

30th July 2010

Urban Planning Outcomes
PO Box 787 Matraville
NSW 2036

Attention: Leone McEntee

Dear Leone,

Re: PROPOSED HOSPITAL EXTENSION NOWRA PARK RESERVE–

In response to your request for research and an opinion regarding the proposed siting of the Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre as an extension of Nowra Hospital facilities into adjoining land in Nowra Park, we provide the following information which clarifies the establishment of the reserve and its history.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Aboriginal Occupation

Prior to European settlement the Nowra region was inhabited by the Wodi-Wodi tribe of the Yuin nation. The Yuin people occupied land along the New South Wales coast south from the Shoalhaven to the Victorian border. The Yuin population was estimated at 11 000 before white settlement in 1788¹.

Early European Occupation of the Area

Survivors of the wreck of the Sydney Cove walked through the area in 1797 and George Bass explored it later that year. He followed Seven Mile Beach and crossed the shoals at the entrance to the river. Bass named it 'Shoals Haven' (now known as the Crookhaven River).

In the following years the area was visited by numerous explorers and surveyors. The name Nowra is attributed to Charles Throsby, who in 1821, wrote of a place named 'nou-woo-ro', an aboriginal word reputedly meaning either 'camping place' or 'black cockatoo'. Land grants were made in the region from the 1820s, though settlement in the vicinity of the present day town of Nowra did not occur until the 1850s.

According to James Jervis in his history of the Illawarra region, "land for a village had been reserved on Nowra Creek, and in 1850 Surveyor Mann was asked to measure portion of the reserve for Henry Nickless [which he described as] broken, barren country"². Mann deemed the village reserve unsuitable for the purpose intended. Nevertheless the Surveyor General persisted in his plans to provide a village on the southern side of the Shoalhaven and instructed Mann to make a survey of the reserve in

1 <http://about.nsw.gov.au/encyclopedia/article/yuin-people/>

2 "Illawarra: A Century of History" in *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, Vol 23, 1942, pp237-238
P:\JOBS\10\10424\Reports\Nowra Park history.docx

1851. A design for the town was subsequently approved and the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported in 1852 that “a site has been fixed upon for a township at Nowra on the Shoalhaven River”³.

Bernard Brown noted that the first land sale in the new township was held in April 1855, at which time he bought an allotment for £6⁴. The following year a further 25 allotments in the Nowra township (half acre blocks) with an upset price of £8 per acre and 21 suburban allotments (ranging between 1 and 16 acres) priced at £2-4 per acre were offered for sale⁵. Henry Gordon Morton visited the township in January 1857 and reported to Alexander Berry that: “there are seven dwellings, with one large workshop...They are rather neatly put up, and show more taste in the erection than is usually displayed on buildings of that class...[There are] seven families, embracing a population of 43 inhabitants, old and young.”⁶ More town blocks went on sale in Nowra in 1857, some selling for £4.

Following two very large floods on the Shoalhaven River, many of the residents of neighbouring town Terara moved to Nowra, the latter being situated on higher ground. Nowra was firmly established as the primary urban centre in the district in the 1870s when the Municipality of Nowra was gazetted in December 1871 with its headquarters in the government township; its population in 1871 was 243 but increased to 886 over the next ten years. Terara continued to decline in importance when the ferry service ceased following the opening of the Shoalhaven River Bridge in 1881, and the coming of the railway to Nowra in 1893 (signaling the end of the shipping trade). By 1891 the population of Nowra had grown to 1705. Other important developments impacting on the subsequent growth of the area include the establishment of a water supply to Nowra in 1894; the opening of the present courthouse in 1897 and the Nowra police station in 1900, the establishment of the first factory of the Nowra Co-operative Dairy Company in 1902; the opening of the United Aborigines Mission with an initial intake of seven children in 1908; the unveiling of Cambewarra Lookout in 1910 as a tourist attraction and the introduction of electricity to Nowra in 1927.

History and Development of the Subject Site

The subject site is described as CNO 410. 26 acres of land, adjoining the township to the north west of the town centre and bordered by the Shoalhaven River, was dedicated for public recreation on 17th October 1876. This reservation comprises the initial portion of the subject site and was gazetted along with sites vested in the Municipal Council of Nowra for a crossing place, water supply and water reserve (Figure 2). An adjoining 10 acres, the block immediately south of the initial portion, was dedicated on 26 March 1886. The two recreation reserves were amalgamated, comprising 36 acres, and proclaimed as “Nowra Park” on 20 December 1887. Simultaneously, a portion of North Street was extinguished and incorporated in the newly proclaimed park. Prior to this date the block south of Nowra Park (portion 14 of the Town of Nowra) was dedicated as a Show Ground and Public Recreation in January 1884.

³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5/8/1852, p3

⁴ *Garden of New South Wales*, p253

⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1856, p?

⁶ *ibid*

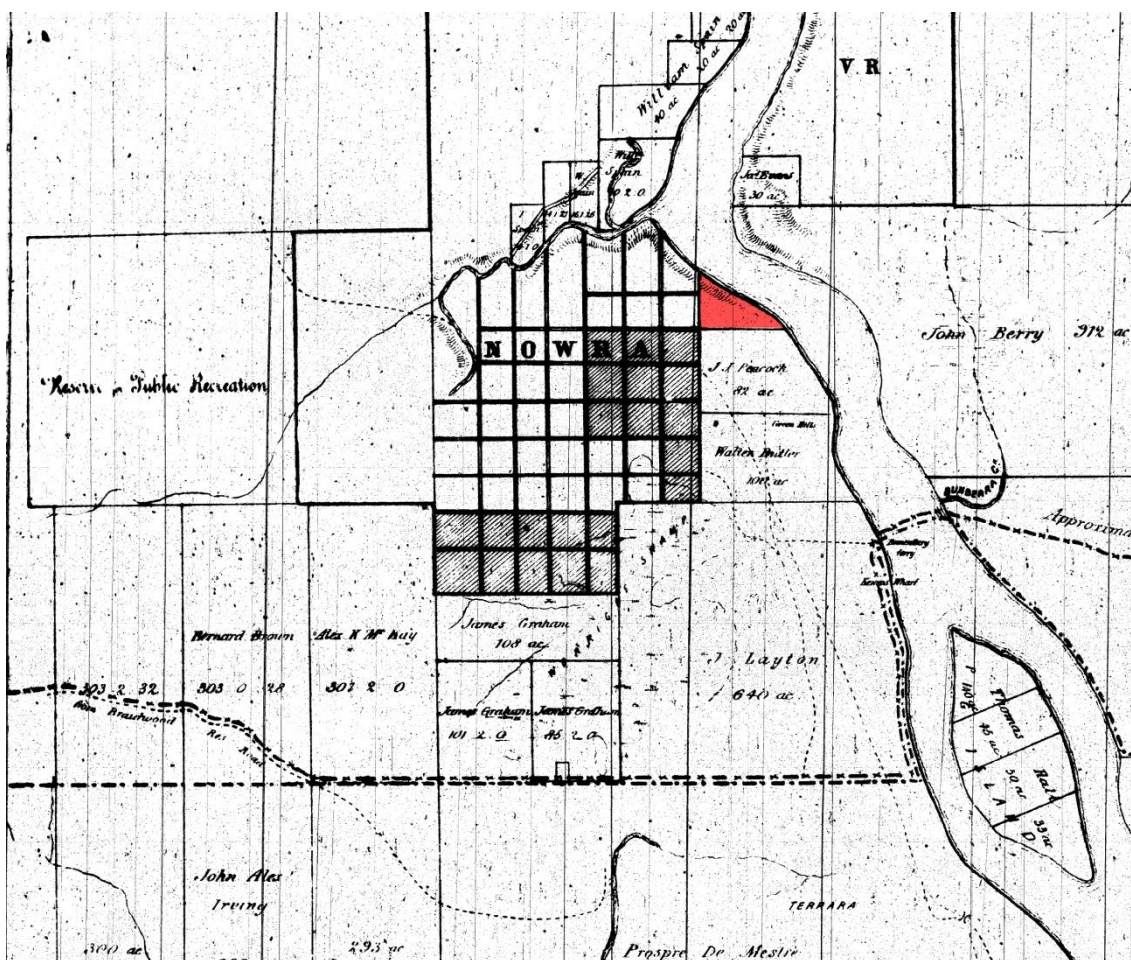


Figure 1 – Plan of Nowra Township and land grants in Shoalhaven River area submitted to the Legislative Assembly, 1859-60 (the plan is oriented east/west). The subject site, comprising 26 acres dedicated for public recreation in 1876, is shaded red above. The area shown herein as the 'Reserve for Public Recreation' is the location of the Nowra Racecourse.

Source: Joint Volumes of Papers Presented to the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, State Library of NSW

[4023]

Department of Lands,
Sydney, 28th December, 1876.

IT is hereby notified for public information that His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has been pleased to approve of the undermentioned Reserves at Nowra, being vested in the Municipal Council of that place, viz. :—

Site for Public Recreation, about 25 acres.
Site for a Crossing-place, 17 acres 3 roods.
Site for Water Supply, 32 acres 1 rood 2 perches.
Site for Water Reserve, 13 acres.

[Ms. 76-1,716]

THOMAS GARRETT.

Figure 2 – Notice appearing in the N.S.W. Government Gazette, 20/12/1887.

Source: Mitchell Library, SLNSW

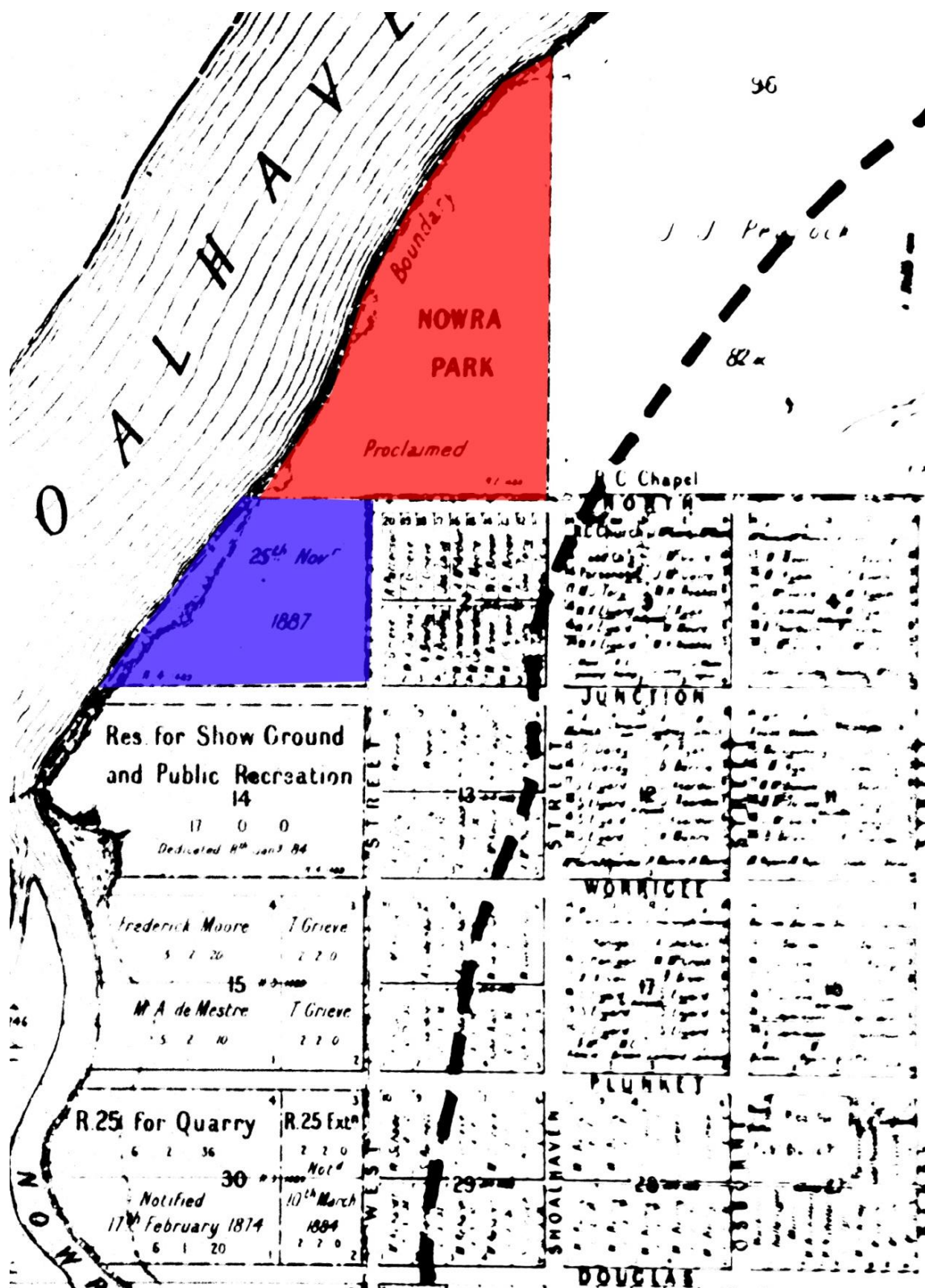


Figure 3 – Portion of Plan of the Town of Nowra, 1887 showing the area proclaimed as Nowra Park adjoining the Nowra Showground and Public Recreation. The portion gazetted in 1876 is shaded red and the additional portion dedicated in 1886 is shaded blue.

Source: Mitchell Library, SLNSW

NEW SOUTH WALES, } Proclamation by His Excellency The
to wit. } Right Honourable CHARLES ROBERT,
BARON CARRINGTON, a Member of Her
Majesty's Most Honourable Privy
(L.S.) Council, Knight Grand Cross of the
CARRINGTON, Most Distinguished Order of Saint
Governor. Michael and Saint George, Governor and
Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of
New South Wales and its Dependencies.

[N] pursuant of the power and authority vested in that
behalf in the Governor of New South Wales, with the
advice of the Executive Council, I, CHARLES ROBERT, BARON
CARRINGTON, as such Governor aforesaid, do, with the advice
of the Executive Council, hereby appoint that the "Dairies
supervision Act" shall come into operation in the Borough
of West Maitland, on the first day of January, one thousand
eight hundred and eighty-eight.

Given under my Hand and Seal, at Government House,
Sydney, this fourteenth day of December, in the year
of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-
seven, and in the fifty-first year of Her Majesty's
Reign.

By His Excellency's Command,
HENRY PARKES.

[7936] GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

NEW SOUTH WALES, } Proclamation by His Excellency The
to wit. } Right Honourable CHARLES ROBERT,
BARON CARRINGTON, a Member of Her
Majesty's Most Honourable Privy
(L.S.) Council, Knight Grand Cross of the
CARRINGTON, Most Distinguished Order of Saint
Governor. Michael and Saint George, Governor and
Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of
New South Wales and its Dependencies.

WHEREAS by the "Public Parks Act of 1881," it is
enacted that it shall be lawful for the Governor to
appoint Trustees of any lands which have been already or may
hereafter be dedicated for the purpose of public recreation,
convenience, health, or enjoyment: Now, therefore, I, CHARLES

ROBERT, BARON CARRINGTON, the Governor aforesaid, with
the advice of the Executive Council, do hereby, by this my
Proclamation, declare the land at Nowra, containing 36 acres,
of which about 25 acres was dedicated for the purposes of
public recreation in Gazette of 17th October, 1876, No. 267, page
4149, 10 acres 2 roods was dedicated for the same purpose in
Gazette of 26th March, 1886, No. 179, page 2040, and the
remainder was a part of North-street, extinguished by notifica-
tion in Gazette of 7th June, 1887, No. 326, page 3775, to be
a Public Park within the meaning of the "Public Parks Act of
1881," and that it be known by the name of "Nowra Park."

County of St. Vincent, parish of Nowra, Municipality of
Nowra, area about 36 acres: Commencing at the intersection of
the north side of Junction-street with the right bank of the
River Shoalhaven; and bounded thence on part of the south by
that side of that street bearing east 1,480 links to the west side
of West-street; thence on part of the east by that side of that
street bearing north 1,100 links to the north side of North-street;
thence on the remainder of the south by that side of that street
bearing east 1,100 links to the west side of Shoalhaven-street;
thence on the remainder of the east by that side of that street
bearing north 2,550 links to the right bank of the River Shoal-
haven aforesaid; and thence on the north-west by that bank of
that river upwards, bearing generally south-west, to the point
of commencement.

The land above described consists—(1) of about 25 acres,
dedicated for public recreation in Gazette of 17th October, 1876,
No. 367, page 4149, as shown on plan catalogued N. 2-1,489
in the Surveyor General's Office; (2) of 10 acres 2 roods, being
section 1 of the village of Nowra, dedicated for public recrea-
tion in Gazette of 26th March, 1886, No. 179, page 2040, as
shown on plan catalogued N. 4-1,499 in the Surveyor General's
Office; and (3) of a part of North-street, extinguished by noti-
fication in Gazette of 7th June, 1887, No. 326, page 3775.

[P. 87-1,987]

Given under my Hand and Seal, at Government House,
Sydney, this thirteenth day of December, in the year
of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-
seven, and in the fifty-first year of Her Majesty's
Reign.

By His Excellency's Command,
FRANCIS ABIGAIL.

[7935] GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

In lieu of notification published in Gazette of 25th November, 1887,
No. 613, page 7908.

Figure 4 – N.S.W. Government Gazette notice, 20/12/1887, p8435.

Source: Mitchell Library, SLNSW

NEW SOUTH WALES, } Proclamation by His Excellency The
to wit. } Right Honourable CHARLES ROBERT,
BARON CARRINGTON, a Member of Her
Majesty's Most Honourable Privy
(L.S.) Council, Knight Grand Cross of the
CARRINGTON, Most Distinguished Order of Saint
Governor. Michael and Saint George, Governor and
Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of
New South Wales and its Dependencies.

WHEREAS by the "Public Parks Act of 1884," it is enacted that it shall be lawful for the Governor to appoint Trustees of any lands which have been already or may hereafter be dedicated for the purpose of public recreation, convenience, health, or enjoyment: Now, therefore, I, CHARLES ROBERT, BARON CARRINGTON, the Governor aforesaid, with the advice of the Executive Council, do hereby, by this my Proclamation, declare the land at Bega, containing 36 acres, of which about 25 acres was dedicated for the purposes of public recreation in Gazette of 17th October, 1876, No. 367, page 4149, 10 acres 2 roods was dedicated for the same purpose in Gazette of 26th March, 1886, No. 179, page 2040, and the remainder was a part of North-street, extinguished by notification in Gazette of 7th June, 1887, No. 326, page 3775, to be a Public Park within the meaning of the "Public Parks Act of 1884," and that it be known by the name of "Nowra Park."

County of St. Vincent, parish of Nowra, Municipality of Nowra, area about 36 acres: Commencing at the intersection of the north side of Junction-street with the right bank of the River Shoalhaven; and bounded thence on part of the south by that side of that street bearing east 1,480 links to the west side of West-street; thence on part of the east by that side of that street bearing north 1,100 links to the north side of North-street; thence on the remainder of the south by that side of that street bearing east 1,100 links to the west side of Shoalhaven-street; thence on the remainder of the east by that side of that street; bearing north 2,550 links to the right bank of the River Shoalhaven aforesaid; and thence on the north-west by that bank of that river upwards, bearing generally south-west, to the point of commencement.

The land above described consists—(1) of about 25 acres, dedicated for public recreation in Gazette of 17th October, 1876, No. 367, page 4149, as shown on plan catalogued N. 2-1,489 in the Surveyor General's Office; (2) of 10 acres 2 roods, being section 1 of the village of Nowra, dedicated for public recreation in Gazette of 26th March, 1886, No. 179, page 2040, as shown on plan catalogued N. 4-1,489 in the Surveyor General's Office; and (3) of a part of North-street, extinguished by notification in Gazette of 7th June, 1887, No. 326, page 3775.
[P. 87-1,937]

Given under my Hand and Seal, at Government House, Sydney, this eighteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, and in the fifty-first year of Her Majesty's Reign.

By His Excellency's Command,
FRANCIS ABIGAIL.

[7339] GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

Figure 5—N.S.W. Government Gazette notice, 25/11/1887, p7908.

Source: Mitchell Library, SLNSW

P L A N

OF ALLOTMENTS APPLIED FOR TO PURCHASE BY THE
TOWN OF NOWRA, PARISH OF NOWRA COUNTY

LAVEN RIVER

J T STREET

NORTH STREET

JUNCTION

Sale at Nowra on the 12th September 1863
Suburban Lots D to V
lots 2, 3, 4 Sⁿ 17 1/2 12 3 Sⁿ 24 1 lot 4 Sⁿ 30
2, 3 Sⁿ 31 2 2 to 7 Sec 31
G.S. 10 are reserved above lots not bid for

Sale at Shoalhaven on the 3rd Sept. 1858
Suburban Lots 5 to 55.
Allot. 1 to 5 Sec 24; 182 Sec 3a; 1 to 7 Sec 31, 32 & 35; 12 W

Scale Eight Chains = 1 Inch

Notified 17 February 1874

14 18. 2-30

17 3-14

TA

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

O 18 10 5 9 21 15 0 5 11 4 9 0 2 5 11 5 11 0 10 0

Source: Crown Plan 3-1489, LPMA

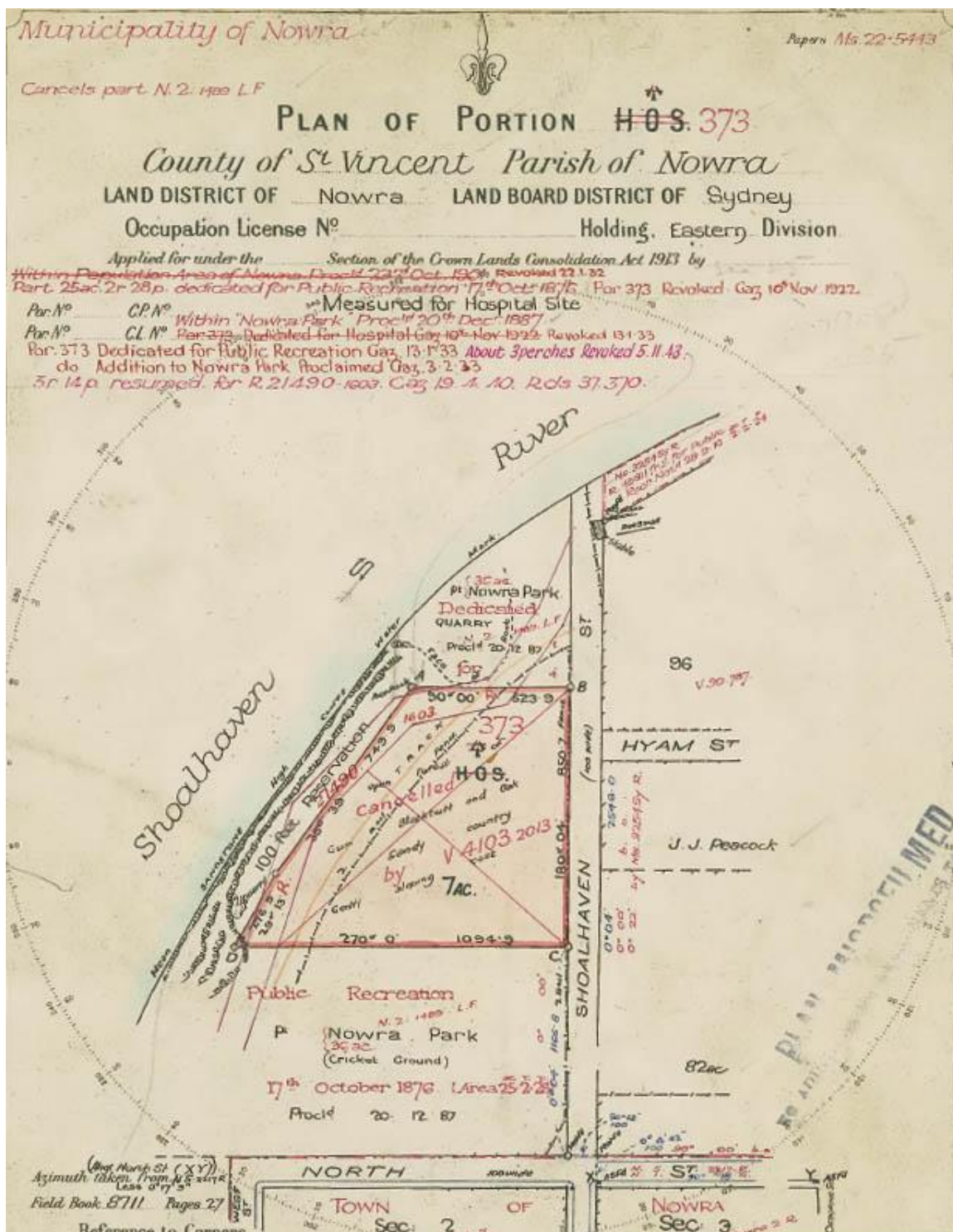


Figure 7 – Plan of Portion 373 showing area cancelled by Crown Plan V 4103.2013, measured for hospital site, 1922.

Source: Crown Plan 3302.2013, LPMA

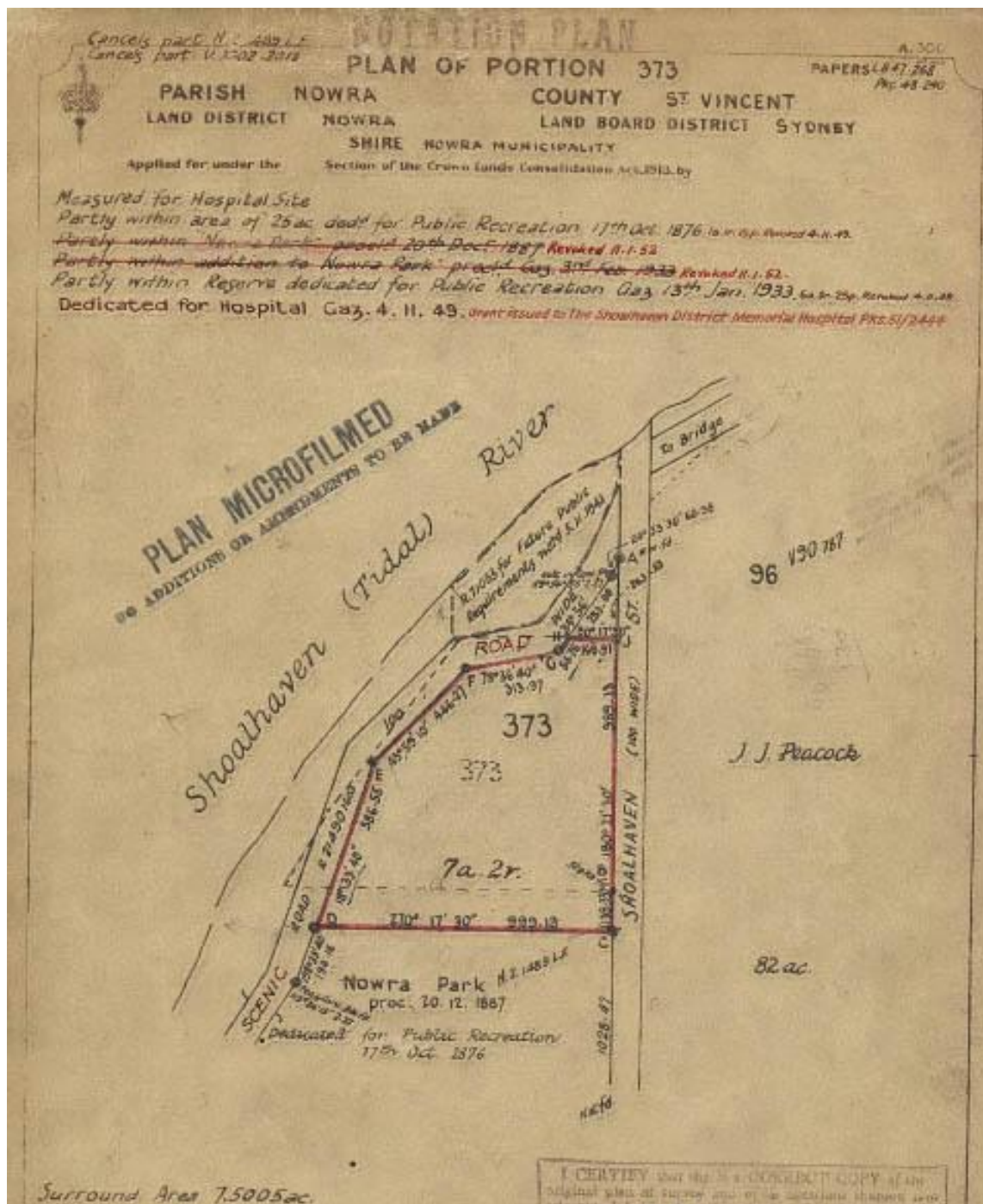


Figure 8 – Plan of Portion 373 showing area of Nowra Park measured for hospital site, 1922. The roadway herein called Scenic Drive was revoked from Public Recreation in 1940.

Source: Crown Plan 3-1489, LPMA

In 1918 a public meeting was called to open a fund to erect a public hospital in Nowra. The following year the Council established a sponsored committee (known as the Soldier's Memorial Hospital Committee) and they were informed the following year that the Council had no objections to erecting a hospital within Nowra Park. The northernmost portion (seven acres) of Nowra Park was surveyed and measured for a hospital in 1922. Figures 6 shows the area designated as hospital site as comprising 'open forest' adjoining the 100 feet reservation, whilst there is a quarry beyond that. On this same plan, 'cricket ground' is noted in the other portion of Nowra and according to

the Shoalhaven District Cricket Association Inc. "for at least 125 years, cricket has been played on this area we now know as the recreation ground".

A deputation of Nowra residents met with the Chief Secretary, C W Oakes, in October 1922 to ask that he expedite the construction of a memorial hospital at Nowra. By this date some £2000 had been subscribed, in addition to a subsidy promised by the Government of £1000. At this meeting Mr Oakes advised the group that "the Hospital Advisory Board estimated the cost of constructing the proposed hospital at between £7000 and £8000"; the discrepancy between the sum raised and the estimated cost of construction ruled building the proposed hospital "out of the question"⁷.

NOWRA.—The Methodist Church
crowded on the occasion of the dedication
of a fine new organ recently installed. A
church organ recital was given by Mr.
Arnold Mota, B.A., of Sydney, all the items
being greatly appreciated.—A well-attended
meeting of returned soldiers was held on
Thursday. For some time the Nowra sub-
branch of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors'
League was practically dead, and the meeting
decided to reform the organisation. The
absence of a soldiers' memorial in Nowra
was discussed. Over £2000 has already been
subscribed, and the idea was to erect a
memorial hospital in Nowra, but the amount
even with the Government subsidy, was not
sufficient to erect a building to cope with
requirements. The hospital advisory board
a newly-formed association, appointed five
delegates to confer with the committee of
the proposed memorial hospital, with a view
of reaching finality on the matter of a
memorial.

Figure 9 – *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17/9/1923, p10.

With the question of building a memorial hospital dismissed by the Government for the time being, attention turned to the question of applying the funds subscribed for other memorial purposes (Figure 8). In 1929 the Master in Equity approved in principle plans for the funds to be used to erect a memorial arch and gates at the entrance to Nowra Park in Junction Street⁸. The Court found in favour of the proposed scheme in 1930 (Figure 9) and the arch and gates were officially opened by Rear-Admiral Evans on 22 January 1931 (Figure 10).

⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20/10/1922, p10

⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6/9/1930, p12

IN EQUITY.

(Before the Chief Judge Mr. Justice Harvey.)

NOWRA SOLDIERS' MEMORIAL.

Gates Scheme Approved.

About October, 1919, the residents of **Nowra** and district decided to raise money for the purpose of erecting a memorial public hospital at **Nowra**, in commemoration of the soldiers of that town and district who fell in the Great War. About £2386/9/10 was raised, and the Government promised a grant of £1000 towards the cost of the building, if the plans were approved by the Minister. The committee of the fund secured the dedication of seven acres for a site. Plans and specifications were prepared for a building, estimated to cost £2000. The plans, however, were not acceptable to the Minister, who required a hospital which would have cost about £8640, one-third of which was to have been borne by the Government.

Finding itself unable to carry out its original plan, the committee petitioned the Court, following the unanimous decision of the subscribers, asking that the amount standing to the credit of the fund should be spent on the erection of memorial gates at the entrance to **Nowra Park**. The matter was referred to the Master in Equity, who propounded a scheme. This was approved.

The scheme, as settled by the Master, provides that £2569 5/, which stood to the credit of the Shoalhaven Soldiers' Memorial Fund, should be applied to paying the cost of the Court proceedings; for the payment to George Cook, of Windsor, monumental mason, of £1890 for the erection of the gates; of such a sum, not exceeding £200, as might be certified by the architect, Mr. C. Blacket, as necessary payment for any additional expenses incurred in connection with the erection of the gates; the architect to receive a special premium of £21, and 6 per cent. on the £1890, and any additional expenses in respect of the gates; the balance to go to the trustees of the **Nowra** Public and Recreation Show-ground for investment, and the income therefrom to be applied to the maintenance, repair, and improvement of the memorial gates.

Mr. Loxton (instructed by Messrs. Perkins, Stevenson, and Co., city agents for Messrs. Marriott and Oliver, of **Nowra**) appeared in support of the application.

Figure 10 – Sydney Morning Herald, 6/9/1930, p12



Figure 11 – Soldiers Memorial Gates and Arch at the entrance to Nowra Park, c.2010.

Source: www.skp.com.au/memorials2/images/p20680.jpg

In the interim Nowra residents were provided health services at several private ‘cottage’ hospitals, including Shoalhaven Private Hospital (Bridge Road, Nowra), St Bede’s (Osborne Street, Nowra), Queenwood (Worrigee Street, Nowra), Booran (Jervis Street, Nowra), Elston (Plunkett Street, Nowra) and Edman House (maternity) in Junction Street, Nowra. The nearest public hospital was the David Berry Hospital in Tannery Road, Berry.

In 1942 the Council formed a new committee to renew the community’s demand for the provision of a hospital in Nowra suitable to the district size. Eventually in 1946 the Government set aside a site for a hospital in accordance with the 1922 survey of the northern portion of Nowra Park (Figure 7) wherein seven acres was revoked and rededicated for a hospital. The Minister for Health announced that a 60-bed hospital was to be erected in 1947. By 1949 the Nowra community was extremely dissatisfied at the “failure of the Government to provide the 60-bed hospital promised by the Minister for Health, approved by gazette but not placed on estimates”⁹ and called on the government to immediately take over the Shoalhaven Private Hospital as a subsidised public hospital¹⁰. The Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital temporary hospital would eventually be opened in 1951, though the decision to build a 90-bed brick hospital was not approved until 1956. The permanent Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital was erected and opened in 1958.

⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28/1/1949, p4

¹⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31/5/1949, p5



Figure 12 – Aerial view of Nowra District Memorial Hospital and Nowra Park, adjoining the Shoalhaven River, about 2010.

Source:

<http://www.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/region/images/econodev/NOWRA%20HOSPITAL%20991210.JPG>

Conclusion

It can be seen from the above information that the Nowra Park land in question is not part of the earlier Reserve dedicated in 1855 but is a later reservation dating from 1876 the northern portion of which has been occupied by the Nowra Hospital since 1946. This research shows that claims that this was the first parkland declared in NSW and possibly the first in Australia are unfounded.

The Park is nevertheless a significant environmental element in the structure of the town and is sensitive from a landscape character point of view. New development of the type proposed should take into consideration the landscape qualities of the perimeter of the parkland and adopt strategies to limit the visual impacts of development through appropriate landscape works. Additionally it would be appropriate for the evolution of the site to be appropriately interpreted for public understanding.

We trust this clarifies the situation and would be happy to discuss any further implications of the proposal with you if required.

Yours sincerely,

NBRS+PARTNERS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Staas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ROBERT STAAS

Director / Heritage Consultant