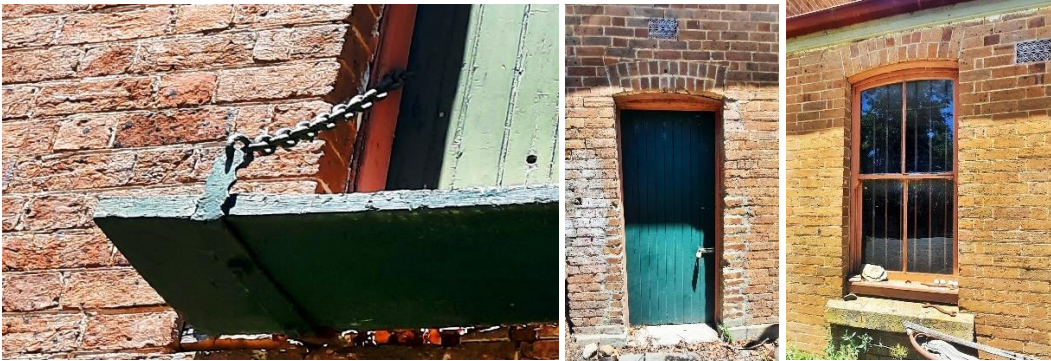




Principal elevation of the existing stables



Historical details retained in the existing building

Heritage Impact Statement
Yass Stables Conversion to Secondary Dwelling
141 Comur Street, Yass, Lot 1 DP 224341, NSW
Report to Yass Valley Council
January 2025

Acknowledgments

Black Mountain Projects acknowledges the assistance of the following people and organisations in the preparation of this report:

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Peer Reviewer: Dennis McManus served as a Senior Heritage Officer with the NSW Heritage Office for over 25 years. Recently, he completed a major pro-bono heritage review of Wingecarribee Council's heritage listings and contributes to the Local Planning Panel as a Resident Representative. With a working lifetime of experience as a Planner and Heritage Officer, his significant contributions to the field have been recognised with the Public Service Medal.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report assesses the heritage impact of a proposed conversion of the “Yass Stables”, part of a locally significant property, heritage listed as Westpac Bank and hitching posts, under *Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013*. The subject land includes the historic two storey bank building which is prominent on the main street of Yass, as well as the stables building at the rear, accessed by a small laneway from the main street. The proposal involves retaining and repairing the stables building, replacing deteriorated building fabric, constructing a sympathetically designed wet area extension, landscaping the stables curtilage, and converting the stables into a habitable building to function as a secondary dwelling.

Key Findings

- **Preservation of the Listed Stables:** The stables building form and most of its external fabric will be retained and stabilised for preservation through adaptive reuse as a secondary dwelling.
- **Harmonious Design:** a small addition for a wet area will complement the historic stable building in form and external materials, while remaining visually subservient to the main stables building.
- **Landscaping:** Landscaping will provide a vegetated context for the secondary dwelling and provide a visual buffer between the listed bank and the refurbished stables, preserving key views and the site's heritage significance.
- **Historical Context:** Design elements, materials, and colours for the secondary dwelling will respect and complement the heritage character, drawing inspiration from local themes.

Conclusion

The proposal aligns with the heritage objectives of the *Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013* and NSW Heritage Council guidelines. Any anticipated heritage impacts have been mitigated by the heritage consultant's advice, summarised in this report and incorporated by amending the plans. The development will successfully balance the preservation of the stables building with the provision of modern housing.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

This report assesses the heritage impact of a proposed conversion of the “Yass Stables”, part of a locally significant property at 141 Comur Street, Yass, NSW, heritage listed a Westpac Bank and hitching posts, under *Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013*. The subject land includes the historic two storey bank building which is prominent on the main street of Yass, as well as the stables building at the rear, accessed by a small laneway from the main street. The proposal involves retaining and repairing the stables building, replacing deteriorated building fabric, constructing a sympathetically designed wet area extension, landscaping the stables curtilage, and converting the stables into a habitable building to function as a secondary dwelling.

The site’s owner has commissioned this Heritage Impact Statement to accompany a Development Application (DA) that seeks to balance the preservation of the listed stable building with its reuse as a secondary dwelling. The proposal includes:

- The retention and repair of the listed stables, removing unsympathetic and dilapidated additions.
- The construction of a small, sympathetically designed addition to one side, informed by local heritage themes and aesthetic considerations.
- Landscaping to provide a vegetated backdrop for small yard attached to the secondary dwelling.

This Heritage Impact Statement assesses the proposal against relevant statutory frameworks and heritage guidelines, concluding that the development will have a minimal impact on the site's heritage significance.

1.2 REPORT OVERVIEW

This report has been prepared to accompany a development application for a property containing the “Yass Stables” (hereafter referred to as the “listed stables”) part of a locally significant property at 141 Comur Street, Yass, NSW. The proposal includes the retention and restoration of the listed stables, removal of dilapidated alterations, supplemented by a small, sympathetic sider addition, landscaping of a curtilage surrounding the listed stables, and reuse as a secondary dwelling.

The report concludes that, as the development application (DA) incorporates the heritage advice outlined in this document:

- The design of the secondary dwelling will be sympathetic to the heritage item.
- The listed stables will be retained and conserved.
- The listed stables will continue to make an important contribution to the heritage fabric.
- Landscape screening will be appropriate.
- The heritage significance of the site will be retained, with any impacts deemed minor.

As such, the DA proposal is assessed as having sufficiently mitigated heritage impact, consistent with the heritage requirements and guidelines of *Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013* and the *NSW Heritage Council guidelines*, including *Altering Heritage Assets* and *Statements of Heritage Impact*.

1.3 REPORT OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this Heritage Impact Statement is to evaluate the design and heritage impact of the proposal in accordance with the provisions established by the NSW Heritage Council guidelines.

1.4 METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared following the guidelines outlined in:

- The *Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, also known as *The Burra Charter*.

- The NSW Heritage Council publication, *NSW Heritage Manual*.

The Burra Charter defines key terms used in heritage conservation and outlines principles and processes for the conservation of heritage items. Terms such as "place," "cultural significance," "fabric," and "conservation" are used as defined in Article 1 of the Charter.

The NSW Heritage Manual promotes standardisation in the investigation, assessment, and management of heritage assets in NSW.

1.5 SITE IDENTIFICATION

The listed stables proposed for reuse as a secondary dwelling are located at 141 Comur Street, Yass, NSW.



(Aerial image of the listed cottage – Source: Six Maps)

1.6 HERITAGE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The stables building at the rear of the Westpac Bank and hitching posts at 141 Comur Street, Yass, NSW (referred to as the "listed stables"), is listed as a locally significant heritage item under the *Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013*.

1.7 AUTHORSHIP

This report was prepared by Peter Kabaila, Heritage Consultant, of Black Mountain Projects Pty Ltd.

1.8 COPYRIGHT

Copyright for this report is retained by the author, Black Mountain Projects Pty Ltd.

1.9 REPORT LIMITATIONS

This report is limited to the analysis of European cultural heritage values. Black Mountain Projects acknowledges that Aboriginal people occupied the land prior to European settlement. The recommendations in this report are based on a site visit and available documentary evidence. Archaeological assessment of the subject site is outside the scope of this report.

This report addresses only the relevant heritage planning provisions and does not consider general planning or environmental management issues. The findings are based on a review of the drawings submitted with the DA.

2.0 ESTABLISHED HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The listed stables are part of the Westpac Bank and hitching posts at 141 Comur Street, Yass, NSW, listed as a locally significant heritage item under the *Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013*. As such, the listed stables have heritage significance established by the local council and community. They fall under heritage management responsibilities of both the current owner and Yass Valley Local Council.

The State Heritage Inventory provides limited details, providing the following **historical notes**:

The Westpac building was built in 1885 and was originally occupied by the Australian Joint Stock Bank. In 1910 the AJS changed its name to the Australian Bank of Commerce, and in 1931 this bank amalgamated with the Bank of New South Wales. The Bank of New South Wales became Westpac during the 1980s. Designed by architects Blackmann and Sulman, the building was constructed by contractors Adamson and Dowe.

The architectural practice of Blackmann and Sulman was established when John Sulman arrived in Australia in 1885 and went into partnership with C.H.E. Blackmann. Blackmann left Australia a few months after the partnership was formed, leaving Sulman liable for his debts. Sulman went on to become one of Australia's best-known architects and later was involved in the emerging profession of town planning.

The state Heritage Inventory provides a good general **description**, which includes citing of the listed stables:

Westpac Bank at Yass is two storey and built of stuccoed brick in the Victorian Free Classical style. The building as a whole is asymmetrical, though the main part including the banking chamber has a symmetrical facade. On the ground floor there is a five-bay arcade with stucco emphasis to the keystones in each arch and with pilasters either side of the central arch. The arcade supports an upstairs verandah on either side of a segmental pedimented projecting bay above the entrance. Verandah posts are slender and in pairs (with three to the corners). Intricate cast iron work decorates the verandah and the arcade. Adding to the building's decorative qualities are articulated quoins. The roof is hipped and slate clad, and the chimneys have slender pots.

Above the banking chamber is the former manager's residence, which has its entry in a side wing recessed from the main facade. It has a notable doorcase with etched glass featuring Waratahs and other flora and fauna. The cedar staircase, safe with a Milner's Patent Fire-Resisting Door and much of the cedar joinery and plaster detailing in the flat remain intact.

To the rear there is a brick stable with loft and iron roof, while to the front there is a stuccoed brick and iron pike fence and an iron hitching post.

Significance Statement

The Westpac Bank building, dating from 1885, reflects the consolidation of this wealthy wool town in the latter part of the Victorian era. Further, still fulfilling its original function, the building has a long association with banking in the town. This commodious and dignified structure is of architectural importance for its fine Victorian Free Classical design together with its filigree elements and is a fine example of the work of the architectural firm Blackmann and Sulman. With its imposing massing and double storey facade, the bank is an important element in the visual character of Yass's main street and is an integral member of a group of adjacent commercial buildings (Source: <https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au>).

This consultant's assessment is that the primary heritage values of the listed stables are historical, aesthetic and associative (with the renowned architect Sir John Sulman). Preserving its aesthetic quality is essential for the future.

Key Considerations for the Proposal

The proposal should address the following aspects of the property's heritage significance:

- Retention and careful conservation of the original exterior of the building.
- Contribution to the heritage significance of the Westpac Bank building and hitching posts.
- Design that is sympathetic to the bulk, scale, and form of the existing building, preserving important heritage details such as the face bricks and arched window and door openings.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

Background

This report has been prepared to accompany a development application for a property containing the "Yass Stables" (hereafter referred to as the "listed stables") part of a locally significant property at 141 Comur Street, Yass, NSW.

Description of the Proposal

The proposal includes the retention and restoration of the listed stables, removal of dilapidated alterations, supplemented by a small, sympathetic sider addition, landscaping of a curtilage surrounding the listed stables, and reuse as a secondary. The proposal addresses both the preservation of the listed stables and the housing needs of the new owners through the following measures:

1. **Retention and Restoration of the Listed Stables**
 - The listed stables will be retained as a central feature of the rear of the property and restored to safeguard its heritage value.
2. **Adaptive Reuse to a Secondary Dwelling**
 - To meet the owners' housing needs, the proposal includes adaptation of the existing building for reuse as a dwelling.
 - Materials and colours have been carefully selected to complement the listed stables.
 - The scale and form of the new bathroom addition ensures that it integrates harmoniously with the listed stables and its surroundings.
3. **Adjusted Curtilage and Landscaping**
 - The curtilage of the listed stables will be reduced to accommodate a small yard.
4. **Sympathetic Design and Landscaping**
 - The design of the new house and surrounding landscaping will reflect the heritage context of the site while incorporating modern amenities.
 - Careful landscaping will enhance both the functionality and visual appeal of the property, creating a cohesive and attractive environment that respects the listed stables historic significance.
 - To mitigate any impacts, a vegetated buffer will be established between the reused stables and remainder of the rear yard (which contains a detracting carport).

Summary

This development proposal aims to balance the preservation of the listed stables with the creation of a modern family home. By integrating a sympathetically designed new residence and enhancing the overall streetscape and landscaping, the proposal provides a sustainable and aesthetically pleasing solution. The design honours the site's heritage significance while meeting the contemporary needs of its owners.

Photographic record (2024 inspection)

	<p>The Westpac Bank is integral to the heritage streetscape of Yass. The listed stables are a heritage significant building in the rear of the property, accessed by a narrow laneway.</p>
	<p>The laneway provides a heritage view corridor to the main street.</p>
	<p>Doors and windows adjoining the laneway have retained their arched openings, even when windows and doors have been renewed.</p>
	<p>Original external building fabric such as face brickwork, window arches, sills and suspended hatch is heritage significant and important to retain.</p>

	<p>Original external building fabric such as face brickwork, window arches, sills and suspended hatch is heritage significant and important to retain.</p>
	<p>Principal elevation of the listed stables.</p>
	<p>Oblique view of the listed stables shows the large open yard to the bank building.</p>
	<p>These small projections from the main stables building are sympathetic in form and finish and will be retained.</p>



A blank wall at the side of the stables may be used as a backing for a water storage tank, provided it is galvanised finished.



The carport detracts from the heritage significance and could be demolished or redesigned.



The well beside the listed cottage shows original stone rubble lining, with recent stonework roughly mortared on top. The latter should be relaid with lime mortar, preferably in "dry-stone" style.



The theatre curtain and lights were still extant but the ceilings and wall sheeting have rotted out, damaged by leaking roofs.



View of the stables wall facing the adjoining property.



One heritage benefit of this adaptive reuse proposal is improvement of the principal elevation by reinstatement of the stables exterior, removing the detracting fibro garage wall addition.

3.1 HERITAGE ADVICE PROVIDED DURING THE DESIGN PROCESS

Peter Kabaila carried out a heritage visual inspection on site in late 2024. During the inspection, preliminary concept plans were reviewed, and a detailed assessment of the site was conducted.

Following the inspection, the importance of repairing and stabilising the historic fabric of the listed stables was discussed in detail with Simon Croker of SC Design Solutions. The necessity of obtaining heritage advice during works on the listed stables was also emphasised. This report recommends heritage consultant engagement as a condition of consent for any works on the listed stables.

Heritage advice for incorporation in sketch plans was emailed on 13 January:

1. **Landscape Plan**

- The proposed landscape plan works well, as the capital pear trees will quickly establish a sense of visual enclosure for the converted stables.

2. **Principal Elevation**

- The principal elevation of the stables (see attached image) holds high heritage significance.
- The face brickwork is a key heritage feature of the exterior and should remain unpainted. Please emphasise its retention by clearly noting this on the elevation plans.
- The arched brick heads over windows and some doors are also significant heritage features. Their retention should be highlighted by showing them prominently on the elevation.

3. **Roof and Roof Drainage**

- Remove any references to Colorbond from the plans. The recommended profiles and finishes for the roof and drainage are as follows:
 - **Roof:** Corrugated profile with a galvanised finish.
 - **Gutters:** Half-round profile with a galvanised finish.
 - **Downpipes:** Round profile with a galvanised finish.
- If a galvanised finish is impractical, such as due to the accumulation of acidic conifer tree needles, a Zinalume finish may be an acceptable alternative.

4. **Original Fittings**

- Retain and reuse any original blacksmith-forged fittings where possible.
- Adapt and incorporate the existing upper hatch (see attached image) into the design.

5. **Timber Barge Board and Finial**

- The timber barge board profile and its finial are significant features. Although the finial has collapsed, it is still attached to the ridge. Both elements should either be retained or reproduced to match the original design.

Additional discussions focused on proportions and treatments for doors and windows, as well as the opportunity to incorporate some of the original details in the adaptive reuse. The architectural designs underwent iterative refinements, with detailed heritage consultations held throughout the process, including further consideration for appropriate placement and finish of a water storage tank.

Conclusion

Revisions to the preliminary drawings demonstrated a clear commitment to integrating heritage advice and preserving the historical integrity of the site. By addressing the outlined recommendations, the project was better positioned to receive positive feedback from the Council and progress smoothly through the planning process. While it was acknowledged that the DA proposal for a secondary dwelling would have some impact on the setting of the listed stables, these impacts were to be mitigated by:

- Preservation of a buffer area around the listed stables.
- Removal of the dilapidated additions which detract from its heritage significance.
- Establishment of a landscape screen.
- Heritage-sensitive design.
- A modest and sympathetic addition for a bathroom.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT

4.1 Introduction

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared with reference to the following assessment criteria: *Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013*, and the NSW Heritage Council guidelines, *Altering Heritage Assets and Statements of Heritage Impact*.

4.2 Assessment

This report assesses the heritage impact of a proposed conversion of the “Yass Stables”, part of a locally significant property, heritage listed as Westpac Bank and hitching posts, under *Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013*. The subject land includes the historic two storey bank building which is prominent on the main street of Yass, as well as the stables building at the rear, accessed by a small laneway from the main street. The proposal involves retaining and repairing the stables building, replacing deteriorated building fabric, constructing a sympathetically designed wet area extension, landscaping the stables curtilage, and converting the stables into a habitable building to function as a secondary dwelling.

The following conclusions are drawn from the assessment:

- The design of the secondary dwelling will be sympathetic to the heritage item.
- The listed stables will continue to make an important contribution to heritage character.
- Landscape screening will mitigate potential impacts.
- Heritage significance of the listed stables will be preserved through its continued use.
- Any impacts resulting from the proposal will be minor and appropriately managed.

The development application (DA) is therefore considered to have an acceptable heritage impact, consistent with the heritage requirements and guidelines of the *Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013* and the NSW Heritage Council guidelines, *Altering Heritage Assets and Statements of Heritage Impact*.

5.0 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

This report provides heritage advice for the following:

- Retention of a landscaped curtilage for the listed stables.
- Preservation of the historic building fabric of the listed stables, with a sympathetic addition.
- Sympathetic design of the secondary dwelling.
- Landscape buffering to mediate the interface between the listed stables and the old Bank.

The assessment concludes that the proposal will adequately manage the heritage impact of the new house, ensuring the retention of the listed cottage's significance and setting. This is consistent with the heritage requirements and guidelines of the *Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013* and the NSW Heritage Council guidelines (*Altering Heritage Assets* and *Statements of Heritage Impact*), and the *Heritage Manual* produced by the NSW Heritage Office.

If unexpected relics are uncovered during excavation, they must be managed in accordance with the archaeological provisions of the *NSW Heritage Act*.

5.2 Recommendation

The DA proposal for a new house will have some impact on the setting of the listed cottage.

However, these impacts will be sufficiently mitigated by:

- Providing landscape screening with trees.
- Ensuring heritage design principles in the adaptive reuse.
- Repairing the listed stables and incorporating a small, sympathetic addition to it.

Recommended Condition of Consent - Heritage Consultant Engagement

A recommended condition of consent is “A *heritage consultant to be engaged to ensure the retention of the property's heritage significance*”. As part of the heritage consultant's due diligence, the consultant would assess whether State-significant relics are present and require special management under the NSW Heritage Act 1966. A report to the private certifier would summarise the heritage consultant's documentation, based on site inspections and a surface survey (excluding archaeological excavation).

5.3 ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

I, Peter Rimgaudas Kabaila, Heritage Consultant, confirm that:

- I have prepared this Heritage Impact Statement, which has objectively assessed the proposed development against the relevant planning controls.
- I have provided this report as advice to the proponent.



Dr Peter Kabaila, Heritage Consultant, Black Mountain Projects Pty Ltd

6.0 REFERENCES

Apperly R, Irving R, Reynolds P, *A pictorial guide to identifying Australian architecture styles and terms from 1788 to the present*. Angus & Robertson, NSW, 2002

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NSW Government Legislation, www.legislation.nsw.gov.au

NSW State Heritage Inventory

<https://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/search-for-heritage/search-for-nsw-heritage/>