Submission in Relation to Proposed Extension of Heritage Listing

Nu Welwyn
4 Clarke Street
RIVERSTONE NSW

HERITAGE21
CULTURAL BUILT HERITAGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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The following table forms part of the quality management control undertaken by Rappoport Pty Ltd regarding the monitoring of its intellectual property as issued.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Authors

This Submission (report) in relation to the proposed extension of heritage listing has been prepared by Paul Rappoport and Kaylie Beasley, of Heritage21 (Rappoport Pty Ltd) Heritage Consultants.

1.2 The site

The subject site is located at 4 Clarke Street, Riverstone which falls within the boundaries of the Blacktown City Council local Government area. The location of the subject site is shown in Figure 1 below.

![Aerial map depicting the location of 4 Clarke Street, Riverstone (indicated by red outline). (Source: Six Maps, accessed 25 September 2015, https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/).](image-url)
1.3 Current Listing

The subject site is listed as an item (I71) of environmental heritage in the *Blacktown Local Environmental Plan 2015* (BLEP). It is not listed in the NSW State Heritage Register, the National Heritage List, the Commonwealth Heritage List or the Register of the National Trust of Australia (NSW). The current listing of the subject site, as shown in Figure 2, covers a section of Lot 5 DP 229 296, including the house and yard. The listing does not include any of the outbuildings.

![Figure 2. Current BLEP heritage map depicting the extent of the curtilage of the current listing (tan) in relation to the lot boundaries. (Source: BLEP Heritage map 011, accessed 25 September 2015, http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/Planning_and_Development/Plans_and_Guidelines/Blacktown_Local_Environmental_Plan_2015).](image)

1.4 Purpose

The Department of Planning and Environment has recently placed the Riverstone East Draft Precinct Plan on exhibition for public comment. The Riverstone East Precinct is part of the North West Growth Centre which was released for planning in August 2013. Documentation on exhibition which is of relevance to this report includes the following:
• the Draft Riverstone East Precinct Development Control Plan;
• the Riverstone East Precinct: Non Indigenous Heritage Assessment; and
• the Draft State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) Heritage Map.

The legislation was placed on exhibition for public comment from 12 August 2015 until 18 September 2015, however, the deadline for public submissions was extended to 2 October 2015 at the request of the owner of the subject site. This letter has been prepared, on behalf of the owner of the subject site, as a submission objecting to the recommendation provided within the Heritage Assessment that the extent of the listed heritage item should be increased to correspond with the present property boundary of Lot 5 DP 229 296.

1.5 Limitations

• This report relies solely on secondary sources. Primary research has not been included in this report, other than the general assessment of the physical evidence on site.
• It is beyond the scope of this report to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the cultural heritage significance of the subject site.
• It is beyond the scope of this report to address Indigenous associations with the subject site.
• It is beyond the scope of this report to locate or assess potential or known archaeological sub-surface deposits on the subject site or elsewhere.
• It is beyond the scope of this report to assess items of movable heritage.
• Heritage21 has only assessed aspects of the subject building/place that were visually apparent and not blocked or closed or to which access was barred, obstructed or unsafe on the day of the arranged inspection.
• Heritage21 holds copyright for this report. Any reference to or copying of the report or information contained in it must be referenced and acknowledged, stating the report’s name and date and Heritage21’s authorship.
2.0 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

2.1 Specific history of the site

The following understanding of the history of the subject site has drawn from the historical evidence presented in the Non-Indigenous Heritage Assessment completed by AHMS.¹

The subject site is located within the original boundaries of Maurice Charles O’Connell’s the 1000 acre land grant which he was given in 1814 (see Figure 3). O’Connell’s land was sold in 1855 to Andrew Hardie McCullouch who subdivided the original grant. Part of this subdivision included the eastern side of Clarke Street, which was divided into fifteen lots. All fifteen lots were bought by John Rumery in 1881 (see Figure 5). It is believed that the original dwelling, Nu Welwyn, was constructed during the early stage of Rumery’s ownership of the land. Evidence of when other standing structures around the Nu Welwyn dwelling were constructed is inconclusive. According to AHMS, the fifteen lots “remained in the ownership of the Rumery family through to the mid-1960s and were used by them as one large property”.²

Since the mid-twentieth century the original 71 acre (approximately) Rumery property has been gradually subdivided. The current Nu Welwyn property is comprised of 5 acres around the house, outbuildings and surrounding paddocks.


² AHMS, p. 51.
Figure 4. Subdivision map, circa. 1881. The extent of the Rumery property is indicated in red. The current lot boundary of Nu Welwyn is indicated by the blue outline. (Source: AhMS, p. 61).
3.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE AND SETTING

The subject site is located at 4 Clarke Street, Riverstone, approximately 48 kilometres from Sydney’s city centre. Clarke Street is located east of the Riverstone town centre and is largely undeveloped with a fusion of agrarian lots scattered amongst a handful of single-storey dwellings that are situated on large blocks.

Situated on the eastern side of Clarke Street, the subject site is setback from the street behind a garden area. The driveway curves off through the northern side of this garden area and around to the rear of the house (see Figure 10). The garden area continues around both sides of the house to the rear of the building where an open lawn, vegetable garden and brick outhouse are located (see Figure 14).

Dwellings are located to the north and south of the subject site with the northern dwelling situated close to the subject site’s boundary fence (see Figures 24 & 25). Undeveloped land is located along the eastern boundary of the site (see Figure 12).

Further east of the rear garden are a series of three sheds with paddocks located in the eastern and southern areas of the site (see Figures 12 & 13). A timber slab shed which is located closest to the house, has a corrugated iron roof with gable window (see Figure 15). It is in poor condition with rapid ongoing deterioration apparently caused by termites and water ingress (see Figure 16). The shed located at the greatest distance from the house is a relatively large timber framed structure with walls and roof clad in corrugated iron (see Figure 17). The third shed is a modern metal sheeting double door shed located between the other two sheds (see Figure 18).

The heritage building consists of two distinct hipped roof brick wings which have been linked by a later dating middle extension. This infill between the two brick wings is a timber framed construction with exterior fibro cladding and internal plasterboard (see Figures 6, 7, 8 & 9). It is also evident that a brick extension with flat roof has been added to the southern wing of the building (see Figure 23). It appears that the awning that was original located on the brick wing has been moved to allow the extension and has simply been re-installed onto the new extension facade. The northern façade of the building is symmetrical with central door and two golden sash windows on either. The saddle awning is supported by iron lace posts and brackets side (see Figure 9). The saddle awning is also evident on the western and southern sides of the building. A flat roofed awning is located along the eastern side of the infill addition. A brick chimney is located in the northern brick section.

The interior of the building has been much altered over time although the northern brick section of the building appears to have retained its original layout and fireplace (see Figures 19, 20 & 22).
The building is in poor condition with evidence of rising damp, buckling floors, structural instability, deterioration of mortar and termite damage to timber elements (see Figures 8, 23 & 21). The house was unoccupied for several years and this is most likely to have contributed to the current state of disrepair (see Figure 5). Immediate remedial action needs to be carried out in order to conserve the heritage fabric and values of the building.

![Figure 5. Photograph of northern façade of heritage building taken prior to current owners purchasing the property in 2013. (Source: Email correspondence from client, dated 1 October 2015).](image)

The following photographs taken by Heritage21 on 29 September 2015 provide a visual survey of the site and its setting.
Figure 6. Western façade of the heritage building. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 7. Eastern façade of the heritage building. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 8. Southern wing façade. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 9. Northern wing façade. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 10. Western façade with driveway and front garden. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 11. View towards Clarke Street from front garden. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).
Figure 12. View towards eastern boundary of the site. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 13. View looking west towards the heritage building. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 14. View west towards rear of the heritage building including vegetable garden, lawn and outbuilding. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 15. View of timber slab shed. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 16. Evidence of termite damage to interior of timber slab shed. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 17. View of front section of large timber and corrugated iron shed. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).
Figure 18. View looking west including paddock located along southern boundary and third shed. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 19. Interior view looking towards the southern wing. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 20. View of one of the bedrooms and original fireplace located in the northern wing. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 21. View of wall crack in bedroom in northern wing. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 22. Interior view looking towards corridor to the northern wing. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 23. View of southern wing with flat roofed brick extension. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).
Figure 24. View looking south from the site. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).

Figure 25. Views to dwelling located on the northern boundary of the site. (Source: Heritage21, 29.09.15).
4.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The NSW Government Heritage Database provides the following brief statement of heritage significance for the subject site:

“One of the few remaining country homesteads of this type in a rural setting. The property was purchased in 1881 by John Rumery and was held by his family until 1966”.

It is outside the scope of this report to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the cultural heritage significance. Heritage21 would recommend a Conservation Management Plan is carried out in order to do so.

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5.0 PROPOSED CONTROLS

The following draft documentation pertains to the subject site.

5.1 Draft Development Control Plan

The Draft Riverstone East Precinct Development Control Plan states the following in relation to the subject site:

“Subdivision of 4 Clarke Street, Riverstone is permitted subject to the preparation of a Conservation and Management Strategy by a qualified Heritage Consultant and endorsed by Blacktown City Council prior to subdivision approval. The Conservation and Management Strategy is to establish site curtilages, significant trees and features, and development controls for the property.”

5.2 Technical Study and Draft State Environmental Planning Policy

In conjunction with the Riverstone East Draft Precinct Plan a number of technical studies have also been placed on exhibition. One of these includes the Draft Riverstone East Precinct: Non-Indigenous Heritage Assessment prepared by AHMS, 15 March 2015. This document addresses the Non-Indigenous heritage of the Riverstone East Precinct, including the subject site.

One of the recommendations provided to address the potential heritage impact of the Draft Precinct Plan on the heritage item identified as Nu Welwyn (the subject site) is as follows:

“The extent of the listed heritage item should be increased to correspond with the present property boundary (Lot 5 DP 229296)”.

This recommendation has been incorporated into the Draft SEPP Heritage Map for the precinct (see Figure 26).

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5 AHMS, p. 103.
6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

After visiting the subject site on 29 September 2015 and reviewing the relevant documents and heritage considerations, it is Heritage21’s opinion that the proposed extension to the current heritage listing at 4 Clarke Street, Riverstone would not contribute positively to the long term conservation of the heritage item and its significance.

Heritage21 holds the opinion that extending the curtilage would not further enhance the understanding and communication of the items’ heritage significance. It is clear that the original boundaries of the Nu Welwyn property extended past the current boundaries of Lot 5 DP 229 296. The subdivision of the Nu Welwyn property, from the middle of the twentieth century, has gradually broken up the integrity of the original property. It would, therefore, be inappropriate to extend the curtilage of the heritage listing to coincide with the boundaries of Lot 5. These boundaries are not representative of the original boundaries associated with the house and its operation as an agricultural property so would not contribute to maintaining the heritage values but instead would create false understanding of the original Nu Welwyn property. If a carefully drawn curtilage was defined around the house and other significant intact structures that would, in our opinion, be sufficient in communicating the remaining heritage values. The integrity of the Nu Welwyn property has already been lost by the subdivision of the original land in the middle of the twentieth century and extending the curtilage would not restate this.

Heritage 21 is also of the opinion that by listing the entire site, there would not be any prospect for future subdivision and therefore, from a future development point of view, the property would effectively become sterilised. The house and outbuildings are in poor condition and urgently require extensive conservation works. The current owners would not be in a position to fund these works without the prospect of subdivision of the surrounding land.

It is our strong belief that there should be some equity in the arrangement and that both the Blacktown Development Control Plan (DCP) and SEPP ought to be aware of a quid pro quo with respect to the current owners and future subdivision prospects. We believe that if a carefully drawn curtilage is struck around the house and whatever structures remain intact, a subdivision proposal could take place on the remnant land and the nature of the subdivision could be carefully controlled by means of a mini DCP in which housing forms, garages, driveways, setbacks and heights could be controlled so that view lines to the historic house are maintained. This in turn would give some hope to the current owners and there would be an equitable financial incentive for them to invest in conserving the property (conservation management plan, photographic archival recording and interpretation strategy) which in our opinion is in urgent need of conservation.
On these grounds and on behalf of the owners, we object to the proposed listing of the whole property as opposed to just the curtilage around the house and remnant outbuildings that are still intact. Heritage21 is of the opinion that the Heritage Assessment and Draft SEPP are ill conceived financially and from a policy perspective. Without an incentive the conservation and ongoing maintenance of the site will be at further risk of ongoing decline and damage. Heritage21 is of the opinion that by allowing the option of subdivision (with a minimum lot size of between 450m$^2$ and 600m$^2$) for the land outside of a well-defined curtilage it would facilitate the ongoing conservation of the heritage fabric and values.

It needs to be mentioned that in the nearby area, other owners have been granted R2 zoning on land where there are heritage houses on the land (see Figure 27). This further creates inequity in the treatment of owners in the area and does not auger well for a clearly concise set of policies for conservation especially where R2 development is allowed on some sites with heritage properties and not on others – also with heritage properties.

Figure 27. BLEP Zoning Map depicting the location of heritage items that are nearby the subject site and located in R2 zoning (purple outline) Subject site is indicated by red arrow. (Source: BLEP, Zoning Map006, accessed 30 September 2015, http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/Planning_and_Development/Plans_and_Guidelines/Blacktown_Local_Environmental_Plan_2015).
6.2 Recommendations

In line with the above conclusions Heritage21 would recommend the following:

- That the draft extension of the heritage item listing should not go ahead;
- In order to understand and assess significance and establish an appropriate curtilage for the heritage item a conservation management plan (CMP) should be complied;
- The CMP would then inform the development of a mini DCP that would control the subdivision of surrounding land outside of the curtilage;
- An interpretation strategy should be devised prior to any development occurring; and
- Photographic archival recording should be undertaken prior to any development occurring.
7.0 SOURCES


Blacktown Municipal Council

Draft Riverstone East Precinct Development Control Plan: Schedule 7,”

Blacktown Local Environmental Plan 201,


NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
