

Statement of Heritage Impact

78 George St, Grenfell



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Executive Summary

The research undertaken as part of this report has fed into the assessment of the heritage significance of the site and facilitated the recommendations that have resulted. The following summarises these findings.

Prehistory

The Aboriginal history of the Grenfell area is reflective of the broader Wiradjuri history of much of that region in the Central West of NSW. The existence of the Weddin mountains in this location would have been of considerable spiritual and cultural significance to Aboriginal people. Archaeology in combination with fragments of oral history suggest that these mountains once contained sites of spiritual significance to Aboriginal people.¹ This is in line with the similar relationships between Aboriginal people and mountain ranges in the Central West of NSW. Please refer to Section 3.1 of this report for a more detailed account.

Whilst it is entirely likely that Aboriginal people would have made their way through the area where the site is located and possibly availed themselves of resources near where Grenfell is located today it is highly unlikely that there is any archaeological potential on the site today.

Conclusion

Based on the work undertaken thus far in the area and what we know about Wiradjuri in the area, it seems highly unlikely that there is any archaeological potential for Aboriginal material culture on the site under question here at the present time.

History

Gold was found at a property near where Grenfell is located today known as 'Brundah' in 1866. This gold find led to a significant gold rush to the area. By October 1866 settlement extended for a mile and within 3 months there were 10 000 men on the various goldfields that were then spanning 2 miles.² In June of the following year, 1867, the alluvial fields were described as the 'best poor man's diggings ever discovered in NSW'.³ Later that year there was an exodus of

¹ Kabalais, P and Knight T *People of the Weddin Shire* p2

² *Grenfell Heritage Study* Tropman and Tropman 1993 p8

³ Ibid p18

alluvial miners to the 7 mile mine which pushed the centre of the town into the main Lead Gully which is the present day George St.⁴

As a result of this mining activity and the large numbers of people arriving in the area, the town evolved around the mining activity in what became the main street of the newly formed town - George St. The development of George Street was quick. A series of shops catering to the gold miners and associated activity sprung up and remained there until 1900, when a series of fires and floods in the street led to the moving of the town centre up to Main Street, where it is today. For a detailed account of those shops and the lead up to the development of the Hardware Store there in 1913 please refer to Section 3.3 of this report.

Purdies Department Store developed what was originally called a Bulk Store at the rear of their newly developed retail space on Main Street in 1913. Over the preceding years it had slowly been buying up the small retail properties that were behind their store. Most of these stores were small timber shops by the twentieth century but one shop, a tobacconist/watchmaker/cordial maker owned by John Sippel was constructed of brick. This was located on the western side of the current property. During the fieldwork undertaken as part of this report an archaeological remnant has been found in this location that is likely to have come from Sippel's Shop. This was the only such remnant that was found during this part of the process.

Conclusion

The site at 78 George St, Grenfell is significant historically as one of the first areas of Grenfell to be settled by Europeans. The hardware buildings on the site reflect a later period of the town's development and are significant for their single, continuous use for over one hundred years. It is listed as part of the George St Urban Conservation Area. Initially the site of one of the first goldfields in the area during the late 1860s and 1870s it became the main street of the burgeoning settlement. During this period the site was a series of small mostly timber shops and the Oriental Bank. The only brick shop constructed during this period was built on this site and was Sippel's Tobacconist on Lot No. 5.

The buildings on the site were constructed C1913 and the loading doors on all four sides of the main building reflect the winding, narrow nature of George Street which it struggled with during the period of its commercial use, that of access for the carts and cars that were both loading and unloading stock from the

⁴ Ibid p19

building. These large sliding timber doors were integral to the building's design and reflect the nature of the area that it was designed for.

Recommendations:

- That the proposal to redevelop the site into a small-scale residential development is appropriate at this point in time.
- It is recommended that the found remnant archaeological item on the site be recorded and assessed by an archaeologist. During the process of this report advice was sought from an archaeologist regarding the found remnant item. The Heritage Office was contacted and a report provided to them of the finding and its context (based on the research undertaken detailed above). The advice from the Heritage Office was that it would be assessed as part of the DA process.
- It is recommended that an excavation director be onsite during demolition of any buildings in the event that there are more archaeological items in the area. It is unlikely that there are any archaeological remnants of significance in the area, based on the research thus far. However, it is not possible to rule out the possibility that there are items on the site. These could include post holes where building were located in the early phase of development and items that have accidentally found themselves on the site, particularly underneath the building where the stumps are located.
- The development of further interpretation in the George Street Urban Conservation area is also recommended here. It is noted that there are two items related to the site that may provide an opportunity to interpret both the site and the broader streetscape. The first is the remnant artefact that is located on the site which is described and photographed in this report and also in the photographic archive that is included as part of this SOHI process. This provides an opportunity to interpret the 1860s shops and also the nature of the township at that time. The large timber loading doors are also another opportunity for interpretation and this could occur at either the new hardware store and/or the site itself in the new development. This provides an opportunity for the interpretation of the business and the one hundred years that it was at the site.

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This statement forms part of the Statement of Environmental Effects and has been prepared by: Dr Ruth Longdin BAppSc, MA, PhD, MPHA
Principal Consultant, Monitor Heritage Consultants and Heritage Architect
Peter Duggan for Greg Oliver, of Olivers Hardware, Grenfell.

We acknowledge the Traditional Lands of the Wiradjuri people, upon which this report is located and based. We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This Statement of Heritage Impact has been undertaken in order to establish the heritage impact of a proposal to demolish the buildings currently on the site and to approve development of the construction of accommodation in the form of small units.

Part of the complexity of this project has been that it is necessary to undertake a comprehensive bibliographic, documentary and literary search in tandem with fieldwork in order to establish what the likelihood is of their being items or archaeological remnants of significance underneath the current building. In order to establish the potential likelihood for archaeological remnants, artefacts or items we need to first establish a comprehensive understanding of what came before. As a consequence of this it has been necessary to provide a broad view of the Aboriginal pre-history of the area, along with the early European contact with the area as well as the Gold Rush that formed the town of Grenfell in the 1860s.

It has been anticipated that oral history may have contributed to our understanding of the site but this was not possible. Nonetheless we have arrived at a sufficiently comprehensive understanding of the site and its significance.

The site contributes to the George Street Urban Conservation Area and as a consequence of this it has been necessary to undertake a thorough historical examination and assessment of the site in order to establish the site's history and the potential for the site to contain remnants of archaeological potential. It is also a requirement of the SOHI process to assess the potential impact of the proposal of the Heritage Conservation Area that it is a part of.

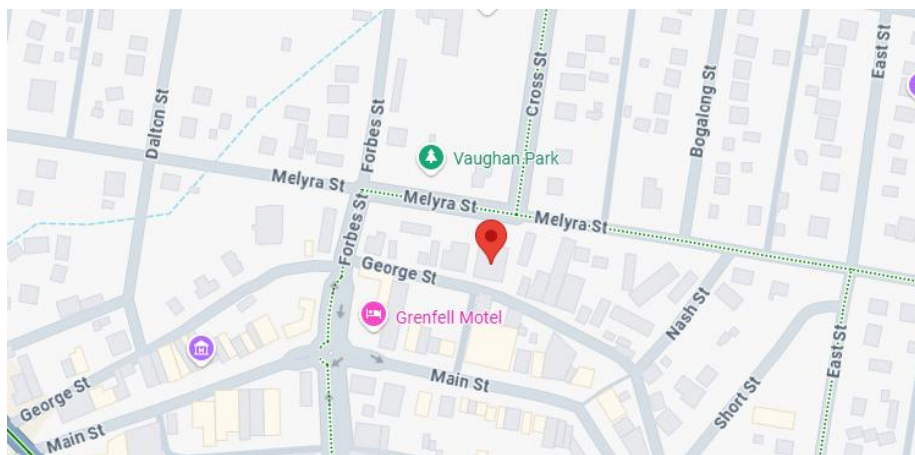
The conclusion of the process has been that the buildings are no longer viable structurally, likely due to weather damage and time. The western side of the building is weatherbeaten and the cypress pine stumps that elevate it (to protect the business from flood damage) appear to have all been pushed by the wind from the west leaving the building leaning towards the East. The photographic archive that was undertaken as part of this process details the impact that the elements have had on it, particularly on that western side.

It is also evident that the location of a large hardware business in George Street is no longer appropriate in terms of heritage or practical concerns. The street is very narrow and most people buying hardware drive in the contemporary era making access both for pick and for delivery difficult. The owners have built a new store in the industrial area of Grenfell which is a much more appropriate location for a business of that nature at this time.

It seems much more appropriate for small accommodation to be constructed in George St in part because, with the passing of time, there is an increasing demand for accommodation for older or vulnerable people and this site is a suitable location for such a development. Council has itself developed accommodation of this nature in George St already. It will enable people to remain independent by providing small, low maintenance accommodation close to town, shops and medical support. Subsequently this SOHI supports, in principle, the outlined.

1.2 Definition of Study Area

The property being assessed here is located at 78 George St, Grenfell. It is directly behind the main street of Grenfell and was the original main street of the town in the earliest days of the Gold Rush in that area.



Street map of the Centre of Grenfell (courtesy of Google Maps)

1.3 Identification of Author

Dr Ruth Longdin is a professional historian and heritage consultant. She is a registered heritage consultant with the NSW Heritage Office and has over 20 years' professional experience and is also a member of the Professional Historians Association. She currently works in the Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Central West of NSW.

Advice was also sought for this Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) from Peter Duggan, Heritage Architect regarding the impact of the proposal on the Heritage Conservation Area in that location. Advice was also sought from Fiona Leslie of MTS Heritage regarding the archaeological potential of the site.

1.4 Methodology

This study has been undertaken in accordance with the processes established by the NSW Heritage Office as defined in:

- *NSW Heritage Manual*, 1999
- *The Burra Charter*, 1999
- *Assessing Heritage Significance*, 2000
- Australian Heritage Commission Australian Historic Themes 1996.
- History and Heritage Archaeological Assessments Historical Archaeological Sites; 2009
- How to Prepare Archival Records of Heritage Items, Heritage Office; 1998

The methodology for this study has included the following:

- Examination of documentary and bibliographic evidence pertaining to the site.
- Fieldwork undertaken 29/05 – 01/06 2025 including a physical site analysis, meetings with the Grenfell Museum, searches undertaken there and at the Grenfell Library and Council.
- The creation of a photographic archive in tandem with this report.

Due to the nature of the site being located at one of the earliest places to be developed in Grenfell it was necessary to undertake a comprehensive history of the site as demolition and redevelopment is being sought. The area around George Street was one of the first gold fields in Grenfell and the street follows the original creek line that the goldfields were focusing on. This accounts for the windy, narrow nature of the street.

In the nineteenth century George Street was the main street of Grenfell and it was here that the town's shops and other commercial businesses, including banks and hotels were located. The site of 78 George St, now Olivers Hardware, was a series of smaller lots that reflected the small shops that proliferated in that area in the latter decades of the nineteenth century.

During this process an item of archaeological potential was located and the Heritage Office was contacted. A report was provided to them and they are aware of the item. The Heritage Office advised that it would be assessed as part of the DA process. Historical research suggests that the item was likely apart of the only shop on the street at that time that was constructed of brick, the rest being timber, corrugated iron and bark. Given the nature of the item (please refer below for further information) it seems that it may have been a part of Sippel's Tobacconist and Cordial etc shop that was there C1880s onwards until the land was bought by Purdies' Department Store for the purpose of developing a hardware, bulk and store business at the rear of their department store in 1913. Please refer to the extensive land titles searches that appears below in Section 3 on the history of the site.

2. Site Description



Olivers Hardware (Courtesy Six Maps 2024)

Oliver's Hardware is a business that has been at located at 78 George St, Grenfell, since 1913 and is comprised of 7 of the original lots that were outlined in the first survey of Grenfell, then known as Emu Creek. The subdivision of that area is known as DP 758473. The property has dual frontages to both George and Melyra Sts.

The site is surrounded by a Heritage Conservation Area and was originally, until C1900, the main street of Grenfell until a number of fires burnt the properties then serving the town. Floods too were a factor in this location at this time. After the third fire it was decided to relocate the town centre to what is now Main St. As a result of this the building is surrounded by remnants of the original town centre but is, in fact, itself a consequence of the second layer of development in that area which is best described as 'light industrial'. This layer of development occurred after the town centre was relocated.

On the site are three buildings. The largest of the buildings, located at the western side of the George St entrance, is where the main building that conducts the majority of the business is located and includes the shop front and is constructed with a timber frame, timber 'roundel' stumps, clad in galvanised corrugated steel sheets and gutters. The roof on the eastern side covers an open platform, as a verandah, the ends of which have restrained decorative pointed tongue and groove timber.

The loading doors of this building, on all sides, are large timber doors that appear at the front of the building to be approx. 2m in height. They operate as sliding doors and are unusual in that they appear on all sides of the building. They appear to be loading docks. Two of these doors at the front of the building on the eastern side have been altered to seal them off, enabling the office to be renovated at that location during the early 1970s. The rest of the doors are essentially extant except for the two at the rear of the building which have been replaced with roller doors. Possibly these were replaced when the old timber doors stopped being operational. Please refer to the photographic archive, which is an independent document, for further details.

The building to the east and near the rear of the property, facing Melyra St is a long narrow timber framed building with a corrugated iron roof with gutters and a south end skillion. This has operated as a storage shed for the business.

The third building at this site is located on the western side of the property at the Melyra St frontage. This building is a small timber framed building with a gable roof with an internal floor made from timber palates. Whilst the first two buildings are made from the same materials and are likely to have been constructed at the same time this building appears to have been constructed at a later date and from materials that have been re-used. The timber pallets used in the construction of the floor were developed around WWII and therefore indicate that this building is more recent than the other two. This building has also served as storage for the business.

3. History

3.1 Pre History

The Aboriginal history of the Grenfell area is reflective of the broader Wiradjuri history of much of that region in the Central West of NSW. Whilst very little excavation, archaeology or pre-history research has been undertaken in the vicinity of the town, the history of the Aboriginal people of the region has been documented in the book *People of the Weddin Shire* by Tom Knight and Peter Kabalais. The authors acknowledge the limited sources available for the area and that the oral accounts of the history have also been lost. They put together a history of the Aboriginal people of the area extrapolated from the work that has been done on the Wiradjuri people in nearby locations that give us an indication of the nature of the relationship Aboriginal people had with the landscape in the area.

The research that has been done thus far relies on historical material provided by the early European settlers and travellers which, as Kabalias and Knight acknowledge, were outsiders of the Wiradjuri World. A search through the documentary and bibliographic resources indicate that there were Aboriginal people in the area at the point of Europeans arrival in the Grenfell area. Newspaper records make mention of Aboriginal people in the area in the early days of settlement. These include an account of the first squatters in the district who were, according to a newspaper account from 1930, directed to the location of the first pastoral property near Grenfell. John Butler Wood and his son were looking for property to squat on when ‘...they met a part[y] of blacks [] and from them learned of the existence of magnificent grazing country, well watered and highly suitable for stock about 35 miles further on in a south-westerly direction. Interestingly Lloyd Mittons’s account of this encounter indicates that this site was of ceremonial significance to Aboriginal people. Hoping that their expectations were to be realised, the Woods – father and son – set out on a further journey of exploration and eventually reached a place known to the blacks as Booroodean but now called Brundah. The Aboriginal name signified “the windy place” because wind and dust storms were of frequent occurrence.’⁵

At the end of 1866 the following newspaper article appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

⁵ A History of Grenfell by Ray Saint Smith *The Grenfell and Lachlan District Advertiser* 22.05.1930 p2

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

FROM THE 29TH DECEMBER, 1866, TO THE 4TH
JANUARY, 1867.

A MAN named Smith, last seen in the company of an aboriginal named Jacko and a person called Thomas Williams, was found murdered at Brundah, near Young, on the 26th of December. The men, Jacko and Williams, have been apprehended on suspicion.

We don't have any evidence to indicate how the Aboriginal people would have felt about the development of Brundah at a site that is likely to have been of significance to them. It is highly likely that Aboriginal people were living in parts of the Central West under the radar of the European settlers during the first half and into the second half of the nineteenth century. Throughout the last half of the nineteenth century governments handed out blankets to Aboriginal people and much of the research that has been done on Aboriginal history is based on these numbers. It is noted however, that newspapers indicate the presence of groups of Aboriginal people in the Central West where no blankets were handed out. The location of the blanket handouts, it should be noted, were police stations and it is possible that this influenced the take up of the blankets as many Aboriginal people would have had negative experiences with both police and with white people.

It is also important to note that Aboriginal people in many areas in the Central West bought land and established farms in the early stages of colonisation. This is a story that has not been told but there is evidence in many LGAs of this occurring without it being recorded in history. Many Aboriginal people assimilated into the broader white society no doubt with a view of being able to stay On Country. It is an important history that is waiting to be told.

In 1913 the *Young Chronicle* detailed the life and death of the seventh child of the elder John Wood, the founder of Brundah. In his obituary the following account of his childhood sheds some light on this subject: 'When he was born in 1850 at Mr Watt's Bumbaldry Station, near Grenfell, white men were almost as scarce in the district as native now are, and camps of 500 or more aborigines [] were frequently to be met.'⁶

⁶ *The Young Chronicle* 11.01.1913 p2

Clearly there were considerable numbers of Aboriginal people in the area in the early days of settlement in the Grenfell region. These numbers appear to have diminished significantly in a relatively short period of time, based on the newspaper accounts of the time. It is important to note that due to the nature of the region resources are less dense here than those areas nearer to coast. Subsequently the numbers of Aboriginal people and the culture and the religion that evolved there is different to those of the coastal regions. It is noted also that records throughout this part of the Central West do suggest that numbers of visible Aboriginal people and communities were absent by the latter decades of the nineteenth century.

The existence of the Weddin mountains in this location would have been of considerable spiritual and cultural significance to Aboriginal people. It is important to note that Aboriginal people throughout NSW, as many early peoples throughout the history of humanity, have had significant relationships with mountains and mountains ranges. In 2002 Matthew Kelleher wrote a Phd entitled *Archaeology of Sacred Space* where he examined the sacred nature of the archaeology of the Greater Blue Mountains Area. He makes the point that: ‘Spatial features which indicate a contrast with their surroundings, such as vistas, caves or precipices which mark a change from the geographic norm, have a strong recurrent use with religious ceremony....’⁷ He went on to say ‘Studies reveal that ‘humans perceive space, at least initially, in accordance with a continuous map of environmental cues that is structural along internal (neural) activity.’⁸

In essence what Kelleher is saying is that there is a strong relationship between geography and the location of ceremonial grounds and where there are significant changes in the nature of the environment ritual behaviour is often found. It is noted that these changes need to be significant, not a change in a single feature but a gross change. For people living thousands of years ago the emergence of mountains ranges such as the Blue Mountains range or the Warrumbungles or the Weddin Mountains for example, would have provided such a landscape. This relationship between people and landscapes is something that appears in the archaeological records around the world.

It is important to note when considering the study of religious behaviour in pre-history in Australia that it was not until the 1960s that anthropology started to seek to understand religious behaviour in Aboriginal people and not until the

⁷ Kelleher, M *Archaeology of Sacred Space* 2002 p39

⁸ Ibid p40

1980s that archaeology followed suit. Subsequently a lot of the little archaeology that was conducted in the 20th Century utilised economic models to interpret the archaeological finds that were made. Subsequently motives attributed to Aboriginal people pertained to the search for food and other similar resources. This meant that religious or cultural reasons for doing things or going to specific places were not considered. This is now in the process of being revised.

In keeping with this Kabalis and Knight make the point that archaeology in combination with fragments of oral history suggest that these mountains once contained sites of spiritual significance to Aboriginal people.⁹ This is in line with the similar relationships between Aboriginal people and mountain ranges in the Central West of NSW. In this context the group of 500 Aboriginal people mentioned in the newspaper article above may well have been visiting the area to undertake some cultural or religious activity in the area.

Mountain ranges were often used by different groups as initiation trails and/or as places where other religious activity was undertaken, depending on the nature of the culture. Indeed Kelleher notes that people east of the Blue Mountains ranges tended to use the Mountains as initiation trails where those from the West (Wiradjuri people) visited sites of religious significance to them in the Blue Mountains in smaller groups.¹⁰ The Weddin Mountains are a highly visible mountain range comprised of sandstone that sits 400 m above sea level and form a crescent shape for 19km.¹¹ Kabaliais talks about the origins of the name of the Mountain Range: ‘Weddin’ comes from the Wiradjuri word ‘Weedin’ which means a place to site or remain, relating to the mountain’s status as a place where youths underwent a period of enforced ceremonial induction during the course of the initiation.’¹²

Kabalis further discusses Aboriginal pre-history in the area. The early settlers found that certain local springs were connected with the ancestral serpent (*Thooroon*) and also a devil being (*Yeo Yeo*) of Wiradjuri belief system.¹³ He concludes that the Weddin Mountains were place of religious or ceremonial significance with the distinction point of a travel path or dreaming track as an important part of the Aboriginal story of creation of ‘dreamscape’ rather than just a place of habitat.¹⁴

⁹ Kabalais, P and Knight T *People of the Weddin Shire* p2

¹⁰ Kelleher, M *Archaeology of Sacred Space* 2002

¹¹ Kabalais, P and Knight T *People of the Weddin Shire* p2

¹² Ibid p2

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

He further notes that most of the Plains Country around Bland Creek, Lake Cowal and the Weddin Mountains was deserted by Aboriginal people soon after the arrival of European settlement and that the degree of desertion occurred ‘...at a scale out of proportion with other factors such as Aboriginal depopulation through disease and conflict.’¹⁵ He goes on to say that Aboriginal people had stopped visiting the Weddin Mountains by the 1840s and the surrounding area, including that around Grenfell, appears to have only had a small number of Aboriginal residents during the twentieth century.¹⁶

There would be exceptions to this and one such exception was recorded by the local Aboriginal Protector in 1915 and is subsequently in the Government Archives. These records include mention of a ‘half-caste’ family that was farming a 40 acre block near Grenfell in 1890 and in 1915 a small reserve of 5 acres was set aside on the Lachlan River (this was then revoked in 1965).¹⁷ These Aboriginal farmers were a lot more common than appears in the record, indeed many properties were managed by Aboriginals people, often women, during the gold rush when many squatters left their properties to make their fortunes finding gold. It is important to note that there were no missions or recorded Aboriginal settlements in the Grenfell region during the period of European settlement.

3.2 Pre-History Archaeological Potential

Kabalais states that the Grenfell area has essentially 2 forms of Aboriginal archaeological sites. The first is described as surface stone artefact scatter and oven mounds which are interpreted as camping grounds.¹⁸ Two less common site types are burials and stone arrangements with the latter thought to represent ceremonial or sacred places. The Weddin Mountains contained 2 repeated rock art locations that were likely linked with the stone arrangements thought to be an initiation ground in the nearby Bogong Hills.¹⁹ Wiradjuri burial sites were traditionally marked with large carved trees as many in the area did.²⁰ It is noted that the trees may not have survived bushfires over time.

Kabalais also makes the point that the Weddin Mountains were a site of religious or ceremonial significance for Aboriginal people and the distinction point of a travel path or ‘dreaming track’, an important part of the Aboriginal

¹⁵ Ibid p3

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid p4

¹⁸ Kabalais, P and Knight T *People of the Weddin Shire* p1

¹⁹ Ibid p3

²⁰ Ibid

story of creation of ‘dreamscape’ rather than just a place of habitat.’²¹ He goes on to say that the districts along the north-south route of the Bogan River and Bland Creek may have had greater significance to the pre-European Aboriginal clans as ceremonial and trade routes than to communities in recent times.’²²

Given the nature of the relationship that pre-settlement Aboriginal people had with mountains, mountains ranges and other significant and luminal (changing) geological features it is unlikely that there are any sites of significance near George St, Grenfell where the site under assessment here is located. Sites of significance are clearly located someway from the town of Grenfell and subsequently the site.

Whilst it is entirely possible that Aboriginal people would have made their way through the area the site is located in and possibly availed themselves of resources near where Grenfell is located today it seems highly unlikely that there is any archaeological potential on the site today. There are no resources available useful for making tools or equipment such as hard stone (basalt for example) and whilst there is a small creek, and therefore water and some food, it is unlikely that there would be remains of a brief camp whilst a group was on their way elsewhere. It is important to note that Aboriginal people worked where the resources were – they did not move resources elsewhere and then begin work on stones for example, they would work on the stone where the stone was available (except in rare cases). The three fires and the floods that have also gone through George Street would have also impacted on most of the material culture used by Aboriginal people being mostly comprised of wood, skin, bone and other perishable materials.

In conclusion based on the on the work undertaken by Peter Kabalais, and what we know about Wiradjuri in the area, it seems highly unlikely that there is any archaeological potential for Aboriginal material culture on the site at the present time.

3.3 Post Settlement History

European Settlement into the Lachlan region was slow to begin largely due to the limited river frontages and the arid nature of large parts of the area, settlement focussed on more fertile areas.²³ Slowly over time the area began to become settled and by the 1840s it was becoming established as a pastoral

²¹ Ibid p3

²² Ibid

²³ *Grenfell Heritage Study* Tropman and Tropman 1993 p8

district. The Commissioner of Crown Land recorded 948 stations and a population of 256 assigned convicts and 609 free people.²⁴ At this stage, and for some time to come, there was no town centre for the district and administration came out of Bathurst.²⁵ This pastoralism remained a significant part of the economy of the region until the 1880s when land began to be subdivided into small properties in line with closer settlement.²⁶

By the 1850s settlement had begun to focus on the area surrounding Cowra when gold was found which further stimulated settlement and led to the development of a network of small towns that sprung up around the area Lambing Flat where a significant gold rush was happening at that time. This may have drawn energy away from Lachlan region during this period. This changed in 1866 when gold was discovered by Cornelius O'Brien who was a shepherd then working on John Woods previously mentioned property known as 'Brundah'.

This gold find led to a significant gold rush to the area. By October 1866 settlement extended for a mile and within 3 months there were 10 000 men on the various goldfields that were then spanning 2 miles.²⁷ In June of the following year, 1867, the alluvial fields were described as the 'best poor man's diggings ever discovered in NSW'.²⁸ Later that year there was an exodus of alluvial miners to the 7 mile mine which pushed the centre of the town into the main Lead Gully which is the present day George St.²⁹

As a result of this mining activity and the large numbers of people arriving in the area the town evolved around the mining activity in what became the main street of the newly formed town - George St. Within the first year of gold being discovered the Post Office was established with the first mail leaving the town on 6 December and the first gold escort by mail coach was with the Cobb and Co coach in February of 1867.³⁰

The police were established in 1866 in a tent on Emu Creek and prisoners were detained by chaining them to trees.³¹ The first sale of Crown Land was

²⁴ *Grenfell Heritage Study* Tropman and Tropman 1993 p10

²⁵ *Ibid*

²⁶ *Ibid* p16

²⁷ *Grenfell Heritage Study* Tropman and Tropman 1993 p8

²⁸ *Ibid* p18

²⁹ *Ibid* p19

³⁰ Mitton, L A *History of Grenfell and the Weddin Shire* 1988 p24

³¹ Grossman P, Pitt I, *A Walk through the Past; A Pictorial History of Grenfell During the Early Years*

advertised in the first week of 1867 and the first courthouse was also built in that year.³² There were many banks that were established in the early phase of the town's development. The first was the bank of NSW in December 1867 on George St it operated there for ten years but closed in February 1877 as the gold rush began to dwindle.³³



*Grenfell's Log Gaol, known as 'The Logs'
(courtesy of A Walk Through the Past)*

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid



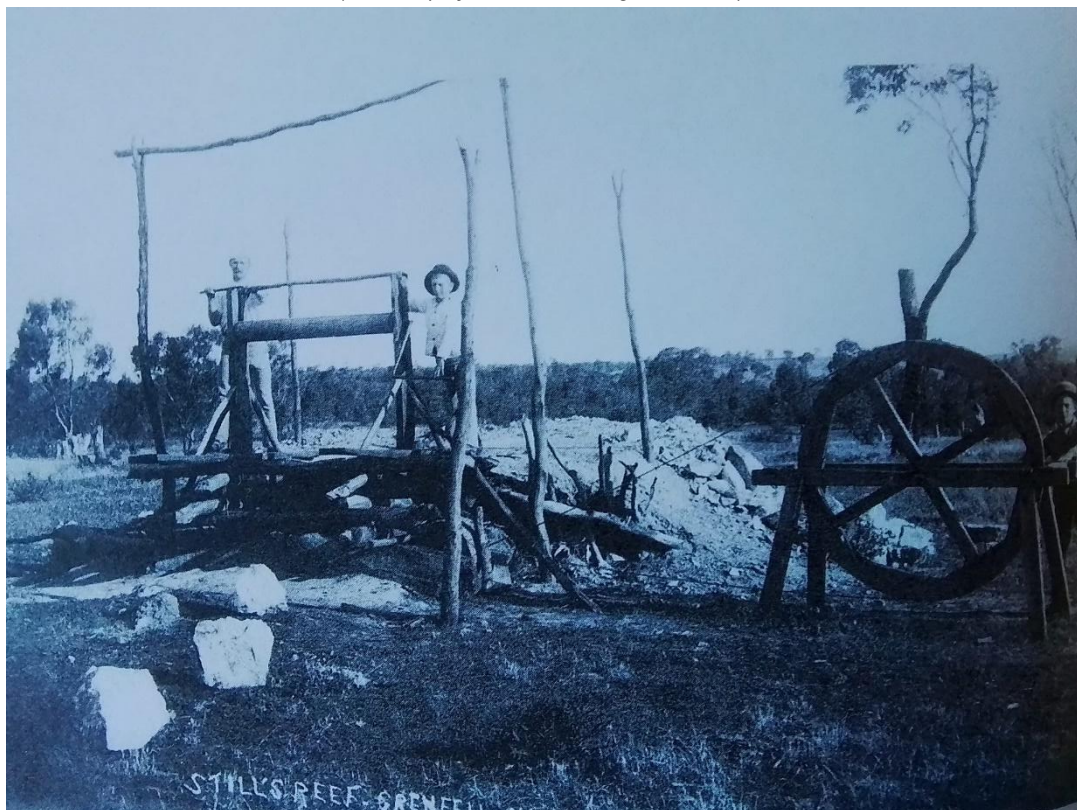
*An Early Goldmine
(courtesy of A Walk Through the Past)*



*Gold Commissioner's Hut 1870
(courtesy of A Walk through the Past)*



*An Armed Escort. It is thought that the hay was being used as a disguise for the gold.
(Courtesy of A Walk Through the Past)*



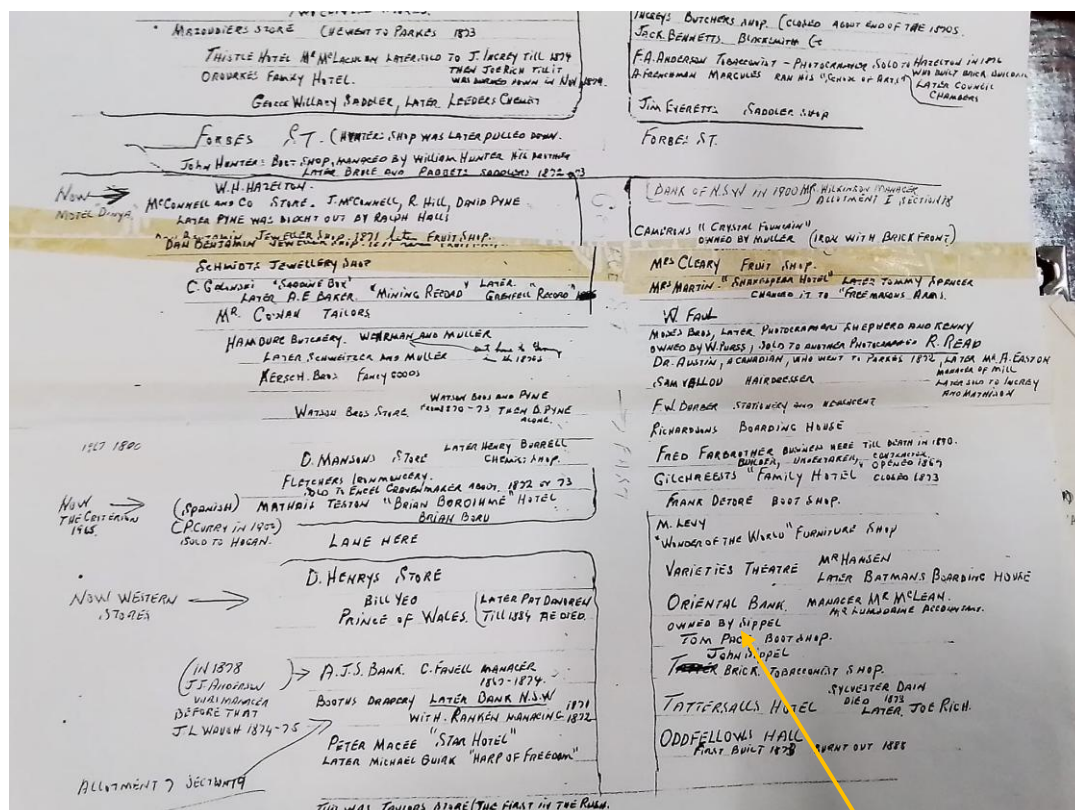
*Image of an early gold mine
(courtesy of A Walk Through time)*

The town formed around the mining activity that was then located at Emu Creek and George St formed following that creek line. This explains why the rest of the streets in the town follow a grid pattern but George Street curves in line with the original creek. This creek is no longer evident and was an intermittent creek historically. There is no evidence of it in the present day.

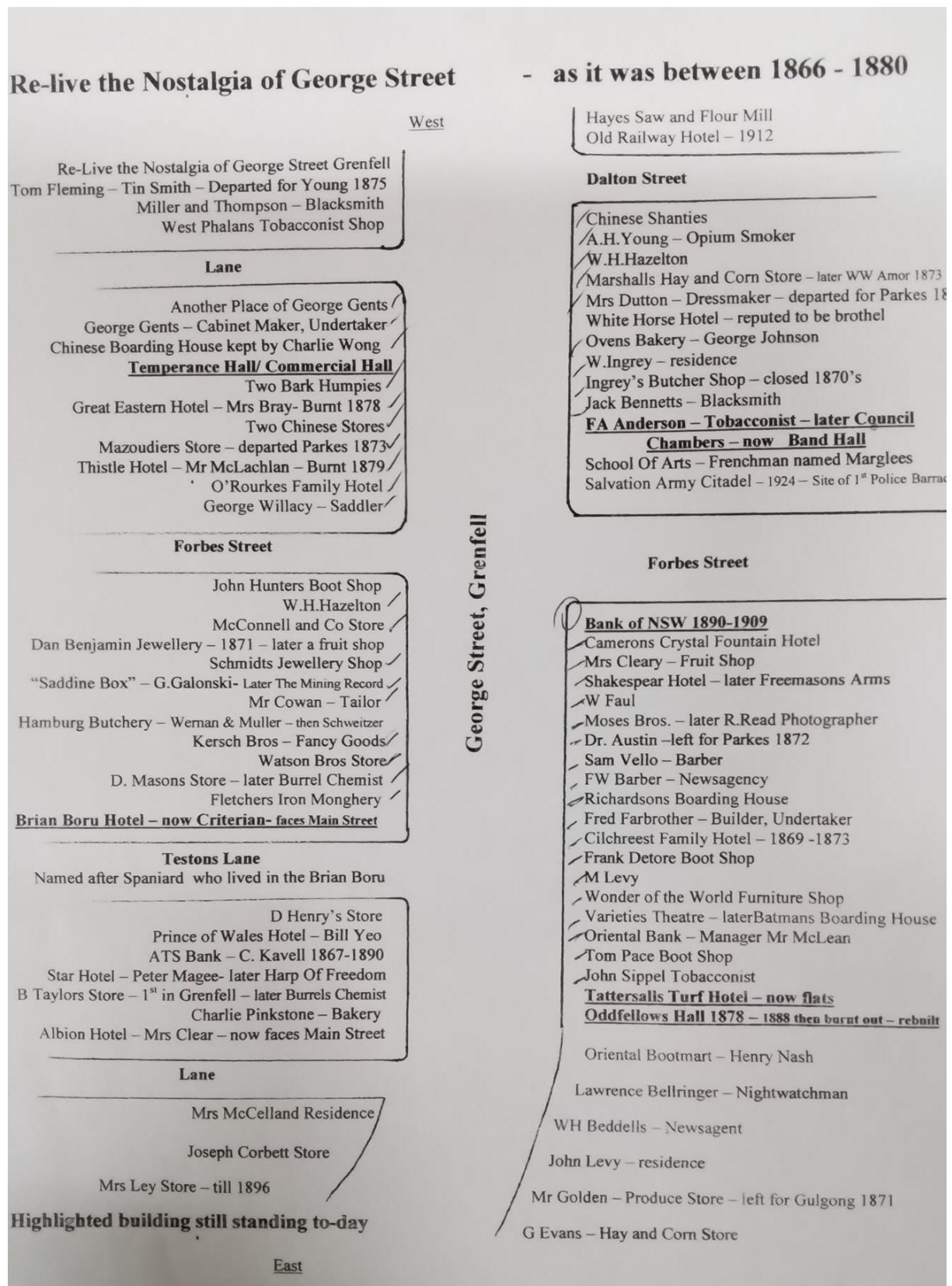
The buildings that lined George St sprung up very quickly in response to the Gold Rush. They were subsequently built quickly out of materials that were cheap and readily available. The buildings were largely shops and other retail and commercial businesses built from 1870 onwards.

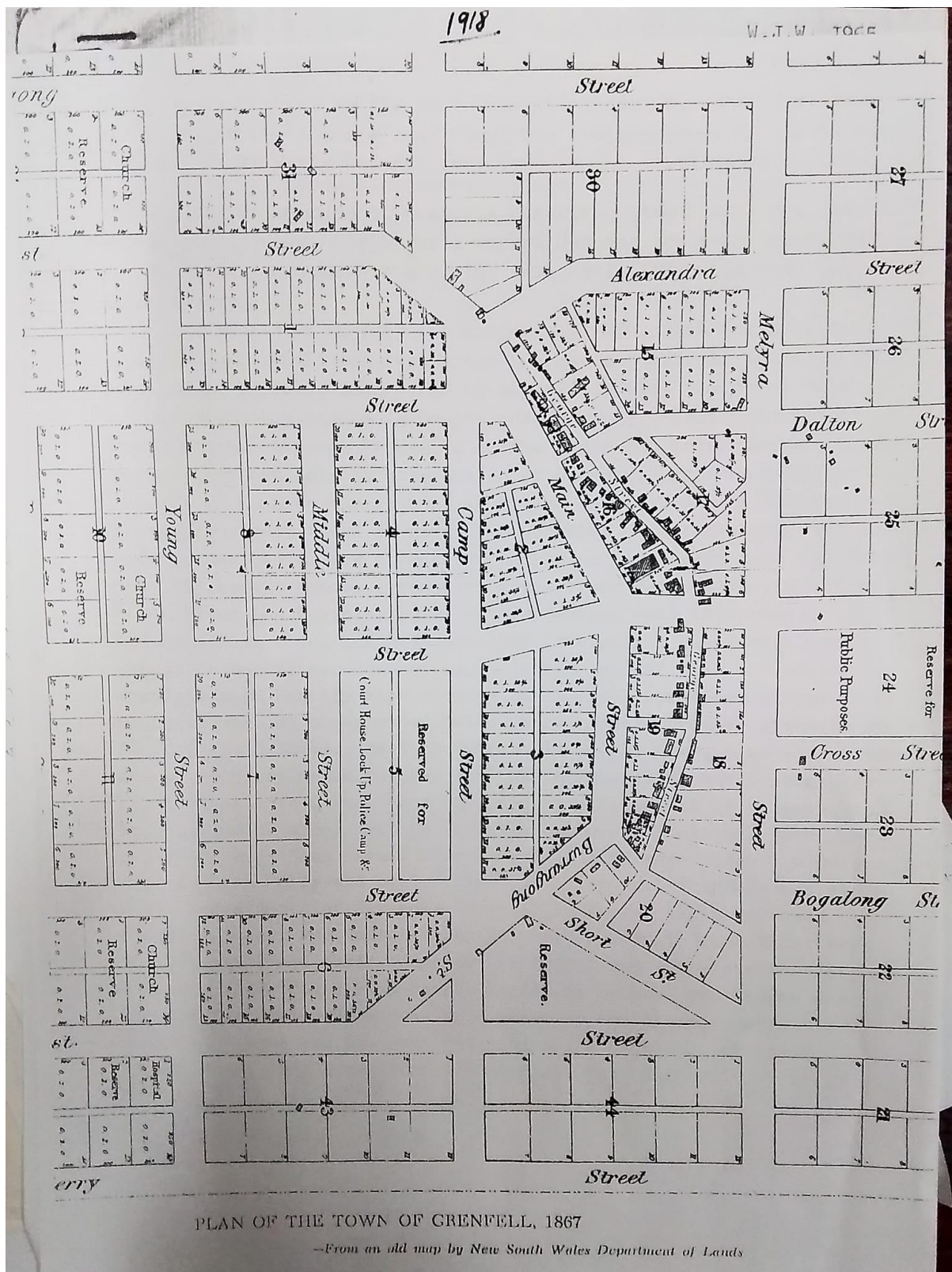
3.4 Maps and Subdivisions of George Street

There are a number of maps of subdivisions of Grenfell from the inception of the town C1870 through to the 1960s. There are also a number of hand drawn maps of the town with the shops and the shop owners name detailed. Research suggests that a lot of this information comes from Council Rate Books C1912. There are no references on the documents indicating where the information comes from however, land titles and newspaper research indicates that it appears to be relatively accurate.



A handwritten plan of the town, 78 George St location – site located where the arrow is pointing.
(courtesy of Grenfell Historical Society)





Based on an old Department of Lands Map from 1867 this seems to have been updated to incorporate the plan for the town and the original town centre.

(courtesy of Grenfell Museum and Historical Society)

3.5 George St Images



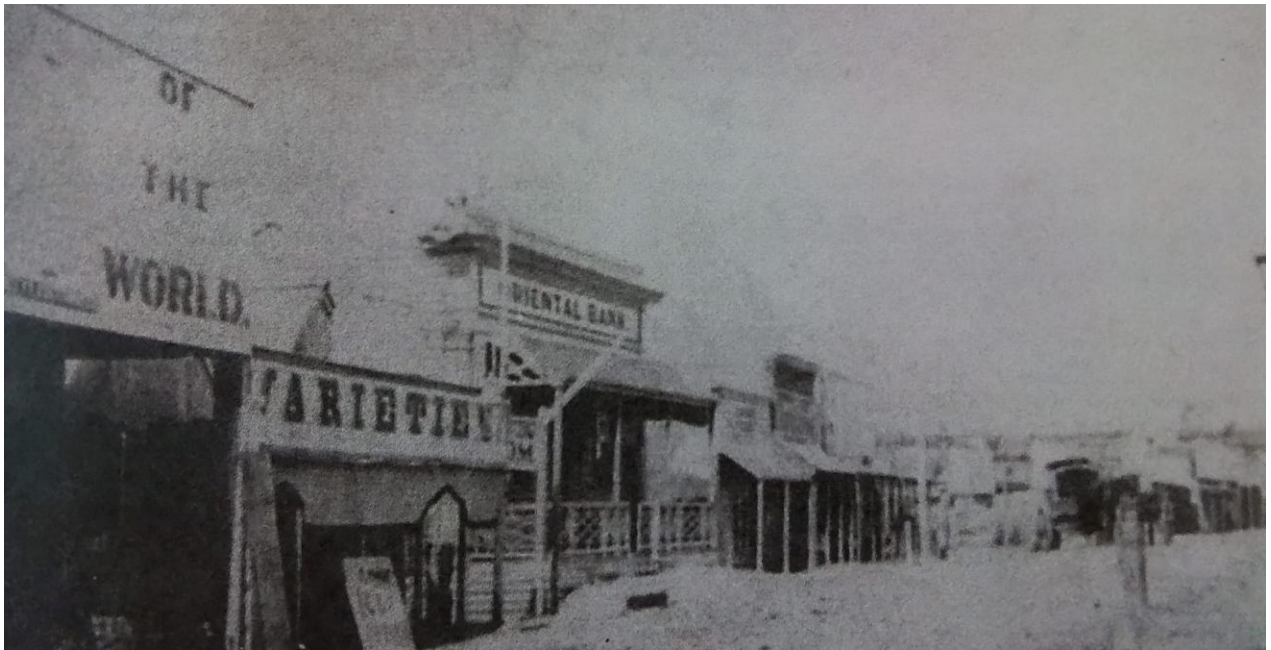
George St. Undated image of George St during the early stages of Grenfell's Development. Now the George St Urban Conservation Area.

(Courtesy of A Walk Through Time...)



Current site's location on George St C1880 – The Sippel Bros owned the site from the 1870s until it was sold to Purdie's in 1913.

(courtesy of A Walk Through Time...)



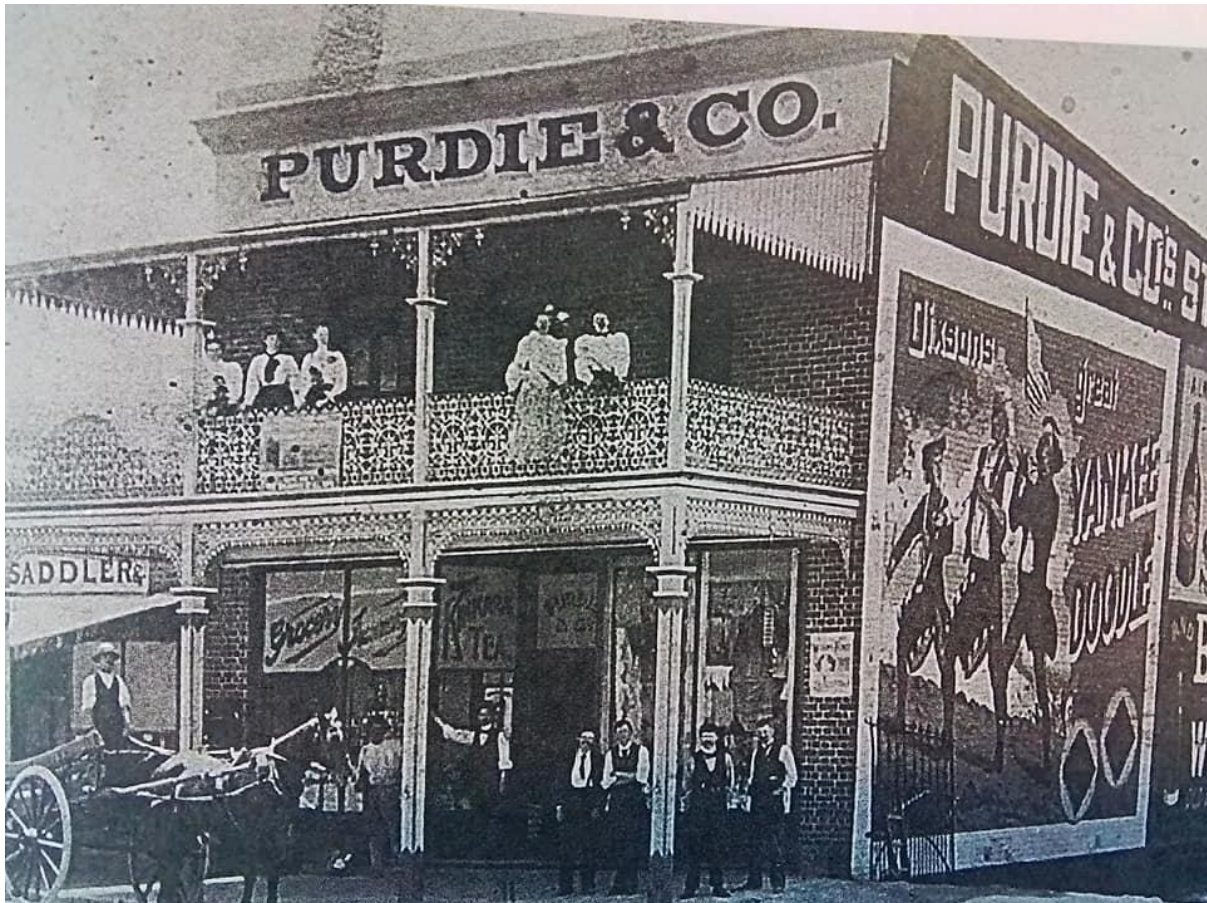
*George St – picture undated -note the Oriental Bank which comprised part of the site today.
(courtesy of A Walk Through Time...)*



*George St – image undated
(courtesy of A Walk Through Time...)*

3.6 Site History

The Bulk Store that the Purdies Department Store established in 1913, now known as Oliver's Hardware Store, was built at the rear of the Purdies Department Store. The first Purdies store was originally constructed in 1891 and traded as Purdies Maitland. It was a small brick building that was built on the present site of what is currently the LGA Supermarket.



*Image of the original Purdies Store known as Purdies Maitland
(courtesy of A Walk Through Time...)*

Purdies original business partner was Mr W Maitland who was also mayor of the town in the years 1895-1896.³⁴ Not long afterwards Maitland left Grenfell for Condobolin and Mr WA Robinson, owner of the property known as 'Myee' in the Grenfell area was admitted as a partner to the business and the name was changed to Purdie and Co (it is noted that Purdie had married Robinson's sister around).³⁵ In 1913, when the business name was changed the directors included JS Purdie, PJ Mannell, HG Ogilvie and EPM Sheedy.³⁶

³⁴ Grenfell Historical Society notes, from a document entitled 'Purdies Ltd'.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid

Business did well, it expanded and in 1905 they bought all of the land between their Main Street Store and Teston Lane and back to George St extending their premises.³⁷ In 1913 they bought land on the other side of George St and erected a large produce store and timber yard.³⁸ The Grenfell Museum account states that alterations and additions were carried out to the main store again in 1917 and in 1918 they were appointed agents for McCormick – Deering machinery.³⁹ The account goes on to say that in June 1937 Mr PJ Manell, the then manager, informed the local newspaper that the business had been purchased by Western Stores and Edgley's Ltd. The following year, in 1938 PJ Robinson completed extensions for Western Stores.⁴⁰ In 1971 Western Stores was sold and Max Oliver, who was already an employee of the Hardware business, bought it and the family have operated it since.⁴¹

To date no historical images have been found of the Hardware Store. The only photographic record that has been found is below. We can see the Hardware Shop to the rear of the celebration of the unveiling of the John Taylor and Pioneers Monument at the junction of Teston Lane and Mains St in 1924.

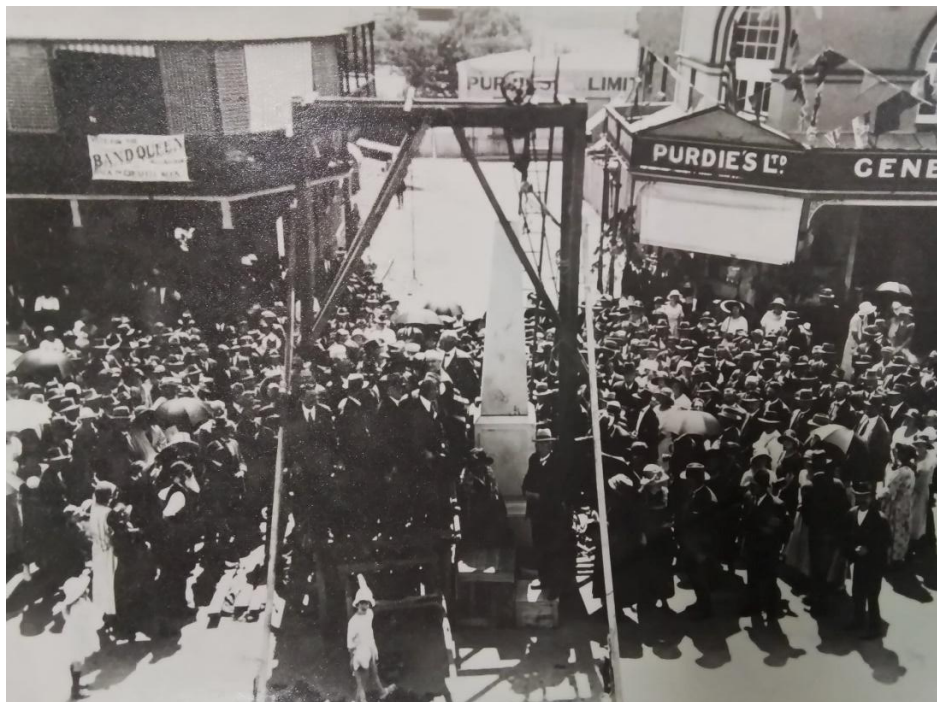


Image courtesy of Grenfell Historical Museum

³⁷ Grenfell Historical Society notes, from a document entitled 'Purdies Ltd'

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Ibid

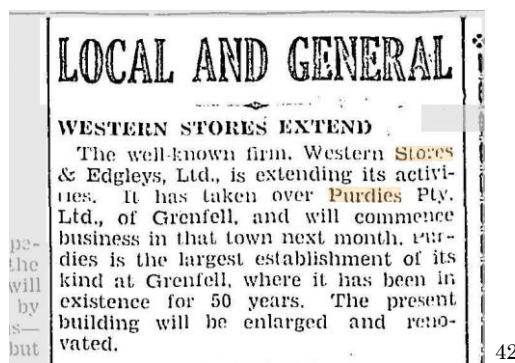
⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Pers. Comm. Greg Oliver July 2024



*The Second Purdies Store at its present location
(courtesy of the Grenfell Museum and Historical Society)*

The above photograph is of Main Street and illustrates the second iteration of the Purdies Department Store at its present location. It is undated but it seems likely that it is after 1938, when the renovation was undertaken. It is interesting to note that there are no cars on the street which is unusual for the 1930s however it is possible that this image was taken during WWII when petrol was rationed and people tried to avoid unnecessary use of the car. Newspapers searches suggest that it was the 1937-38 renovations that were the most substantial and took the building into its present configuration. No mention of the 1917-1918 renovations has been found during this research process. Even detailed searches around that time period have revealed nothing suggesting the renovations were perhaps not as substantial as those undertaken in 1937-38. The only reference to renovations in the newspapers at all is what appears below:



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⁴² *Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate* 24.06.1937 p2



*Photographs of the Directors of the Purdies Department Store
Undated the photographed building suggests this was taken after the 1938 renovations.
(Courtesy of the Grenfell Museum and Historical Society)*



*Image of the display window of Purdies. Taken during the 1940s at night.
(Courtesy of the Grenfell Museum and Historical Society)*

Throughout the time that the Hardware or Bulk Store operated it advertised its products in the local newspapers. Below are a series of images that come from the local Grenfell newspapers during the 1930s onwards that advertised such products. Many of these products were aimed at the DIY builder and reflect the period that they were advertised in:



TILE—The only Permanent Roof

YOU'LL agree that a roof which cannot rot, burn or corrode must be long lasting. Such a roof you can have by using Wunderlich Terra Cotta Tiles; it will never need painting; it will be permanent and will not cost a penny for upkeep.

Wunderlich Tiles in numerous charming colours are ideal for country homes; hard as flint; do not absorb or contaminate rain-water; cool in summer—weather-proof always. A roof of Wunderlich Tiles adds value and beauty to the house.

WUNDERLICH LIMITED, Manufacturers
Corner Baptist and Cleveland Sts., Redfern

Wunderlich Terra-Cotta Tiles

Stocked by:
H. H. Francis, J. R. McDonald: Purdies Ltd., Grenfell.

Free! If you cannot call send for illustrated booklet "Roofs of Tile." It will show you just how lovely your home can look. Simply post this advertisement with your name & address to Wunderlich Ltd., G.P.O. Box 4744A, Sydney.

Cheaper to build this way—easier too!



SAVE your money—save time and labour, too—yet build a house or garage that not only looks far nicer than if you used wood, but is durable too. Use Durabestos fibre cement building sheets.

Durabestos sheets are made from asbestos, fibre and cement, compressed to a rock-like hardness; quicker to erect than wood—available in large sizes—yet as easy to cut and nail; fire-proof; cannot warp, flake or rot; white ant and borer proof; need no painting; do not deteriorate.

WUNDERLICH LIMITED . . . Manufacturers
Showrooms: Cr. Baptist & Cleveland Sts., Redfern, Sydney.

DURABESTOS Asbestos Cement BUILDING SHEETS

Stocked by: H. H. S. Francis, J. R. McDonald, Cowra.
Purdies Ltd., Grenfell.

Many of the products are dedicated to the building of homes but are also targeted at the DIY market – asbestos sheeting, wallpaper and wall and ceiling linings are examples of this.

A LOVELY HOME built so easily—



WITH DURABESTOS (Asbestos Cement) Building Sheets you can build a lovely home—easily, quickly and at low cost; a home that will be comfortable in all weathers—a home that will last.

Durabestos sheets are made from asbestos fibre and cement, compressed to a rock-like hardness; quicker to erect than wood—available in large sizes—yet as easy to cut and nail; fire-proof; cannot warp, flake or rot; white ant and borer proof; need no painting; do not deteriorate.

WUNDERLICH LIMITED . . . Manufacturers
Showrooms: Cr. Baptist & Cleveland Sts., Redfern, Sydney

DURABESTOS Asbestos Cement BUILDING SHEETS

Stocked by: H. H. S. Francis, J. R. McDonald, Cowra.
Purdies Ltd., Grenfell.

Know these Wunderlich Features

Home-builders choose Wunderlich Art Metal Ceilings and Wall Linings because of these exclusive features:—

Variety of Design
There are designs, in wide variety, to meet all tastes.

Durable Material
Wunderlich designs are produced in a special tough, durable steel, which cannot crack, warp, flake, rot, or fall away from its fixings.

Time and Fire Proof
Over a period of 38 years, we have proved that Wunderlich Art Metal resists Time, Fire, Vermin, and White Ants.

Easily Fixed
The simple system of jointing enables any local tradesman to make a good, quick job of fixing our Metal.

Your home needs this treatment

To be truly attractive and up to date, your Home needs a Wunderlich Art Metal treatment to both Ceilings and Walls. Hundreds of designs for the purpose are shown in our Catalogue M.2.—free on request.

WUNDERLICH LIMITED
Showrooms: Corner of Cleveland and Baptist Streets, Redfern, Sydney.

WUNDERLICH Metal Wall CEILINGS & LININGS

STOCKED BY
PURDIE'S LTD., GRENELL

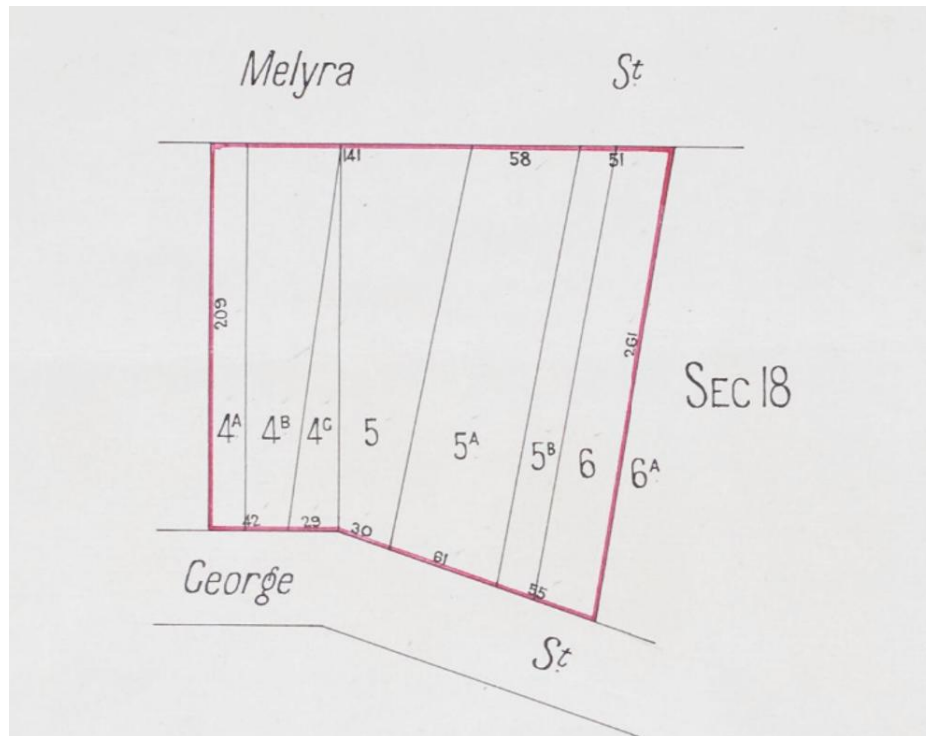


3.7 Land Titles Research

Land titles searches for the site reveal the details of the history of the site prior to its use as Purdies and then the Western Store and finally Oliver's Hardware.

The site is comprised of a series of smaller lots that were bought up over time. Evidence suggests that the plan was developed some time before it was enacted. The lots that were developed in the late 1860s into early 1870s were small, reflecting the small shops and businesses that located themselves on what was the gold mining field at that time.

The land titles searches for the site that is now Oliver's Hardware is a little complicated by the small plots that were the original layout of the street. However, the search suggests that the plan for Purdies to buy up the land and create a business like a hardware store appears to have been underway since sometime around 1909, when the first plots were bought. The plan below illustrates the plots that make up the property today:



From Land Titles Record No. Vol 2401-86, 1913

The land is known as Section 18 and the lots are 4A, 4B, 4C or G, 5 and 6 and is part of the Deposited Plot No. 758 473. It seems likely that 4G was in fact originally 4C as it follows the sequence and perhaps something was lost in translation and documentation process. The above records it as 4C but a number of earlier records have it as 4G (likely a typographical/reading error). The original owners of these plots were clearly members of the community and not land owners who were living away from the area, is as often the case during the latter decades of the nineteenth century in NSW.

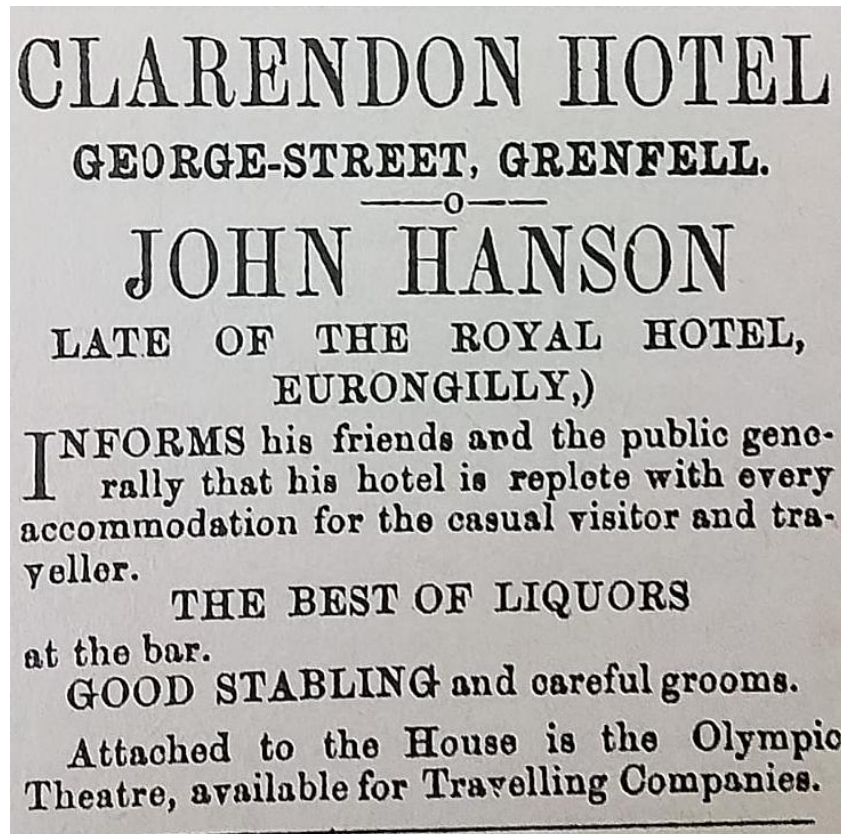
Lot 4A

One of the first land grantees for the site was John Hanson who bought Lot 4A for three pounds on 23 June 1869. John Hanson was an early pioneer of Grenfell and ran the Clarendon Hotel. There are a few references to him in the local newspapers including his trip back to Europe in 1868 from which he returned, temporarily transferring the license for the hotel to someone else during his absence.⁴³ Further references in the newspapers include *Hanson's Olympic Theatre* which a number of 'remembrance articles' refer to as operating in 1868.⁴⁴ Perhaps it was a precursor the Clarendon Hotel which he opened not

⁴³ *Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser* 13.05.1905 p2

⁴⁴ *Ibid*

long afterwards. The following advertisement appeared in first edition of *The Mining Record and Grenfell General Advertise* which was published on June 15 1867.



Lot 5A

In January 1871 Lot 5A was purchased from the Crown for Seven Pounds by the Oriental Bank.⁴⁵ The image of the bank appears above in the photographs of George St. It operated there for a little over ten years before the Oriental Bank was liquidated in 1883 and the land was sold in June 1884 to Richard Hurley of Grenfell.

It seems likely that the property that housed the Oriental Bank was tenanted for the time prior to its purchase by Purdie based on the date of the land's sale to him. Richard Hurley sold the land to William Alexander Robinson in April 1909 and Robinson sold it to Purdie in August 1913.

⁴⁵ Land Titles record Volume 115 Folio 114

Lot 5

Lot 5 was originally bought as Crown Land by John Hanson in June 1869.⁴⁶ He then sold it to Henry Harley, a publican of Grenfell in December 1872.⁴⁷ Henry Harley then sold the lot to George Rich, a landholder of Grenfell, in July 1874.⁴⁸ The Rich brothers had made money on the goldfields and they settled in Grenfell, some running hotels and other businesses in the town during that period. George Rich then sold it to Michael Levy of Grenfell, Auctioneer, in January 1886.⁴⁹ There are a number of references to the Rich Brothers and George specifically in the newspapers during this time. In 1870 there are a number of references in newspaper of the Rich brothers bringing their crushing plant from Grenfell to new goldfields.

The first is a reference to them at Flyers Creek, on the road to Orange, in August 1870. They had already taken up several claims in the area and were on their way to bringing the crushing plant which processed other peoples stone (presumably for a fee).⁵⁰ The other reference is similar at Kangaroo Reef which was 5 miles north of the Junee reef, 40 miles from Wagga and here too they were bringing their crushing plant to be used by others.⁵¹

The *Australian Town and Country Journal* refers to the Rich Brothers in an article published in 1874 stating that William Rich and his brothers ‘made an absolute fortune on the goldfields, sold out and then turned to the hotel industry.’⁵²

Newspapers from a similar time also have George Rich as part of a deputation to the Minister for Public Works advocating for the railway to come through Grenfell.⁵³ This was very common throughout the Central West and likely the rest of rural NSW as the impact economically of the railway on the burgeoning towns of the time would have been significant. These deputations occurred in many, if not most, towns and the issue was a very political one during these decades. Indeed for many small towns this lobbying continued from the 1870s – 1920s.

⁴⁶ Land Titles record Volume 87 Folio 158

⁴⁷ Land titles record Volume 152 Folio 14

⁴⁸ Land Titles record Volume 186 Folio 33

⁴⁹ Land Titles record Volume 186 Folio 33

⁵⁰ *Evening News* 01.08.1870 p3

⁵¹ *Cootamundra Herald* 07.05.1878 p6

⁵² *Australian Town and Country Journal* 02.05.1874 p5

⁵³ *Sydney Morning Herald* 18.10.1879 p14

The final reference to George Rich was his obituary notice in the *Forbes Advocate*: 'The death took place in Sydney recently of Mr George Rich, a pioneer of the old Grenfell days and a brother of Joe Rich of the Royal Hotel. Deceased was 85 years of age.'⁵⁴ George Rich was of the early pioneers of Grenfell as were a number of people who owned land that is under examination here. This land speculation was widespread in NSW during these last decades of the nineteenth century and contributed to the state economy significantly during this period. It is noted though that in most places land speculation was being undertaken by wealthy people who were buying up large tracts of land in order to subdivide and create estates for profit. Here it is clear that those that are land speculating are people who came to make money on the goldfields (whether by gold or the establishment of secondary business on the goldfields, often a more lucrative venture). They came to the goldfields to make enough money to establish themselves in some other related activity, usually hotels or similar or land for farming.

Lot 5 was then sold to Michael Levy who started out as a shopkeeper but is later recorded as an auctioneer, perhaps a secondary income. He appears to have been part of an early Jewish group that included the Moses brothers. Michael Levy bought up a number of the lots under assessment here, initially with the Moses brothers but then he appears to have bought them out of some of the properties over time. Michael Levy appears to have died in 1875 but his probate was not granted until January 1889.⁵⁵ The below section of a newspaper article details Michael Levy's farewell by the local Masonic community in Grenfell at the time:

On Friday night the masonic body gave a farewell dinner to Brother Michael Levy; there was a large attendance of brethren present, and after due justice had been done to the first-class spread, supplied by host Brother Rich, the usual toasts followed, and the party broke up about 11 p.m., every one well pleased with the evening's proceedings. Mr. Levy has been in business here for many years, and will not only be missed by the brethren of the mystic tie but by the outside public, as he was always ready to lend a helping hand to everything charitable or for the advancement of the town and district.

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⁵⁴ *Forbes Advocate* 18.02.1921 p2

⁵⁵ *Australian Town and Country* 17.04.1875 p10 and *Government Gazette* 22 October 1889 p7624

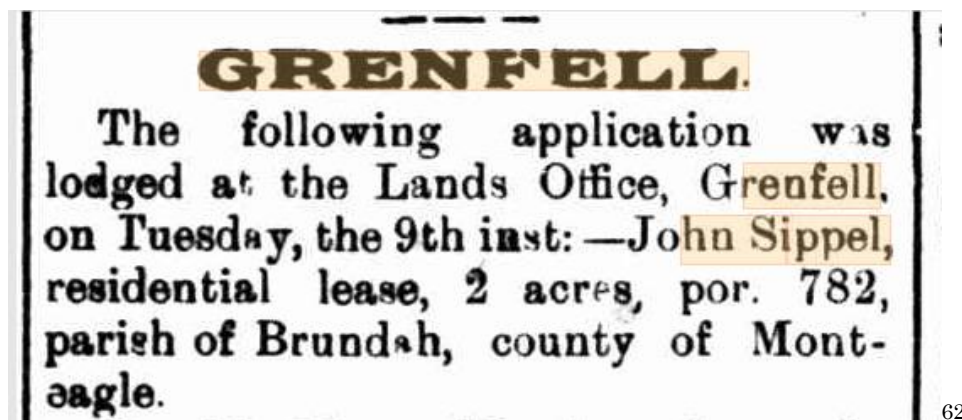
⁵⁶ *Australian Town and Country* p14 April 1875 p10

Probate was granted to Solomon Kersh of Nowra and to Henry George Levy, storekeeper's assistant of Glebe, Sydney in 1889.⁵⁷ Lot 5 was then passed to Henry George Levy who sold it John Smith Purdie in December 1910 (part of the document are signed in 1909 but it was not processed officially until the following year).⁵⁸

John Hanson had also bought lot 4A in June 1869 then sold it to Abraham Moses, Simione Moses who were then storekeepers living in Grenfell at that time in March 1870⁵⁹. Another of the above mentioned 'remembrance articles' refers to a long advertisement in an early local paper published by the Moses brothers no doubt for the store that they were keeping in those early days of Grenfell. These storekeepers appear to have formed a business relationship with a fellow storekeeper - auctioneer Michael Levy who bought land both with the Moses brothers and from them. In 1871 he and the Moses brothers bought property off John Hanson adding Lot 4B to 4A.⁶⁰

Lot 6

John Sippel is another of the early pioneers of the Grenfell community who bought land and operated a business in Grenfell in the 1870s. John Sippel was a watchmaker who bought Lot 6 in January 1870⁶¹, this is the block that he appears to have built his business in and was the only brick building in George Street during the early phase of the town's development. There are a number of references to John Sippel in the newspaper searches and one of those is included below:



⁵⁷ *Government Gazette* 22 October 1889 p7624

⁵⁸ Land Titles record Volume 99 Folio 219

⁵⁹ Land Titles record Volume 87 Folio 159

⁶⁰ Documented in land titles records Vol126 Folio 120, Vol 99 Folio 219

⁶¹ Land Titles record volume 95 Folio 222

⁶² *Western Champion* 19.09.1902 p6

Newspapers record John Sippel as being on the first Council for the town in 1883 and also on the Progress Committee the previous year.⁶³ There is also a *Sydney Morning Herald* classified of the marriage of Bertha, John Sippel's daughter to William Powell, eldest son of the late GW Morison of Orange.⁶⁴ The significance of this is that it seems the son in law became involved with John Sippel's business affairs buying into the property in George St in 1906.⁶⁵

John Sippel also bought Lot 5B in April 1871 being transferred from Thomas Page who was the original purchaser of the land from a Crown grant in October 1870.⁶⁶ This land and the land above was transferred from John Sippel to William Powell Morison in 1906.⁶⁷ The below description of John Sippel and his business comes from the *Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser* in 1884:

the hotel. Next to Tattersall's was a little brick shop kept by John Sippel as a tobacconist &c. Sippel Bros about the year '71, were rather prominent in this line, besides the Grenfell shop they had one at Lambing Flat, one at Gulgong, and one in George st, Sydney, all seeming to be doing a fair business, Sippel never seemed to take kindly to anything either Australian or British, they could always do it better as dot in Yermanny, the Yermans could fight "My vord, ah?" several solemn shakes of the head here. In the early days of the Municipality, when Purss and Sippel were both aldermen, Purss complained to the council one night that Sippel kept a pig and as that animal since our earliest history, is notably without the virtue that comes next to godliness, said he should be compelled to do away with it. Sippel was absent that night and the matter was allowed to stand over till next meeting, at which Purss was not present. However, Sippel was all eagerness to meet the enemy, and, referring to Purss, said his pig was "cleaner than that man's bed." The next shop was also owned by Sippel, and occupied by old Tom Page as a boot shop, he selling out and going to Gulgong in the early days; he came back some years afterwards and occupied the same shop. Old Mrs Page was, I believe, the

⁶³ Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser 29.06.1936 p2 and Australian Town and Country Journal 07.10.1882 p39

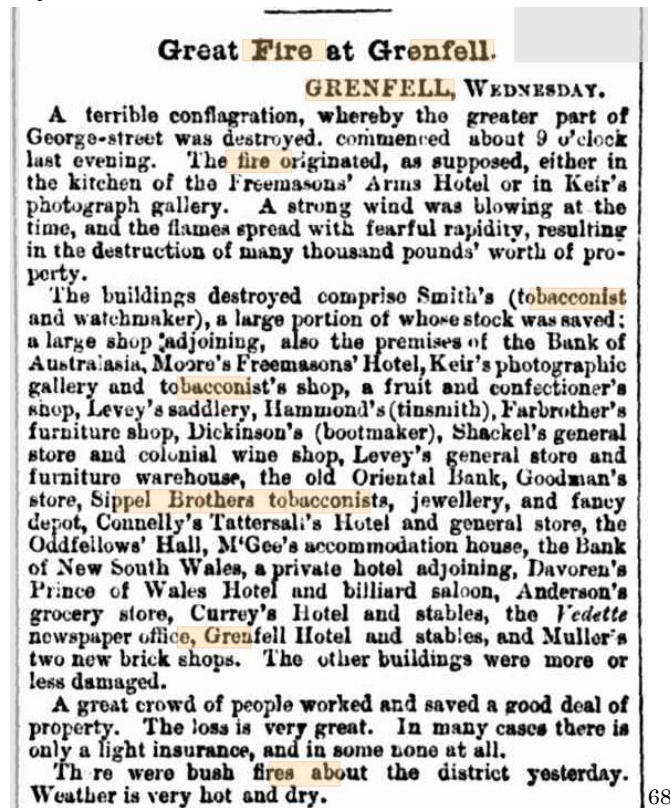
⁶⁴ SMH 20.02.1894 p1

⁶⁵ Land Titles record Volume 95 Folio 222

⁶⁶ Land Titles Record Vole 99 Folio 99

⁶⁷ Ibid

The next newspaper article that Sippel appears in is the following that details a large fire that directly impacted on the properties then located on the land where 78 George St is today:



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Newspaper searches indicate that approximately a decade of newspapers are not on the Trove database and so it has not been possible to establish exactly what happened to Sippel's business. It is clear from the above that Sippel's shop burnt down and had been one of the few shops that had been constructed from brick. There had been fires in 1879 and 1886 which had led to changes in the materials which buildings were being constructed from. The original structures were built using slab and bark or weatherboard and shingles and these were replaced by brick and galvanised iron.⁶⁹ It subsequently seems likely that Sippel's brick shop had been constructed after one of these earlier fires. The newspaper article suggests that the building did not survive the fire and there is, to date, no information as to what occurred after the 1888 fire to Sippel's shop.

It is likely that the tobacconist that Sippel had been running had become less financially viable over time as the population reduced significantly during the 1870s. It is noted that the business clearly diversified providing cordial and

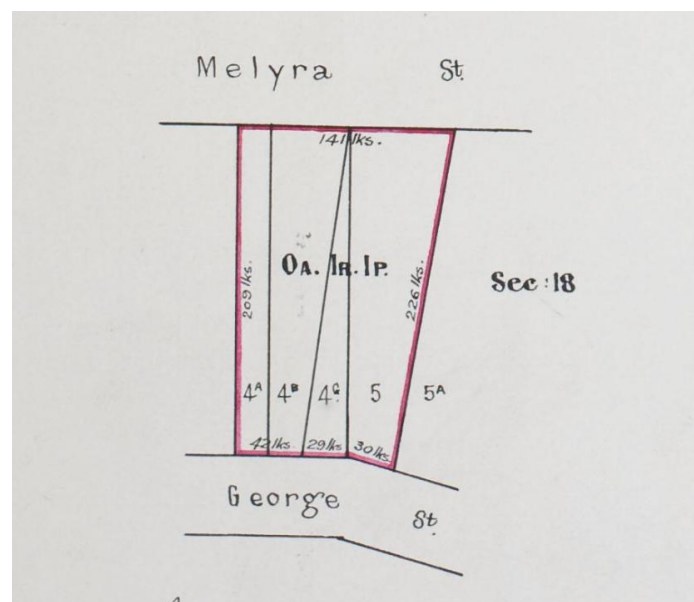
⁶⁸ Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser 29.12.1888 p1367

⁶⁹ Mitton, L *A History of Grenfell and the Weddin Shire* p11

watchmaking and fixing also. The years of the gold rush were focussed between 1867-1873 when the population went from around 10 000 ⁷⁰ to 1 657.⁷¹ This in conjunction with the increase in other larger stores including the Purdie Department store that had opened in the town from the 1890s onwards means that it is possible that competing with these larger businesses was becoming difficult even prior to the fire.

As John Smith Purdie and his business partners had already started buying up the property to the rear of their large department store on Main Street it is likely, as previously mentioned, that they had planned this expansion for some years before it was fully enacted. Perhaps the lack of financial viability for Sippel is why he entered into an arrangement with John Smith Purdie, in 1906, whereby he and Purdie operated his business as ‘tenants in common’ with Purdie’s son in law.⁷² This arrangement continued until the land was sold outright to Purdie in 1913. This arrangement suggests Sippel must have rebuilt at some point in order to enter into a ‘tenants in common’ arrangement there needs to be a building or something similar in which to share.

John Smith Purdie and William Alexander Robinson bought up the lots that comprise the land that Oliver’s Hardware now sits on in 1913. Land Titles Volume 2117-30 records the transfer of Lots 5, 4a, 4b and 4G (likely 4C is what was meant here). The map included on the record appears below:

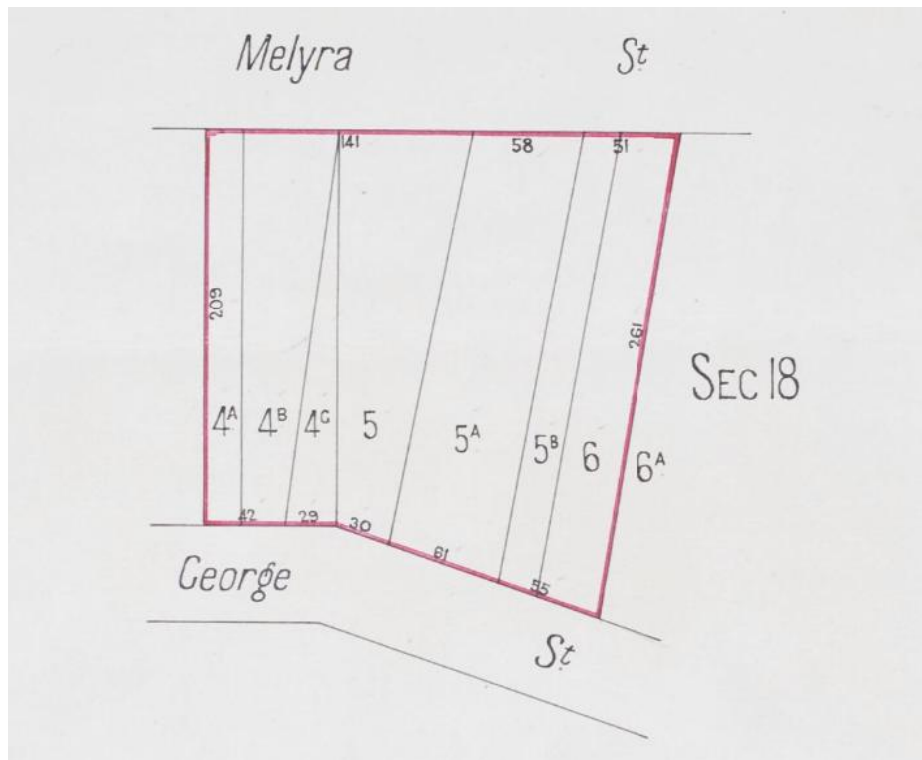


⁷⁰ From Tropman and Tropman *Grenfell Heritage Study* p17

⁷¹ From the most recent census taken in 1871 in the *Australian Town and Country Journal* 14.06.1873

⁷² We know that this was his son in law as the *Sydney Morning Herald* records the marriage of William Powell Morison to the Bertha, the ‘only daughter of John Sippel of Grenfell NSW’ 20.02.1894 p1

The next record that shows the coming together of the lots is land titles record 2401-86 which records the transfer of lands to John Smith Purdie and William Alexander Robinson and shows them as the proprietors fee and simple, no longer as ‘tenants in common’.



This land was then transferred from Robinson to Purdie and Co in 1913 after which point the hardware business and subsequent buildings were developed.

None of the resources searched during this process has shed any light on exactly when the building was constructed or when it opened. There is no article indicating its opening nor is there any advertising for it. There was an application from Purdie and Co to build a fence in Melyra St in 1912, which given that is two blocks from their store in Main Street suggests that work had already begun on developing the hardware store site.⁷³

The only reference to the opening of the business in 1913 is in the account of the Purdies Store, written in the 1960s, by the research officer for the Grenfell Museum and Historical Society. This information may well have come from oral sources as there are no written records. It is likely to be accurate based on the Land Titles Searches.

⁷³ Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser 29.11.1912 p2

3.8 Building History

The physical description of the buildings appears in section 2 of this report, please refer to it and the photographic archive for a detailed understanding of the buildings.

The materials that the first two buildings are constructed from are consistent with each other. Oregon timber forms the framework and corrugated iron, all of which is the Redcliffe brand, that was available in Australia, originally from the UK, from the 1870s until 1921. The following provides a brief history of the Redcliffe brand and its operation in Australia:

The import of Redcliffe Crown corrugated galvanised iron to Australia is on record since February 1875 and in New Zealand from July 1878. The company marketed the brand aggressively from 1882 onwards, capitalising on successes at International Exhibitions. To protect the brand, 'Redcliffe Crown' was trade-marked in Victoria in July 1886 and in most other Australian colonies soon after. After the trademark was acquired by Lysaght in 1895, Redcliffe Crown was marketed as good second choice iron (in order not to diminish the market for Lysaght prime brand, 'Orb'). The sale of Redcliffe Crown was discontinued during World War I, even though galvanised agricultural appliances continued to be sold under the Redcliffe brand.⁷⁴



Fig. 8. Redcliffe Crown trademarks over time as represented in publications⁷⁰

Trademarks from the Redcliffe brand.

⁷⁴ DHR Spennemann *From Redcliffe Crown; Corrugated Iron in Australasia. Its history, marketing and Distribution 1875-1921* p25

The ending of the trading for the Redcliffe brand in Australia ended not long after the original buildings on the site were constructed. It is also highly likely that the business sold the products that it constructed the buildings from.

4. Assessment of Significance

The Burra Charter defines cultural heritage significance as follows:

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.⁷⁵

The NSW Heritage Office has developed a series of criteria used to assess the significance of a heritage item (s). These are listed below:

Criterion (a)	An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).
Criterion (b)	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 cultural or natural history of 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 a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.
Criterion (e)	An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).
Criterion (f)	An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).
Criterion (g)	An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural or natural places; or • Cultural or natural environments (or a class of the local area's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural or natural places; or • Cultural or natural environments.)

Gradings of Significance

The significance of an item, once it has been established, is then graded to reflect the significance.

⁷⁵ Australia ICOMOS, 2000 *The Burra Charter. Article 1.2*

Gradings of Significance

Grading	Justification	Status
Exceptional	Rare or outstanding item of local or State significance. High degree of intactness. Item can be interpreted relatively easily.	Fulfil criteria for local or State listing.
High	High degree of original fabric. Demonstrates a key element of the item's significance. Alterations do not detract from significance.	Fulfil criteria for local or State listing.
Moderate	Altered or modified elements. Elements with little heritage value, but which will contribute to the overall significance of the item.	Fulfil criteria for local or State listing.
Little	Alterations detract from significance. Difficult to interpret.	Does not fulfil criteria for local or State listing.
Intrusive	Damaging to the item's heritage significance.	Does not fulfil criteria for local or State listing.

4.1 Statement of Significance

This is a brief statement, based on the assessment of significance that best reflects the reasons for the significance of the item or place.

The Statement of Significance for George St from the Tropman and Tropman Town Centre Heritage Study is as follows:

The precinct is historically important as it allows an interpretation of the growth and development of the settlement along George St, and the region as gold yields declined and the rural industry expanded.

This precinct is historically important as the town origins generated from this commercial street. George Street represents the former commercial street of Grenfell during and after the gold rush.

The collection of buildings located in this precinct reflect the discovery of gold and its subsequent decline, the re-emergence of the rural industry, the establishment of the railway and the Federation boom which followed.

Emu Creek is significant as it determined the alignment of the original subdivision and acted as a generator for the town plan.

The precinct contains many overlays of development. The western end of George St represents light industrial workshops c 1890s which appear to relate to the establishment of the railway and the emergence of agricultural trade.

George St extends from Rygate Square in the West to Short Street in the East.

George St represented commercial development close to the goldfields, fresh water and was probably located in this area as there was little potential for gold.

Generally the remaining buildings are single storey constructed of corrugated iron and pressed metal. The more prominent buildings are of brick, it bank, hotel, Oddfellows, tattersalls etc. Many of the properties are now defined by fencing.

Many of the original George St building have been demolished (or lost as a result of fire) and the sites have been redeveloped or left as vacant land.⁷⁶

The Tropman and Tropman report on *Buildings and Other Works/Relics* as part of the Grenfell Precinct Heritage Study states the following of the Oliver's Hardware Site. It has the date of construction as 1930s and describes it as vernacular and lists the materials as being a timber frame on timber stumps with corrugated iron clad to walls and roof. It lists the themes relevant to the building's significance as:

SHIP Themes:	Emergence of building styles
Local Themes:	Functional building using skilled iron and timber construction methods
	Grenfell's importance as a rural centre
	Building activity since the 1930s

There are no historical notes but the Statement of Significance is as follows:

This building is historically important as it enables an interpretation of the growth and development of the area. It is significant that the original

⁷⁶ Tropman and Tropman *Grenfell Town Centre Heritage Study* Section 3.2.2

George St alignment and use is retained after the establishment of the new commercial Main St.

The research undertaken as part of the DA process has the following to add regarding the significance of the buildings and the site:

The site at 78 George St, Grenfell is significant historically as one of the first areas of Grenfell to be settled by Europeans. It is part of the George St Urban Conservation Area. Initially the site of one of the first goldfields in the area during the late 1860s and 1870s it became the main street of the burgeoning settlement. During this period the site was a series of small mostly timber shops and the Oriental Bank. The only brick shop constructed during this period was built on this site and was Sippel's Tobacconist on Lot No. 5. An archaeological remnant on the site is thought to be from this era and from Sippel's shop.

The hardware buildings on the site reflect a later period of the town's development. They are significant, in part, for their single, continuous use for over one hundred years. After 1900 the town's main street was moved to what is now known as Main Street and George Street became more of a light industrial area than it had been previously. The buildings were bespoke to the site. The main building has loading doors on all four sides reflecting one of the issues that George Street struggled with during the period of its commercial use, that of access for the carts and cars that were both loading and unloading stock from the building. These large sliding timber doors were integral to the building's design and reflect the nature of the area that it was designed for.

It is noted that research undertaken as part of this report has revealed, through research through the Grenfell Historical Museum and Land Titles Searches, that the Timber and Bulk store, as it was originally called by Purdies Department Store who developed the property, was built in 1913.

It is not individually listed but is listed as part of the Grenfell Urban Conservation Area which is bounded by Melyra, East, Camps and Alexandra Streets. This listing was first made by the National Trust in 1982 and this was ratified by the Tropman and Tropman Heritage Study which was undertaken in 1992.

The advice for the Management of George St is outlined in the Grenfell Heritage Study as follows:

Retain the evidence of the phases of development of the Town Centre by retaining the historic features of the layout of the precinct. This can be achieved by retaining:

- The street alignment which reflects the focus of early commercial development in the town;
- The back lanes as accessways; and
- The original alignment and setback to buildings where redevelopment occurs.

Conserve the main characteristics of the buildings and other works which reflect the period of development of the Precinct by:

- protecting places which are significant;
- retaining original fabric and details which remain;
- respecting the existing scale, massing and character of the Precinct which is characterised by both vernacular and more elaborate styles of commercial and industrial buildings which are predominantly single storey; and
- ensuring that alterations and additions reflect the traditional character expressed in built form.

Preserving the existing landscape and streetscape character by:

- maintaining the current road profile;
- removing traffic control devices;
- retaining visual and pedestrian links along George St between George and Main Streets;
- retaining George St as a thoroughfare; and
- maintaining and reinforcing the alignment of George St through building or appropriate fencing.

4.2 Heritage Management Objectives for George St HCA

It is noted that the Conservation Management Objectives for the area requires development application for demolition of buildings within the Urban

Conservation Area and building applications for any significant reconstructions or renovation work, encourages compatible facades and paint schemes.⁷⁷

The Heritage Conservation Objectives outlined by Tropman and Tropman for George St, Grenfell are as follows:

- Recognise the remaining physical evidence of the main phases of growth of Grenfell Town centre's commercial, industrial, civic and residential activities.
- Actively conserve a full range of evidence representing the history of development in Grenfell and its association with gold mining, pastoral and agricultural activities with events and with people.
- Reinforce the character and identity of the Grenfell Town Centre, recognising the contribution of cultural heritage resources to the 'sense of place' that exists at the present time.
- Promote an understanding and appreciation of the Grenfell Town Centres cultural heritage resources, particularly architectural and archaeological aspects, to encourage appropriate conservation activities by private owners, visitors and councils and;
- Present and interpret the historical evidence for the enjoyment and education of people with association with the area and visitors to Grenfell.⁷⁸

As the site also faces on to Melyra Street Precinct the advice for the area is also outlined below:

Retain the evidence of the phases of development of the Town Centre by retaining the historic features of the layout of the Melyra Street Precinct by:

- Retaining the original subdivision pattern and orientation which has survived almost completely intact and reflects the early period of town development;
- Retaining back lanes as accessway; and
- Following the original alignment and setback where redevelopment occurs.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Tropman and Tropman *Grenfell Town Centre Heritage Study* p105

⁷⁸ Ibid p112

⁷⁹ Tropman and Tropman *Grenfell Town Centre Heritage Study* p112

Conserve the main characteristics of the buildings and other works which largely reflect two phases of development in the Precinct, the pre 1870s – 1890s period and the period between 1910 and the 1920s by:

- Protecting places which are significant;
- Retaining original fabric and details, much of which remains intact;
- Respecting the existing scale, massing and character of the precinct which is characterised by earlier vernacular residential building styles or by those of the later period which are predominantly Federation and Beaux-Arts styles; and
- Ensuring that alterations and additions reflect the traditional character expressed in the built form of the Precinct.

Preserve the existing landscape and streetscape character by:

- Maintaining an awareness of the high probability that significant archaeological evidence may be found in the precinct.
- Maintaining the alignment and existing retaining walls of Emu Creek.
- Retaining existing street trees.

Colour Schemes

The guidelines provided state the following regarding colour schemes in the HCA:

- Colour schemes for historic buildings should be based on the original colour scheme for the building. This can be determined by undertaking colour scrapes of original paintwork and by studying early photographs of the building.
- As a general guide, surfaces that were unpainted should remain unpainted.
- It should also be noted that colour schemes can result in an inappropriate “sameness” that does not necessarily reflect the rich diversity of colour that was frequently used. A classic example of this, and one that is evident in Grenfell, is the “over-use” of cream and white (as in many country and regional towns in NSW).
- Colour schemes have been provided in the Grenfell Town Centre Heritage Study and a useful range of colours can be found in the Pascol Heritage and traditional Colour Charts and from also Porter’s Paints

and the book *Colour Schemes for Old Australian Houses* by Ian Evans.⁸⁰

Archaeology

Protect the potential archaeological resources by:

- maintaining an awareness of the high probability that significant archaeological evidence may be found in the Precinct; and
- ensuring that redevelopment proposals are preceded by archaeological investigation.⁸¹

Regarding archaeology Tropman and Tropman say the following:

Archaeological deposits provided the chronological basis for the study of the occupation of a place. Relics which may be found in such deposits provide material evidence of the sequence of past events. Archaeological deposits may be found within, and associated with, the occupation of standing structures (eg deposits below the floors or in the yard of a standing structure), below standing structures but pre-dating the present occupation of the site and in other locations.

As assessment of the archaeological resource of the precinct is integral to the heritage assessment process. For archaeological remains this process has two stages. The first is an assessment of the potential for the survival of any archaeological remains in the precinct. On the basis of this general assessment of potential, guidelines are suggested for appropriate conservation management strategies in the event of any planned action which will adversely affect the resources. The second stage is the assessment of the significance of the archaeological resources. This should be undertaken when more detailed information has been collated concerning specific sites.⁸²

Tropman and Tropman list the following as sites that have the potential of archaeological remains:

- the survival of the original subdivision plan along the line of Emu Creek;
- the survival of Emu Creek as a recognisable landscape feature;

⁸⁰ Tropman and Tropman *Grenfell Town Centre Heritage Study* p11

⁸¹ Tropman and Tropman *Grenfell Town Centre Heritage Study* Section 3.4.3

⁸² Tropman and Tropman *Grenfell Town Centre Heritage Study* Section 4.3.3

- the slow establishment of an alternative economic base for the town after the gold rush resulting in the retention of many buildings and features during a period of economic decline;
- the decline in importance of George St and its relegation to a position as 'back street' which Main Street was established;
- the lack of wholesale and redevelopment in the area at any period;
- the survival of many empty blocks;
- the absence of multi-storey buildings the construction of which would have necessitated extensive clearance and excavation;
- the paucity of buildings with basements or other below ground excavation;
- the survival throughout the town of much of the original subdivision plan.⁸³

Types of Archaeological Remains:

The types of remains which might survive in this context include:

- buildings or parts of building which have been incorporated into later structures the fabric of which provides information about everyday life in the town from its earliest occupation;
- sub-floor deposits and archaeological deposits in yards etc associated with structures of heritage significance;
- archaeological remains of structures and activities which are no longer represented by any above ground remains or indications;
- disturbance of the land form and landscapes associated with mining activities;
- relics including equipment and domestic debris;
- vegetation and other botanical remnants associated with specific periods of the town's development.

Actions Detrimental to the Archaeological Resource

Actions which might be detrimental to the archaeological resources include:

- new construction;
- conservation works including alterations removal or additions to the existing fabric of standing structures;

⁸³ Ibid

- excavation works including site regarding and the installation of new services;
- redevelopment.

Although an assessment of the significance of the archaeological resource of the area cannot be made in this general study, it should be noted that, as a gold rush settlement, archaeological remains and relics at Grenfell may have more than local significance and might be detrimental to the archaeological resource:

- an archaeologist should be engaged from the initial planning and design stages of the proposed works to advise upon the protection of archaeological remains during any proposed demolition, site clearance, excavation and redevelopment;
- additional research should be carried out to identify, in as much detail as possible, the history of the occupation of the site, building or area which it is proposed to disturb, in order to determine further courses of action;
- this research should be carried out by or in conjunction with an archaeologist who can advise concerning the types of information which would assist in the assessment of the archaeological significance of the site;
- on the basis of this research an assessment should be made by an archaeologist of the types of archaeological remains which might be expected to be found on the site and, if possible, a zoning plan should be prepared identifying the level of sensitivity of the various parts of the site;
- an assessment of the significance of the potential remains should then be made by the archaeologist taking into account the comparative value of the archaeological resource (eg its rarity, representative value, integrity) and also its level of significance (local, regional, state etc)
- recommendations for the management of this resource should then be made by the archaeologist;
- these recommendations should be incorporated into an overall plan of management for the site on the basis of the overall assessment of heritage significance.

It should be noted that these recommendations refer to sites with standing structures, to vacant lots and to all features which have been created by human

interference in the landscape, including the re-shaping of the land form occasioned by mining activities.

4.3 Archaeological Potential of the Site

The bibliographic and documentary search undertaken here indicates that there is little likelihood for significant archaeology under the present site. Based on what we know of Aboriginal history of the area the site and the area surrounding it was not of significance to Aboriginal people in the region and whilst they may have made their way through the area on their way to other locations, availing themselves of any resources nearby, it is unlikely that there would be any remnants of their time there.

The three fires that made their way through George Street would have impacted significantly on any building in the location, as is detailed in the newspapers of the day. The early buildings were also constructed of flammable materials and this would have meant that there would be few remnants of them after the fires. Floods too have also impacted on that area and these have also been detailed in the papers. Emu Creek, around which the early settlement was originally based, is no longer evident indicating significant changes in the way that water moves across the landscape since European settlement. These floods, in part resulting from the changes in water flow, would also impact on the archaeological potential on the site.

Subsequently there is a relatively low likelihood of there being any further significant archaeological potential at what is now 78 George St, Grenfell. It is possible that there are remnants of post holes located at the edges of the original properties. It is noted however that fire and floods may well have impacted on them in the past.

Having said that during the site visit in June 2024 an item of archaeological potential was found and it is pictured below. The location of the item is Lot 6 of Section 18, the site that was owned by John Sippel and was the location of his brick tobacconist shop. This is the shop that was the 'tenants in common' arrangement between Sippel and Purdie from C1906-1913. It seems likely that the item is a remnant from that era and possibly indicates the hurry in the development of the site.

As a result of this advice was sought from an archaeologist, the Heritage Office was contacted and a report provided to them of the finding and its context (based on the research undertaken detailed above). The advice from the Heritage Office was that it would be assessed as part of the DA process.



Item of Archaeological Potential (photographed 2024)

The physical building and the site have been documented in a photographic archive that has been undertaken as part of this SOHI. It is a separate document. Please refer to it for further information.

5. Assessment of Heritage Impact

This Statement of Heritage Impact is assessing the potential impact that a small residential development would have on the George St Urban Conservation Area. Its findings are that this kind of development is entirely appropriate for this location and it supports, in principle, the design that has been developed.

5.1 The following aspects of the proposal respect or enhance the heritage significance of the item or conservation area for the following reasons:

The proposal respects the heritage significance of the George St Urban Conservation area by reflecting the materials and the form and setback of the original historic buildings on the site. The materials recommended are those that clad the original building and are also those that are recommended in the heritage studies for the area.

The hardware business has redeveloped on a new site in the industrial area of Grenfell. The continued use of the site for the purpose as a hardware business is no longer suitable. The change of use for the site is entirely appropriate at the present time. When the hardware was originally constructed it was logical to locate it behind Purdies Department Store, who developed both properties. In C1913 many people would not have had their own private transport and so it made sense to locate the hardware shop in town, where there was sufficient space enabling people to go and choose their products and have them delivered. Those who did have transport would have had carts and most likely would have been living in the farms and similar properties. These would have taken up considerable space and this is what led to the design for the building including the large loading doors on all four side of the main building.

To have constructed a modern hardware business at this site would not have been appropriate and it would not have met the heritage requirements of the George St Urban Conservation Area. Other changes have also occurred over the one hundred years since the hardware shop was located at the time. One of these changes is the demand for residential accommodation close to the centre of town. This is particularly the case for older and vulnerable people. It is noted that Weddin Shire Council have built similar accommodations to that being proposed here in George St to the east of the property under question here. Picture below.



*96 George St – residential apartments development by Weddin Council
(Photo courtesy of Google Maps)*

The demand for smaller accommodation for older and vulnerable people is increasing and the location of George St is ideal enabling easy access to both medical services and retail and social spaces. Stimulating appropriate residential development would respect and enhance the Heritage Conservation Area by encouraging people to move around the area on foot enabling more and better interpretation of the area's historical and heritage significance. The reduction in traffic on the street would also improve the area for pedestrians and further stimulate and enable people's interaction with the area.

It is noted that the artefact found in the Hardware Store's grounds, thought to be part of one of the original shops in the area, provides an opportunity to further interpret the site. It is noted that the proposed design leaves the artefact exposed enabling interpretation of it and this is recommended as part of this assessment process.

5.2 The following aspects of the proposal could detrimentally impact on heritage significance. The reasons are explained as well as the measures to be taken to minimise impacts.

The concern for a site of this nature is that an unsympathetic design could detract from the heritage nature of the Heritage Conservation Area. This could include a design that may be considered to be high architecture. The objective when designing a new development in a Heritage Conservation Area is to design a building that does not stand out and follows the original alignment, form and setback of the street and property. It uses materials that are in use in the area

that enable the building to fit in with streetscape and meet with the heritage management guidelines outlined for the area.

A small residential development such as that proposed here, that utilises materials such as those recommended in the management guidelines for the HCA will not detract from the streetscape and provides an opportunity to develop further interpretation for the area.

5.3 Why is the work necessary for the ongoing viability?

The work is necessary on the site because the original building is in a very poor condition as the survey report attests. Please also refer to the photographic record that was prepared as part of this SOHI. The support poles beneath the building are leaning and many are no longer in contact with the rest of the building.

As previously mentioned the business has been rebuilt in the new industrial area of the town. This was necessary for the ongoing viability of that business. What is being considered here really is what is appropriate for the site now, in the 21st century.

The development of housing in the centre of towns is one of the tools that have been used, particularly in the UK and in other parts of Europe, where many old towns and cities have struggled with the development of large malls on the outskirts of ancient towns. One solution to this has been to stimulate and develop housing and accommodation in the centre of the old towns, often over the old shops and the result has been to stimulate business in the town. People start using coffee shops and restaurants more because they are so easily accessed. This proposal, and ones like it, could contribute to a similar stimulus in Grenfell.

5.4 Steps being taken to minimise negative impacts.

The steps that are being taken to minimise the impacts on the HCA that surround the proposed site are as follows:

- The form and setback of the property is in line with the site historically and with the nature of George St.
- The materials and cladding are sympathetic and in keeping with those that are recommended as part of the heritage guidelines outlined the Tropman and Tropman Heritage Studies undertaken in the 1990s.

- The archaeological remnant that has been located on the site is recommended for protection and interpretation.

5.5 The following sympathetic solutions have been considered and discounted for the following reasons.

This is the most sympathetic solution for the site. It has incorporated the heritage management guidelines, this SOHI has been undertaken and the advice of a professional historian-heritage consultant and a conservation architect have all been included in this report and the subsequent design. To have developed a new hardware store in the original location would have led to a less sympathetic design as the needs of a hardware building have changed in the time since the original store was developed. The hardware store also requires a lot of parking and easy access to the site for customers to be able to pick up their purchases and this is not ideal for this small, windy street (as was indicated in the original design of the building).

As mentioned above to develop accommodation for older people in this location is not only sympathetic in terms of heritage but it is also the best logistically for older, vulnerable people who struggle to travel into town in order to collect basic daily groceries and attend medical appointments. The development of accommodation in the centre of town is also good for the HCA and the heritage in town as it is possible that bringing people to live back in the town centre may stimulate business in the town itself.

5.6 Have all options for retention and adaptive re-use been explored?

The buildings in this location whilst of historical significance are best described as being vernacular in nature. There are no design elements of significance and no architecture as such. They are simple large timber framed, corrugated iron buildings.

The materials are over one hundred years old and are not re-usable.

It is recommended however, that the large timber doors be kept and re-used perhaps either at the new store or at the original location providing an artefact that enables interpretation. These are the most significant elements of the building in terms of its history and use. The use of the doors on all four sides in response to the nature of the surrounding street was a bespoke design that is worthy of interpretation. The doors could be used as a springing board point to enable a more nuanced interpretation of the building.

It is recommended that both the doors and the remnant of the early shop both be retained and interpreted.

5.7 Can all of the significant elements of the heritage item be kept and any new development be located elsewhere on the site?

It is recommended that the remnant of the old shop and the large timber loading doors be retained and interpreted.

5.8 Is demolition essential at this time or can it be postponed in case future circumstances make its retention and conservation more feasible?

Demolition is necessary due to the state of the buildings.

5.9 Has the advice of a heritage consultant been sought? Have the consultant's recommendations been implemented? If not, why not?

This Statement of Heritage Impact has been undertaken by Dr Ruth Longdin, professional historian and heritage consultant in consultation with Peter Duggan, Heritage Architect.

5.10 Are important features of the item affected by the demolition (e.g. fireplaces in buildings)?

Elements of the building are recommended for interpretation, as indicated above.

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