

Heritage Referral DA 2021.839.1

Longfield' 175 Wilsons Creek Rd



Mr Belson's homestead
Source State Library Archives <https://archival.sl.nsw.gov.au/Details/archive/110104837>

April 2022

Prepared by
CLARENCE HERITAGE
for Byron Shire Council

1. Background

This report reviews DA 2021-839 and accompanying documentation. A site inspection was carried out at the property on 25 March 2022 with Kate Singleton, Planners North, Dom Jones and Liam., DFJ Architects, Ben Grant, Senior Planner BSC and Deborah Wray; Heritage Advisor BSC, to discuss the proposed restoration and alterations to this historical property and proposed development of 4 cabins on the land.

2. Heritage Status

Although the property is not currently listed as a heritage item under Byron Shire LEP 2014 its heritage significance is acknowledged. A request for protection has been raised by Brunswick Valley Historical Society and community members. Its potential inclusion on the heritage schedule has been considered at Councils Heritage Panel and has support for inclusion. Discussion with the applicant also indicated that the new owner is supportive of its protection. A draft Planning Proposal is in preparation for additional heritage listings.

3. History

The following history was provided by Brunswick Valley Historical Society

The original 300 acre property was selected by renowned teamster and timber-getter William Grant Law of the Clarence in 1881. He pit-sawed his own timber for the original thatched roofed house. But whether he or his successor subsequently erected the current building is uncertain.

In 1899 he sold the property, by then known as 'Longfield', to Charles Belson of Maitland for £1000 (~\$151,000 in today's money, using the RBA's inflation calculator). W. G. Law remained as a sharefarmer for 3yrs before moving to Main Arm. In the meantime the dairy industry had boomed, Belson became a foundation committeeman of the Mullumbimby Farmers & Dairymen's Union in July 1901, of which his brother Albert of nearby 'Bella Vista' was foundation president.



Mr Belson's Longfield Farm

Source State Library Archives <https://archival.sl.nsw.gov.au/Details/archive/110104836>

In 1907 Belson sold the place to William Bower of Bega for £6000 (~\$884,000). [Meanwhile, in late 1903, Albert sold 500 acre 'Bella Vista' for £3750 (having paid £1250 4yrs earlier) - ~\$542,000 and ~\$190,000].

The rise of King Banana to challenge Her Majesty the Cow as the district's totem started in 1912 when William Bower planted out 8 acres on the slopes of Montecollum / Laverty's Gap, harvesting assisted by a tramline down the hillside to the flats of 'Longfield' His first production arrived at the Mullum fruit shops in Mar13.

William Bower, born Norfolk, England 1856, represented 'A' Riding on the Byron Shire Council 1911-1917(Son James T. Bower carried on the tradition as an 'A' Riding councillor Nov1913 and served as Shire President 1939-40. In Oct1955 the Council adopted the name 'Bower Street' in the new Crown land subdivision at Brunswick Heads. Like his father, James was prominent in community affairs.)

The Bower homestead, 'Longfield'; ~1910.

(L to R on verandah: Catherine (nee McPaul) Bower, William Jnr's wife Beattie (nee Pethers) with son Stan, William Snr, James with son Les, and Percy.)

William added to 'Longfield' over the years, such that by 1922 upon his retirement into Mullum he was able to hand on to his sons 550 acres, Percy Ambrose inheriting 'Longfield', James getting 'Pulpit Hill', and Henry Robert on 'Hillside', both carved off 'Longfield', William Ernest with 'Elmhurst', Frederick George Thomas with 'Mountain View' and Herbert John at 'Oceanview'. Source BVHS

3. Proposed Works

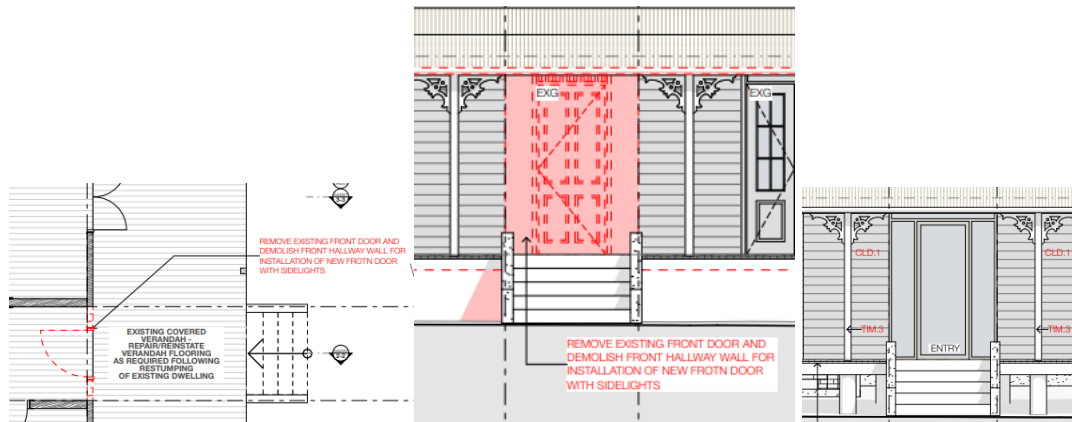
- Alterations and additions to the existing dwelling house including;
- Demolition of the rear of the existing dwelling;
- Changes to the internal configuration of the existing dwelling
- Construction of a new detached linked addition
- Addition of a pool and landscaped lawn; and
- Additions to existing outbuilding to provide amenities, store, wet bar and outdoor shower.
- Proposed construction of 4 x 1 bedroom cabins with a gross floor area of 60m² contain a kitchen, dining/living area, bathroom and bedroom.

The architectural plans reference some historical photographs however the SEE does not address heritage or include a SOHI due to the non-formal heritage status of the property.

The Icomos Burra Charter which is nationally adopted as best practice for heritage conservation advocates a cautious approach to change, and to do as much as necessary but as little as possible.

4. Proposed Demolition

4.1 Removal of entry door, replacement of door and widening of walls to insert side lights.

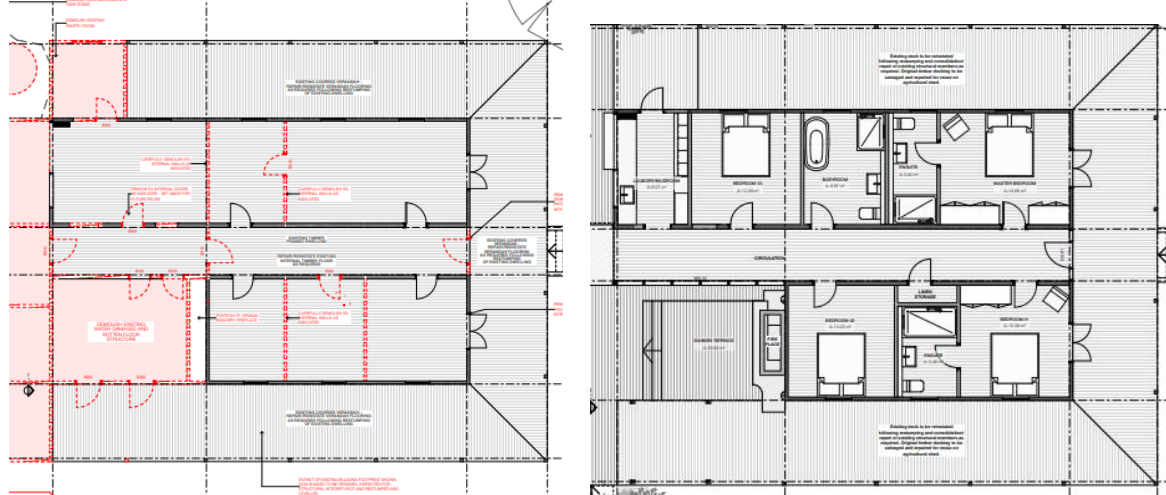


Original 4 panel entry door, transom light above and hallway.

The removal of this door, architraves and skirtings and transom to insert a new door and side lights, removes original historic fabric, and alters the original historic detail and authenticity of the farmhouse.

Retention and conservation of the original fabric of the existing entry door, transom light, and walls is recommended.

4.2. Removal of original internal walls.



Western Side

The front living room is a possible amalgamation of two former rooms and has non original linings. Conversion of this to a bedroom and ensuite does not remove original fabric.

A bathroom could be created in the existing original space of the second room on the western side without disruption to the historical layout and walls.(further research would be required to look at whether this wall was original or has been relocated in association with point 1).

A bedroom and small kitchenette could also be created in the southernmost room also minimising demolition of original walls.

Eastern side

The eastern front bedroom should retain the existing wall to the south to avoid unnecessary demolition of original fabric and insert the bathroom behind this wall achieving the same layout.

Demolition of the next wall to the south is acceptable to increase the size of this room and create of a bedroom similar to the proposal.

Demolition of the third wall to the south forms comprises the original rear wall of the house which should be conserved.

Removal of the hallway division and door frame unnecessarily removes historic fabric and should be conserved.



Front living room with later altered linings.



Simple quad profile around top of walls.



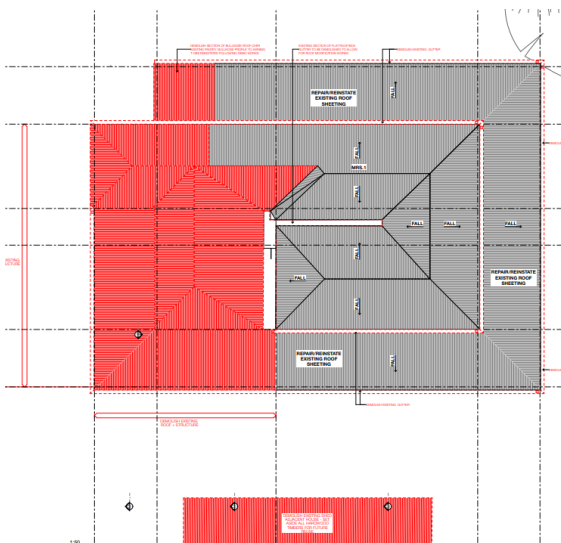
Hallway doorway opening



Southern side of bedroom wall behind frame.

4.3 Demolition of Rear Section

The small hipped roof over the eastern side rear room is indicative of a possible former detached kitchen. This is historically significant fabric and the extension on the side of the verandah is also evident in the early photograph.





Reconstruction of this historic roof form over the outdoor proposed kitchen would provide reference to the existing former structure., however the drainage issues of a box gutter are acknowledged and would need to be considered and addressed. Further research is recommended. The water damage and deterioration of this space is noted. The proposed retention of this element as an open walled outdoor kitchen is acceptable in principle continuing the likely former use. Reconstruction of the fireplace is positive. Further details /photos of existing fireplace footings should be included in the archival report.

The rear section on the western side also constitutes a historic component of the dwelling and the side extension under the bullnose verandah matches that of the other side and this proposed demolition also removes historic elements of the dwelling.



Western side



Early paint layers of red brown oxide.

5.0 Other Works

The proposed new addition to the rear is sympathetic in scale, bulk and form, and does not interrupt the principal views of the historic farmhouse or its setting. The proposed pool and restoration of the wash house raise no adverse issues

Note- Materials MS2 for new addition roofing is not shown on table. Suggest it is the same roofing as the main house Galvanised Steel which works equally well with contemporary constructions and is an authentic material for the rural location.

CLD.1	LINING - WEATHERBOARDS
CN.1	CONCRETE - UNFINISHED
CN.2	CONCRETE - SEALED
CN.3	CONCRETE - POLISHED
MRS.1	CLADDING - METAL ROOF SHEETING
SRL.1	SHAFT LINER
ST.1	STEEL - STRUCTURAL WHITE
ST.3	STEEL - GALVANISED
TM.1	TIMBER - STRUCTURAL

The proposed cabin location was inspected and it is considered that this is well located with little potential to disrupt views and vistas of the historic property and its setting.

6.0 Summary

It is acknowledged that the property does not have a formal heritage listing in place, (although an Interim Heritage Order could be sought if required) and that a balance is being struck between the conservation of the original core of the dwelling and provision of updated living spaces. The deteriorated condition of the property and the work required to reconstruct the damaged materials of the original dwelling is acknowledged and overall, this presents a positive conservation outcome subject to the recommendations below.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 An Archival Report consistent with Heritage NSW guidelines to document the existing building, setting and outbuildings is to be prepared and submitted prior to release of the CC. 3 hard and digital copies are to be provided for Council records, the Library and BVHS <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Heritage/photographic-recording-of-heritage-items-using-film-or-digital-capture.pdf>

7.2 Works should be consistent with the conservation articles of the Icomos Burra Charter 2013 with the underlying principle 'do as much as necessary but as little as possible' minimising intervention and alterations to historic fabric and layout, and the introduction of new material as far as possible.

<https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf>

On this basis, revisions to the proposed plans are sought to address the following matters

- Retention of the original front door and wall unchanged.
- Retention of end hallway doorway and nib walls
- Reconsideration of the detailed layout to minimise alteration to the historic layout, and loss of original fabric.
- Further research on the hipped roof possible early kitchen section.

7.3 Damaged material should be replaced 'like for like' to original details however a subtle change or date stamping on the rear should be used to distinguish new material from the original. New materials introduced to address damage should be documented and provided at completion of the project.

7.4 Any sound wall linings, ceiling linings, skirtings, architraves to be removed should be recorded in situ, and reused for restoration and reconstruction works and details kept of location of new installation.

7.5 Reroofing should be carried out in Galvanised Steel Z600, with non perforated low front quadrant profile or ogee guttering, and reinstatement of acroterions to the corners as per historic details in early photographs.

7.6 Decorative details which are not evident in the original structure, should not be introduced, to maintain the historic details, authenticity and simple vernacular style of the house. For example, there are no significant cornices, only simple quad. Decorative cornices or ceiling linings should not be installed

7.7 A colour scheme based on historic evidence of the original paint scrapes should be used to maintain the historic and aesthetic significance of this dwelling. It is noted that the earliest wall colour layers are a red brown red oxide which is consistent with early photos of this tonality of the wall. Contemporary colour schemes of grey, black and white should be avoided for a historic dwelling of this era.

7.8 That the property included as a heritage item on Schedule 5 of Byron LEP 2014 through a future amendment to the schedule.

8.0 References

1. *Australia ICOMOS The Burra Charter - Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance 2013*
2. Byron Shire Local Environmental Plan 2014
3. Byron Shire Local Environmental Plan 2014
4. Brunswick Valley Historical Society information provided. Susan Tcisalis.

CLARENCE HERITAGE

Deborah Wray B.A Hons, M.P.I.A. M. ICOMOS

clarenceheritage@gmail.com

PO Box 1759, GRAFTON, NSW 2460 | M: 0427 425558 | P 0266 444 000