

29 February 2024  
Attention: Angela Frew  
Transport for NSW  
7 Harvest Street  
Macquarie Park NSW  
Angela.FREW@transport.nsw.gov.au

## HERITAGE REVIEW

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### 1256 BELLS LINE OF ROAD, KURRAJONG HEIGHTS NSW 2758

#### 1. Background

Development Application DA0173/22 for the wholesale demolition of the subject site is currently under consideration by Hawkesbury City Council. The application was referred to the Sydney Western City Planning Panel for consideration under Section 4.33 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Panel for consideration under Section 4.33 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).

Heritage 21 has been engaged by Transport for NSW to review the heritage context and supplied information for the property located at 1256 Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong Heights ("the site"), as well as provide heritage advice regarding the proposed demolition of the subject building.

On 18 January 2024, Heritage 21 received heritage documentation from Transport for NSW pertaining to the proposed works at the site. The preliminary advice contained in this letter is based on this information and has been informed by historical research and a site visit undertaken on 25 January 2024.

#### 2. Nature of Heritage Review

This report serves to guide the project team in identifying heritage issues generated by the documentation that Heritage 21 has received to date.

This advice is based upon an assessment of the documentation provided to Heritage 21 to assess only and does not purport to have reviewed or in any way endorsed decisions that are of a planning or compliance nature. Thus, it will be assumed that apart from the heritage aspects of the *Hawkesbury Local Environmental Plan 2012* ("HLEP") and the *Hawkesbury Development Control Plan 2023* ("HDCP"), all planning and compliance matters will be dealt with by other consultants and not Heritage 21. Similarly, this heritage review does not purport to determine or assess any BCA requirement, services related issue, contamination issue, legal matter or any other non-heritage related issue.



### 3. Authors

This Heritage Review has been prepared by Alin Almasan, reviewed by Emily McSkimming, and overseen by Paul Rappoport, Director of Heritage 21.

### 4. Site Identification

The subject site is located at 1256 Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong Heights which falls within the boundaries of the Hawkesbury Local Government Area (LGA) and comprises Lot A & B DP 14931. As depicted in Figure 1 below, the site is located on the northern side of Bells Line of Road on the corner of Douglas Road.

The site features an interwar single-storey timber framed weatherboard building which is comprised of three flats connected through a later addition common walk-way area connecting each flat. The roof of the verandah is not continuous, but is higher at its northern end, with the verandah featuring a return around to Douglas Street. Each cottage features a hipped roof with a small separation between each 'cottage'.



**Figure 1.** Contemporary aerial view of the site highlighted in yellow and surrounding urban environment (Source: NSW Spatial Services, "SIX Maps," accessed 13 February 2024 <http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au>).







## 6. Physical and Historical Evidence

### 6.1 Physical Evidence

The site comprises two single storey bungalows, linked by a third later structure which can be discerned in its external configuration most clearly from the rear. The building is timber framed and clad with timber weatherboards. Access throughout the units is reticulated via a later addition verandah constructed from compressed fibre cement sheeting. The foundation comprises split (not sawn) timber stumps in a regular pattern and a sandstone wall running along the western elevation with other sandstone piers filled with loose rubble found throughout.

The building is located on the corner of Douglas Road and Bells Line of Road and features a significant and prominent Bunya Pine tree which slightly obscures the building from view from the main arterial road on which the site is located.

Observations on site on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 has contributed to Heritage 21 being of the opinion that the fabric of the building is in very poor condition. The subject building appears to have experienced further decay since the previous round of heritage and structural reports were written.

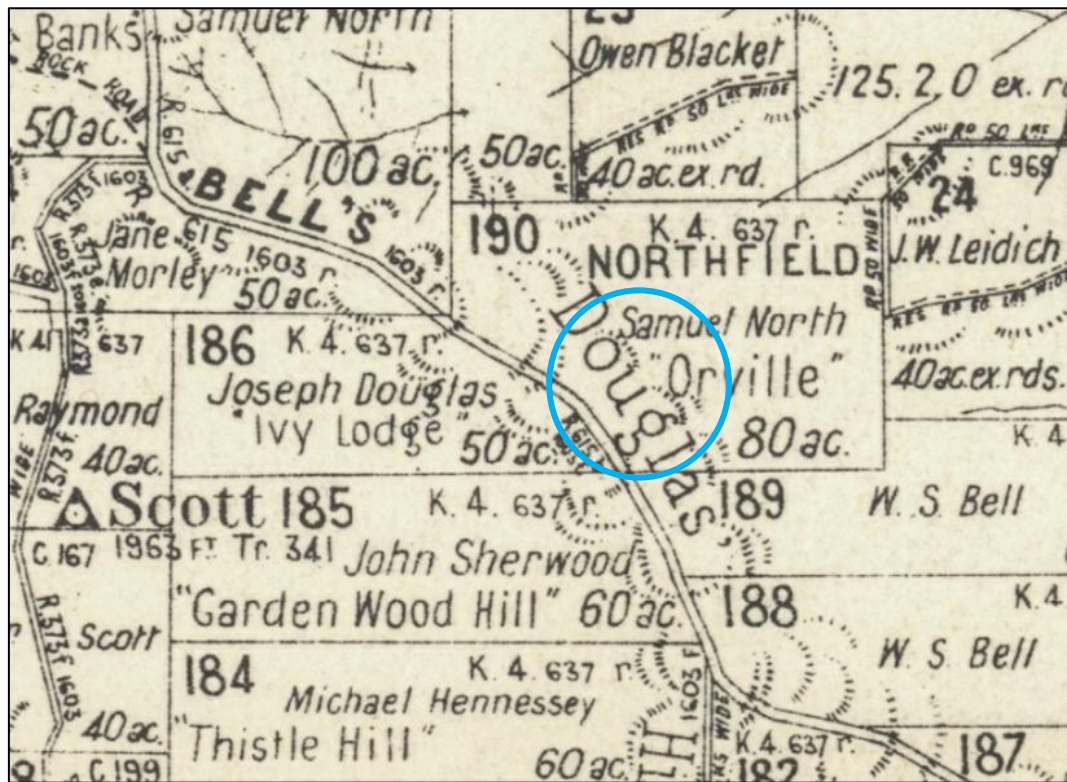
The sandstone walls and piers to the south-eastern corner of the dwelling are leaning away from the building, with several piers having cracks throughout the mortar and stone. Many of the split-timber stumps are noticeably weathered, termite affected and no longer plumb.

The timber flooring (bearers, joists and floorboards) appear to have experienced extensive termite damage with partial collapse of the flooring due to termite activity to the central connection between the cottages. Extensive water rot was observed at the rear elevation of the building, particularly in the lightwell between the central flat and flat number 3.



## 6.2 Historical Summary

The subject site was originally part of an 80-acre parcel of land granted to Samuel North in 1839 (see Figure 3 below).<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 3.** 1903 Kurrajong Parish Map with the approximate location of the subject site in the blue circle (Source: State Library of NSW, Digital Collection, annotated by Heritage 21)

In 1841, Samuel North and Joseph Douglas, a settler of the surrounding area, established the Village of Northfield and began subdividing their land grants, selling the allotments at auction.<sup>3</sup> In 1873, James Comrie acquired lot 34 (the lot on which the subject site is located) and 36 of the Village of Northfield.<sup>4</sup> Alwin Peck acquired lot 34 in 1922, and in the same year, the ownership of the land was transferred to Frank Carl Peck, his brother.<sup>5</sup> The land was further subdivided however after 1945 subsequent subdivision plans were not able to be obtained.

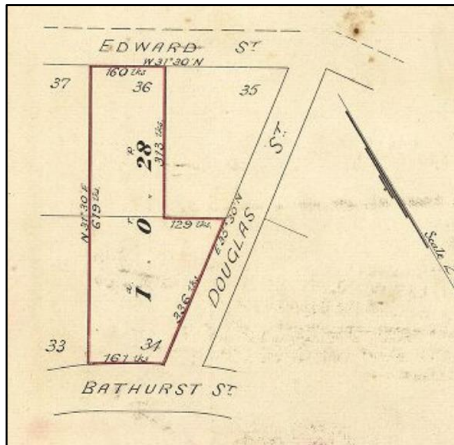
<sup>2</sup> NSW Land Registry Services, "Certificate of Title," Vol. 156, Fol. 50, Historical Land Records Viewer, 13 March 1873, <https://hlrv.nswlrs.com.au>.

<sup>3</sup> "History – Kurrajong Heights," Uniting Church Synod of NSW & ACT, accessed 13 February 2024, <https://kurrajongheights.uca.org.au/history/>.

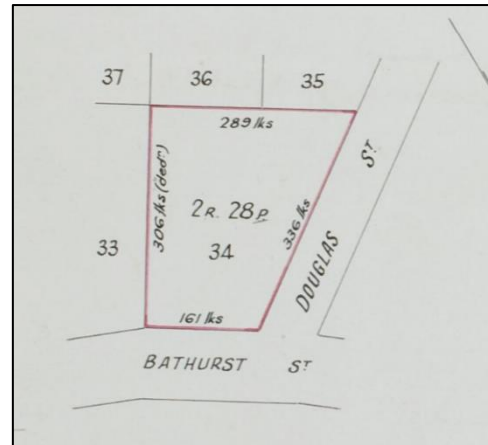
<sup>4</sup> NSW Land Registry Services, "Certificate of Title," Vol. 156, Fol. 50, 1873.

<sup>5</sup> NSW Land Registry Services, "Certificate of Title," Vol. 3332, Fol. 181, Historical Land Records Viewer, 30 June 1922.

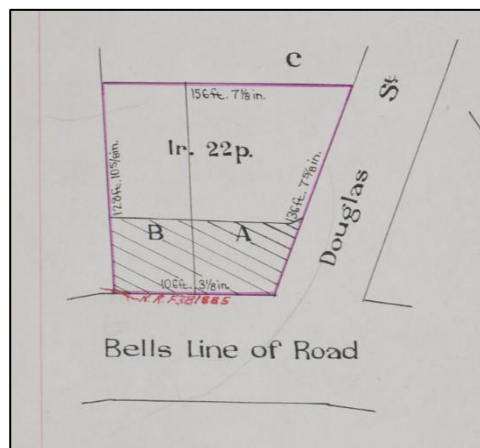




Vol. 156 Fol. 50 - 1873



Vol. 3332 Fol. 181 - 1922



Vol. 5493 Fol. 84 - 1945

**Figure 4.** Excerpts of original land diagrams from Certificates of Title Vol. 156 Fol. 50, Vol. 3332 Fol. 181, and Vol. 5493 Fol. 84 showing the various stages of subdivision of the subject site (Source: NSW Land Registry Services, 'Historical Land Records Viewer', annotated by Heritage 21)

It was during the ownership of Frank Carl Peck, that the Allambie Cottages/Guest House on the subject site was most likely constructed. The exact date of construction is unknown; however, historical information from the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society suggests that the site was constructed in the early 1920s. Allambie Guest House was established by joining two cottages together in 1935, likely built by Frank Peck.

After the construction of 1256 Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong Heights, the Allambie Cottages remained in the family until 1937. It was purchased by Kurrajong Heights Hotel Pty Ltd, the licensee of the company being Henry Edward Peck, Frank Peck's father.<sup>6</sup> Percy Freeman purchased the property from Kurrajong Heights Hotel Pty Ltd in 1945 and retained ownership of the site until 1960. Stanley Ernest Gorham and Ailsa Maria Gorham become the registered proprietors of the land as joint

<sup>6</sup> NSW Land Registry Services, "Certificate of Title," Vol. 3332, Fol. 181, Historical Land Records Viewer, 30 June 1922.



tenants in 1960. Following this period, the historical owners of the site were not able to be ascertained.<sup>7</sup>

Henry Edward Peck was considered a pioneer of the Kurrajong area. A newspaper article announced his death and outlined his life's achievements. H. E. Peck was an influential individual in the area as President of the Kurrajong Railway League, largely responsible for acquiring the Kurrajong Railway building. He also built the local *Uplands* cottage and contributed to the orchards in the area.<sup>8</sup> He was a well-known and reputable orchardist in the Kurrajong area, as evidenced in the newspaper extracts below.



Figure 5. Extract of newspaper article detailing Henry Edward Peck's life achievements (Source: Trove, *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 14 September 1955, 7)

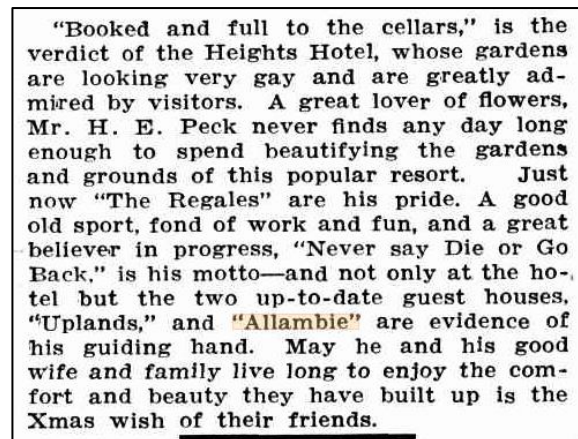


Figure 6. Extract of newspaper article detailing Henry Edward Peck's contributions to the area (Source: Trove, *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 14 December 1934, 3)

After the Peck family sold the site, Percy Freeman owned and operated the guest house in the 1940s. It is said that this was the busiest period of the guest house's history. The history of the site, along with the history of Percy Freeman, gained traction after an episode of Australian series *Who Do You Think You Are?* aired investigating the family tree of Australian comedian and TV host, Shane Bourne. Percy Freeman, a multi-talented conman, and the eventual manager of Allambie Guest House was Bourne's grandfather. Kurrajong residents such as Amena Murray recounted their time

<sup>7</sup> NSW Land Registry Services, "Certificate of Title," Vol. 5493, Fol. 84, 1945.

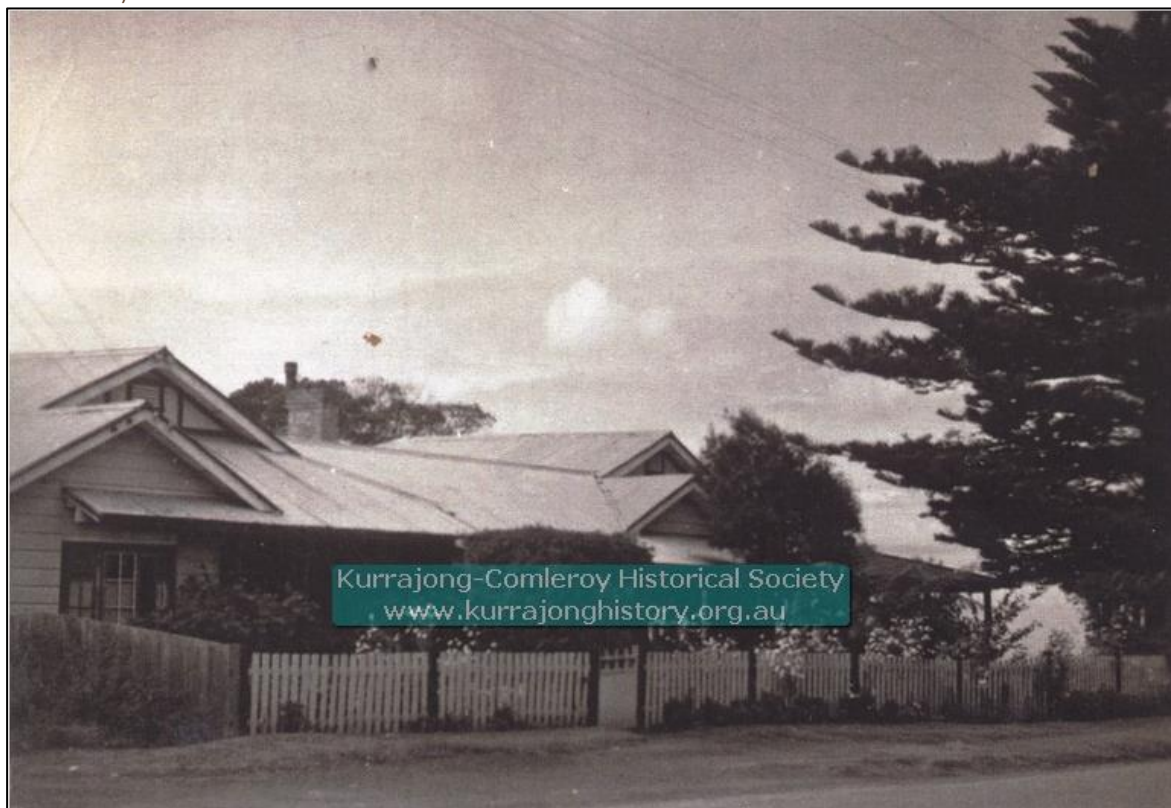
<sup>8</sup> Trove, "PASSING OF A PIONEER OF KURRAJONG," *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 14 September 1955, accessed 13 February, 7.



working for Percy Freeman at Allambie and the history of the place. Ms. Murray shared that the guest house could accommodate approximately 70 guests at one time.<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 7.** 1940s image of Allambie Guest House at Kurrajong Heights (Source: Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society, Ref: 041914)



**Figure 8.** 1949 image of Allambie Guest House at Kurrajong Heights (Source: Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society, Ref: 096442)

<sup>9</sup> Carter, Alan and Catherine Marciniak, writers. *Who Do You Think You Are?* Season 3, episode 4, "Shane Bourne." Directed by Alan Carter and Catherine Marciniak, featuring Shane Bourne. Aired 19 December 2010. <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/watch/737114179945>.



The following historical imagery shows the site throughout its life. Unless otherwise stated, the images below have been sourced from the NSW Government’s Historical Imagery Viewer and annotated by Heritage 21.-

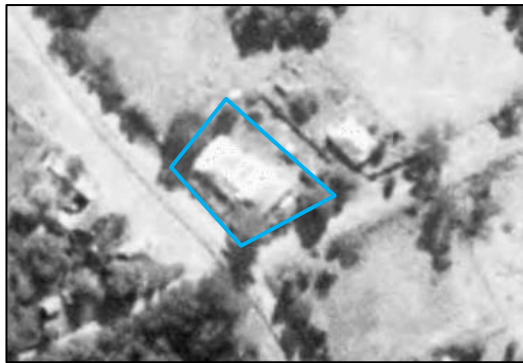


Figure 9. 1975 aerial view of the site.



Figure 10. 1998 aerial view of the site.



Figure 11. 2013 aerial view of the site.



Figure 12. Latest SIX Maps aerial view of the site. (Source: NSW Spatial Services, “SIX Maps,” accessed 13 February 2024, <http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/>, annotated by Heritage 21).

### 6.3 Established Significance

The following Statement of Significance for the site located at 1256 Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong Heights, is an extract from the State Heritage Inventory:

*The site of 1256 Bells Line of Road has some limited historical significance because it provides evidence of early landholdings and subdivision in Kurrajong Heights during the nineteenth century and because of its associations with a succession of owners connected with orchards. However, the aesthetic significance of the subject buildings have been compromised by the processes of alteration and addition that have taken place and by the deteriorated physical condition of the building.<sup>10</sup>*

<sup>10</sup> Heritage NSW, “Allambie,” State Heritage Inventory, Heritage Item ID: 1741869, accessed 14 September 2024, <https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=1741869>.



## 6.4 Preliminary Assessment of Significance

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment issues guidelines and criteria for assessing the heritage significance of a place.<sup>11</sup> An overview of the history of the subject site combined with a detailed site inspection and review of the previous heritage documentation has rendered Heritage 21 with the opinion that the site meets at a basic or rudimentary level, the criterion for historical association at the local level.

The most recent heritage report for the site prepared by CCG Architects noted that the place did not have any notable connections to any persons of importance. Heritage 21 does not share this opinion due to the historical research conducted and produced in this report noting the site's connection with Henry Edward Peck. H.E Peck was considered a pioneer of the Kurrajong area. A newspaper article announced his death and outlined his life's achievements (refer to Figure 5).

H. E. Peck was an influential individual in the area as President of the Kurrajong Railway League, largely responsible for acquiring the Kurrajong Railway building. He also built the local *Uplands* cottage and contributed to the orchards in the area. His associations would be better connected to his social pursuits and being the chief licensee over the Kurrajong Heights Hotel which was a grand and large hotel designed by the Sydney firm of Roberston and Marks in the late 1920s<sup>12</sup>. It is estimated that the subject site also being a guesthouse served as an investment property to the Peck family.

Heritage 21 is in agreeance over the significance assessment of the property under the remaining significance criterion produced in the most recent CCG Architects significance report dated January 2022. The condition of the heritage item has only decayed further since the previous assessment. It is the opinion of Heritage 21 that the significance of the site does not hinge upon the extant fabric remaining for continuation of interpretation of the site's significance. There is scope for interpretation of the associative significance attributed to the subject site.

Criterion	Assessment
<b>(a) Historic significance</b>  <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>	<p>'Allambie' is a guest house associated with the development of Kurrajong as an outer Sydney suburb. The early subdivision pattern of the area cannot be interpreted at this site as the building stands on a number of subdivisions including part of the Bells Line of Road reserve. The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century subdivision patterns associated with the site cannot be interpreted. The site contributes little to the understanding of the development of early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings in the area. The current building at the site has little potential to demonstrate the history of Kurrajong Heights.</p> <p>The place does not meet this criterion.</p>

<sup>11</sup> Department of Planning and Environment, *Assessing heritage significance* (Parramatta: Department of Planning and Environment, NSW Government, 2023), <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/assessing-heritage-significance>.

<sup>12</sup> Trove, "HOTEL KURRAJONG HEIGHTS," Windsor and Richmond Gazette, 5 November 1926, accessed 13 February



Criterion	Assessment
<p><b>(b) Historical association</b></p> <p><i>An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).</i></p>	<p>The site has a connection with the prominent local character Henry Edward Peck hotelier and orchardist. H.E Peck was considered a pioneer of the Kurrajong area. The site therefore does have historical association with influential local figures. The use of the site as boarding accommodation would have commenced under the Peck family ownership. The Peck family are connected to more prominent Kurrajong properties such as The Kurrajong Heights Hotel, 'Uplands' and 'Northfields'.</p> <p>The place does meet this criterion at the local level.</p>
<p><b>(c) Aesthetic/creative/technical achievement</b></p> <p><i>An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).</i></p>	<p>The building presents as being in a highly altered state and would be a loose or basic example of a Californian Bungalow. The front gables and bay windows are representative of inter-war architecture. Notwithstanding the period of construction, the house does not exhibit notable aesthetic characteristics. It is also unlikely that repair or renovation of the building would demonstrate this criteria in any meaningful way.</p> <p>The place does not meet this criterion.</p>
<p><b>(d) Social, cultural, and spiritual</b></p> <p><i>An item has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.</i></p>	<p>Research has discovered no strong or special association with any community or cultural group.</p> <p>The place does not meet this criterion.</p>
<p><b>(e) Research potential</b></p> <p><i>An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).</i></p>	<p>The subject site has little potential to yield information that will contribute and understanding of NSW's cultural history.</p> <p>The place does not meet this criterion.</p>
<p><b>(f) Rare</b></p> <p><i>An item possesses uncommon, rare, or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).</i></p>	<p>Interwar Bungalows are not currently rare in Sydney and there are numerous examples in the Kurrajong area. Accordingly, the subject item does not meet the requisite standard of significance under this criterion.</p> <p>The place does not meet this criterion.</p>



Criterion	Assessment
<p><b>(g) Representative</b></p> <p><i>An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments (or a class of the local area's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments).</i></p>	<p>The subject site does not demonstrate representative or principal characteristics of a class of local cultural places. The subject site is not representative of guesthouses in the local area.</p> <p>The site does not meet this criterion.</p>

## 7. Statement of cultural significance

Upon the review of the site's heritage significance, Heritage 21 provides the following statement of significance:

1256 Bells Line of Road is of limited associative significance through its ties to local orchardist and hotelier H.E Peck, an early pioneer of the Kurrajong Heights area. Peck had constructed other more notable properties in the area, being the Kurrajong Heights Hotel, 'Uplands' and 'Northfields'. The aesthetic significance of 'Allambie' has been compromised by unsympathetic alterations and the highly deteriorated physical condition of the building.

## 8. Proposed works

Heritage 21 understands from the documentation supplied by the client, Transport for NSW, that the proposal at the subject site entails the wholesale demolition of all structures at the subject site.

## 9. Heritage Impact Assessment

On 25 January 2024, Heritage 21 undertook a site visit for the purposes of a visual and photographic survey. The visit included a general survey of the setting of the site as well as the physical evidence on the site itself, including an assessment of the items degraded condition. Internal access could not be attained on the day of inspection due to the perceived structural inadequacy of the building.

It is noted that the wholesale demolition of all structures at the site would engender a total and permanent impact upon the site by removing the heritage item. We are of the opinion however, that the extant fabric of the building does not form the substantiative qualities of the site's significance. It is to be noted however that there are other older guest houses in the area that present in better condition such as 'Ivy Cottage' or 'Lochiel' built 1825. Allambie Cottages was also not the primary guest house or orchard operated by the Peck family, as it is known that more notable properties such as the Kurrajong Heights Hotel, 'Uplands' and 'Northfields' were owned and operated by the Peck family.



Therefore, a continued interpretation of this associative significance at the site would be recommended for Heritage 21 to support and recommend the proposed demolition of the building.

An interpretation strategy for the site capturing the significance is recommended to be implemented should consent be granted for the proposed demolition. The re-purposing and retention of original fabric that survives at the site is encouraged in Heritage 21's opinion and would allow for a continuation of the fabric to remain at the site. Interpretive landscaping at the site using surviving fabric, combined with interpretation panels outlining the significance of the site is a recommended option to retain a connection with the established significance of the site.

The following table provides an itemised grading of the significance and condition of site elements. The assessment is based upon our inspection and understanding of the site, the proposed works and legislative obligations under Schedule 5 of the HELP 2012 and pertinent heritage controls.

No.	Design Element	Grading	Condition
1	Landscaping	<b>Little</b>	Poor and overgrown.
2	Foundations	<b>Moderate</b>	Condition is very poor with much of the sandstone cracked and leaning. Timber stump footings have rotted. Sandstones can be reused/interpreted.
3	Exterior original weatherboard walls	<b>High</b>	Poor. Paint has degraded allowing moisture to penetrate the substrate, however, members can be salvaged and re-finished
4	Exterior (Rear)	<b>Moderate</b>	Poor. Any original weatherboards and surviving window joinery could be salvaged.
5	Exterior (southern side)	<b>Moderate</b>	Poor. Any original weatherboards and surviving window joinery could be salvaged.
6	Façade (street-facing)	<b>Moderate</b>	The original façade is obscured by the later addition asbestos clad hallway/walkway servicing the three flats. The original gable to flat 3 is still interpreted from the public domain. Any remnant timbers still in reasonable condition could be salvaged.
7	Exterior (northern side)	<b>High</b>	Original weatherboarding extant in portions which are damaged due to degraded paint allowing moisture into the substrate. Any intact original weatherboards can be salvaged.
8	Roofing material	<b>Low</b>	Appears to be in fair condition and recently replaced over the last few years. Roof sheeting does not appear to be original.
9	Roof form	<b>Moderate</b>	Original roofing members are not interpretable; thus, condition could not be ascertained. The roof-plane features later additions, being the later addition walkway between



No.	Design Element	Grading	Condition
			the flats. The most prominent view would be the vented gables visible from the public domain.
10	Bunya Pine Tree	High	Bunya pine is in visibly good condition and is of significance. To be retained.

## 10. Recommendations

In accordance with the without prejudice condition set drafted by Hawkesbury Council for DA0173/22 and best practice heritage management, Heritage 21 would also recommend the following considerations are made to ensure that the development maintains and respects the heritage significance of the subject site:

- An archival recording of the site is to be prepared in accordance with The Heritage Office Guidelines and submitted to Hawkesbury Council.
- A heritage interpretation plan or scheme is prepared to interpret the significance of the site to be communicated through various mediums i.e. interpretive landscaping using elements found on site, interpretation boards featuring historic photos and a historical outline of the site. This is recommended for the continued interpretation of the associative significance associated with the site.
- A salvage schedule is to be prepared by a suitably qualified heritage practitioner for the purposes of identifying significant fabric which can be salvaged and reused.

## 11. Conclusion

As discussed above Heritage 21 supports the proposed demolition of Allambie Cottages provided the associative significance of the site can remain interpretable as per our recommendations above in Section 9. The demolition of structures at the subject site would not pose an adverse impact to heritage items in the vicinity. We would support the proposal on the basis of the assessment made in this letter and the recommendations stemming from the assessment.

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,



**Alin Almasan**

**Senior Heritage Consultant**

B. Property Valuation, University of Western Sydney

B. Architecture, University of Technology Sydney

M. Heritage Conservation, University of Sydney



## Appendix A

The following photographs have been taken by Heritage 21 at the site inspection undertaken on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024, unless stated otherwise.



**Figure 13.** The subject site as viewed from Bells Line of Road.



**Figure 14.** Northwest facing elevation of flat number 3. Note the extensive deflection experienced by the house.



**Figure 15.** Early portions of the façade pictured above. Select portions of fabric that has survived can be salvaged.



**Figure 16.** Surviving early/original window to the northwest elevation.



**Figure 17.** Southeast elevation pictured showing later addition asbestos clad verandah.



**Figure 18.** Deteriorated stone foundation to the rear northwestern corner of the building.





**Figure 19.** Rear elevation of flat 3.



**Figure 20.** Street-facing portion of the later addition verandah linking all 3 flats within the Allambie complex.



**Figure 21.** Deteriorated and termite eaten foundations to the front verandah.



**Figure 22.** View towards the footing structure and undercroft of Allambie. Many of the timber supports are termite affected.



**Figure 23.** View towards stone footing structure. Note cracking throughout the footing.



**Figure 24.** Rear elevation of flat 1. Note leaning sandstone supports leaning southwards being eccentrically loaded.





**Figure 25.** Rear elevation of Allambie. Note eaves and rainwater goods have failed.



**Figure 26.** Note the extent of deflection and deformation of the rear corner of Allambie above. The pier at the rear corner supporting the rear of the building has failed.



**Figure 27.** View towards the rear elevation of the heritage item featuring heavily deteriorated fabric.



**Figure 28.** View towards the rear of the heritage item. Note the failure of the timber footing, with the building temporarily supported by the tree growing in lieu of the pier. Note rubble block pier behind the tree.





**Figure 29.** View of the rear of Allambie Cottages.



**Figure 30.** Vegetation growth is seen under the house towards the rear of the property.



**Figure 31.** View towards the split timber stump footings found at the subject site.



**Figure 32.** The fabric to this lightwell area between the cottages has failed leading to collapse of the bay window and fabric below.





**Figure 33.** Note failure of the structure and the fabric to the above pictured portion of the subject site.



**Figure 34.** There are deposits of intact and original fenestration and weatherboards that could be salvaged.



**Figure 35.** Note the heavy southward lean on the above pictured sandstone footing at the rear of the site rendering the structure above eccentrically loaded.



**Figure 36.** The footing structure of flat 1 is pictured above. Note leaning stumps that feature termite damage.