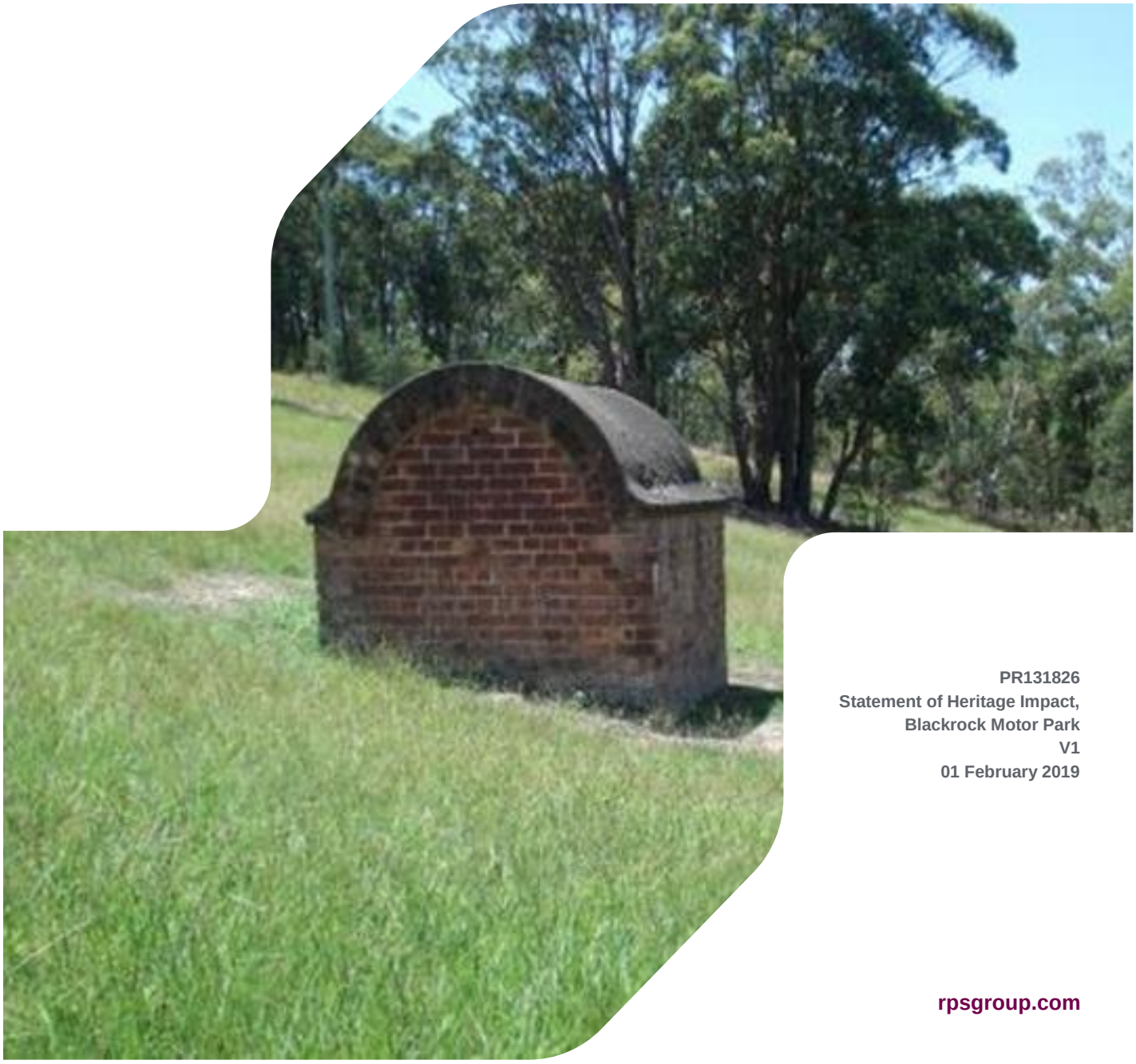
STATEMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT

Blackrock Motor Park



PR131826
Statement of Heritage Impact,
Blackrock Motor Park
V1
01 February 2019

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Approval for issue

A Byrne		7 February 2019

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Contents

Tables

Plates

Figures

Appendices

1 INTRODUCTION

Barr Property and Planning commissioned RPS to prepare a Conservation Management Plan (CMP), including a Statement of Heritage Impact (SHI), for the former Rhondda Colliery. This Statement of Heritage Impact has been undertaken in accordance with the *NSW Heritage Act 1977* and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

1.1 Project Area

The proposed development area is that of the former Rhondda Colliery in the Lake Macquarie local government area, consisting of 630 acres of rehabilitated mining land. The proposed development area is defined as Lot 101 in Deposited Plan (DP) 1073163 (Figure 1).

1.2 Proposed Development

The proposed development enacts the conservation incentive of the Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2014 (Section 5.10 (10)). Under the conservation incentive, the consent authority may grant consent to development for any purpose on land on which a heritage item is erected, or for any purpose on an Aboriginal place of heritage significance, even though development for that purpose would otherwise not be allowed under the Plan. The consent authority must be satisfied that:

- The conservation of the heritage item or Aboriginal place of heritage significance is facilitated by the granting of consent;
- The proposed development is in accordance with a heritage management document approved by the consent authority;
- The consent to the proposed development would require that all necessary conservation work identified in the heritage management document is carried out;
- The proposed development would not adversely affect the heritage significance of the heritage item, including its setting, or the significance of the Aboriginal place of heritage significance; and
- The proposed development would not have any significant adverse effect on the amenity of the surrounding area.

The proposed development would be classified as a recreational facility (outdoor) according to the definitions contained within the Lake Macquarie LEP 2014. It would use of part of the land as a driver training centre, motoring experiences centre, adventure tourism-based experiences, visitor and training centre and accommodation for users of BlackRock Motor Park. The major components associated with the proposed development include a 5.58km track circuit to facilitate driver training and accommodate safety, education and driver experiences, a skid pan, go-kart circuit, visitor centre including short term accommodation, additional accommodation in the form of villa and lodge facilities, stable café, four-wheel drive experience, BlackRock Village incorporating individual modules containing parking and short term accommodation, as well as ancillary structure (Figure 2).

The proposed development is consistent with Clause 5.10 of the Lake Macquarie LEP 2014 and the Conservation Incentive subclause. The proposed development would facilitate the conservation of Rhondda Colliery (167) and the Rhondda Colliery railway (170) with the conservation and adaptive reuse of existing infrastructure, the interpretation of removed infrastructure and the interpretation of the wider

cultural significance. The proposed development would be completed in accordance with an approved CMP and would not adversely affect the significance of Rhondda Colliery (167) and Rhondda Colliery railway (170) including the setting.

RPS coordinated with the architect (SHAC), landscape architect (Moir) and other consultants in preparing the development application to ensure an integrated approach to conservation of the cultural significance of the place and interpretation as a form of conservation.

1.3 Authorship

RPS Cultural Heritage Consultant Georgia Wright prepared the SHI. RPS Draftsperson Natalie Wood provided technical assistance. RPS Newcastle Cultural Heritage Manager Tessa Boer-Mah and Joanne McAuley, RPS Principal Cultural Heritage Consultant reviewed the Report.

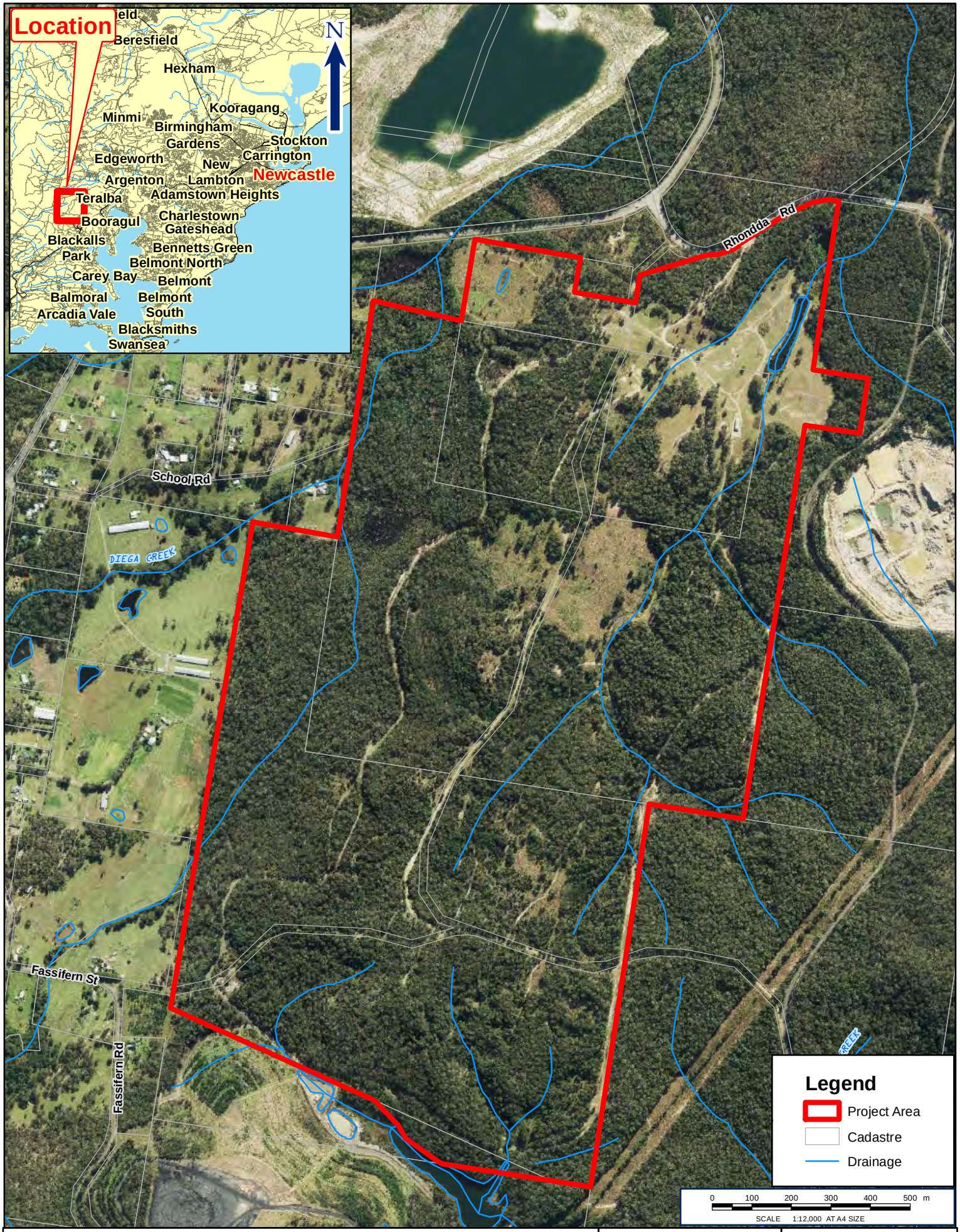

FIGURE 1: PROJECT AREA

LOCATION: WAKEFIELD	DATUM: GDA94 PROJECTION: MGA Zone 56
JOB NO.: **PR 131826** PURPOSE: HERITAGE Technician: james.hugo Date: 19/4/2017	Data Sources: RPS Land and Property 2015

CLIENT: THE FORMULA COMPANY

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RPS

Path: J:\JOBS\131k\131826 Wakefield\10 - Drafting\Arcgis Map Documents\Arch\131826 Figure 1 Project Area A A4 20170419.mxd

KEY - Site Macro

GENERAL

- BOUNDARY LINE - WHOLE SITE
- BOUNDARY LINE - INTERNAL
- CONTOUR 5M
- CONTOUR 1M
- BUSHFIRE APZ
- DRY CREEK LINE
- FIRST ORDER GRID LINE
- SECOND ORDER GRID LINE
- EXISTING WATERCOURSE
- LANDSCAPED AREA 01
- LANDSCAPED AREA 02
- SEWERAGE TRANSPIRATION
- EXISTING TREE CANOPY
- EXISTING TREE CANOPY MANAGED
- EXISTING TREE CANOPY REMOVED
- PROPOSED TRACK
- HERITAGE ITEM
- HERITAGE CURTILAGE
- PROPOSED POOL
- EXISTING ROAD
- PROPOSED ROAD
- ROOF OVERHANG
- DECK / TERRACE
- SHORT STAY ACCOMMODATION / FACILITIES - 1 BED
- SHORT STAY ACCOMMODATION - 2 BED
- SHORT STAY ACCOMMODATION - 3 BED
- FUNCTION CENTRE
- GARAGING
- MANAGERS RESIDENCE

KEY - Stations

A	SITE ENTRY
B	CENTRE OF OPERATIONS & TRAINING ROOMS
C	CONCOURSE
D	DISPLAY LAWN
E	EMERGENCY CENTRE
F	FOUR WHEEL DRIVE EXPERIENCE
G	GO KARTS
H	STABLE CAFE
I	IRRIGATION POND & FISH STOCK
J	PITS
K	MECHANICS
L	FUEL FARM
M	MAINTENANCE SHED
N	GARAGING
O	OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION, SHORT STAY
P	PARKING
Q	ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND
R	LODGE
S	SKID PAN & SAFETY TRAINING
T	TRACK
U	SEWERAGE TREATMENT / TRANSPIRATION
V	VIP PARKING
W	WASTE STORAGE
X	MAJOR NORTH SOUTH GRID LINE
Y	MAJOR EAST WEST GRID LINE
Z	PROJECT SETOUT POINT

CONSULTANTS

TOWN PLANNING	Barr Property & Planning	T 0403 093 664
CIVIL ENGINEER	Northrop Consulting Engineers	T 4943 1777
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT	Moir Landscape Architecture	T 4965 3500
GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER	GHD Australia	T 4979 9983
ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER	MJD Environmental	T 0416 208 684
HERITAGE CONSULTANT	RPS Group	T 4940 4200
TRAFFIC ENGINEER	SECA Solution	T 4032 7979
RISK ASSESSMENT	EP Risk	T 4048 2845

AMENDMENTS

No	Drn	Chk	Date	Comment
A	TG	JH	10.05.17	Consultants
B	TG	JH	22.05.17	Consultant Meeting
C	TG	JH	29.05.17	Revised Site Plan
D	TG	JH	15.06.17	Revised Base Plan
E	TG	JH	16.06.17	Civil / Landscape Workshop
F	TG	JH	19.06.17	Revised Site Plan
G	TG	JH	26.06.17	75% Design Development
H	TG	JH		Revised Site Plan
I	TG	JH	10.07.17	Coordination Meeting
J	TG	JH	12.07.17	For Coordination
K	TG	JH	24.07.17	For Coordination
L	TG	JH	24.07.17	For Coordination
M	TG	JH	26.07.17	Client
N	TG	JH	28.07.17	Coordination
01	TG	JH	10.08.17	For DA LMCC

NOTES

1. Dimensions are in millimeters unless otherwise shown.
2. Work to given dimensions. Do not scale from drawing
3. Check all dimensions on site prior to construction and fabrication.
4. Bring any discrepancies to the attention of the proprietor & architect.

CLIENT NAME
PALMER GROUP

SCALE
0m 10 20 30 40 50 1:1000 @A1

PROJECT NAME AND ADDRESS
Blackrock Motor Park
Old Rhondda Colliery Site Rhondda Road, Wakefield NSW

DRAWN: TG
APPROVED: JH

STATUS
FOR APPROVAL

DRAWING TITLE
Proposed Site Plan

PROJECT NO. **3606** DRAWING NO. **DA1301** REV. **01**

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2 STATUTORY CONTEXT

The *NSW Heritage Act 1977 and Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* provides for the conservation of the State's environmental heritage. Development applications must be assessed in accordance with the NSW *Heritage Act 1977* and *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and the appropriate approvals obtained as required.

2.1 NSW Heritage Act 1977

The NSW *Heritage Act 1977* includes a number of provisions relating to the identification and protection of the State's environmental heritage. In addition to the establishment of the State Heritage Register (SHR), the Act includes provisions relating to Interim Heritage Orders and Section 170 Heritage and Conservation Registers and 'relics' provisions.

To assist management of the State's environmental heritage, the Act distinguishes between assets of State and local significance:

- State significance refers to significance to the State in relation to the historical, archaeological, architectural, cultural, social, natural or aesthetic value of an item.
- Local significance refers to significance to an area in relation to the historical, archaeological, architectural, cultural, social, natural or aesthetic value of an item.

2.1.1 Relics Provision

The 'relics' provision applies to all archaeological relics that form part of the State's environmental heritage but which are not identified on the SHR or protected under an Interim Heritage Order.

A relic is defined under the Act as:

> *Any deposit, object or material evidence:*
>
> *(a) which relates to the settlement of the area that comprises New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement, and*
>
> *(b) which is of State or local significance*

It is an offence under Section 139 of the Act to disturb or excavate land knowing or with reasonable cause to suspect that the disturbance or excavation would affect archaeological relics except in accordance with a permit (or in accordance with a gazetted exception to the Act). Section 139 of the Act applies to all land within NSW not included on the SHR.

Permits are issued under Section 140 of the Act, or Section 60 for State significant relics. There are a number of exceptions and exemptions under Section 139(4) of the Act, Section 57(2) for State significant relics for minor activities that would not adversely affect significance. Section 146 of the Act requires that all identified archaeological relics are reported to the NSW Heritage Council (or NSW Heritage Division).

It should be noted that not all archaeological resources are considered relics under the Heritage Act 1977. Important archaeological resources often comprise a number of different elements including archaeological 'relics' of significance in the form of archaeological deposits, artefacts and objects, but also other material associated with demolition or a work. A work is defined as a form of infrastructure including a culvert, drain, abutment or similar.

Where an exception is granted, and during the course of the development, substantial intact archaeological relics of State or local significance, not identified in an archaeological assessment or statement as required by the exception, are identified, all activity must cease in the affected area and the Heritage Division notified in writing in accordance with Section 146 of the Act. Depending on the nature of the archaeological relic, additional assessment and approvals may be required prior to the recommencement of any activity in the affected area.

2.2 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) regulates a system of environmental planning and assessment for NSW. Land use planning requires that environmental impacts are considered, including the impact on cultural heritage. Planning documents such as Local Environment Plans (LEPs) and State Environmental Planning Policies often contain provisions relating to cultural heritage. The Lake Macquarie LEP applies to Rhondda Colliery.

2.2.1 Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2014

The Lake Macquarie LEP 2014 requires development consent to:

- Demolish, move or alter a heritage item;
- Demolish, move or alter a building, work, relic or tree within a heritage conservation area.
- Disturb or excavate an archaeological deposit knowing, or having reasonable cause to suspect, that the disturbance would expose, damage or destroy a relic.

The consent authority must, before granting consent, consider the effect of a proposed development on the heritage significance of the item or area concerned.

Rhondda Colliery is included on the Lake Macquarie LEP 2014 (I67).

Additional provisions under Lake Macquarie LEP 2014 Section 5.10 (10) are outlined in Section 1.2 of this document.

2.3 The Burra Charter

The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, The Burra Charter, 2013 (Burra Charter) and the associated series of Practice Notes provide a best practice standard for managing cultural heritage places in Australia.

3 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This section sets out the historical context of the assessment and consideration of non-Aboriginal cultural heritage.

3.1 The Donaldson's Estate

Alexander L. Donaldson, Henry Donaldson and James Donaldson purchased Portion 75 (40 acres) and Portion 76 (40 acres) on 15 July 1867. The Donaldson's purchased an additional 305 acres (Portion 13) under the *Crown Lands Alienation Act 1861* on 23 December 1902.

The 1880 Plan of Portion 13 described the land as grassed with a swamp extending across part of Portion 13, Portion 74 and Portion 75 (Plate 10.1). In 1880, improvements included fencing to the value of £51 and ringbarking and other improvements to the value of £20. The Donaldson's leased the land to William Laidley and Company. The Donaldson's received "4d on round coal, 1½d per ton on small, and 3d on unscreened coal" (*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 20 May 1903:7).

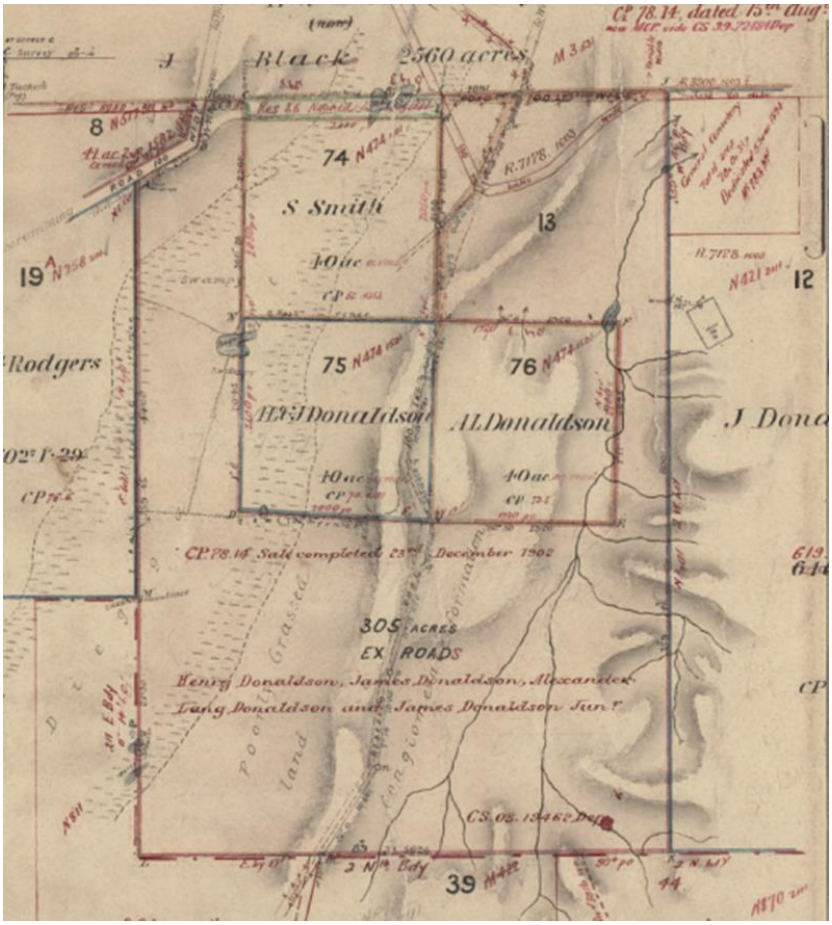

Plate 1 Plan of Portion 13 Parish of Teralba County of Northumberland (677-2111)

3.2 Rhondda Colliery

William Laidley and Company, which operated the Co-operative Colliery at Wallsend, opened Rhondda in 1900. The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser described Rhondda on 27 October 1900:

> The estate, situated at Teralba, comprises upwards of 1800 acres of proved coal land distant 13 miles from the port of Newcastle… The hauling engines and other plant in the course of erection are calculated for an output of 1500 tons per day drawn from an adit. The screens and travelling belts are of the most modern pattern, no expense being spared to place on the market a clean coal (*Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* 27 October 1900:988).

Mr James Barr, the proprietors' manager at the Co-operative Colliery, was entrusted with the layout and equipment of Rhondda Colliery, with machinery assembled under the supervision of Mr R W Laidley, consulting engineer. Mr Archibald Gardiner laid out the railway and C. E Hamilton and Mr Ahearn, contractor, of Sydney, constructed the road (Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser 27 October 1900:988).

On 27 November 1900 Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate reported that Mr Shepherd Laidley, Senior Partner of Messrs. William Laidley and Co, inspected Rhondda, which comprised upwards of 1800 acres of proved coal land, to the north of Teralba:

> He found the erection of surface machinery at the tunnel mouth well forward. The hauling engines and other plant are calculated for an output of 1500 tons per day, though, of course, it will be some time before the mine will be sufficiently developed to give such an extensive output. The screens and travelling belts are the most modern pattern, no expense being spared to place on the market a perfectly clean coal. The seam is said to be 13ft in thickness, though not of the quality of the borehole seam, which is believed to underlie at a depth of 700ft. It is contemplated to test the seam by diamond drill, and if proved equal to anticipation, it is proposed to sink and work the coal…The mine is connected by railway with the dyke, the private line, three miles in length, joining the Great Northern Railway the other side of Cockle Creek (Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate 27 January 1900:988) (Plate 2 - Plate 4).

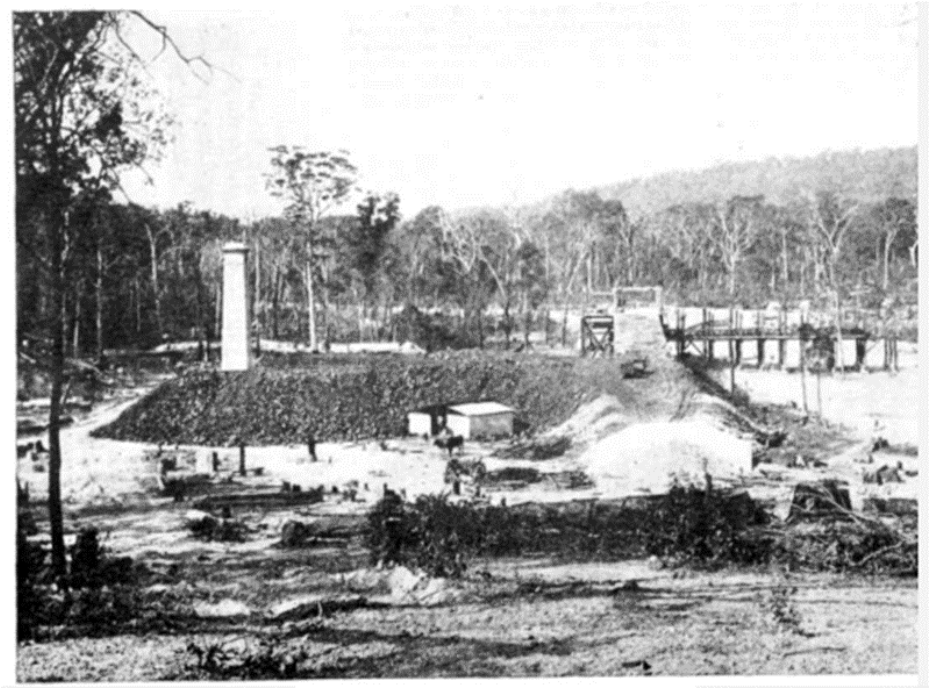

Plate 2 Rhondda Colliery (*Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* 27 October 1900:988)

Plate 3 Rhondda Colliery (*Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* 27 October 1900:988)

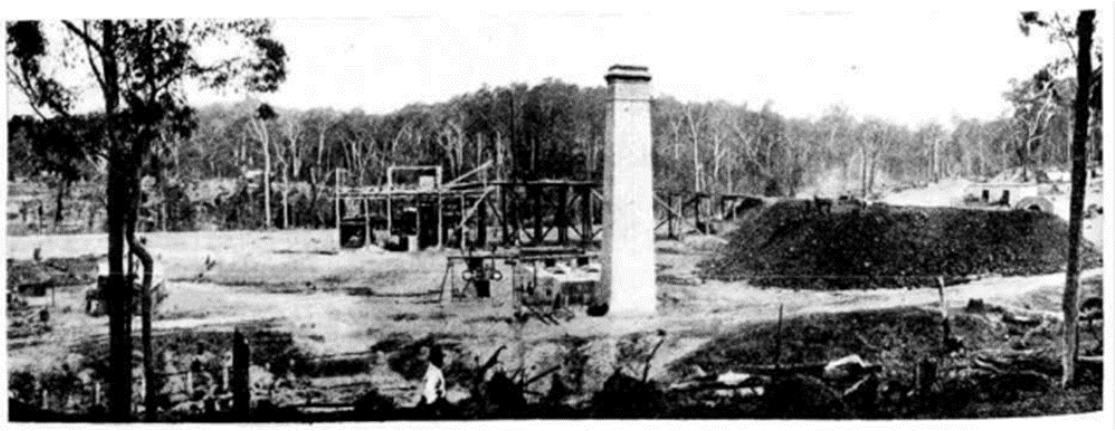

Plate 4 Rhondda Colliery (*Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* 27 October 1900:988)

In October 1902, Rhondda included an under-manager's residence, office, stables and goods-shed. Mr Frew had established the Rhondda Hotel, with ample accommodation and a road leading off the Cooranbong Road (*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 13 October 1902:7).

Rhondda operated on the latest system:

> *An endless rope with skips…are attached to by clippers' bring coal to the surface and as the full skip goes into the tipper it pushes the empty one out around a half-moon curve, where a spiked creeper chain catches the empty skip, and carries it to a higher elevation, where it is clipped out by a boy to the endless rope and taken back in the put to the different flats* (*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 13 October 1902:7).

In December 1904 the Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate reported that "Two Sullivan coal-cutting machines are now established in the Rhondda Colliery, the property of William Laidley and Company". It noted:

> *The colliery was closed down some months ago, and about 120 hands were paid off, owning, it was said, to the slackness of trade. It is stated now that work will be resumed again at the beginning of the year, but under different conditions. The proposal is to make the machines do the work that was formerly done by the miners, and the company will employ men to break down and fill the coal (Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocat*e 6 December 1904:5).

William Laidley and Company recommended Laidley's Blend for bunker purposes. The blend included coal from the Co-operative Colliery and Rhondda. In November 1907 William Laidley and Company had "contacted to bunker with Laidley's Blend, in Newcastle or Sydney, the steamers of 35 of the principal steamer companies in Great Britain and the Continent, trading with Australia" (*Daily Commercial News and Shipping List* 29 November 1906:4).

In March 1909, Messrs. Warburton, Frankl and Company completed a high-tension electrical transmission set up at Rhondda, with a three-phase current at 2200 volts generated at a power-house on the surface and carried in armoured cables to a sub-station below ground, where it is converted to direct current at 250 volts pressure for operating coal-cutters. The high-tension transmission method reduced the loss of power associated with a low-tension system, and ensured the full pressure on and the full output from the coal-cutters. The machinery was manufactured by Messrs. Ernest Scott and Mountain, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, UK (*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 20 March 1909) (Plate 5).

In June 1910 Rhondda employed between 130 and 140 persons including about 60 shooters and fillers. The seam at Rhondda was about seven feet six inches and worked with machines. The parties that followed the machines consisted of a shooter and two fillers, the shooter being the experienced miner, and the fillers labourers (Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate 22 June 1910:7).

The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate noted a lack of accommodation at Rhondda with persons unable to secure accommodation. Consequently, persons employed at Rhondda lived at Teralba and further away (*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 29 April 1910:6).

> *Last year, Messrs. W. Laidley and Company… erected a few residences, in order to provide for some of the workmen. Additional residences are, however, needed; and, if let a moderate rental, would quickly have tenants (Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 29 April 1910:6).

Plate 5 Rhondda Colliery 1910 with screening infrastructure in right mid-ground (Lake Macquarie Library)

3.2.1 William Laidley

William Laidley (1828-1897) founded William Laidley and Co in 1871. Prior to that, Laidley had held a position with the Commonwealth Bank. He had acted as a merchant and proprietor, purchased a controlling interest in the Wallsend Co-Cooperative Coal Company in 1869. Between 1889 and 1897 he acted as a Member of the NSW Legislative Council. He held a seat on the Board of the Bank of New South Wales and chaired the Commercial Union Insurance Company. He also acted as an agent for the Royal Insurance Company (Parliament of New South Wales, William Laidley). Laidley had an active interest in charitable institutions and often attended the Legislative Council Chamber. He was regarded as a conscientious and shrewd public figure (*The Maitland Mercury*, 20 February 1897:16).

3.2.2 James Barr

James Barr (1851-1935) managed William Laidley and Company operations at Rhondda. He had coalmining experience in Scotland and America before he came to Australia in 1874. He spent 10 years at the Hartley Vale coal and shale mines and then came to West Wallsend, where, as manager, he sank the main shafts at Monk-Wearmouth and Killingworth. In 1890 Mr Barr became associated with Messrs. William Laidley and Company, as manager of the Co-operative Colliery at Wallsend. He developed and managed the Rhondda Colliery (*The Sydney Morning Herald* 17 July 1936:7).

3.3 The Railway

Construction of a railway to connect Rhondda with the Great Northern railway commenced in April 1900. In April 1900 the Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate reported:

> *The railway to connect with the Great Northern line near Cockle Creek is now being constructed over a distance of about three miles, Mr John Ahearn having the contract, at a cost of… £9,000 (Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 9 April 1900:5).

The *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* also noted that wagons for the transport of coal had been commissioned and "now being built, some at the engineering from of Goninan and Co., at Wickham" (*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 9 April 1900:5) (Plate 6). In November 1900 the *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* reported:

> *The railway which is being constructed a distance of about three miles from Cockle Creek to connect… Rhondda Colliery… is all now but completed (Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 1 November 1900).

Archibald Gardiner, C.E. of Hamilton set out and supervised the railway construction, carried out by John Ahearn, contractor, of Sydney (*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 1 November 1900). The construction of the railway required "longer than the contractor, Mr. Ahearn, anticipated, the swampy nature of the ground being made worse by the wet season" (*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 1 November 1900).

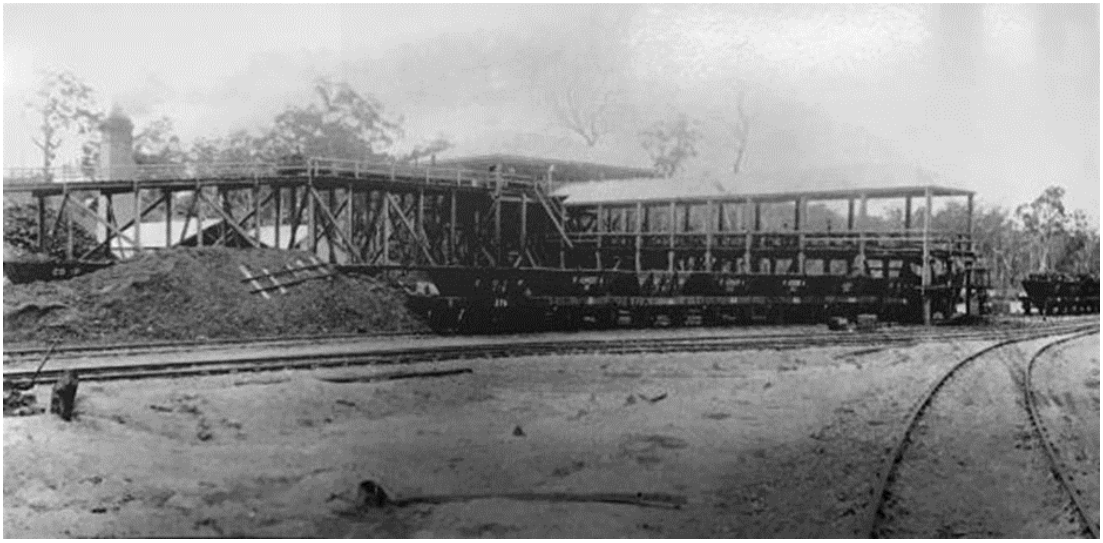

Plate 6 Rhondda Colliery railway and 'RHONDDA' and 'CO OP' coal wagons (Andrews 2003:904)

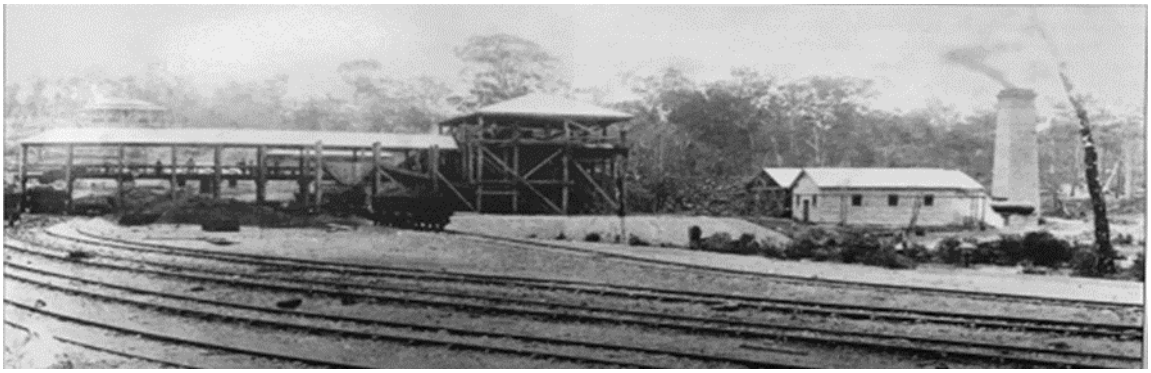

Plate 7 Rhondda Colliery screening infrastructure and railway (Andrews 2009:908)

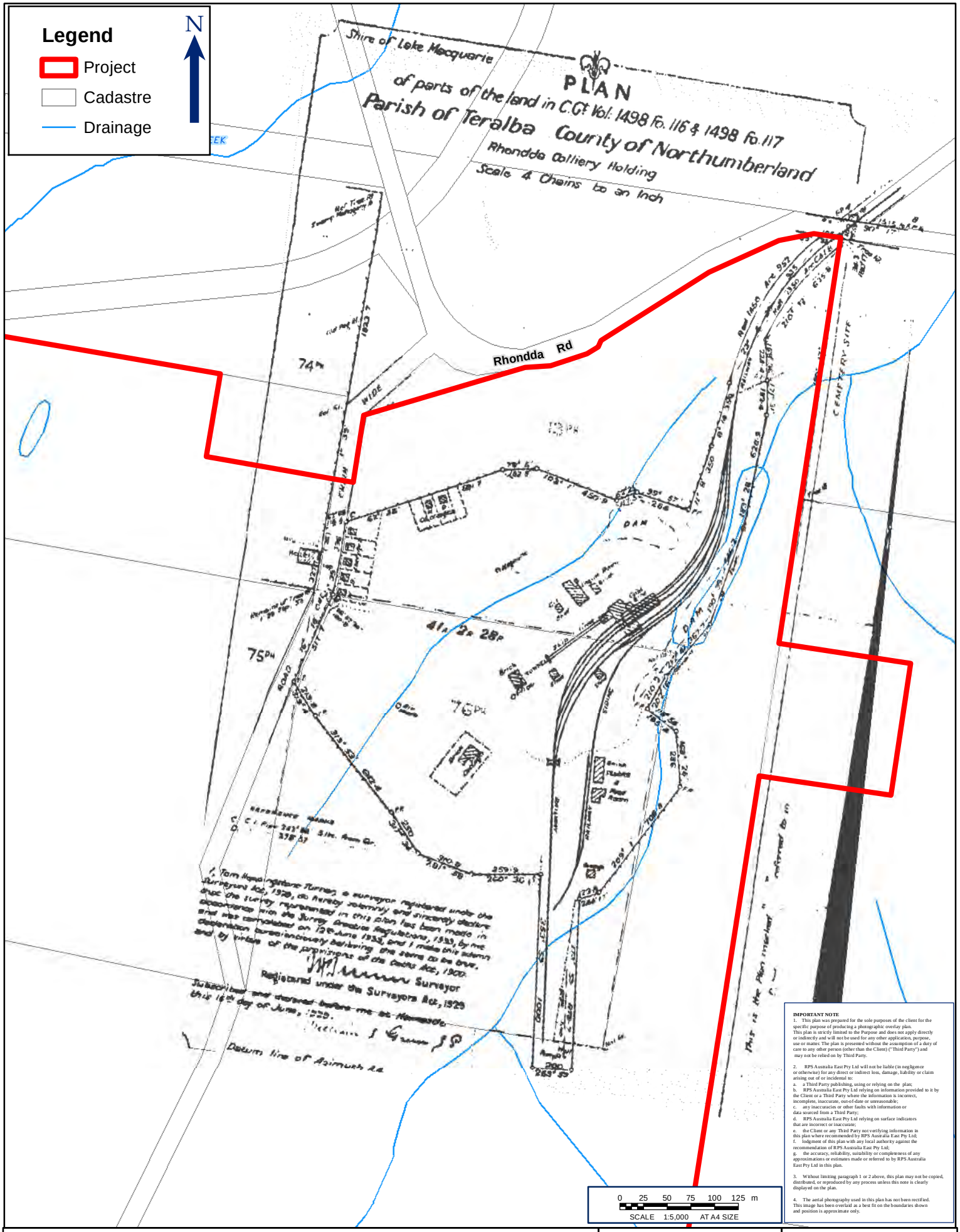

FIGURE 3: 1929 PLAN OF RHONDDA COLLIERY

LOCATION: WAKEFIELD

DATUM: GDA94

PROJECTION: MGA Zone 56

JOB NO.: **PR 131826**

PURPOSE: HERITAGE

Technician: james.hugo Date: 4/8/2017

Data Sources:
RPS
Land and Property 2015

CLIENT: THE FORMULA COMPANY

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Path: J:\JOBS\131k\131826 Wakefield\10 - Drafting\Arcgis Map Documents\Arch\CMP\131826 Figure 10-1 1929 Plan A A4 20170804.mxd

3.4 Northern Colliery

In 1931 William Laidley and Company renamed the holding Northern Colliery. In 1932 R W Miller and Company, which operated numerous leases on the Greta Seam at Heddon Greta, purchased the Northern Colliery. R W Miller and Company operated the Northern Colliery to provide coal to an extensive steam network that operated out of Newcastle (Andrews 2009:914).

R W Miller and Company later became R W Miller and Company PTY LTD and Northern (Rhondda) Collieries PTY LTD was formed to operate Northern Colliery. In 1990, Coal and Allied took over R W Miller and Company PTY LTD and its subsidiary companies (Andrews 2009:914).

In January 1953 R W Miller and Company called for the "Construction of a Blow Surface Level Concrete Coal Bunker, capacity 400 tons" (*The Sydney Morning Herald* 7 January 1953:14). The coal bunker formed part of the infrastructure associated with the Northern (Rhondda) Colliery (Plate 9).

Plate 8 Northern (Rhondda) Colliery, February 1967 (University of Newcastle Cultural Collections)

Plate 9 Northern (Rhondda) Colliery, c1960 (University of Newcastle Cultural Collections)

3.4.1 Robert William Miller

Robert William Miller founded R W Miller and Company in 1919. He held the position of Governing Director until 1858. He established a fleet, which included the 180-ton *Audrey D*, which operated the Newcastle-Sydney run. In 1923 he ordered the *William McArthur*, the first collier with engines aft and equipped with grabs to unload, resulting in faster turn-around in port. The Company later developed road transport of coal in New South Wales and Victoria (Atchison 1986).

In 1920, on the recommendation of Professor Sir Edgeworth David, Miller had purchased the Ayrfield Colliery near Branxton. With the later acquisition of Wallsend, Belmond and Preston Extended (Curlewis) collieries, the R W Miller and Company became a major producer of coal in New South Wales, for the Sydney market through the 'Sixty Milers' fleet, and later throughout Australia (Atchison 1986).

In the 1930s R W Miller and Company faced frequent confrontation with the Australasian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation and the Department of Mines over extraction techniques and conditions.

3.5 The Fassifern Seam

In 1949 the Fassifern Seam was exploited to boost production with an inter-seam drift constructed between the Great Northern Seam and Fassifern Seam. The inter-seam drift allowed for the transport of materials between the seams. Due to the inferior quality of the Fassifern Seam, coal from the Great Northern Seam and Fassifern Seam was mixed as part of the screening process (Andrews 2009:914).

In January 1952 R W Miller and Company advertised for a Manager for the Northern Colliery noting, "Rhondda Colliery is being mechanised to produce 1,200 tons" of coal per day (*Lithgow Mercury* 4 January 1952:3). The mechanisation allowed concurrent mining of the Great Northern Seam and Fassifern Seam.

3.6 The Coal Preparation Plant

In 1958 a Coal Preparation Plant opened at the Northern Colliery. The Coal Preparation Plant allowed the dismantling of the screening structure and associated infrastructure. Coal was transferred to the Coal Preparation Plant by conveyor belt (Andrews 2009:916).

In 1958 the Colliery produced about 1,000 tons of coal (Andrews 2009:916). The coal supplied the Electricity Commission of New South Wales Pyrmont Power Station. The coal was transferred to Port Waratah and loaded at the Dyke for transport to Blackwattle Bay, Sydney (Andrews 2009:916).

3.7 Closure of the Northern Colliery

On 10 March 1971 R W Miller and Company announced the closure of the Northern Colliery. The Company cited insignificant reserves remaining uncovered and the cost of winning the coal and the quality of remaining coal as the reasons for the closure (Andrews 2009:297). The Northern Colliery ceased production on 12 March 1971, at which point fire ignited the coal seam (Plate 10).

After closing, a coal lift caused a considerable amount of coal to be left ‘at grass’. Between July and September 1971 the coal was lifted and transported to the Port of Newcastle for distribution. The last coal was lifted from the Northern Colliery on 23 September 1971 (Andrews 2009:927). Surface infrastructure and plant associated with Northern (Rhondda) Colliery remained on the holding (Plate 11).

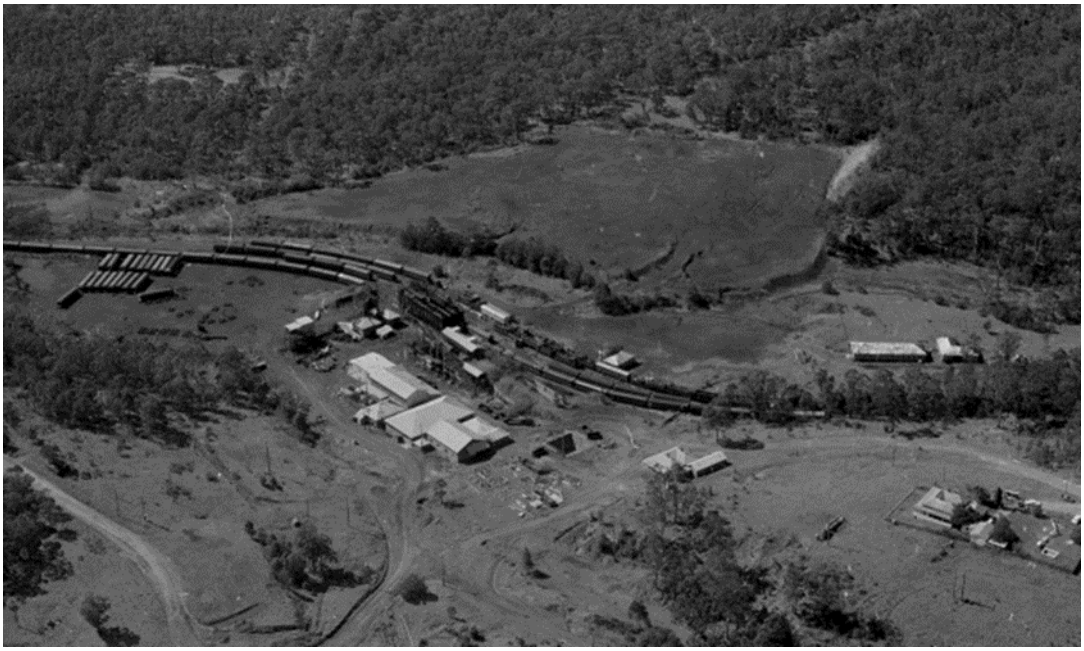

Plate 10 Aerial photograph of Northern (Rhondda) Colliery, September 1975 (University of Newcastle Cultural Collections)

3.8 The Fire

The numerous attempts to extinguish the fire proved ineffective. The action of pumping water through the below ground infrastructure to extinguish the fire failed as the water flowed on the base of the seam and the fire continued toward the top of the seam.

Between 2000 and 2002 Coal and Allied pumped a slurry of flyash, bottom-ash and fine sediment and water (sourced from Cockle Creek from 2001, and from the holding tank on Rhondda Colliery into which Metromix pumped the fines (fine particulate matter) from its processing plant) through the coal seam. The fines infilled voids in the coal seam which prevented rapid egress of water and restricted air space, making the coal less combustible. The fire was extinguished and pumping to the seam ceased in 2006.

Plate 11 Fire at Northern (Rhondda) Colliery (University of Newcastle Cultural Collections)

3.9 Open Cut Operations at the Northern Colliery

In September 1971 the Joint Coal Board approved the extraction of 20,000 tons of coal by open cut methods from pillar coal close to the surface. The coal was transported to the Northern Screens and crushed. The coal was later screened and loaded for transport to the Port of Newcastle (Andrews 1971:927). Open cut operations ceased in November 1971 and the remaining coal transported by railway or road transport as required (Andrews 1971:927).

Open cut operations resumed in the 1980s. The coal was transported on road to other collieries for processing. Open cut operations also resumed under Oceanic Coal Australia in 2009, with coal from the Fassifern Seam extracted in addition to remaining outcrop and pillar coal associated with the Great Northern Seam. In 2009 the coal was transported on road to Earing Power Station at Dora Creek.

4 PHYSICAL ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

This section describes fabric and setting in detail to facilitate an understanding and assess the archaeological potential. The remaining fabric is limited as the Mining Lease required that above ground structures be removed to rehabilitate the land.

4.1 Landscape and Setting

Rhondda Colliery is sited north of Teralba on 630 acres of rehabilitated land. The landscape is undulating, with numerous tributaries dissecting the landscape, including Diega Creek. Cleared land to the north east formed the operational core of Rhondda Colliery, with surface infrastructure concentrated in that area, and below ground infrastructure extending out across the landscape. The remaining land is regenerated, with intermittent clearing, and a number of access roads extending across Rhondda Colliery.

4.2 Existing Structures

Two structures associated with Rhondda Colliery are extant, with all other surface infrastructure removed to rehabilitate the land in 1999. The structures formed part of the 1929 landscape, with the stable sited adjacent to a siding, and the ammunitions store sited to the west, in an isolated position in the landscape.

4.2.1 Stables

The stables comprise a brick structure with hipped corrugated iron roof and concrete floor. It is sited on a north-south axis with double braced doors at each end of the structure, each triple hinged, and 12 awning windows on each side, each with an arch of three row lock courses (Plate 12 to Plate 13). The internal roof frame appears intact.

Plate 12 Exterior of stables, east side (RPS 2017)

Plate 13 North end of stable, looking south (RPS 2017)

Plate 14 Window with row lock arch of three courses (RPS 2017)

4.2.2 Ammunitions store

The ammunitions store is a brick structure with a cement rendered pitched brick vault. It is sited on east-west axis in an isolated position in the landscape. It is a purpose built structure for storing explosive materials.

Plate 15 Ammunitions store, front and north side of structure (RPS 2017)

Plate 16 Ammunitions store, rear of structure (RPS 2017)

Plate 17 Detail of pitched brick vault (RPS 2017)

4.3 Assessment of Archaeological Potential

The assessment of archaeological potential is based on an understanding of the infrastructure associated with Rhondda Colliery, and the substantial ground disturbance associated with extinguishing the fire that spread throughout coal seam, and removing above ground infrastructure, as required under the Mining Lease to rehabilitate the land.

Fire broke out below the ground surface in 1971, igniting the coal seam. The action of pumping water through the below ground infrastructure to extinguish the fire proved ineffective as the water flowed on the base of the seam and the fire continued toward the top of the seam. Between 2000 and 2002 Coal and Allied pumped a slurry of fly-ash, bottom-ash and fine sediment and water (sourced from Cockle Creek from 2001, and from the holding tank on Rhondda Colliery into which Metromix pumped the fines from its processing plant) through the coal seam. The fines infilled voids in the coal seam which prevented rapid egress of water and restricted air space, making the coal less combustible. The fire was extinguished and pumping to the seam ceased in 2006. Extinguishing the fire caused substantial ground disturbance (Plate 19 to Plate 20).

The Mining Lease also required the removal of above ground infrastructure to rehabilitate the land. EJE (1999) recorded the above ground infrastructure to be removed including a brick office, a brick structure at the north east of the complex and a brick shed, and a number of additional structures that formed part of the complex.

The substantial ground disturbance associated with extinguishing the fire, and removing above ground infrastructure, severely limits archaeological potential. It is unlikely that significant archaeological resources associated with the development of Rhondda Colliery would be identified.

Plate 18 Aerial of Rhondda Colliery, 1990 (Coal and Allied)