also):

The mature trees and remnants of the gardens and grounds of the Abbotsford property have scientific significance as a collection of rare species of horticultural interest and their association with George Harper who was a noted natural history collector. Together with the other components of the Abbotsford group, the plantings provide evidence of the structure and layout of the farm estate. In a wider context, the surviving plantings also illustrate the horticultural practice of plant collecting which was to remain an important influence in the development of gardens of the colony for a substantial period of time. Today, the trees are a landmark and contribute to the character of the rural landscape north-west of Picton (LEP).

The listing includes all trees and buildings on the land from road to hill top (AHC, 1980).

Buildings:

House (now ruins)(WO0108)

A colonial Georgian brick house with front verandah, the main block being flanked by slightly later ones which at the rear form a U-shaped verandah court with the centre block. The whole is raised on a terrace at the front which is unusual. The main block is double pile plan and the elevation is five bays wide under a hip roof of shingles covered with corrugated galvanised iron. Internal detailing is intact. (AHC, 1980).

Originally a Colonial Georgian, one storey house flanked by later gabled pavilions forming a U-shaped verandahed courtyard with the whole raised on a high terrace at the front. Face brick on rubble foundation for main block. Two brick outbuildings are associated with house; one containing a kitchen and servants’ quarters, the other a smokehouse. Twice destroyed by fire in last decade and main building now derelict (LEP).

The ruins of the main Abbotsford farmhouse are significant for their associations with the settlement of the area and the links with the Harper and Antill families. The architectural value and intactness of the house as an early homestead has been lost. The ruins, together with the other components of the property, provide an opportunity to interpret an early pastoral property through archaeological investigation. The ruins are also an evocative part of the Abbotsford group which is a landmark in the rural surrounds of Picton (LEP).

Cottage & Brick Outhouse (WO0111)

The cottage was used as servants’ quarters and the brick outhouse as a smokehouse. These domestic buildings are thought to date to the mid 19th century (LEP).

Timber Barns

Convict Barracks/Old Gaol (demolished)
Together with the main residence these two buildings and the gaol (now demolished) were positioned around a central court with a deliberate axial relationship to the hill, the driveway and selected trees (LEP)

Underground Water Storage Tank (WO110)

A large brick tank about 3m in diameter. It is internally rendered, capped with a brick dome and still holds water.

Archaeological and other elements:

As well as the water storage tank there are other sites considered to be of archaeological interest. They are the site of the "Old Gaol" or Convict Barracks, a line of stones adjacent to the existing timber barns and the remains of a floor surface (LEP).

The ruins, together with the other components of the property, provide an opportunity to interpret an early pastoral property through archaeological investigation. The ruins are also an evocative part of the Abbotsford group which is a landmark in the rural surrounds of Picton (LEP).

Physical condition and/or Archaeological potential:

A large brick tank about 3m in diameter. It is internally rendered, capped with a brick dome and still holds water.

As well as the underground water storage tank there are other sites considered to be of archaeological interest. They are the site of the "Old Gaol" or Convict Barracks, a line of stones adjacent to the existing timber barns and the remains of a floor surface.

Date condition updated: 27 Mar 12

Modifications and dates:

Original access road to Abbotsford House extended in a straight line from the Abbotsford crossing of Race Course Creek. 1985 new works commenced in 1985

1986 the 1908 l timber trestle bridge was demolished - Site of original bridge over Racecourse Creek, at site of Abbotsford crossing.

Current use: vacant

Former use: Aboriginal land, farm, residence

History

Historical notes: Picton:

The town of Picton was named by Major Antill after Sir Thomas Picton in 1841. The location was previously known as 'Stonequarry'. The Duke of Wellington described Picton as a 'rough foul-mouthed devil as ever lived' but very capable. He was 'respected for his courage and feared for his irascible temperament'. He was chiefly remembered for his exploits under Wellington in the Iberian Peninsular War displaying great bravery and persistence. He was killed at the battle of Waterloo and was the most senior officer to die there. He was buried in the family vault at St. George’s, Hanover Square in London. In 1859 Picton was re-interred in St. Paul’s Cathedral, London, lying close to the body of the Duke of Wellington (Wheeldon, 2015, 3).

Abbotsford:

The 400 acre property was taken up in 1822 by George Harper, natural history collector, settler, noted Scottish government official and surveyor.

Governor Macquarie granted 400 acres to Harper in 1823. Harper was store keeper at the
Commissariat Store (in Sydney). He named the property after the estate of his Scottish patron, Sir Walter Scott’s estate (Heritage Council, 1983, 9).

The main block of the house may have been built before Harper made his trip to England in 1827. The ornamental plantings include relatively rare species of horticultural interest and are thought to have been planted by George Harper. The rest of the house was built before his death at Abbotsford in 1841.

The original access road to Abbotsford house extended in a straight line from the Abbotsford crossing of Race Course Creek.

The property was purchased by William Redfern Antill, local Magistrate and a prominent early settler, in 1865.

Abbotsford House was built c1908.

Original access road to Abbotsford House extended in a straight line from the Abbotsford crossing of Race Course Creek. The timber truss Abbotsford Bridge was built c1908. It was handed over to the Wollondilly Shire Council by the Public Works Department. New works in commenced in 1985 and the original bridge was demolished in 1986.

The property remained with the Antill family until 1952. The house was considered to be a remarkable survival of a farmhouse from an early period of Australia’s settlement.

It was also considered the oldest-surviving house west of the Nepean River. Until the first fire in 1981, the house continued to survive almost in its original form, as an archetypal house of the 1820s (Heritage Council, 1983, 9).

In the late 1970s it was reported as being virtually unchanged since the middle years of the last century except for the loss of the original ceilings. Neglect, and two separate fires over the following decade, led to its state of dereliction.

Twice in two years the house was ravaged by fire. In July 1981 it was partly damaged by fire, during burning off operations on adjoining land. Another, more disastrous fire broke out in 14 April 1983, after soaking rain had recently fallen. Police including the arson squad, investigated the causes of the fire. Despite the deprivations by fire, the historic and archaeological significance of the site, house and outbuildings remain. The landscape and setting are preserved and the former drive to the house, apart from its beauty, contains many interesting botanical elements to remind us of Harper’s important role as a natural history enthusiast and collector (Heritage Council, 1983, 9).

The site was handed over to the Wollondilly Shire by the Public Works Department. New works in commenced in 1985 and the 1908 bridge was demolished in 1986 (LEP). The original bridge was a timber trestle bridge over Racecourse Creek, at the site of the Abbotsford crossing. It was replaced with present concrete road bridge c1986.

### Historic themes

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<tr>
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<td>Activities associated with the travels and sojourns of a gardener</td>
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<td>Ancient settlements</td>
<td>Activities associated with the interactions between humans, human societies and the shaping of their physical surroundings</td>
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<td>Ancient aquaculture</td>
<td>Activities relating to the cultivation and rearing of plant and animal species, usually for commercial purposes, can include aquaculture</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient agriculture</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>3. Economy - Developing local, regional and national economies</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Accommodation-Activities associated with the provision of accommodation, and particular types of accommodation – does not include architectural styles – use the theme of Creative Endeavour for such activities.</td>
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<td>Accommodation-Activities associated with the provision of accommodation, and particular types of accommodation – does not include architectural styles – use the theme of Creative Endeavour for such activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Settlement-Building settlements, towns and cities</td>
<td>Land tenure-Activities and processes for identifying forms of ownership and occupancy of land and water, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal</td>
<td>Granting Crown lands for private farming-</td>
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<td>Land tenure-Activities and processes for identifying forms of ownership and occupancy of land and water, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Creating landmark structures and places in regional settings-</td>
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<td>Country Estate-</td>
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<td>Creative endeavour-Activities associated with the production and performance of literary, artistic, architectural and other imaginative, interpretive or inventive works; and/or associated with the production and expression of cultural phenomena; and/or environments that have inspired such creative activities.</td>
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<td>Architectural styles and periods -</td>
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9. Phases of Life-Marking the phases of life

Persons-Activities of, and associations with, identifiable individuals, families and communal groups

Recommended management:

Recommendations

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<td>Recommended Management</td>
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<td>Recommended Management</td>
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<tr>
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Procedures /Exemptions

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>57(2)</td>
<td>Exemption to allow work</td>
<td>Standa rd Exemp tions</td>
<td>SCHEDULE OF STANDARD EXEMPTIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>HERITAGE ACT 1977</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Notice of Order Under Section 57 (2) of the Heritage Act 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>I, the Minister for Planning, pursuant to subsection 57(2) of the Heritage Act 1977, on the recommendation of the Heritage Council of New South Wales, do by this Order:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. revoke the Schedule of Exemptions to subsection 57(1) of the Heritage Act made under subsection 57(2) and published in the Government Gazette on 22 February 2008; and</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Sep 5 2008
2. grant standard exemptions from subsection 57(1) of the Heritage Act 1977, described in the Schedule attached.

FRANK SARTOR

Minister for Planning

Sydney, 11 July 2008

To view the schedule click on the Standard Exemptions for Works Requiring Heritage Council Approval link below.

## Standard exemptions for works requiring Heritage Council approval

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### Study details

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### References, internet links & images

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<td>entry in Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 1</td>
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<td>1983</td>
<td>Abbotsford, Picton: Report of Inquiry pursuant to s.41 of the Heritage Act into objections to making a PCO</td>
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Note: internet links may be to web pages, documents or images.

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Annexure B: Borst and Jones Drawings of Abbotsford, 1981