

Historical Context

As part of NSW heritage assessment procedures it is essential to have a full understanding of a site or item based on its historical and physical context. This Appendix provides a brief historical context for the LWB1-B2 Modification Area (focusing on the Barraba Estate) and its broader locality, to provide an understanding of the potential heritage significance the LWB1-B2 Modification Area. The historical context prepared as part of the *Historical Heritage Assessment: Austar Coal Mine Project, Stage 3* (Umwelt 2008) should be referred to for the full historical context of the Austar Coal Mine.

The history of the Cessnock region is characterised by pastoral estates and a slow intensification of residential development prior to 1892, with mining then becoming increasingly significant to the region's economy and development; particularly from the 1910s. The history of the Quorrobolong area reflects this, with land first taken up as part of pastoral estates in the late 1820s and early 1830s, then being progressively subdivided for further pastoral use. Mining infrastructure in the Quorrobolong area – for the Pelton, Ellalong, Bellbird and Southland Collieries – dates to the 1910s, resulting in the rapid intensification of use of the local region. As a result of this history, the landscape of the LWB1-B2 Modification Area has undergone modification through extensive pastoral grazing and some residential development, with native vegetation cleared and foreign grasses introduced (Umwelt 2008).

Land Tenure

The wider Quorrobolong area was originally controlled under several large land grants of over 1000 acres including those owned by Jacob Josephson, George Thomas Palmer and Edward Charles Close. Smaller land grants of 30 to 40 acres were later taken up by George Hall, Sara Hall, Joseph Hall, R Palmer, H Kerr, and R H Jordan (Umwelt 2008).

Between 1821 and 1831 a system of quit rent or 'free grants' was in place, which included the granting of lands within the Quorrobolong area. The free grant system operated through an immigrant presenting a letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies which stated that they required 'a grant of land in proportion to his means of cultivating it' (Parkes et al. 1979:25). These grants were conditional title and the land holder had to fulfil certain conditions over a period of seven years such as 'provide fencing and buildings and general improvements', at the end of the first seven years of their occupation of the land, the landholder had to pay a quit rent sum which was related to the productivity and assets built on the land (Parkes et al. 1979:25). This system was abandoned after 1831 as it led to landholders being dispersed over too great an area and encouraged 'many members of the labouring classes to become landed proprietors and hence to deprive capitalist farmers of an adequate workforce' (Parkes et al. 1979:26).

In 1831 Alexander McLeay, then Colonial Secretary passed legislation which ensured that 'no land will be sold below the rate of 5 shillings an acre....a deposit of 10 per cent upon the value of the purchase must be paid at the time of the sale, and the remainder must be paid within one calendar month' (cited from Parkes et al. 1979:26). This legislation backfired and only encouraged members of working class to become 'landed proprietors' and led to the acquisition of small 40 and 60 acre portions of Crown land, which is a pattern that is reflected in the north west and south east of the Quorrobolong area by small grants held by the Jordan, Chapman, Palmer and Kerr families. The legislation also led to larger land holders, such as George Thomas Palmer, who were based in Sydney to extend their larger empires of land into the Cessnock region and the Quorrobolong area.

Jacob Josephson's estate is referred to in the historical records as the 'Barraba Estate' and also as 'Abbotsford'. George Thomas Palmer's estate is also later referred to as the Barraba Estate and the northern area of the estate as Coney Creek Paddock.

The Barraba Estate

Barraba Homestead (refer to figures A7.1 to A7.3) was built in 1830-1831 by William Carter. George Thomas Palmer was the second owner of the house, purchasing it in 1834 (OEH 2013 V2 A1: 5). Palmer is described as gaining possession of the 1280 acre estate called Barraba, 'lying between Carter's Track (the track from Ellalong to Mount Vincent) and the Myall Range'. It is believed that Palmer acquired the property with a 'ready made homestead and farm buildings' and 'little more than 100 acres had been cleared' (Parkes et al. 1979:75). George Thomas Palmer also acquired 'a narrow 40-acre block on the verge of the road on the north side of the Barraba' and approximately a mile north east of Barraba 'a 1200 acre portion against the Broken Back, adjacent to a 284 ½ acre portion which E.C. Close acquired later' (Parkes et al. 1979:75). The Barraba Estate appears in advertising in the Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser from 1830. When it was sold to George Thomas Palmer in 1834 the advertisement for the sale read:

A most superior Estate known by the name of Baraba, formerly the property of William Carter, Esq., distant from the Green Hills by a bush road, only sixteen miles and by the main road twenty five miles from Maitland and nearly adjoining Elalang, the Estate of Robert Crawford Esq., This Farm comprises 1280 acres of rich soil, admirably adapted to agricultural and dairy purposes. The improvements are most extensive consisting of an excellent verandah house of six rooms, four of them 21 feet in length with under-ground cellar, detached offices..a most substantial barn with mill-house adjoining, about one hundred feet in length, with flagged cellar, underneath, intended for the salting of provisions..a stable with loose box, sufficient to accommodate ten horses; good dairy, of two rooms; tobacco house, also of two rooms. Upwards of one hundred acres are cleared and burned off, a considerable proportion of which has been under cultivation, and the fencing comprises a large part of the Estate. The timber on the land is well suited for building purposes, and very fine cedar may be cut in the neighbourhood (The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser 16 January 1934).

In 1906 the Barraba property was owned by the McDonald family. At this time the Barraba Estate is described as being:

... very heavily stocked through the winter; in fact, most people hereabouts believe it far too heavily stocked.

But, although this winter was not a favourable one from a pastoralist's point of view, Barraba has carried all of its stock without any loss worth mentioning, and there is now every prospect of a splendid spring.

It is only about eight or nine months since the owner (Mr McDonald) decided on going in for dairying on a large scale, and during that time he has pushed ahead with improvements...He has got two large dairies built, and almost ready to start, with the spring just setting in.

They are capable of carrying from a hundred to a hundred and fifty cows each, when running full power, and everything is up to date on both farms (Cessnock Express, 22 September 1906 cited in Sugarloaf, January – February 1995, No. 47:2030).

Land Holders

William Carter

William Carter arrived in NSW on the Prince Regent with his wife and daughter in August 1824 and was appointed Master of the Supreme Court on 25 August 1834 (Free Settler or Felon: http://www.jenwilletts.com/george_thomas_palmer.htm).

On 8 November 1824 Carter was granted a 2,030 acre estate, 'Piercefield', near Muswellbrook. In January 1825 a further 1,000 acres adjacent to this grant was set aside for Carter to purchase (Wood 1972: 62-3). By 1828, Carter is recorded as having 3,900 sheep and 150 cattle (Wood 1972: 181).

By 1828 his land holdings were recorded on the census as 9,000 acres across the Hunter Valley (Wood 1972: 194). Carter ran into financial difficulties and in 1829 he was declared an insolvent debtor and his salary apportioned to his creditors. His stock was sold and land forfeited and he was removed from his position as Master of the Supreme Court; although he later became Registrar General (Wood 1972:194- 5). However, he is reported to have constructed the Barraba Homestead in the early 1830s.

George Thomas Palmer

George Thomas Palmer Senior was a large landholder in New South Wales and a shareholder in the Australian Agricultural Company in the early nineteenth century having arrived in Australia as part of the 62nd Regiment in the ship Albion. Palmer owned the property Pemberton Grange at Woolloomooloo and was the son of the former Commissary-General John Palmer. He is reported to have owned 13,200 acres, 46 horses, 1897 cattle and 6133 sheep. His son George Thomas Jnr managed the Barraba Estate (Umwelt 2008). Palmer purchased the Barraba Estate, including the homestead built by Carter, in 1834.

Jacob Josephson

Josephson was born on 21 April 1776 in Breslau, Germany. In 1814 he was ordained a Minister of the Gospel to the Jews and employed by the London Society for Promoting Christianity. Josephson is reported as being caught stealing the communion plate from a church at Stanstead. He was found guilty of theft (or for having forged 1 pound notes in his possession in 1817) removed from office as a Minister, sentenced to 14 years and was subsequently sent to Australia as a convict later that year. Convict transport records list Josephson as a Hebrew teacher. He gained employment as a jeweller, gold and silversmith, and has been described as Australia's first silversmith. Josephson was provided with a two thousand acre grant in the Quorrobolong area on 15 August 1834 and became one of the major landholders in the area (Umwelt 2008).

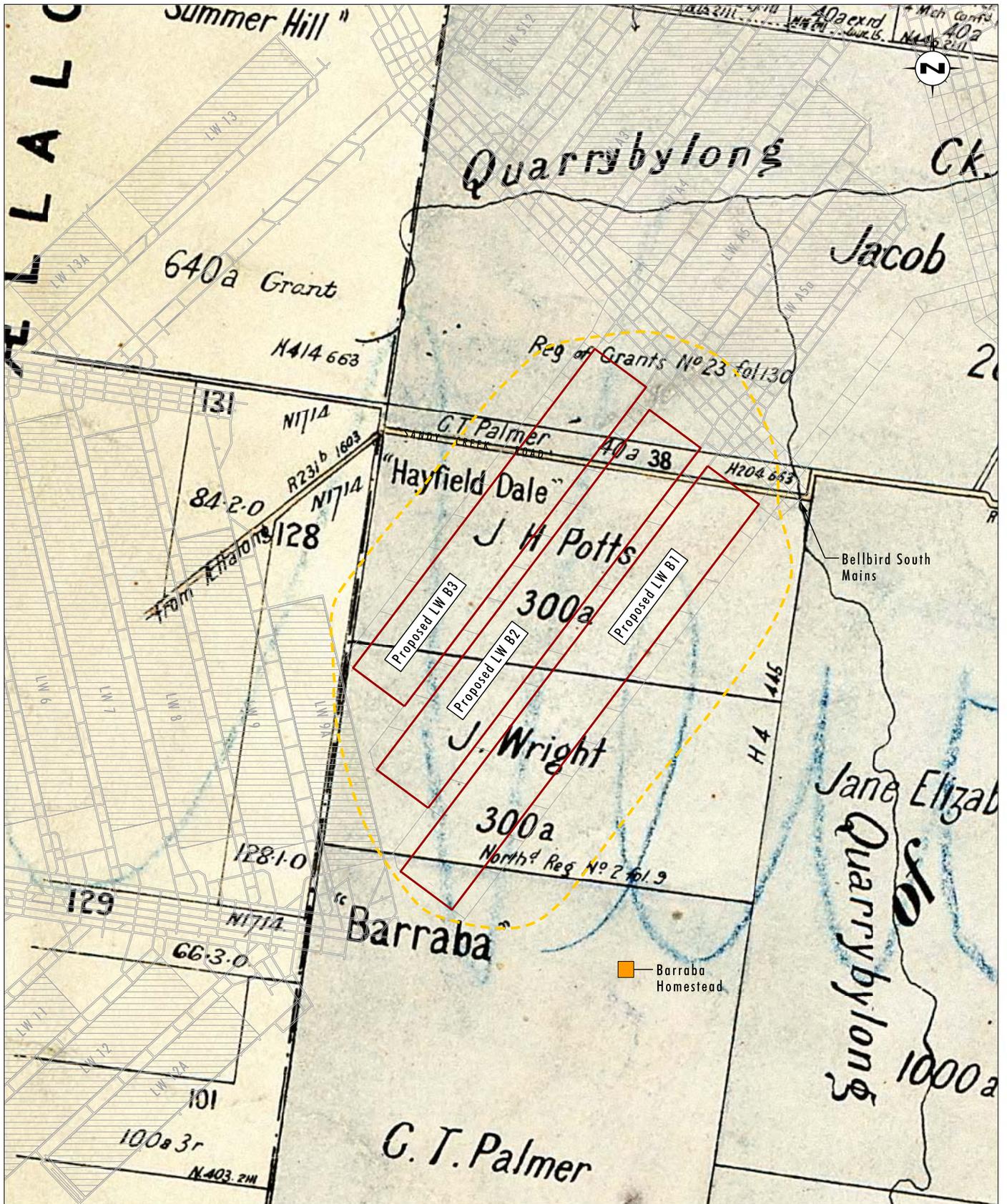


Image Source: Land and Property Information (August 1999)
 Data Source: Austar Coal Mine (2015)

0 0.25 0.5 1.0 km
 1:20 000

Legend

- Proposed LWB1-B3 Longwall Panels
- LWB1-B3 Modification Area
- Completed Underground Workings
- Potential Heritage Item

FIGURE A7.1

1888 Parish Map of Quorrobolong
 and Former Location of Barraba Homestead



FIGURE A7.2
1980 Photograph of Barraba Homestead

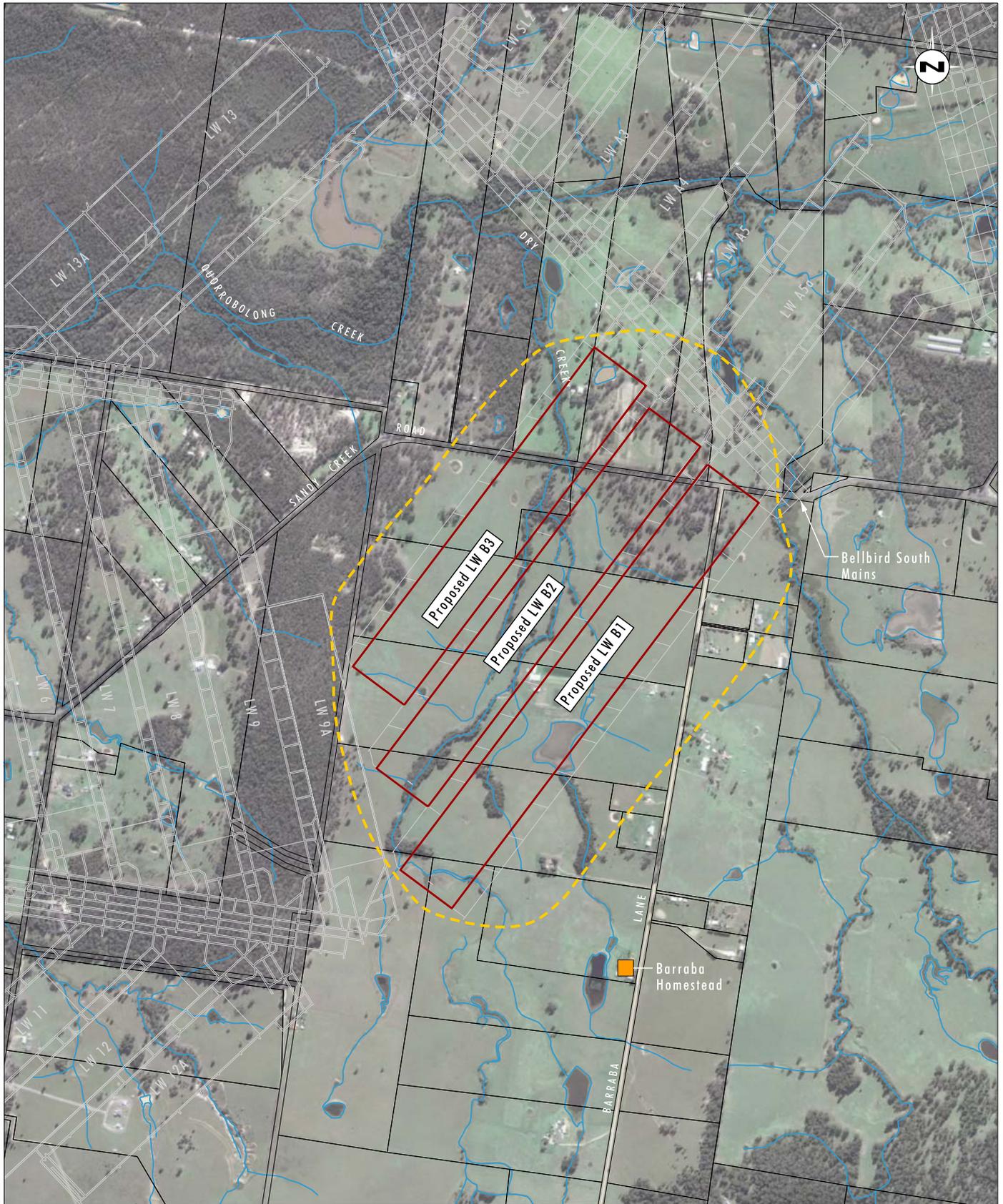


Image Source: Google Earth (2014)
 Data Source: Austar Coal Mine (2015)

0 0.25 0.5 1.0km
 1:20 000

Legend

- Proposed LWB1-B3 Longwall Panels
- LWB1-B3 Modification Area
- Completed Underground Workings
- Drainage Line
- Potential Heritage Item

FIGURE A7.3

Former location of Barraba Homestead
 in relation to LWB1-B3 Modification Area