



# Fernhill 'Working Heritage' Master Plan Vision Report

December 2013

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Executive Summary

The Working Heritage Master Plan Vision for the Fernhill Estate provides the initiative to establish a sustainable future for the conservation of the state heritage listed Fernhill. This Vision Report sets out the plan to deliver that support in a proposal that priorities heritage, biodiversity and public benefits. A Voluntary Planning Agreement, proposed to be tied to the site, reinforces the objectives and purpose of this proposal.

The Master Plan Vision for working heritage is proposed to be delivered through the series of development proposals which will ultimately deliver an enlarged and consolidated heritage area, biodiversity conservation, subdivision of peripheral lands and the equestrian and adaptive uses and events which have been based on preserving the heritage and encouraging the potential use of Fernhill. The opportunity to introduce public events to the state heritage area, deliver biobanking areas and supply a diverse range of housing on the periphery of the site, would provide funding that would be used to protect and enhance the heritage significance of the site in the long term.

## 1.2 Vision

The concept for the Master Plan was informed by the desire to preserve the Fernhill heritage area; in particular the original heritage curtilage and buffer areas. This is based on the Conservation Management Plan prepared for the property and the Tripp family's vision for the active use of the Central Precinct.

The Master Plan is underpinned by a guiding vision:

*"Fernhill is a significant heritage home and landscape to be preserved through a working heritage master plan that will protect and consolidate the heritage values and provide an iconic venue for equestrian activities, functions and events in Western Sydney."*

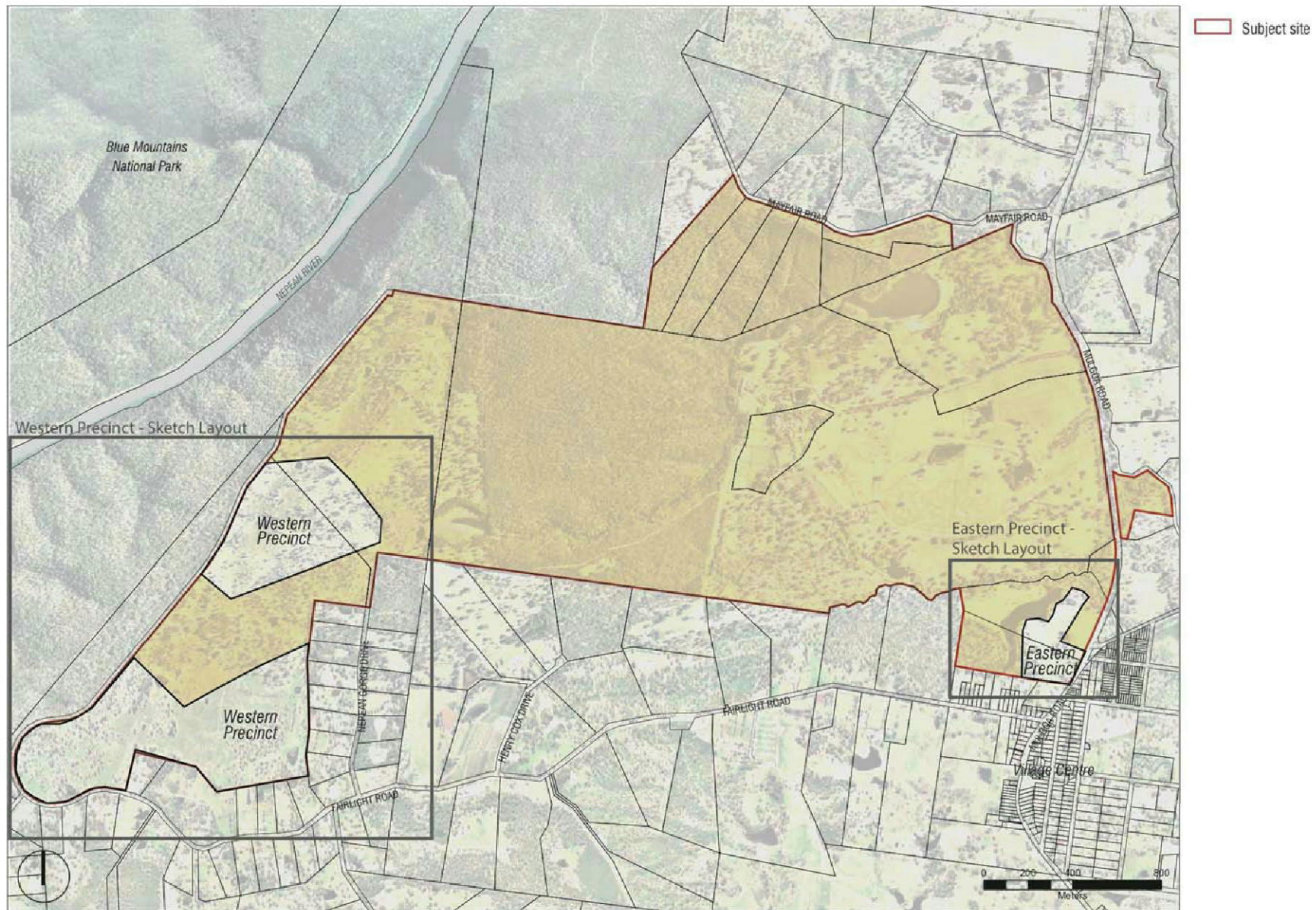
This Working Heritage Master Plan Vision Report for Fernhill Estate documents a way forward for the long-term conservation and management of Fernhill. The Report explains the multi-faceted proposals for the future uses and development envisaged for the Fernhill property to achieve this long-term conservation.

The Working Heritage Master Plan draws on international best-practice heritage conservation models and has been prepared in consultation with key stakeholders including Penrith City Council and the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

Fernhill House









### 1.3 Background

The Fernhill Estate (the Estate) holding is approximately 643 hectares in area over 15 contiguous titles. The Estate includes the Central Precinct of the State Heritage Listed area “Fernhill”, which occupies an area of approximately 385 hectares and comprises the homestead, stables, paddocks and various landscape features established by the Cox family. Fernhill has been used as pastoral land since the 1840s and potentially earlier, when the Cox family first lived in the Mulgoa Valley at Cox’s Cottage from the 1810s.

The other components of the Fernhill Estate that adjoin the State Heritage Fernhill area include: the Northern Precinct in the Mayfair Road area, the Eastern Precinct to south east that adjoins the rural village of Mulgoa; and the Western Precinct along Fairlight Road that adjoins rural residential land environmental areas. The Northern and Eastern Precincts have local significance as ‘curtilage of Fernhill’.

Fernhill is presently owned by Angas Securities which has been in control of the estate since it went into receivership. Angas Securities has entered a joint venture with Simon and Brenda Tripp to consolidate the core part of the estate and to seek to develop peripheral areas of the estate to establish a sustainable future for Fernhill. Unfortunately, Angas Securities sold off one peripheral lot from the estate located in the Henry Cox Drive area, prior to Tripps involvement and the preparation of this Working Heritage Master Plan.

Fernhill is the Tripp family home. The Tripp family reside on the property and are managing the estate; they have been in residence since December 2012. Their goal is to complete the joint venture and then to take over ownership of the balance of the property – the enlarged Central Precinct.

View across Eastern and Central Precinct (Mulgoa Rd foreground)



View south across Lake Jessica to Central Valley





## 1.4 The Working Heritage Master Plan Vision Report

The Working Heritage Master Plan Vision Report is a document that pulls together in one place all the various aspects of planning underway for Fernhill. It is intended as a public information document to provide a framework under which various parts of the Master Plan can be described in relation to each other.

On several occasions since its development in 1842, Fernhill has struck financial difficulty. Unlike other neighbouring heritage estates, Fernhill has been able to survive with its original curtilage intact. This Master Plan Vision seeks to honour this heritage and consolidate the curtilage into the future. Active re-use of the heritage buildings and landscape provides the mechanism to deliver ongoing heritage conservation maintenance.

In summary, the Working Heritage Master Plan comprises four main parts:

### Part 1 - Consolidation

The current owner of Fernhill, the receivers Angas Securities, requires a stable financial basis to be established in order to maximise heritage and biodiversity conservation and consolidate areas of state and local heritage significance. Through an analysis of the Conservation Management Plan, ecological studies, infrastructure, scenic amenity and other considerations, the limited development of the peripheral lands (in the Eastern and Western Precincts) and biobanking in a range of areas across the Estate were identified that can deliver that stable financial base for the sustainable future of Fernhill.

### Part 2 – Biodiversity Strategy

This involves the identification of suitable lands for inclusion in the state government's permanent biodiversity conservation program known as 'biobanking'. Suitable lands have been identified within the Estate for environmental conservation by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. Biobanking provides a financial incentive

Eastern Precinct



Western Precinct





to contribute to the protection of important biodiversity and each year an increasing area of lands identified for environmental conservation areas in Western Sydney are protected permanently through property titles.

### Part 3 – Peripheral Land Development Strategy

This involves the discrete extension of Mulgoa Village on lands outside the State Heritage area for residential development on lands at Mulgoa Road, known as the Eastern Precinct. Limited expansion of the rural residential area west of Mulgoa Village is also proposed on lands not affected by heritage or environmental constraints, known as the Western Precinct.

### Part 4 – Central Precinct Working Heritage Business Plan

Fernhill has long been a destination celebrated for its picturesque landscape and magnificent home and gardens. In recent decades, however, the property has been a private home and rural holding requiring significant resources to maintain. Current economic circumstances indicate a more sustainable economic model is one of adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and landscape. Adaptive re-use is a well-recognised way to ensure the viability of ongoing heritage conservation that includes significant public benefit.

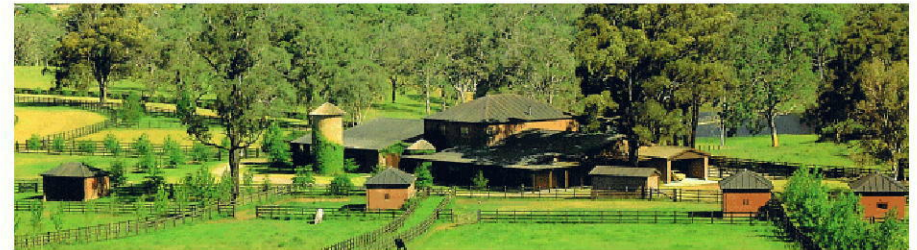
The Working Heritage Business Plan coordinates the plans for and uses of the enlarged and consolidated Central ‘State Heritage’ Precinct of Fernhill and buffer areas and includes:

- cultural heritage overlay setting out Heritage Conservation Strategy (to be delivered through the proposed Voluntary Planning Agreement)
- biodiversity overlay setting out a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy
- adaptive re-use overlay (including permitted uses) setting out appropriate uses for the buildings and landscape including, an Equestrian Centre of Excellence, recreation events, functions and entertainment events and activities
- the Fernhill Foundation to establish corporate and community support for heritage conservation

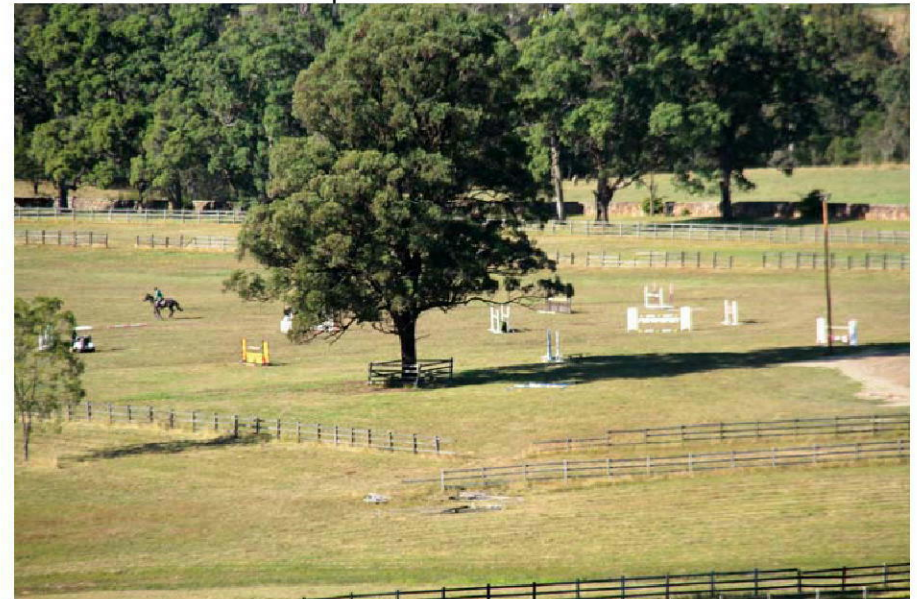
### Supporting Programs and Strategies

These four parts combine to provide the overall Working Heritage Master Plan and are supported by a suite of necessary programs and strategies including heritage conservation, transport, environmental management and sustainability, economic and community development and management / implementation. This Master Plan document seeks to document each of these parts of the Working Heritage Master Plan and its supporting programs and strategies.

Racetrack Stables



Equestrian Activities in Central Precinct





## 1.5 Overview of Consultation and Planning Pathways

Stakeholder consultation will continue throughout the assessment processes including:

- Public notification of all development proposals for Fernhill Estate lands including the development of peripheral lands (Eastern Precinct and Western Precinct) and the adaptive re-use of the heritage building and lands (Central Precinct)
- Public notification of the Voluntary Planning Agreement to coordinate and deliver outcomes for heritage, biodiversity and public benefit
- Consultation with relevant agencies and authorities including the Heritage Council, Office of Environment and Heritage, Roads and Maritime Services, Transport for NSW, NSW Rural Fire Service, and
- Ongoing consultation with local indigenous groups and community groups, including the Mulgoa Progress Association, as well as residents and businesses

Any inquiries about the Master Plan can be made to [info@fernhillstate.net.au](mailto:info@fernhillstate.net.au) and planning assessment processes can be made to Penrith City Council, the relevant planning authority.

House and Lawns



Rose Garden





Fernhill Estate was described in *Our Antipodes*, Colonel Godfrey's account of his visit to Australia in 1852:

*"A handsome stone house overlooks by far the most lovely and extensive landscape – as a home view – I ever met with in Australia: and its beauty is much enhanced by the taste and success of the proprietor in weeding out the thinly leafed and unsightly kinds of the gum-tree and preserving only that species of eucalyptus called the apple-tree, which, with its stout gnarled branches and crisp tufted foliage, is, when standing alone or in clumps on parkish looking ground, by no means a bad representative of the English oak... a stranger might imagine himself at the country-house of some substantial English squire ...there is a unity of homelike landscape unlike anything else of its kind I have met with out of England."*

Various farm buildings or structures were added throughout 20th century, including a chicken hatchery, piggery, bird aviaries and enclosures for deer and other game animals. These structures were in keeping with the use of the rural property and were situated away from the house.

The approach to the house was changed following the realignment of Mulgoa Road in 1949, which led to a new entry and portion of the southern driveway further south of the original entry off the new Mulgoa Road. The original southern driveway alignment is still visible in the landscape with the remnant apple trees.

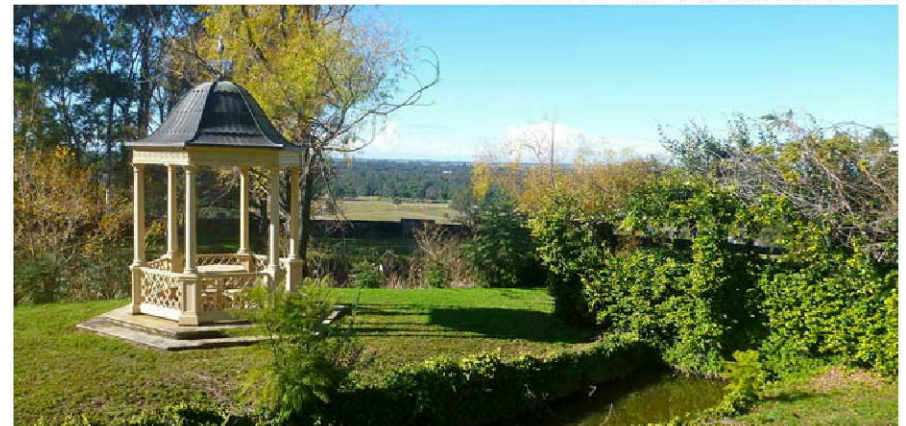
Further changes to the integrity of Fernhill's landscape character have included the creation of the easement for movement of materials and then supply of electricity in relation to Warragamba Dam; the addition of large-scale farm buildings in the 1960s by the Darlings; the house garden alterations and additions by Sorensen in the 1970s; and the alterations and additions to the entire property's landscape by the Andersons from the 1980s

### Heritage Views and Vistas

Fernhill Estate once had significant views and vistas through a cleared, open and managed landscape between Fernhill House, St Thomas's Church and, to a lesser extent, Cox's Cottage. There were also significant views and vistas around Fernhill Estate from and to the house, its landscape and the Mulgoa Valley. Some of these broader views and vistas remain, but as discussed in relation to changes to the garden and pastoral areas, the designed early views and vistas are now largely lost. There are, however, many fine views and vistas still available within the property, to and from the house, from the house to the valley, and some minor and remnant view lines from Mulgoa Road to the house garden. This latter view is, however, only available over adjacent lands that do not form part of the core Fernhill site.

The views have been lost due to two principal changes: the changes to the estate in relation to the garden setting around the house and the introduction of new landscape elements from the 1960s onwards; and the extensive regrowth of mostly Cumberland Plain Woodland that is in itself protected and valued but which has obscured the relationships between the historic elements.

Lake House and district views





### Conservation Management

The Fernhill property falls into several broad landscape area, made up of conservation management areas as described below (and detailed in Appendix A):

- The house and its immediate garden and working setting is an area that needs to be considered as a whole;
- The open pastoral land, flanked by the driveways that extends from the house to Mulgoa Road, is a landscape area that has integrity for its openness and needs to be considered in relation to the house and garden in particular;
- The wooded hill behind the house that extends into the woodland of the western precinct is a separate landscape unit;
- The remaining lands that flank these areas; and
- The extended estate.

The Conservation Management Plan sets out the values that require conservation and identifies issues and opportunities to support the ongoing heritage conservation.

### Ownership

Ownership of Fernhill reveals past challenges to the retention of the Fernhill Estate which are compelling, especially when considered in conjunction with the adjoining Cox family estates of Glenmore, the estate of Henry Cox to the north which was sold in 1852, and Windbourne, the estate of George Cox to the south, sold in 1901. Development pressures on these pastoral estates intensified in the area through the 1940-50s bringing subdivision, sealed roads and electricity to the area.

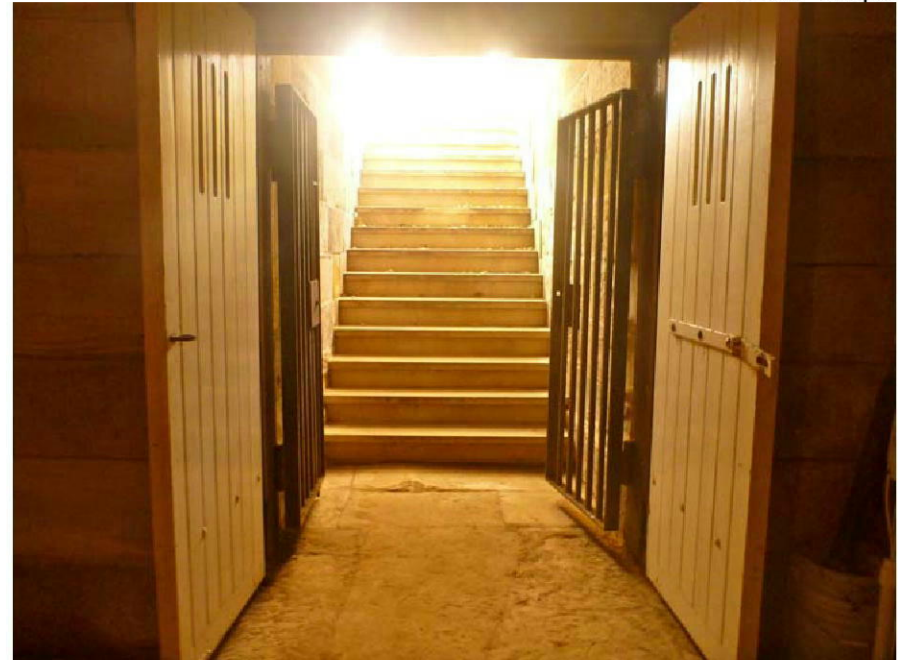
The ownership of the land that became the Fernhill Estate by Edward Cox and his descendants from 1810 was ended in 1896 when Edward Standish Cox defaulted on a mortgage on the property and the ownership passed to Fredrick Thomas Humphery and Edward Perry Simpson. At that time, Humphery was an official assignee of insolvent estates and tenants were installed at Fernhill. The property

was then bought by Henry James Bell in 1906 and in 1924 was sold to the Baynes family. With the onset of the depression in 1930, the

Baynes's mortgage was called in and the property transferred to Hilda Mary Moyes of Belluvue Hill, who ran the property as a pastoral concern.

The house and grounds were in poor condition when bought by John Darling in 1955. The Darlings undertook significant renovations as well as establishing several rural industries within the property. Subsequent ownership by the Andersons from the 1980s saw further changes to the property with a focus on equestrian activities. In 2010, the property went into receivership and ownership passed to Angas Securities.

Cellar Steps





## 2.2 Environment

Mulgoa Valley is characterised by creek flats surrounded by wooded hills and escarpment areas. To the west the valley is steep and hilly, to the east it is more undulating; the Mulgoa Creek flats form the centre of the valley. The topography varies in height from an average 100 metres to over 215 metres above sea level in the west. In the east is the topography is more undulating, ranging in height from 40 metres to 100 metres above sea level. The natural landforms on Fernhill Estate include the hill where the house is sited, and the gently undulating hills and various tributary creeks through the property.

Much of the present vegetation in the valley has been cleared for grazing and other agricultural purposes. Dry sclerophyll forest covers uncleared or regrowth portions of the valley, which varies between open forest, woodland and low woodland communities. Extensive mapping of 'green webs' throughout Penrith LGA has been undertaken to identify regional biodiversity links and conservation goals.

The property is located within the Western Sydney Region of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment, located approximately 500 metres east of the Nepean River. The property has a small area in the west that drains west to the Nepean River, however the majority of the property falls to the east. Several creeks traverse the site, including Littlefields Creek in the south, which are tributaries of the Mulgoa Creek which flows north through the Mulgoa Valley to the Nepean River.

The Mulgoa Valley was intensively used by Aboriginal people for thousands of years prior to European contact in the early 1800s. Aboriginal people are noted in historical sources to have lived semi-traditional ways up to the 1840s in the area. Previous assessments of Fernhill's Aboriginal heritage archaeological values included consultation with Aboriginal community groups, and conservation and management strategies have been identified.

Fernhill has had a number of severe bushfires across the site in its history. The most recent fire in 2000 destroyed a number of buildings on the site (including the former slab post office on Mulgoa Road), fences and extensive areas of vegetation. The core buildings and site areas were able to be protected largely through the access to large water storage on the property. Bushfire management continues to be an important consideration.

Under Penrith LEP 2010, most of the property is zoned Environmental Management (Zone E3), however the land east of Mulgoa Road, the wooded hill behind the house and the western land beyond that, and parts of the lots along Mayfair Road are zoned Environmental Conservation (Zone E2). The environmental zoning does not affect the heritage values of the property but does impact on how the estate is managed with regard to both its cultural and natural values.

Ecological corridors across site to Mulgoa Creek



## 2.3 Built Environment

Fernhill Estate is located immediately north-west of Mulgoa Village. There are various properties in the area surrounding Fernhill Estate that are heritage listed, many of which relate to the Cox family or other significant families in the district.

The village of Mulgoa consists of mainly residential allotments with single and two storey dwellings, a school, churches and shops on Mulgoa Road, while further away from the town are larger rural and rural residential allotments. Most of the town dates from the mid to late-twentieth century period with a few earlier buildings spread across the township. Unlike many historic villages, Mulgoa does not have an historic core, or a real focal point as a village, rather it is spread with the heritage buildings extending over several kilometres. Consequently, the township does not have a heritage character but does contain several heritage buildings.

The village boundary is currently the boundary between the public school and the Fernhill lands. Directly opposite this is a park and rural residential development to the north and east.

Located on a hillside north of Mulgoa Village, facing St Thomas' Road (old Mulgoa Road alignment), the St Thomas' Church was built c1836-38 in the Gothic Revival architectural style. The church and surrounding land is now owned by the Anglican Schools Corporation which is commencing the construction of a small local school on the southern portion of the property, outside the heritage setting of the church and graveyard. Parts of the site are now subject to extensive regrowth, particularly along the alignment of Mulgoa Road and to the east of the church. This growth has removed views from the church to the landscape beyond the site, to most of Mulgoa Road and onto the Fernhill lands.

To the north of St Thomas' is Cox's Cottage, built by William Cox built in 1811 for his sons, George, Henry and Edward. Cox's Cottage is one of Australia's oldest extant timber buildings, which retains its rural setting. The lands around the house front Mulgoa Road and Church Lane (once Mulgoa Road) and the rural landscape is in many respects contiguous with the eastern end of the Fernhill lands. However, lineal perimeter or boundary planting along the western side of Mulgoa Road on the Fernhill land has largely visually separated the properties from direct visual connection.

Mulgoa Road north of the site primarily consists of open landscape character with limited built form. Uses such as a golf course, school and rural development occupy land along Mulgoa Road.

South of the property, on Fairlight Road, is the Fairlight homestead and barn (1860s). The farm was sub-divided by the late 1960s, removing most of its surrounding paddocks and setting. It remains on a moderate sized parcel of land, with the house with views to the rear of the western Fernhill lands partly screened by trees.



Aerial view east across Mulgoa Valley





### 3. WORKING HERITAGE MASTER PLAN PART 1 – CONSOLIDATION STRATEGY

#### 3.1 Financial Circumstances and Options

As stated in the introduction, Fernhill is presently owned by Angas Securities, which has been in control of the estate since it went into receivership. As the property is in receivership there is a requirement to identify an appropriate way forward. While there are a range of possibilities available, including further subdivision under existing planning controls, a review of options clearly identified the preferred option to recoup value to be one that would also:

- where possible maintain the original heritage curtilage;
- provide public access and a range of public benefits;
- provide a workable model for the long term; and
- protect biodiversity values.

#### 3.2 Heritage Incentives

Penrith LEP 2010 contains heritage incentive controls that facilitate heritage conservation for properties such as Fernhill. This clause allows Council to consider, in consultation with relevant state agencies, uses of the land that deliver heritage conservation that would otherwise not be permissible. This allows Council to approach heritage conservation on a case by case basis and undertake a merit-based assessment specific to the heritage site involved.

At this time, the key component of the future viability of the property is the selection of uses that can sustain the place,

culturally, in terms of its heritage value, and financially. A continuation of rural uses alone will not achieve this, as important as those uses are to the character of the place.

#### 3.3 Appropriate Opportunities

The future of Fernhill will largely depend on how successfully new uses can be integrated into the site so that there is a strong financial basis to conserve and maintain the property. Any consideration of new uses should be based on ensuring that the heritage significance of the place is conserved. The Fernhill Heritage Conservation Management Plan identifies that the expansive property has a range of appropriate opportunities. These include:

- intensification of existing rural uses including agricultural uses and equestrian uses
- events and other outdoor recreation activities which can provide excellent public access to the site
- support activities such as small scale accommodation, restaurant winery/boutique brewery that could be integrated into the site in locations that are outside the core areas to support equestrian activities, events or to support the local and wider community
- Use of the main house and core buildings as the house and its associated outbuildings are also capable of some public access either in relation to small events or as part of activities taking place on the site.
- Support Buildings and Services to house infrastructure required to maintain and operate the property in appropriate locations that do not impact on core areas, views or vistas.
- Biobanking as Fernhill has extensive natural vegetation that has a value in its own right. There are opportunities for activities such as biobanking and improving the quality of the natural environment.



- Development of peripheral lands where there are several locations within the broader Fernhill holding that are not affected by heritage constraints and where careful development could take place without impacting upon the heritage values of the core property.

There has been consideration over many years on the value of providing for development on non-heritage significant land to allow the very significant core holding to be consolidated and protected from future subdivision or development. This is a proven technique to aid in heritage conservation outcomes.

### 3.4 The Preferred Approach – Consolidation

The preferred approach, as set out in this Working Heritage Master Plan Vision Report, is based on a preservation approach whereby heritage conservation and consolidation and biodiversity conservation opportunities are afforded by limited development on peripheral lands in order to secure the long-term protection of the heritage estate of Fernhill. The overall outcome would comprise:

- The historic Fernhill established as a single (or limited) title complete with consolidation of lots to one/two parcels of the 385 hectare Fernhill to prevent future subdivision of the State Heritage area
- Expansion of the State Heritage consolidated area to include: 52.7 hectares of land to the north at Mayfair Road, approximately 16 hectares land at the Eastern Precinct in recognition of their scenic and environmental value as part of the Fernhill setting, and approximately 87.6ha hectares of biodiversity value in the Western Precinct to facilitate biodiversity conservation
- Biodiversity conservation through possible biobanking
- Development of peripheral lands to include:
  - In the Western Precinct, an expansion of the existing rural residential area of West Mulgoa of 38 x 2 ha lot rural residential development

- In the Eastern Precinct, an expansion of the Mulgoa Village of a 54 lot residential development

With the Fernhill heritage retained, an enlarged and consolidated Central Precinct is created that then requires ongoing management. This will be managed through a 'Working Heritage' Business Plan for the Central Precinct that will facilitate a range of appropriate uses within the heritage area including equestrian, recreation and other event and entertainment functions, which will provide public access to Fernhill not seen in decades.

A Voluntary Planning Agreement, proposed to be tied to the site, reinforces the objectives and purpose of this proposal.

Central Precinct - Racetrack





## 4. WORKING HERITAGE MASTER PLAN PART 2 – BIODIVERSITY OVERLAY

### 4.1 Ecological Values

Large tracts of the property remain in a natural state and are home to a range of ecological communities including:

- Cumberland Plain Woodland (listed at the state and federal level as a critically endangered ecological community)
- Shale Sandstone Transition Forest (listed at the state and federal level as an endangered ecological community)
- Sandstone Ridgetop Woodland
- Western Sandstone Gully Forest
- Alluvial Woodland.

Environmental controls exist to protect the high-value ecology at a local, state and federal level and require careful consideration at Fernhill – having particular regard to the ‘picturesque landscape,’ a key component of the heritage value of Fernhill.

### 4.2 Biobanking Programs

In recent times, mechanisms to deliver biodiversity conservation in the long term have been established through biodiversity offsets and biobanking. In 2008, the NSW Government released the Growth Centres Biodiversity Offset Program as part of a package of conservation measures to offset the impacts on biodiversity as Western Sydney’s Growth Centres are developed. By pooling the offset resources, the program intends to target the largest and best remaining bushland on and around the Cumberland Plain for

conservation. The program has identified priority areas of high-value ecology within Fernhill suitable for conservation.

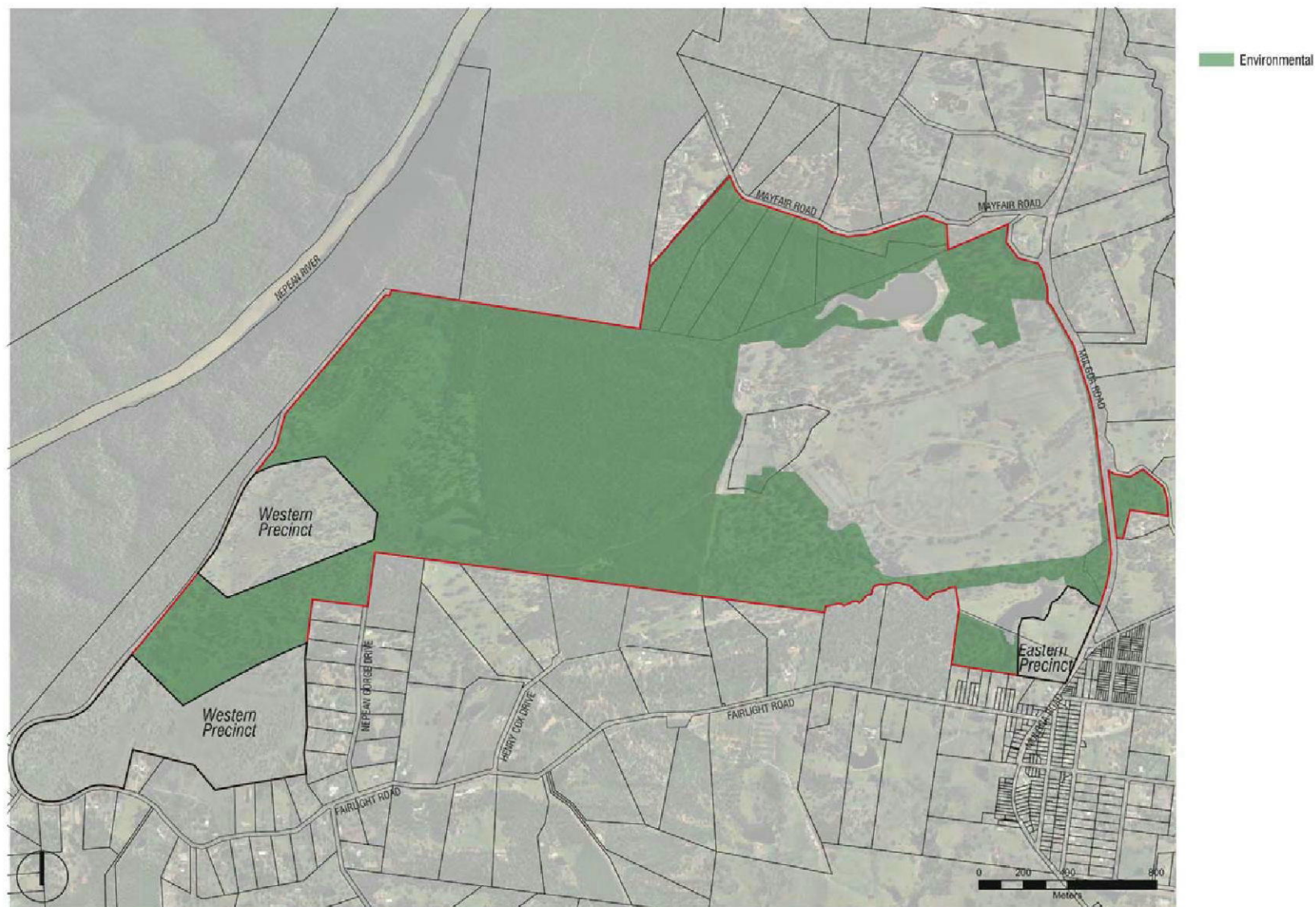
Offset programs can work either through the acquisition of reserves or conservation agreements. This program does not preclude the ecological values at Fernhill being used to offset other development not related to the Growth Centres program.

The program notes that conservation agreements are a priority for properties that have suitable conservation values but are too small to be managed as public reserves, or for properties where the landowner is not interested in selling. The preferred conservation agreement for use in the program is a biobanking agreement; that is, an agreement made with landowners under the NSW Government’s Biodiversity Banking and Offsets Scheme. Biobanking agreements provide permanent security for the land and funding for ongoing management and monitoring.

### 4.3 Biobanking at Fernhill

The areas at Fernhill suitable for consideration relate to the lands containing Cumberland Plain Woodland, which is found in areas to the south along the riparian corridor of Littlefields Creek and to the north along the Mayfair Road corridor, and areas of Shale Sandstone Transition Forest found in the western parts of the property.





FERNHILL - Environmental Protection



## 5. WORKING HERITAGE MASTER PLAN PART 3 – PERIPHERAL LAND DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY

### 5.1 Overview

As identified in the Fernhill Conservation Management Plan:

*“There are several locations within the broader Fernhill holding that are not affected by heritage constraints and where careful development could take place without impacting upon the state heritage values of the core property. There has been consideration over many years on the value of providing for development on non-heritage significant land to allow the very significant core holding to be consolidated and protected from future subdivision or development. This is a key technique to conserve Fernhill. This is a matter that requires negotiation with Penrith Council and the NSW Heritage Council. Allowing development on non-significant parts of the estate to secure the core holding is a sound approach to heritage management and use of the property.”*

Opportunities for such ‘careful development’ have been identified in the most south-east portion of the property adjacent to Mulgoa Village (the Eastern Precinct) and at the western-most portion of the property adjacent to existing rural residential areas (the Western Precinct).

### 5.2 Eastern Precinct

The potential for a modest and sensitive expansion of the Mulgoa Village is proposed in the Eastern Precinct. Preliminary development layouts make provision for views from Mulgoa Road to Fernhill Estate, environmental values, bushfire and so forth. A total of approximately 54 residential lots are considered an appropriate level of development. This includes the existing home

and 53 new home sites. This would deliver a sensitive residential development to provide interface between Fernhill and Mulgoa Village.

The housing lots proposed are all over 900 square metres, with an average lot size of approximately 1000sqm square metres and width of approximately 25m. A large tract of land fronting Mulgoa Road is maintained with some landscaping proposed to present a quality setting to Fernhill and the Mulgoa Village. New housing north west of the intersection with St Thomas Road development is set 100 metres back from Mulgoa Road behind a natural rise and will not be highly visible from Mulgoa Road.

Demand for a more exclusive housing choice has emerged in Penrith in recent years as western Sydney’s wealth and skills increase. Often referred to as ‘Entrepreneurs Housing,’ these large housing lots associated with a rural village provide a valuable alternative to estate housing available elsewhere in Penrith.

Eastern Precinct Layout



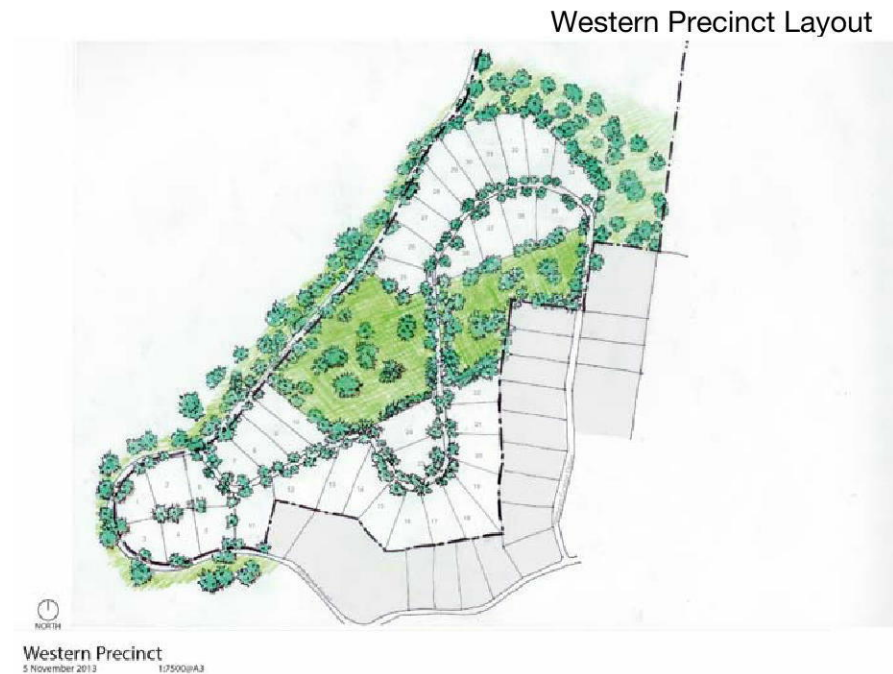


### 5.3 Western Precinct

The Western Precinct of the Fernhill Estate is a rural/environmental area outside the State Heritage area that has the potential to support a level of rural residential development similar to that on nearby properties elsewhere along Fairlight Road. A rural residential subdivision of approximately 38 lots is proposed, with lots being a minimum of 2 hectares. The lots are arranged in two clusters.

The developable area identified has been established in close consultation with ecological, bushfire and infrastructure experts to ensure the suitability of the land for rural residential development. These lots will be accessed via an extension of Nepean Gorge Drive and new internal road that links through to Fairlight Road. The design of the layout gives appropriate consideration to the adjoining Fairlight House and much of the frontage to Fairlight Road will be conserved due to its biodiversity values.

There are few areas in western Sydney where rural residential development is appropriate, as areas are either developed for urban residential or have limited infrastructure to support growth. This western part of Mulgoa is ideally suited to this modest proposal as it complements the local rural village and surrounding rural residential character.





## 6. WORKING HERITAGE MASTER PLAN PART 4 – CENTRAL PRECINCT STRATEGY

### 6.1 Central Precinct Considerations

As set out in the Conservation Management Plan, the lands within the Central Precinct accommodate the heritage and biodiversity conservation with limited opportunities for further development. Conservation policies have been established in the Conservation Management Plan to assist the property owner to manage Fernhill's diverse values and historic fabric. A conservation policy explains the principles to be followed to retain a place's heritage significance and how that significance can be enhanced when undertaking conservation and maintenance works or proposing change to the place. These include policies for:

- Compliance with statutory controls and guidelines
- Conserving the natural environment
- Managing the cultural landscape
- Managing the built environment
- Managing the archaeological resource and Aboriginal heritage
- Managing use
- Interpretation
- Further research and investigations.

Within the cultural landscape several areas and activities have been identified that, subject to appropriate considerations, complement the rural setting and these are the focus of the Working Heritage Business Plan. These uses include equestrian events and activities, recreation events and activities, as well as a range of functions and entertainment uses and the supporting infrastructure required.

According to the Conservation Management Plan, some limited development may also be possible in areas to the north west of the house surrounding the rural structures and aviaries damaged by fire and on land outside the visual catchment adjoining the large dam in the northeast of the property. Limited expansion of existing structures such as the Racecourse Stables and Hayshed may also be possible. Detailed submissions addressing all relevant Conservation Policies are required before any such proposal within the State Heritage Area can be considered.

### 6.2 Vision

A central element of the vision is The Equestrian Centre of Excellence which builds on Fernhill's notable equestrian past and the vision is to establish a world-class facility for acquisition, breeding, agistment and training of international-quality jumping horses.

The operation will have many aspects including clinics, specialist coaching and training, as well as being able to host shows and jumping competitions which will ideally include Australian and NSW Championship events, as well as International World Cup Qualifiers and Grand Prix events to prepare Australia's future Olympians for overseas competition

Another key component of the vision is that Fernhill should become more accessible to the public and make a positive contribution to the local community. A distinctive and historic property like Fernhill is uniquely placed to host a variety of events including weddings, corporate functions, and community events that, where appropriate, make use of the existing heritage buildings and the picturesque landscape. The extensive property is also able to accommodate outdoor events such as moonlight cinema and music concerts in a natural amphitheater area.

The ability to achieve the vision for an iconic venue for the Equestrian Centre of Excellence and events and functions has



been based on an analysis of the appropriate opportunities identified in the Fernhill Conservation Management Plan; the areas and range of acceptable activities have been identified across the property.

In summary, the main appropriate uses that have been identified include:

- Equestrian Centre of Excellence
- Outdoor recreation facility
- Function facility
- Entertainment facility

### 6.3 Activities and Areas proposed in the Central Precinct:

The Conservation Management Plan and ecological studies provided the framework to identify areas suitable for these activities. These include:

- House and Garden Area – comprising the house, house gardens (rose garden, northern garden, summer house) and the great hall and lawns for functions/events
- Farm Buildings and Western Paddocks Area - in the area north and west of house garden to support functions/events and recreation / equestrian activities
- Racetrack Area – including the racetrack, stables and eastern and southern paddocks to accommodate a range of functions/ events, outdoor entertainment uses, equestrian activities and recreation activities
- Amphitheatre Area - north west of the racetrack area to accommodate a range of functions/ events and outdoor entertainment uses
- The Hayshed Area including the hayshed, pecan grove, large dam, and northern paddocks suitable for a range of functions and to support recreation/equestrian activities with an area also identified for camping and markets associated with functions/events and picnic areas adjacent to Lake Jessica

Further use of the extensive grounds of Fernhill may also be possible as part certain activities where detailed consideration has been given to heritage and environmental considerations.

Amphitheatre Area



### 6.4 Future Investigation Areas in the Central Precinct

The analysis of the Fernhill Conservation Management Plan also identified three areas and associated activities suitable for future investigation. These include:

- In the Farm Buildings and Western Paddocks Precinct – involving the redevelopment of disused and fire damaged farm buildings in the area north and west of house garden
  - for equestrian activities, storage, supporting infrastructure
- expansion of the Stables area associated with the Racecourse
  - for equestrian activities, storage, supporting infrastructure



- in the Lake Jessica area (adjacent to the large dam) as a possible extension of the Hayshed Precinct
  - for small scale accommodation to complement function/equestrian centres and recreation facility

## 6.5 Central Precinct - Working Heritage Business Plan Implementation

The Working Heritage Business Plan sets out the various activities that are suitable to be held at Fernhill. These have been identified to ensure the ongoing heritage conservation as well as recognising the capability of the extensive land holding and iconic venue and equestrian centre of excellence being established in Western Sydney. The specific approvals that will be sought under the Working Heritage Business Plan will be sought under the Penrith Local Environmental Plan (PLEP) 2010 Conservation Incentives where uses are otherwise prohibited. The activities include:

Equestrian Centre of Excellence: This involves year round agistment and training utilizing paddocks and existing equestrian infrastructure. Agriculture and animal training are permissible uses in the areas proposed.

Signature Events: These are large events for up to 15,000 people that focus on the existing equestrian infrastructure and other opportunities within the large expanse of the landscape setting and are defined in several ways as recreation (major), recreation (outdoor), entertainment facility and would be considered under conservation incentives. These include:

- signature events – associated with equestrian facility such as picnic races, show jumping and dressage competitions
- major recreation competitions such as a charity walk
- outdoor events such as concerts, outdoor cinema event

Regular Activities: Smaller more regular activities and events for up to 300 people, also to be considered under Conservation Incentives. These include:

- Regular events/functions – weekly uses for functions, corporate events. – approval required of various Fernhill venues defined under ‘Function Centre’
- Regular equestrian events – in addition to the existing equestrian activities – DA applies for approval of Fernhill equestrian areas as ‘Equestrian Centre’ being a facility under the ‘Recreation facility (outdoor)’ category
- Regular sporting training and outdoor recreation activities – DA applies for approval of Fernhill recreation areas defined under ‘Recreation Facility (outdoor)’

Ancillary uses to the major events and the function centre /equestrian centre / recreation facility (outdoor) include:

- Camping (up to 500 people for signature events)
- Markets (associated with events such as markets as part of an equestrian event, local produce market and markets associated with corporate events).

Fernhill Foundation: The Foundation provides a mechanism to ensure consistent and continuous conservation of the heritage values. This is proposed to involve regular reporting on nature and status of conservation works to an Independent Board. There will be limited financial membership of the Foundation and membership opportunities that allow carefully managed access, participation and exclusive benefits of being associated with Fernhill.

Future Uses - The potential for future uses has been identified for further investigation as part of the evolution of the Business Plan in keeping with the constraints of the Conservation Management Plan and proposed consolidation.

## 7. ON-GOING HERITAGE CONSERVATION

### 7.1 Conservation Considerations

Overall maintenance works are prioritised to meet statutory requirements for minimal standards of maintenance and repair, under Section 118 of the Heritage Act, for protection of the item from weathering; protection from damage or destruction by fire; protection from security threats; and essential maintenance and repair. These standards are required to be met for all components of the property that are of exceptional, high and moderate heritage significance, such as the stables (1839) and house (1842), various landscape features and significant plantings. These works should ensure the long-term conservation of significant fabric and the overall heritage significance of the place.

The Conservation Management Plan sets out the heritage conservation measures for the buildings and landscape including:

- Protection and maintenance of the 1842 home
- Protection and maintenance of the early out buildings including the stables (1839) and winery
- Protection of the landscape setting through controls on views and vistas
- Protection of the landscape elements including the driveway, significant trees, reflection pond and other elements

### 7.2 Provision for Funding on-going Conservation

An Indicative Cost Estimate for the proposed ongoing management and long-term conservation works has been prepared. This estimate includes all the requirements to conserve and maintain significant buildings, heritage fabric, structures and landscape features at Fernhill. These costs fall into three categories: urgent works, long-term works and annual maintenance works and are described below. It should be noted that other buildings, structures, fabric and landscape features, such as 1980s additions to the house and stables and landscape, should also have appropriate ongoing maintenance.

- Urgent works - are those that are to make good elements of the existing buildings including any associated repair works required within the next 1-3 years.
- Long-term works – are those to renew and upgrade as required existing building elements to each building as one-off works that are not required to be completed within next three years.
- Maintenance works per year – this involves the inspection of the condition of the major building elements including repair works on annual/periodical basis as required.

By undertaking a program for urgent and long-term maintenance works within specified timeframes, costs can be minimised as further deterioration is avoided. By undertaking required annual maintenance works, this will also ensure that future urgent conservation works are kept to a minimum. Finally, salaried caretakers (rather than external contractors) have undertaken the majority of maintenance works at Fernhill, which has been an efficient use of funds to conserve the property.



### 7.3 Voluntary Planning Agreement

Funding for heritage conservation can be provided through a voluntary planning agreement. In this instance a Voluntary Planning Agreement is proposed to ensure the consolidation as well as the ongoing conservation and relationship to the Working Heritage Master Plan Vision for the overall Estate and the Working Heritage Business Plan envisaged for the enlarged and consolidated Central Precinct.

Such an agreement is attached to the land and is binding on current and all subsequent owners for an identified period.

The Voluntary Planning Agreement can coordinate the overall delivery of heritage and biodiversity conservation outcomes and include:

- public appreciation of the heritage significance of the place or object
- conservation requirements to conserve the heritage significance of Fernhill including urgent and long-term works program as well as annual maintenance
- recognising the use of the place or object including adaptive reuse of buildings and landscape areas for events, functions, and entertainment activities, as well as outdoor recreation and equestrian activities
- provision for the appropriate development of peripheral lands and associated consolidation of remaining lands into an enlarged Central Precinct
- recognising there are some limited areas for further development to be investigated as consistent with the Conservation Management Plan

- establishing the requirements and standards for work to be carried out
- restricting work that may be carried out
- recognising the availability of the place or object for public access

The financial considerations of the ongoing funding for heritage conservation in the Planning Agreement are contained in Appendix B.

Endurance Race



Showjumping



## 8. ENVIRONMENT

### 8.1 Environmental Issues

Environmental issues have formed a large part of the considerations for the design and layout of the Eastern and Western precincts as well as the areas and activities and areas proposed for the Central Precinct. This has involved assessment and mapping of a range of requirements including all flora and fauna species, the riparian corridors (waterways) and archeological sensitivities. Bushfire requirements have also been a major consideration. Areas of environmental value are to be protected through inclusion in the Central Precinct.

### 8.2 Ecological Values and Management

#### Ecological

The subdivision of the Eastern and Western Precincts have been designed to minimise impacts on ecological values and to facilitate connectivity of existing ecological corridors in the vicinity. The different characteristics and species of each of the Precincts means the Western Precinct will require a more detailed assessment of impacts.

The Central Precinct events and activities are limited to the areas that largely correlate with the exotic grassland. Where there are small pockets of high value ecology within the events and activities areas mitigation measures are proposed to avoid and protect those areas.

#### Riparian and Water Management

Littlefields Creek and other unnamed tributaries of Mulgoa Creek form much of the riparian considerations. Appropriate setbacks have been identified for all precincts.

Water sensitive urban design measures are proposed as part of the subdivision of the Eastern and Western Precincts. In the

Central Precinct some riparian corridors have also been identified for protection.

The Eastern and Western Precincts also incorporate stormwater and water quality measures appropriate to the proposed subdivision.

#### Archaeological

A full Aboriginal Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assessment has been prepared for the Eastern and Western Precincts. No sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage are likely to be impacted by the proposed subdivision in the western precinct. In the Eastern Precinct impacts have been identified and the process of identifying and defining the archaeological potential of these precincts has commenced in consultation with the Aboriginal community.

#### Bushfire

The subdivision proposed Eastern and Western Precincts address all necessary bushfire management and include all necessary asset protection zones and evacuation routes. The Central Precinct contains a number of fire trails and on-going maintenance which are to be maintained. Events and activities in the Central Precinct are subject to plans of management to ensure appropriate measures are in place in relation to bushfire.



## 9. TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

### 9.1 Eastern and Western Precincts

#### Transport

The proposed subdivision and new residential population could be expected to increase local traffic levels. Potential traffic impacts and road configuration have been established in a Traffic Impact Report (Mott MacDonald, 2013).

At the Eastern Precinct, the study sets out a T intersection at the Access Road to the Eastern Precinct and a secondary 'left in/left out' at the north of the subdivision. Some road widening on Mulgoa Road is proposed to allow safe and easy passing for right hand turns into the Eastern Precinct Access Road.

A further proposal for road safety is to extend the 60 km/hour limit further north of the Eastern Precinct and the Central Precinct to Mayfair Road. This proposal has taken into account a range of issues including traffic volumes, the nature of the existing road and proposed intersection upgrades. It also helps establish Fernhill as Mulgoa Village's most immediate northern neighbor.

At the Western Precinct, Nepean George Drive is extended to the north to become a crescent that reconnects with Fairlight Road within the capacity of Fairlight Road.

Analysis found that the combined traffic expected to be generated by the additional population would under 80 trips during each peak period. This is not considered to be a significant increase given conditions in the local area. Intersection analysis indicated that under a 2024 future scenario developed for the modelling, existing intersections would operate safely and efficiently, and would be well within their operational capacities.

In summary, the "proposed development is not anticipated to have any adverse impacts on traffic efficiency or road safety".

#### Utilities

The Eastern Precinct is proposed to have reticulated water and sewer as an extension of existing services of the Mulgoa Village. Sydney Water has advised on their requirements and capacity is sufficient to ensure an appropriate servicing strategy.

The Western Precinct is proposed to have on site sewer following careful analysis of the land capability. Water is to be supplied through individual water tanks. This approach to water and sewer is consistent with the surrounding rural residential areas in the western part of Mulgoa adjoining the Western Precinct site.

Provisions for electricity are also being made in consultation with agencies to ensure appropriate infrastructure is in place to accommodate the extension of power to the Eastern and Western Precincts. Advice has been received that there is sufficient power for the Eastern and Western Precincts.

### 9.2 Central Precinct

#### Traffic and Parking

Day to day activities and events are expected to attract up to several hundred participants and 140 cars at weddings, functions and equestrian and recreation events. This level of traffic is likely to have only a minimal impact on local roads. Given the extensive landholdings, parking can be easily accommodated within the Central Precinct for all levels of activities proposed.

For larger events traffic management measures are required. After careful consideration of heritage and safety issues and in consultation with stakeholders the need for a third gate with a right hand turn bay was identified. This third gate is to be specifically used for functions and will not compromise the existing gates. This new third gate is located just south of the northern 'tradesman'

gate. The right hand turn bay will allow for safe passing on Mulgoa Road when this gate is being used.

Traffic associated with larger signature events and activities could, however, be expected to create some disturbance for neighbours and other local residents. These events, such as the picnic races or concerts, are expected to attract over 2,500 people and up to 15,000 people with parking for several thousand cars as well as catering facilities and amenities. These larger events will require active traffic management and cannot proceed without an appropriate traffic management plans being submitted to Council.

The traffic management plans will be considered on a case by case basis in consultation with Penrith City Council, transport agencies, the police and the local community. In some cases, approval may be subject to the imposition of conditions deemed necessary to minimise or mitigate impacts on the community or local residents, particularly traffic impacts.

Catering for large public events will require good management and planning. The recent trial of such events, the April 2013 Tough Mudder Endurance Event and November 2013 Picnic Race, were very well received by the many thousand participants, organisers and regulating authorities alike. This provides an example of the way future events and activities would be successfully managed.

The large site area of Fernhill Estate and potential for several access routes would help minimise traffic levels on any one route. However, detailed traffic management plans would be developed for all large events and the impacts monitored to ensure delays or safety issues do not arise. In addition, public transport options, such as a shuttle bus from Penrith or Mulgoa village, are explored to reduce road traffic during larger events.

Safe road access is a major consideration in facilitating public access to Fernhill as mentioned for the proposed activities, functions and events in the Central Precinct as well as the access

to the subdivision in the Eastern Precinct. It is proposed that the 60km/hr zone for the Mulgoa Village be extended to Mayfair Road to ensure the safe operation of Mulgoa Road and Fernhill. This extension of the 60 km/hr zone also reinforces the proximity of Fernhill to the Mulgoa Village

#### Utilities and Amenities

Temporary facilities and amenities are proposed to support the proposed events and activities in the first instance. As the program of events and activities becomes more established, investigations to provide for those amenities and facilities on a more permanent basis (where heritage considerations permit) will be able to be undertaken.

Requirements for operations are governed by a range of authorities and regulations and will include plans of management for risk, safety, emergency management, security as well as food and catering.

The necessary requirements to ensure a high degree of accessibility to events and activities are also being identified across the range of proposed venues at Fernhill.



## 10. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

### 10.1 Social

#### Social Context

The Mulgoa area is recognised by Penrith City Council for its rural setting and historical connections and heritage as set out in the following description by Council:

*“Mulgoa today has gone full circle, from the early farming, vineyards and orchards, to the guest houses of the first part of the twentieth century, it is now an area of extensive hobby and general farming, with some tourist through traffic. The twin villages of Mulgoa and Wallacia add value to the City of Penrith because they retain strong connections with the early pioneers who initially settled the area.”*

Currently, less than 20% of Penrith’s residents live in rural villages and surrounding rural lands. When compared to the Penrith local government area, Mulgoa has a young population with high numbers of young children; more than half of households are families with children. Mulgoa also has a very low unemployment rate. Although a relatively small population Mulgoa has access to a range of community services and facilities including local schools, medical services and local shopping as well as recreation opportunities such as golf and equestrian activities.

Consideration of stakeholder feedback and an understanding of impacts typically associated with subdivision and development proposals on other projects, has highlighted a number of key social issues relevant to the proposals for the Fernhill Estate. In relation to the proposed subdivision at the Eastern and Western Precincts a key consideration is how the development will impact on the character and identity of the existing village and surrounds. The proposal for the Central Precinct use for a range of activities takes into account the need for socially sustainable and healthy communities within Penrith and western Sydney; in particular the

importance of continued rural activities as well as the cultural linkages and facilities for the local and wider community

#### Proposed development of Peripheral Lands

The scale of the new development proposed at the Eastern Precinct (54 lots) is modest and will not detract from Mulgoa’s status as a ‘village’ in a rural setting. The village will be capable of retaining its distinct identity and separation from urban development areas to the north in the local government area. The majority of housing is to be set back from Mulgoa Road in consideration of the interface of Mulgoa Village to the rural lands to the north.

As with the Eastern Precinct, the relatively small total number of lots proposed for subdivision in the Western Precinct (38 lots) in West Mulgoa and their low density (lot sizes of at least 2.0 ha) is also unlikely to impact in a significant way on the rural character and amenity of West Mulgoa.

In order to minimise potential impacts on the village and rural character and identity, the development has been designed and sited to:

- integrate physically with the existing village and avoid entry or boundary treatments or street layouts that would segregate it or impact adversely on village identity
- maintain substantial areas of existing bushland in the Western Precinct, restore degraded areas and protect the area's environmental values consistent with wider environmental policies
- minimise impacts on the rural landscape character of the Mulgoa village
- in the Western Precinct, be situated so as to maximise views and privacy from neighbours, as well as to minimise potential visual impacts to those using the Blue Mountains recreational areas across the Nepean River to the west

A process of consultation with the existing community is to be initiated to consider community concerns relating to social impacts and how these might be addressed in the detailed planning of the development for issues such as:

- impacts on character and identity of the area; such as setting detailed development controls in consultation with Council and the community to ensure housing in the Eastern Precinct be designed to be sympathetic to the character of the existing village; and
- concerns about social infrastructure needs and social cohesion can be addressed; such as the management of the rate of development to minimise rapid change to the village, its facilities and social character.

#### Central Precinct – Working Heritage

The extensive landscape and iconic buildings at Fernhill provide a significant and unique opportunity in the Mulgoa Valley for the local and wider community. The application of this Working Heritage approach to the Central Precinct has set out to establish an appropriate balance between the rural setting, heritage and biodiversity conservation values, social consideration and economic opportunities and goals. With guidance from the Conservation Management Plan, the proposed activities to take place under the working heritage approach draws on the historic uses such as the equestrian activities and reflects the historic setting as an iconic destination and venue as well as providing a structure for interested corporate and community participation through the Fernhill Foundation.

Overall the Central Precinct presents a matrix of activities to be undertaken at a range of scales:

- Equestrian Centre of Excellence
- Agriculture
- regular uses such a smaller functions, equestrian activities community /charity and recreation activities
- 4-6 signature events associated with Equestrian Centre of Excellence, and for entertainment and recreation activities such as concerts and charity walks

It is also noted that the Conservation Management Plan has identified several limited locations within the extensive property that are suitable for further investigation that will complement

these uses which may include small scale accommodation, expanded stables and other equestrian infrastructure as well as other supporting infrastructure (storage and amenities) which will be investigated as part of the evolution of the Working Heritage Business Plan.

Benefits of the Working Heritage Business Plan proposal for the Central Precinct include the:

- establishment of a mechanism (the Working Heritage Business Plan) to fund ongoing repairs and maintenance of this iconic heritage property and its environmental values for public benefit;
- active promotion and facilitation of public access to and use of parts of the Estate, including parts of the House and Garden itself and other facilities;
- support for and promotion of the historic and heritage values of Fernhill and Penrith's rural heritage more broadly; and
- contribution to local economic activity and employment through the use of existing shops and services to access day to day needs, and for provision of goods and services, staff and other requirements for regular activities and signature events.

However, the proposal raises a number of potential social impact issues which may be of concern to the local community or others in the wider area. These include general traffic, traffic noise, parking and safety impacts associated with signature events and public accessibility to events and activities. Consideration of those have led to a careful allocation of number of events – maximum of 4-6 a year, and maximum number people of up to 15,000 for a signature event with many much smaller. Management of Transport forms part of operational management requirements and are governed by safety standards. .

#### 10.2 Economic

Development of Fernhill Estate will occur in a context of high demand for new housing and employment opportunities within the



Sydney Metropolitan Area to accommodate forecast population growth. To manage and guide this growth, future planning directions being developed for Western Sydney by The Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) states that a priority need is to focus...

*“on building the West as a vibrant community and economy in itself, in order to secure educational priorities, the cultural activities and the employment investment that will transform the economy and achieve integration with the wider city”.*

Penrith City Council has long recognised the important contribution heritage can make to Council’s economic development strategy. Council’s guiding policy for rural lands notes the importance of tourism as a growing activity linked to rural uses and the area’s natural and heritage resources. It goes on to suggest opportunities for substantial heritage buildings to be used for heritage tourist-related uses. WSROC’s ‘Next Steps Strategy’ goes further and proposes a range of ideas to build a stronger identity for the region and states that these outcomes will be achieved in partnership with businesses, the community and other stakeholders.

The economic values of preserving and managing rural settlements such as Mulgoa Village are also stressed in local and regional policies, including their role in providing shopping, educational, health and other basic services and as a focal point for the community activities which support rural communities. Penrith City Council’s guiding Rural Lands Policy states that any growth of villages “needs to be managed so that it does not have a detrimental impact on the sustainability of the agricultural uses or the landscape, heritage and biodiversity conservation value.”

Fernhill presents a significant opportunity within Western Sydney to support these local and regional priorities and goals. The Working Heritage Master Plan for the overall estate together with the Working Heritage Business Plan for the Central Precinct support many of the goals including:

- Improving the Brand a more positive identity to attract investment and address the bias toward lower paid and lower skilled jobs... and to promote the region’s many assets
- Distinct identities - build in a distinct identity for each town and community
- Community pride - build and enhance a sense of community pride to promote connection to the region
- Iconic projects and signature events
- Economic resilience - through diversifying businesses
- Increase employment opportunities - greater job diversity including professional jobs and jobs in the creative sectors so residents of Western Sydney can work locally
- Promote creative arts and cultural expression
- Housing choice and affordability - greater choice for the diverse households in the region.

Central Valley – Endurance Race Base Camp



## 11. ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

As stated throughout this Working Heritage Master Plan Vision Report, a central element of the vision is a belief that Fernhill should become more accessible to the public and make a positive contribution to the local and wider community. While the underlying success of Fernhill depends on it being a commercially viable enterprise, a major aim is to become a valued and integral part of the local community. The Working Heritage Business Plan sets out to have a positive impact, directly and indirectly, on local business and surrounding communities. The aim is that commercial success will in turn have an incredibly positively impact on local business and communities in a number of ways.

The success of Fernhill's commercial events and facilities will also mean that these same facilities are enabled to support a wide range of neighbourhood, invitational and open events directly involving and benefitting local business and the surrounding communities.

There are a number of active ways that Fernhill proposes to contribute to economic and community development.

### Employment Opportunities

The scale of Fernhill's operation presents an enormous range of full time, part time, contract and trainee employment opportunities. In addition to general maintenance and equestrian centre staff, the range, size and frequency of events will provide opportunities for a host of other employment options including a wide range of contractors and trainee/apprenticeship programs, possibly in conjunction with local TAFEs and Colleges as appropriate.

### Provision of Goods and Services

Local business will be Fernhill's first point of call to supply goods and services for events, whether meat from the local butcher, bread from the bake house, or drinks from the bottle shop, the aim is to source supplies as locally as possible. The intention is to also source local contractors where possible for services such as catering, cleaning, security, transport and other requirements as appropriate. Part of Fernhill's long-term success will be strong relationships with local services and suppliers, and Fernhill aims to foster a real sense of mutual benefit and community spirit.

### Collaborative Efforts and Community Participation

As part of engagement with the local area a number of collaborative events are envisaged with local business, community groups, clubs and Council. For example:

- Picnic Race: the restoration of Fernhill's racetrack can culminate in a collaborative effort from local business and community groups, to hold an annual Fernhill Picnic Race Day, reminiscent of the imprint left by the original Cox Family on the Australian thoroughbred industry
- Music/Art/Food/Wine/etc Events: a collaborative effort to offer something unique to Sydney's event calendar, held on the estate's park like grounds and/or working together to showcase "local products, services and attractions".
- Charity Fundraiser: involve local community groups and business in hosting a charity event on Fernhill's grounds e.g. a Pink Day Picnic in conjunction with National Breast Cancer foundation.
- Carols by Candlelight: a collaborative effort to create something special for everyone to enjoy.
- and a range of other possibilities.



## 12. MANAGEMENT / IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The preservation of Fernhill is able to be achieved through the development of peripheral lands and consolidation of the heritage area, biobanking an active re-use of heritage areas. The Working Heritage Master Plan Vision applies to the whole property and sets out the relationship between all 14 existing property titles.

The development of the peripheral lands at the Eastern and Western Precincts would create respectively residential and rural residential Torrens title lots for sale to the public. The enlarged Central Precinct of Fernhill will remain in private ownership and management.

The key relevant approval authorities for the Fernhill Estate Central Precinct include:

- Penrith City Council under the heritage and other provisions of Penrith LEP 2010
- Heritage Office under the Heritage Act
- Office of Environment under the Threatened Species Act and Biobanking instrument

All approval authorities will be guided by the Conservation Management Plan. Together with the Working Heritage Master Plan a comprehensive framework is established for assessing proposals now and in the future.

A series of proposals will be required to deliver to overall Master Plan vision and may include short-term proposals to continue to funding arrangements while longer-term proposals are considered. Overall coordination is proposed through a Voluntary Planning Agreement.

The Office of Environment and Heritage and NSW Heritage Council has a concurrent role in approvals for the state heritage matters. Environment, transport and infrastructure agencies and authorities also have approval roles in relation to specific issues.

The proposal for biodiversity is required to be assessed by the Office of Environment and Heritage through its biobanking branch. As this sets out to conserve ecological communities across broad areas of western Sydney concurrence from the local council is not required. The communities for conservation are, however, consistent with conservation goals recognised by Penrith City Council.

Hayshed and Pecan Grove



## APPENDIX A – CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

### Area 1 – House and House Garden – State Heritage Listed

While the house was constructed between 1839 and 1842, it may not have been occupied by Edward Cox and his family until around 1845. The house is orientated to the south and east with its principal rooms and the original courtyard providing access to the kitchen and servants' quarters. Various external and internal elements of the house were symmetrically planned. The interior of the house has undergone extensive change over the last 50 years. Much of this work has reconstructed damaged and missing elements after many years of neglect.

The former stables and other service buildings are situated to the north-west of the house. The stables building was constructed in 1839 as a single-storey building with sandstone walls and floors; the stone quarried from Fernhill. While this building has been substantially rebuilt and refurbished by subsequent owners, part of it remains a working stable.

The House Garden has several elements and was largely modified by landscape architect Paul Sorensen in the late 20th century. Features include a pergola and lawn area, an enclosed rose garden, paved car park, Chinese Elm grove, various garden walls and stairs, and various other plantings. There is also a covered water reservoir, swimming pool, tennis court and gardener's shed, as well as the dammed lake complete with island summerhouse.

The formal house gardens are well established and the modifications to the land forms are major and significant and are largely not easily reversible. The house garden should remain as the immediate garden setting for the house. While limited changes within the garden could be made, there should be no further development within the frontage of the colonnaded veranda to the south or the main eastern façade.

The establishment of the gardens since the 1970s and regrowth in former view corridors has caused loss of specific views overtime to the east to St Thomas's Church, Cox's Cottage and parts of the Mulgoa Valley. Careful modification of the garden could be considered to recover views, to open the landscape setting, and to remove some of the introduced elements that disrupt the open landscape form.

### Area 2 - West and North of House Garden – State Heritage Listed

The items of heritage significance that remain in this area are the remains of the winery and the surrounding land formations and the alignment of the north-south driveway. The landscape directly west and north of the house and house garden, all other structures, retaining walls and many of the levels are late twentieth century and of little or no heritage significance. Many of the buildings and structures are damaged, providing the opportunity to remove existing infrastructure and undertake new development. This is one of the few level areas on the Estate that would require little or no modification to land forms to achieve a future use or development.

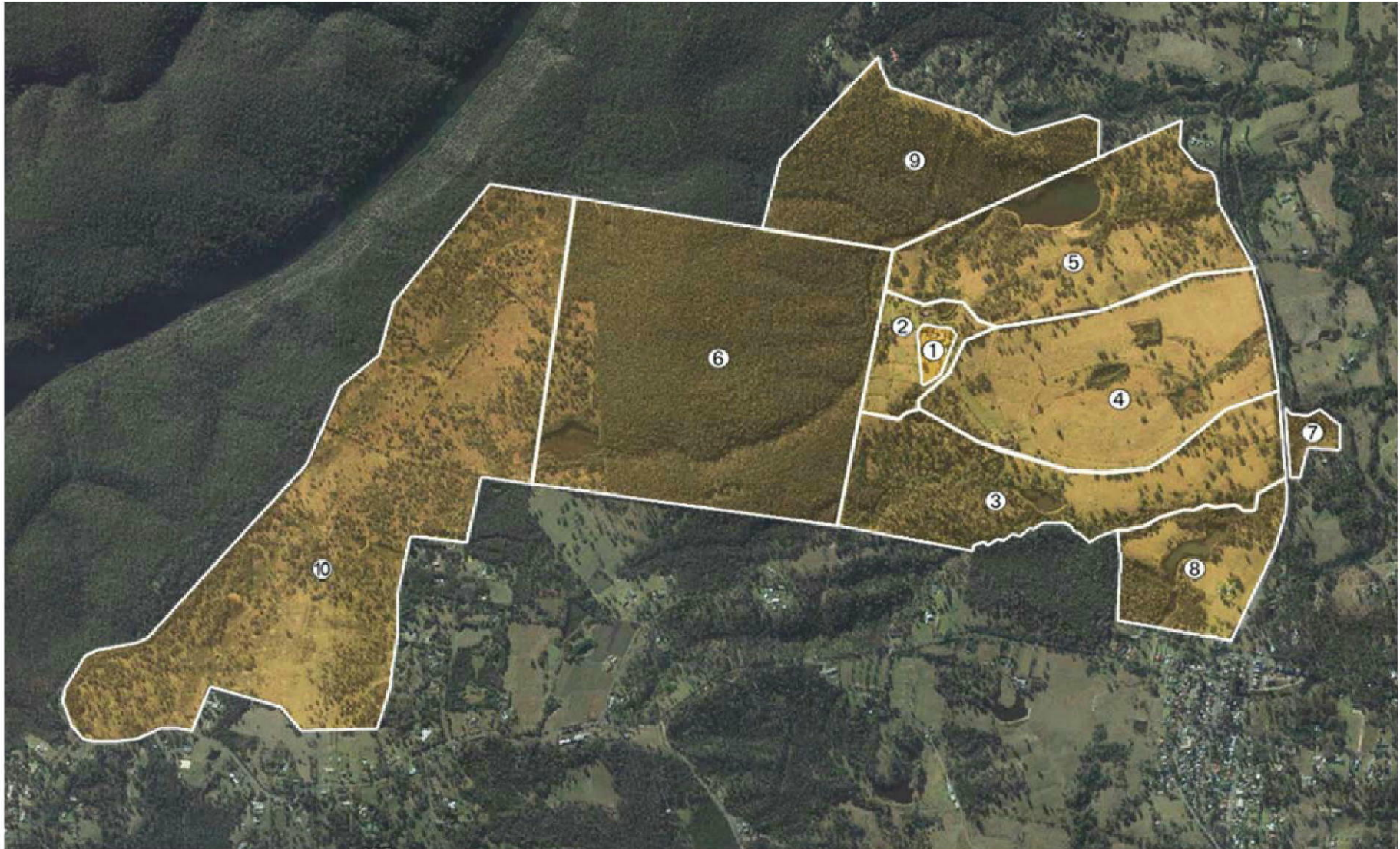
### Area 3 - South of Southern Driveway – State Heritage Listed

Bounded by the racetrack and stables complex to the north, Littlefields Creek to the south, and water board easement to the west, the land to the south of the original southern driveway retains the colonial landscape character of Fernhill estate: a home in a picturesque garden. Land to the south should generally remain as open pasture, however some opportunities exist to locate uses within this zone that relate to the stables area and the rural uses of the property.

### Area 4 - East of House – State Heritage Listed

The area bounded between the house and Mulgoa Road, bounded either side by the northern and southern driveways, contains the central park-like landscape. Early remaining features include the reflection pond and two stone bridges. Additions in more recent decades have included the racecourse, stables and fencing for new paddocks. Generally, the landscape should be maintained as an open landscape with opportunities taken to reduce some of the larger areas of planting to recover the park-like form. The southern driveway is the original serpentine carriage drive approach to the house and requires careful consideration.





Landscape Area Map

#### Area 5 - North of House and Northern Driveway – State Heritage Listed

This area includes a large dam, orchard and associated farm buildings (including the hayshed), various mature trees, grassy pastures, several enclosed animal pens, the Creek and gorge to the west and areas of regrowth on the slopes north of the Creek line. The southern area is divided into paddocks with a scattering of eucalyptus and presents as an open pastoral landscape. Due to the gentle slope of the land to the north and the open trees cover, much of this area falls visually outside the core views and vistas that are available up and down the property east to west. A strip of land along the southern edge of the dam extending to the hayshed and incorporating the orchard presents a discrete landscape unit within this area.

#### Area 6 - Western portion of Fernhill Estate – State Heritage Listed

This vegetated hillside that forms the backdrop to Fernhill home and landscape setting is mostly natural vegetation with some areas of high ecological value and is accessed via a number of fire tracks. Future uses should maintain the area for its natural values and maintain fire tracks. There is with some potential for new uses at the cleared western edge.

#### Area 7 - Eastern Portion of Fernhill Estate – State Heritage Listed

This land, east of Mulgoa Road contains Littlefields Creek's vegetated riparian corridor that traverses the site from south west to north east with some cleared land to the eastern portion. Historically the land was cleared with scattered tree cover and formed part of the original Fernhill Estate Area but has undergone revegetation since being severed by the new road alignment of Mulgoa Road in 1949. The site has limited potential apart from its current value as a regrowth area as it is located within the visual setting of the church and former Mulgoa Road.

#### Area 8 - Eastern Precinct – Local Heritage Significance

This precinct is located on the southern side of Littlefields Creek and is south of historic boundary of Fernhill. This land formed part of George Henry Cox's Windbourne Estate to the south. Historically site was substantially cleared grazing land however in recent years regrowth has occurred along the Littlefields Creek corridor and in the south west of the

precinct. The precinct contains a large well-established dam. The local heritage is related to the extension of the Fernhill landscape. There is considerable potential for new uses and development within this precinct, provided vistas and visual setting are considered appropriately.

#### Area 9 - Mayfair Road – Local Heritage Significance

This land is north of the historic boundary of Fernhill. From 1825 to the early 1920s, the land formed part of Henry Cox's estate centered on Glenmore and substantial holdings to the north. Historically the land had been cleared with scattered tree cover. Subdivision in the area commenced around 1920s, however formation of Mayfair Road did not occur until the 1960-70s. Significant regrowth has occurred since the 1950s, followed by some further clearing in 1970s however regrowth has continued especially recently since the 2000 bushfires. There is limited ability to develop the western area due to the local heritage listing and environmental values, however the eastern area falls outside the visual setting and has considerable potential for new uses.

#### Area 10 - Western Precinct – Fairlight Road

This area formed a considerable part of Nathaniel Norton's Fairlight Estate holding to the south from the 1820s which was centred around the original 1821 homestead. The current Fairlight House (erected 1863 by later Fairlight owner William Jarrett) is situated on a small holding adjoining the Western Precinct. The land is mostly cleared and has been used for pastureland, however most recently the area has been subject to some regrowth. There are no particular heritage constraints on future uses or development of this area apart from consideration of the setting for Fairlight House to the south.



## APPENDIX B – HERITAGE CONSERVATION FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

The conservation of heritage is fundamental to the success of the Working Heritage Business Plan as the iconic heritage of the landscape and buildings is a major factor in establishing the Equestrian Centre of Excellence and in attracting the regular functions and signature events proposed.

Annual funding requirements to maintain a satisfactory level of heritage conservation has been identified at approximately \$285,000 per annum that will be generated by the annual turnover from the proposed uses and activities set out in the Central Precinct Working Heritage Business Plan. These funding costs have been independently reviewed by a quantity surveyor as part of the Conservation Management Plan. The Conservation Management Plan has been submitted to the NSW Office of Heritage seeking their endorsement.

The Planning Agreement is the mechanism that locks together:

- the funding requirement
- support for the range of appropriate uses to generate the necessary turnover
- the requirement on the enlarged and consolidated Central Precinct property holding for that funding

The funding requirement has been established and prioritised to meet statutory requirements for minimal standards of maintenance and repair, under Section 118 of the Heritage Act, for protection of the item from weathering; protection from damage or destruction by fire; protection from security threats; and essential maintenance and repair. These standards are required to be met for all components of the property that are of exceptional, high and moderate heritage significance, such as the stables (1839) and house (1842), various landscape features and significant plantings. These works should

ensure the long-term conservation of significant fabric and the overall heritage significance of the place.

The proposed equestrian activities, functions and events and the support from the Fernhill Foundation envisaged to generate the necessary turnover was based in the Conservation Management Plan's outline of appropriate opportunities and refined through stakeholder consultation with the NSW Heritage Council and Penrith City Council.

The financial modeling for the turnover has been prepared by Van Zyl Tripp Propriety Limited which has an extensive experience in managing large venues for sports and entertainment and restaurants. With their expert team in equestrian and events management, Van Zyl Tripp Propriety Limited is well placed to deliver the financial return required by the proposed Planning Agreement.