

DRAFT

Review of Development Application DA 164-2019

On behalf of:
Armidale Regional Council

Property/Site:
**“Palmerston”
345-347 Dangarsleigh Road
Armidale**



Palmerston circa 1930 - Source: Eureka Heritage

PROJECT:

**Development Application:
Solar Farm Proposal
submitted by ITP
Renewables**

REFERENCE NUMBER:

**Armidale Regional Council
LEP 2012, Item 066**

ADDRESS/PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

**“Palmerston”
345-347 Dangarsleigh Road
Lot No. 192, DP 66672,
Armidale**

PREPARED BY:

**STUDIO TWO
ARCHITECTURE
& DESIGN**
104 Brisbane Street
Tamworth 2340
Ph: 02/6766 8134

FOR

Armidale Regional Council

DATE:

13.08.2020 – Rev. A

Disclaimer

The author has attempted to ensure that the information included in this statement is based on reliable sources. Documentation and comment has been sought and received from the Regulatory Authority in addition to public information and resources. We have not sought any information from the present owners or operators of the Property.

If further information becomes available that provides further clarification or requires any corrections then the author is to be notified as soon as possible. The document has been produced for the exclusive usage by Armidale Regional Council and related regulatory agencies that are directly involved with the project.

PREAMBLE

Our Practice has been engaged by Armidale Regional Council to assess a Development Proposal DA 164-2019 as submitted by ITP Development (hereafter referenced as ITP) on January 10, 2020.

The Development Proposal is summarised as follows:

- Construction of a 5 MW Solar farm, including two inverter stations.
- The maximum height of the array will be 2.617m.
- A 4m wide access road to the Solar Farm connected to Dangarsleigh Road.
- The setback of the Array from the security fence is 10m minimum.
- For the purpose of security the Array is proposed to have a fenced area of 12.3 Ha. The security fence is proposed to be 2.1m in height, chain mesh steel construction with 300mm high (3 strands) of barbed wire at the top.
- No landscaping is proposed other than the retention of the hawthorn hedge which has grown to a height ranging from 3.5 to 8m height. This will provide screening of the arrays from public places including Dangarsleigh Road.¹



Plate 1:

View of Palmerston Homestead from the north with location of solar farm behind the existing hawthorn hedge

Source: Studio Two Architecture

¹ Statement of Heritage Impact, Petersen's Solar Farm - Zenith Town Planning; 8th November 2019

1.0 GENERALLY

The Site

Item 066 - Palmerston

The heritage item “Palmerston”, which is identified as Item 066 on *Schedule 5 Armidale Regional Council LEP 2012*, includes the whole of Palmerston property as indicated on the Heritage Map Sheet HER_002A, covering five allotments, including Lot 2 DP 569410, and Lots 1,192,494,554 and 767 DP66672, with the address of 345-347 Dangarsleigh Road. It is located 4 kilometres south east of the town of Armidale.

Palmerston’s Statement of significance states:

The building, grounds and property is of regional significance in evidencing the expansion of the Dangar pastoral interests into the New England area and the establishment of the family there in the mid 19th century. Aesthetically the design is of a type very rare in the region having been executed by an eminent Newcastle Architect. Socially the property has regional significance for its association with the early career of a Queensland Premier of the latter 19th century. The current home and property have regional social significance for their continuous association with the pioneering Dangar family over a period of almost ninety years. Scientifically the property and home are representative of the scale and type of changes in the lifestyle of an eminent New England family over the course of the 20th century.

The heritage item covers an area of 212.96 Ha. It includes the main residence, and several outbuildings. The property features a perimeter hawthorn hedge that follows a large extent of the boundary of the property.

The vistas from the Palmerston Homestead are considered to contribute to the heritage value of the property. The approximate curtilage of the residence comprises a 6.5 hectare area within which the garden and trees are located, and the unsealed driveway is lined with exotic deciduous trees along both sides.

The Residence is presently used as visitor accommodation and is known as Petersen’s Guesthouse and Winery. It is noted that grazing continues on most of the property with some land used for viticulture.²

Item I164 - Roseneath House

Roseneath House is a two storey colonial Georgian style residence located to the north of the site. It is also identified on the *Schedule 5 Armidale Regional Council LEP 2012*, and is also on the *State Heritage Register*.

Roseneath’s Statement of significance states:

“Roseneath is a Colonial Georgian Colonial Georgian style residence built by Thomas Lamb, the first Town Clerk of Armidale, in 1854. Roseneath is reputed to be the oldest substantial home in the immediate environs of Armidale and is unique

² Statement of Heritage Impact, Petersens Solar Farm - Zenith Town Planning; 8th November 2019

to the area. It is a fine example of its type and period and includes a formal garden and outbuildings. (Directors Report to the Heritage Council April 1978).”

It is noted that the relevant objective of clause 5.10 is “to conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings and views.”³

In consultation with John Goodall, ADC Coordinator Development, we understand that the distance from Roseneath Cottage itself to the boundary of Palmerston is approximately 440m, with the security fence being setback approximately 23m from the northern boundary of the site and the solar panels a further 10 metres inside the fence. Hence the actual distance between Roseneath Cottage and the panels may be approximately 473m.⁴

Item I065 “Terangan”

Terangan is also referenced in the Statement of Heritage Impact for the Development Application. Terangan’s Statement of Significance states:

Grazing property on edge of City with notable period layout, indigenous eucalyptus and cultural tree planting from the 1920's era. Local significance.

Terangan is located a kilometre to the north west of the development. The impact of the proposed solar farm on Terangan can be considered negligible.



Plate 2:

Aerial View of Palmerston and the extent of the hawthorn hedge.

Source: Sixmaps

2.00 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

³ Armidale Regional Council LEP 2012

⁴ According to Figure 5 in the SOHI Roseneath Cottage is approximately 500 metres from the solar array.

2.01 Context

The Proposed Solar Farm is situated between two residences of heritage significance, as described above.

It is noted that consideration has been made in the Statement of Environmental Effects submitted as part of the Development Application to the visual impact of the solar farm on these two residences.

Palmerston:

The visual impact can be considered moderate, however it is also considered to be a sufficient distance from the residence to respect its curtilage. It is noted that no trees are proposed to be removed.

Refer to Plate 3.



Plate 3:

View of solar farm from NW edge of Palmerston Curtilage

Source: Zenith Town Planning

Roseneath:

The visual impact on Roseneath Cottage can be considered moderate. It is considered to be a sufficient distance from the residence to respect its curtilage, and will be at least partly concealed by the hawthorn hedge.

Refer to Plate 4.



Plate 4:

View of solar farm from SE edge of Roseneath Cottage.

Source: Zenith Town Planning

2.02 Hawthorn Hedge

The documentation submitted has highlighted the importance of the Landscape Context of Palmerston. The Hawthorn Hedge is considered to have rare aesthetic and technical significance due to its extent and association with A.A. Dangar (circa 1880).⁵

The following is the description of the Palmerston site by Zenith Town Planning:

“The immediate curtilage of the residence includes Palmerston house, outbuildings, the second dwellings and the entrance driveway which is lined with plane trees. The hawthorn hedge which surrounds the entire property is also of heritage significance, and in accordance with the findings of the Land and Environment Court (Residential and Commercial Developments Pty Limited v Dumaresq Shire Council No 10510 of 1996), is located within the wider curtilage. S J Watts, Conciliation and Technical Assessor, found that in the case of the development application the subject of the court hearing which proposed a 60 lot subdivision of the property, *the relationship of the homestead and the open rural setting, its historic, aesthetic, [and functional] relationship with the Plane tree drive would be irreversibly destroyed by the proposal... The Hawthorn hedge surrounding the open rural landscape contributes to the rural experience and is important to be retained.*”

2.03 Scarred Tree

A Scarred Tree on the property has been identified as an Aboriginal Cultural Site. Its location is to be confirmed and it is not presently listed on the AHIM register. It is a distance from the proposed sub-division, however it adds to the overall significance of Palmerston as a place where 19th century European culture developed to the detriment to the indigenous culture that was present in the area for an unknown period if time prior.

⁵ SOHI: Eureka HHA – August 2017

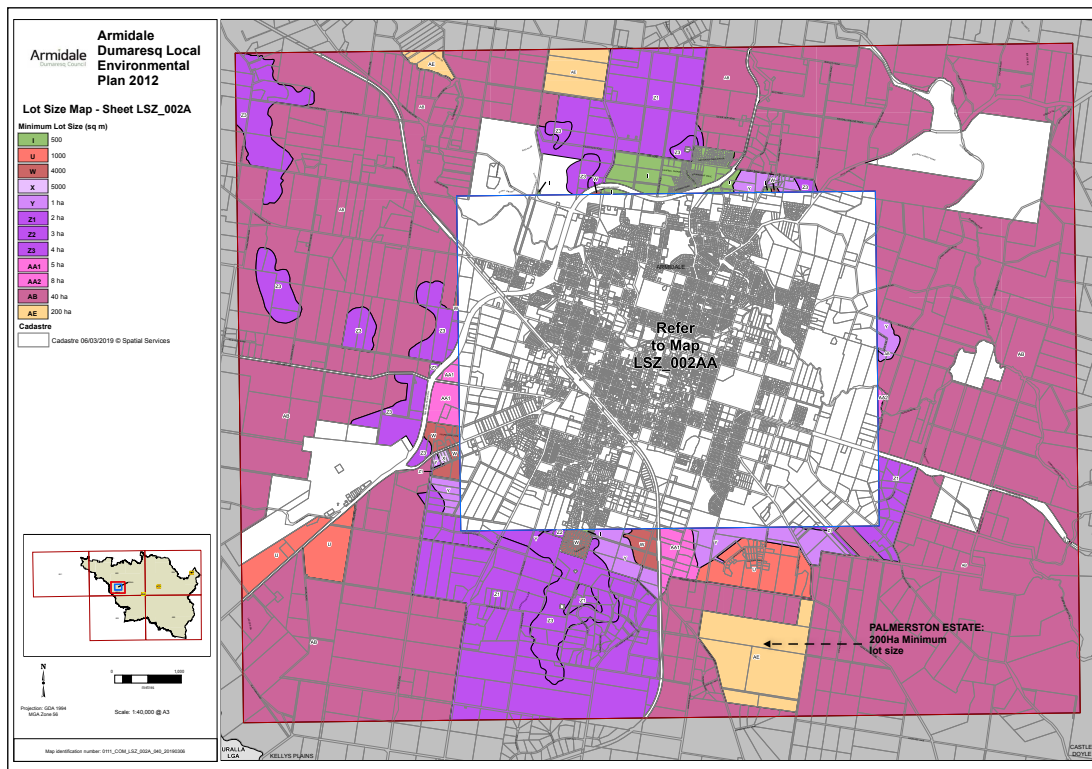


Figure 1:
Lot Size Map - Palmerston location relative to Armidale City Centre and surrounds
 Source: Armidale Dumaresq Council Local Environmental Plan 2012

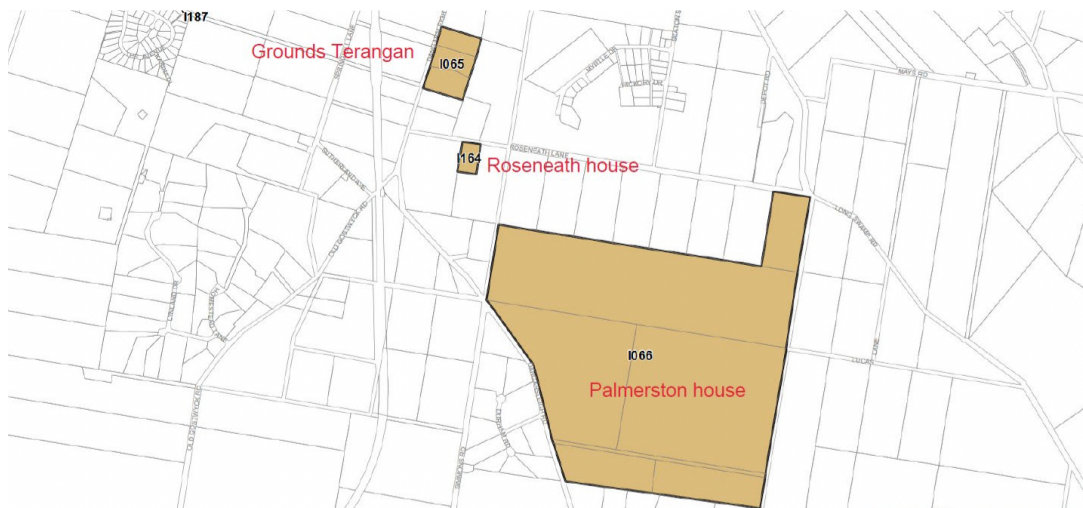


Figure 2:
Heritage Map – Showing locations of Roseneath Cottage and Palmerston
 Source: Armidale Dumaresq Council Local Environmental Plan 2012

3.0 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Palmerston:

The following points are made in relation to the impact of the solar farm on the Palmerston as a property of heritage significance:

- a) It is noted that, unlike a residential sub-division, development of a solar farm does not include subdivision of the land, and does not require the removal of any of the trees on Palmerston.
- b) It is anticipated that the solar array does not compromise the health of the hawthorn hedge. The proposal is dependent on the continued health of the hedge, and hence will contribute to its sustainability as it creates a visual baffle to the solar panels from the nearby public roads.
- c) The array is in the distant view of the vistas from the residence that are presently available to the North West, and as such can be considered to be less invasive on the vista than other types of development.
- d) The scale of the Solar Farm as proposed is respectful of the overall curtilage of the Palmerston property.
- e) Land usage for a solar farm: Noting the 1997 Land and Environment Court's recommendation that the agricultural use of the Palmerston property continues as predominantly open grazing land for primary production in order to maintain the existing non-intensive agricultural usage of the site in order to limit possible environmental degradation (erosion etc), it would seem likely that the proposed solar farm does not significantly limit this land usage.
- f) It is considered suitable for agricultural use of the site continues as open grazing land, maintaining the existing non-intensive agricultural usage of the site.
- g) The use of the site for a solar farm is considered a suitable land usage for the area extent as proposed.
- h) Income via renewable energy is, a valid strategy for funding heritage upgrades on this heritage item. A Conservation Management Plan that establishes a strategy for managing the heritage assets that exist on the property including the hawthorn hedge, should be a condition of consent.
- i) The solar farm will not compromise the indigenous heritage of this site, however care would be recommended to protect the remains of the scarred tree located in close proximity to the solar farm.

2. Roseneath Cottage

The following points are made in relation to the impact of the solar farm on Roseneath Cottage as a property of heritage significance:

- a) The array is in the distant view of the vistas from the Roseneath Cottage that are presently available to the South East, and as such can be considered to be less invasive on the vista than other types of development.

- b) Given that the curtilage of this State listed property is within 500m of the solar farm, we recommend that it is a condition of consent that ensuring the hawthorn hedge is maintained at a consistent height of at least 5m on the northern perimeter of the solar farm in an effort to reduce the visual impact of the solar farm on the vista from the curtilage of Roseneath.

We trust the above information meets with the satisfaction of the regulatory authorities, namely Armidale Regional Council. If you require additional information please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Nicholas Brown - Architect
Nominated Architect 6027

Studio Two Architecture
nlb

Photo Gallery

Palmerston:



Palmerston – Northern Lawn

Source: Zenith Town Planning



Palmerston – Reception Hall interior

Source: Studio Two Architecture



Palmerston – view to the east near the solar farm site
 Source: Studio Two Architecture



Palmerston – view at proposed entrance off Dangarsleigh Road
 Source: Studio Two Architecture

Roseneath Cottage:



Roseneath Cottage – Entrance facade
Source: NSW State Heritage Register



Roseneath Cottage Curtilage – view south towards Palmerston
Source: Studio Two Architecture

