



Nymboida Police Station Complex Heritage Assessment

FINAL REPORT

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1 Introduction

1.1 Preamble

Brookfield Johnson Controls have commissioned Ainsworth Heritage to prepare this Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) for the Nymboida Police Station Complex in Nymboida, NSW. The complex comprises the residence (including the station rooms), outhouse, lock up and stables.

The NSW Police Force have recently completed an audit of Police Stations and Residences in NSW and have identified Nymboida as not meeting their current needs. This SOHI has been prepared to assess the heritage significance of the buildings and provide recommendations for appropriate development options.

The Nymboida Police Station Complex is not currently listed on any statutory heritage registers (including the NSW Police Force's Section 120 register). However, Clarence Valley Council has noted that their heritage study did not cover the Nymboida area (the former Pristine Waters LGA). Consequently, they recommended that Brookfield Johnson Controls commission a heritage assessment of the buildings before any development options are considered.

In addition, Clarence Valley Council has applied for an Interim Heritage Order on the site, to allow time for a full heritage assessment to take place. However, the NSW Heritage Branch will consider the interim heritage order only once the heritage assessment is complete.

1.2 Aims & Methodology

The aims of this SOHI are to:

- 1. Understand the site and its significance:**
 - Review any available documents to understand the history of the site and its role in Nymboida;
 - Undertake a brief physical assessment of the site to identify its important elements, its setting and its condition;
 - Undertake a comparative analysis to establish the rarity and representativeness of the site; and
 - Review any background studies relating to the site, its history and its condition.
- 2. Understand the proposed development:**
 - Review the statutory obligations arising from the site's heritage significance;
 - Outline the design process; and
 - Provide an overview of the potential design options.
- 3. Understand the heritage impact of the proposed development:**
 - Outline the potential heritage impacts of each design option;
 - Recommend mitigation measures for each design (if necessary);
 - Outline a Statement of Heritage Impact; and
 - Develop appropriate management recommendations for any future development.



Figure 1.2: The subject site and its curtilage (Google Earth).

1.4 Previous Research and Heritage Recognition

The subject site is not listed as an individual heritage item on any statutory or non-statutory heritage register nor is it located within a heritage conservation area. However, Clarence Valley Council's heritage study has not yet extended to the Nymboida area and therefore the site has never been assessed for its potential heritage significance.

Clarence Valley Council has applied for an Interim Heritage Order (IHO) on the property, however the NSW Heritage Branch have rejected the application pending the results of this assessment.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

The aim of the report is to inform the proponent of the subject site's heritage significance, if any, and ensure that the proponent meets their statutory obligations under the *NSW Heritage Act, 1977*, the *Clarence Valley Council Local Environmental Plan*, and the *Clarence Valley Council Development Control Plan*. The assessment aims to understand the heritage significance of the site and recommend appropriate development options.

2 Site Background

2.1 Preamble

There is very little history relating directly to the Nymboida Police Station available via a desktop study. The NSW State Records (who hold the archives of the NSW Police Force) and the National Australia Archives do not appear to hold records relating to the site. In addition, there is very little relevant information available on Trove (historical digitised Australian newspapers) relating to the Police Station and its associated buildings.

Hence, the information presented below provides a general history of Nymboida and what little is known about Nymboida Police Station.

2.2 General History of Nymboida

The Nymboida area was first visited by Europeans c.1846, when a party from Sydney explored the area aboard the small steamer, *William the Fourth*. The party was trying to locate suitable areas for station and, following favourable reports, settlers began to move to the district. The name of the original Run was the "Pandemonium Run" however, by 1848, this had changed to Nymbwoidia (the spelling subsequently changed over time to Nymboida. At this time, the run comprised some 12,000 acres for 40 cattle and 4,000 sheep.

In 1855, Mrs E. McDonald had applied via conditional purchase to buy the 320 additional acres containing the "Nymboida Station Improvements." These comprised the public house, cultivation paddock and boiling down plant. However, by 1858 the purchase price had not been paid and the conditional purchase was cancelled.

Following this, the Nymboida Run changed hands several times in quick successions. A letter dated 31 December 1861 from Mr John T Neale showed that he had purchased the run and was prepared to buy the additional 320 acres. Only four years later the run was owned by C.J. Shannon however he had also not purchased the additional 320 acres. On the 18 March 1871, Stephen Buchan purchased the Nymboida Run.

In 1870, on 14 September, sales of the first town allotments were held in Grafton, offering 25 allotments for sale at £8 per acre. The layout of the village of Nymboida had been designed earlier, in 1869, by Surveyor Donaldson.

Following the 1870s, the village underwent rapid development and contained public houses, school, church, general store, police station and many private residences.

An image contained in the book "A History of Coutts Crossing and Nymboida Districts" shows an early photo which is titled "*The Old Nymboida Police Station demolished in 1910*" (see image below).

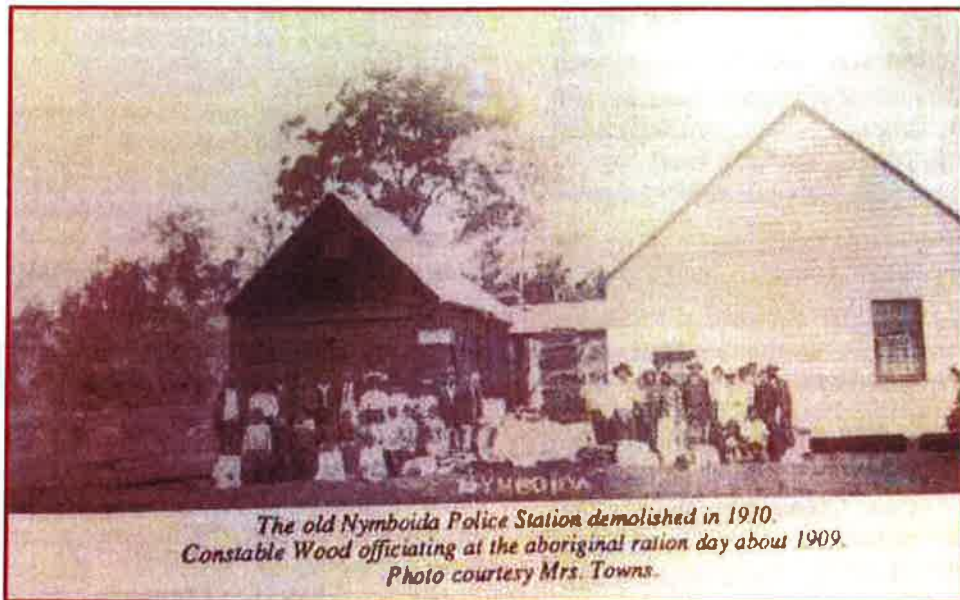


Figure 2.3: The old Nymboida Police Station.

On 13 August 1910, the Department of Public Works called for tenders for "new Police Buildings at Nymboida." Subsequently, on 29 August 1910, the Evening News reported that "*Tenders for the following works were opened this afternoon...Erection of new Police Buildings at Nymboida, 4 tenders, W. Morris £948-17s, lowest.*"

However, despite W Morris submitting the lowest priced tender, the Northern Star reported on the 27 September, 1910 that "*The following works tenders have been accepted: Erection Police Buildings at Nymboida, T.E. Jarman, Lismore £1060.*"

T.E Jarman was a builder and contractor based in Lismore who completed many other public buildings on the north coast, including the Salvation Army Barracks in Lismore and school building in Tyagarah and Fernleigh.

There do not appear to be any newspaper reports describing the new buildings or their opening, nor were any historic photographs of the buildings readily available.

3 Physical Analysis

This chapter provides a physical description of the site and its setting. It focuses on each of the buildings, their inter-relationships and their immediate environs (or setting).

3.1 Site Location and Setting

Nymboida Police Station is located at 4216 Armidale Road at the southern end of Nymboida, NSW (approximately 42kms south-west of Grafton). The site is described as part of Lot 116, DP 723024.

The site is roughly rectangular and is fenced on all sides. It contains the residence and station, lockup, outhouse and stables, as well as the footings of a former building and some mature historic plantings. The buildings are not oriented to the current road alignment, but to the former road alignment which ran to the north of the site.

The site is surrounded by open paddocks and the Nymboida River is situated downslope to the west of the site. It has views across the open paddocks and towards the river. As it is located at the far southern end of Nymboida, there are no other residences or commercial buildings visible from the Police Station.



Figure 3.1: View looking from the subject site to the Nymboida River (Ainsworth Heritage).



Figure 3.2: View looking north from the subject site (Ainsworth Heritage).

3.2 Description of Police Station Buildings

The Nymboida Police Station Complex contains several buildings, which together serve as the village's civic hub. This includes the residence and station, the lock up, the outhouse and the garage (former stables).



Figure 3.3: Front elevation of the Police residence (Ainsworth Heritage).



Figure 3.4: Side elevation of the Police residence (Ainsworth Heritage).



Figure 3.5: Internal hallway of residence, looking toward front door (Ainsworth Heritage).



Figure 3.6: Sitting room with new wall linings, new mantelpiece and original windows (Ainsworth Heritage).

3.2.3 Lockup

Physical description:

The former lockup (the historic term for the prisoner cell) is located to the rear of the residence and outhouse, and it is now used as the police station office. The lock-up consists of two rooms – one being the former prison lockup room and the other is the guard's room. The former lock up room retains clear evidence of its earlier function – it has a small door (presumably not original) to the exterior, which faces the residence and a very small, horizontally aligned high window with prison bars. The walls are unclad internally with exposed timber beams and cladding. The floors are also boarded and there is plumbing for basic toilet facilities. There is another internal door which leads into the guard's room. The guard's room, which now functions as the station office, has been heavily modified with new gyprock cladding to the walls, and carpet and linoleum to the floors. It also has fluorescent lights and air conditioning, as well as a door to the exterior.

Condition:

The lock-up's guard's room has been substantially altered internally to serve its modern function as the office of the police station, however the guard's room is highly intact and its original function is discernible. Externally, the building has undergone only minor changes and internally its layout remains virtually the same.



Figure 3.11: Interior of the lockup room with small, horizontal barred window (Ainsworth Heritage).



Figure 3.12: Door to the lock up (Clarence Valley Council).

4 Significance Assessment

This chapter undertakes a significance assessment of the Nymboida Police Station complex. Assessments of significance are carried out to determine and establish the level of importance or value that a place, site or item may have to the community. Assessments of significance are based on an understanding of a place's history together with a physical analysis and an appreciation of the comparative level of rarity or representativeness that a site possesses.

Cultural heritage significance is assessed using the NSW *Heritage Act, 1977* criteria and best practice guidelines such as the *ICOMOS Burra Charter*. The criteria relate to the site's historic, aesthetic, architectural, technical or social significance and its degree of representativeness and rarity.

4.1 Assessment of Significance

Criterion	Assessment
Criterion A: Historic Significance <i>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).</i>	The current Nymboida Police Station building was constructed c.1910 and has continued to function as a police station since this time. It has historic significance for its role as an operational police station and residence for the village of Nymboida and the surrounding areas. It has significance for its long and continuous association with the provision of police services to the local community. Significance level: Local
Criterion B: Associative Significance <i>An item has a strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or a group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)</i>	Does not meet this criterion.
Criterion C: Aesthetic Significance <i>An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW.</i>	The Nymboida Police Station complex, especially the main residence, is an attractive, early twentieth century timber cottage with some aesthetic significance, although this significance has been affected by the many modifications and changes it has undergone. Significance level: Local
Criterion D: Social Significance <i>An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in</i>	The Nymboida Police Station complex has social significance to the Nymboida community for its long and continuous role in the provision of police services to the local community. Significance level: Local

5 Legislative Obligations

This chapter summarises the statutory obligations of this report for the proponent.

5.1 NSW Heritage Act, 1977

The NSW Heritage Act, 1977 requires that government instrumentalities (i.e. state government agencies) maintain a register of their heritage assets and manage such assets in accordance with the State Government Heritage Management Guidelines.

The NSW Police Force does have a s.170 heritage register however Nymboida Police Station is not currently listed as a heritage item on this register. This Heritage Assessment has demonstrated that Nymboida Police Station has local heritage significance and as such, would threshold for listing in the s.170 heritage register.

The NSW Heritage Branch would only need to be consulted regarding plans to demolish the Nymboida Police Station if it was listed on the s.170 heritage register or if it had an interim heritage order in place over the site.

5.2 Clarence Valley Council Requirements

Clarence Valley Council's Local Environmental Plan requires that development application with an accompanying Statement of Heritage Impact be lodged with Council if alterations (including demolition) are being planned for places listed on the LEP's heritage schedule. Nymboida Police Station is not currently listed on the LEP's heritage schedule, however, it should be noted that Council has not yet undertaken an assessment of the Nymboida area's heritage. Consequently, Council has required that a heritage assessment be undertaken for the Police Station to assess its potential significance. This Heritage Assessment should be lodged with Council once completed and discussions should then be held with Council's Heritage Advisor and Planner regarding their requirements for the DA.

6 Options & General Impact

At this stage, the NSW Police Force does not have a preferred option for the future of the buildings at Nymboida. The buildings have been identified as needing substantial alterations to meet their operational needs however the options will be dependent on the results of this Heritage Assessment.

Consequently, this assessment can only look broadly at various options and their potential impact. Should any one of the options be chosen and a detailed design developed, we would recommend that a subsequent heritage impact statement be prepared at that stage.

6.1 Option 1 – Demolition of buildings and construction of a new Police Station

The option would involve the demolition of all the built elements within the Police Station and the construction of a new Police Station to the south or north of the existing site.

The advantage of this option would be a purpose built, modern police station and residence designed to fully meet modern operational requirements.

However, this option would have the highest level of impact on the significance of the existing police buildings.

As such, we would recommend that this option should be the last to be considered and it would only be feasible if there was substantial economic benefit to justify such an approach.

6.2 Option 2 – Removal of buildings and construction of a new Police Station

The option would involve relocating the existing buildings to a new site (possibly involving sale to a private owner) and the construction of a new Police Station to the south or north of the existing site.

The advantage of this option would be a purpose built, modern police station and residence designed to fully meet modern operational requirements.

However, this option would have moderate level of impact on the significance of the existing police buildings. Whilst the buildings would be moved to a new site and would not be demolished, they would be removed from their historic context which would lower their heritage value and their intactness.

As such, we would recommend that this only be considered should options 3 and 4 be deemed unfeasible.

6.3 Option 3 – Retention of buildings (for a new purpose) and construction of a new Police Station

The option would involve both the retention of the existing buildings and the construction of new Police buildings to the north or south of the site. It would require that the existing buildings be functional and maintained, and would only be an option should an appropriate re-use for them be found, i.e. leased as a home to private tenants.

- Clarence Valley Council's heritage advisor should be consulted with regarding the preferred option and what Council's specific requirements may be as they relate to heritage;
- Should an Interim Heritage Order be placed on the site, the Heritage Branch's staff should be consulted with regarding preferred options and all conditions of the IHO should be conformed with;
- Any new development on the site should not impact on the setting, curtilage or viewlines of the existing Police Station – this should be considered in the Statement of Heritage Impact;
- Any modifications, alterations and changes should seek to retain as much original built fabric as possible and to make any changes to the layout both discernible as new changes and if possible, reversible.

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