



3rd May 2013

The General Manager
Penrith Council
P.O. Box 60
PENRITH, NSW 2751

Dear Sir,

Re: 'NEPEAN PARK' CASTLEREAGH - PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL SHED

On behalf of the owners of 'Nepean Park' at 1404 Castlereagh Road, Castlereagh we write in support of a Development Application for the demolition of an existing mid 20th century agricultural structure and the erection of a new agricultural shed within the grounds of the above heritage listed property.

Heritage Listing

'Nepean Park' is not listed as an item of Environmental Heritage in the Penrith Local Environmental Plan (Heritage Conservation) and is not listed on the State Heritage Register.

The place is located within the Penrith Lakes Scheme and is identified in the State Environmental Planning Policy Penrith Lakes Scheme as a heritage item.
(Nepean Park, Part portion 48, Parish of Castlereagh, County of Cumberland - No. 2 in the Structure Plan)

A Heritage Listing prepared by Penrith Council for Item C9 – Nepean Park contains information relating to the significance of the place as a Built Item – Homestead.

An inventory listing on the State Heritage Inventory refers to the above identification but refers to the site as a landscape item – Urban Park.

Development of the site is controlled by Provisions in Part 3 of the SEPP, Clause 14 which relates to Items of Environmental Heritage and Clause 15 Development in the vicinity of a heritage item.

Heritage Significance

The site contains an early Colonial two storey farmhouse modified by later changes, which is set in a fenced garden with largely modern outbuildings. A former detached kitchen wing possibly older than the main house was demolished in the mid 20th century and the roofing material was reused as cladding on a former agricultural shed also now demolished and replaced with a new purpose designed shed.

The Statement of Significance in the Penrith Heritage Inventory identifies the significance of Nepean Pak as one of the most important extant homesteads in the Nepean River Valley and within the State of NSW on account of its age and historical associations.

“The homestead demonstrates the emergence of European settlement in the Nepean River Valley and successive phases of rural development over the 19th and 20th centuries. This is demonstrated in its remnant Grant Lot Portion, fabric and layout. The strong associations with John Single and his descendents demonstrate continuity of use by one family over the 19th century. The homestead complex inclusive of associated vegetation forms a prominent landmark within the local area. The homestead complex is part of an ensemble of early Colonial and Mid Victorian features that collectively form a rural landscape of high aesthetic and cultural value. The property is of some scientific interest on account of its archaeological research potential.”

The Nepean Park site is now curtailed from its original extent and isolated from the original Castlereagh Road frontage by the extensive 20th century mining operations which are currently undergoing rehabilitation as the Penrith Lakes Scheme development.



Figure 1 - Aerial view of Nepean Park showing the homestead and the location of the proposed new shed (circled)

The Proposal

The current development application is for the demolition of a mid 20th century shed and associated structures and the construction of a new purpose built agricultural shed as shown on drawings prepared by Circle Z Design Pty Ltd.

The shed to be demolished was erected in about 1966 for use as a Calf Feeding Shed by the present owners. It is 12metres long by 7 metres wide and is constructed on a concrete base with timber log posts and sawn rafters with corrugated sheet cladding and a shallow skillion roof. It is located to the north of the Homestead and is set parallel to the main agricultural shed with access off the existing driveway. The existing shed is screened from the homestead by a bank of mature trees. The shed is shown in the photographs at Figures 2 – 6 below indicating its position in relation to the main shed and to the homestead.

The proposed shed shown on drawings prepared by Circle Z Designs (Figure 7) is located in the same position in relation to the main agricultural shed and the homestead and is 18 metres long by 10 metres wide and is constructed on a concrete base with steel framing and trussed roof clad with colourbond, corrugated steel sheeting (Windspray colour). Door openings to the shed are located on the western side facing the main shed. A single access door is located on the east facade while the north and south facades are blank. The height of the shed to the eaves is 3.2 metres. The roof pitch matches that on the main shed to the west. Water from the roof of the shed is to be directed to an above ground water storage tank.

The entry driveway from Castlereagh Road is to be slightly modified to align with the new structure. No trees are affected by the proposed new structure.



Figure 2 - The shed in the context of the service yard area aligned with a yard fence showing the front clad with corrugated sheeting and rear portion built of timber slabs.

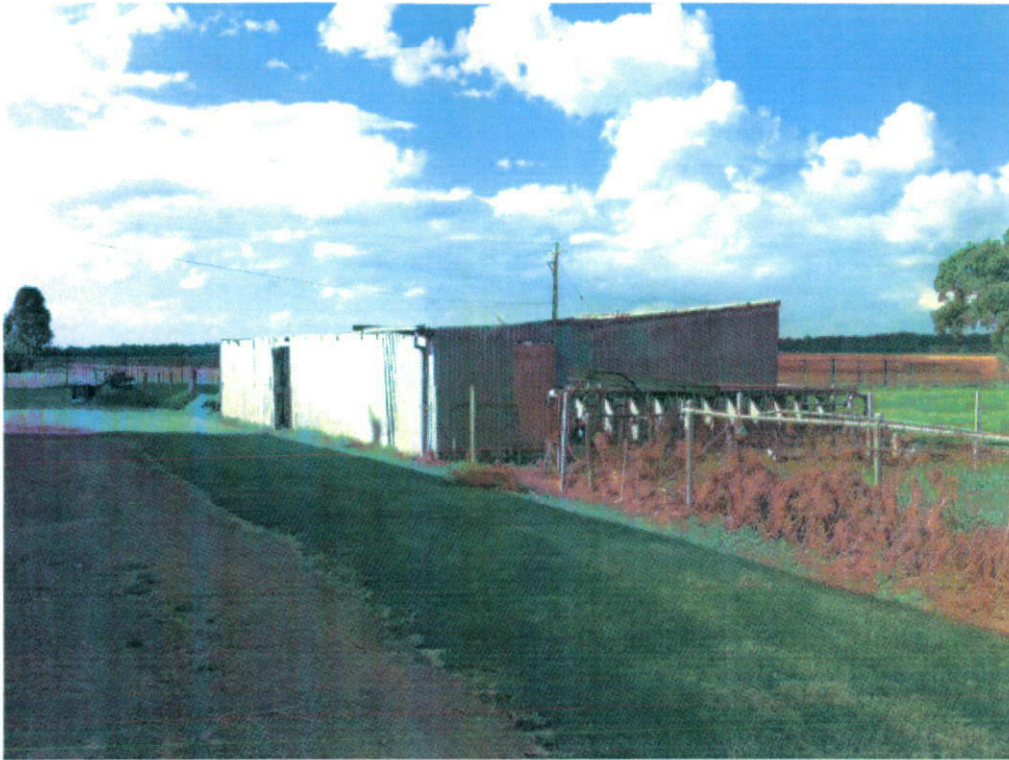


Figure 3 - The former calf feeding shed looking north from the access road servicing the main shed.



Figure 4 - View looking west showing the existing shed and associated structures proposed to be demolished with the main agricultural shed in the background.



Figure 5 - Rear of former calf feeding shed showing timber framed extension to enclosed area and adjoining feed box.



Figure 6 - Shed proposed to be demolished and replaced shown in the context of the principal agricultural shed and the homestead which is located behind the trees in the background.

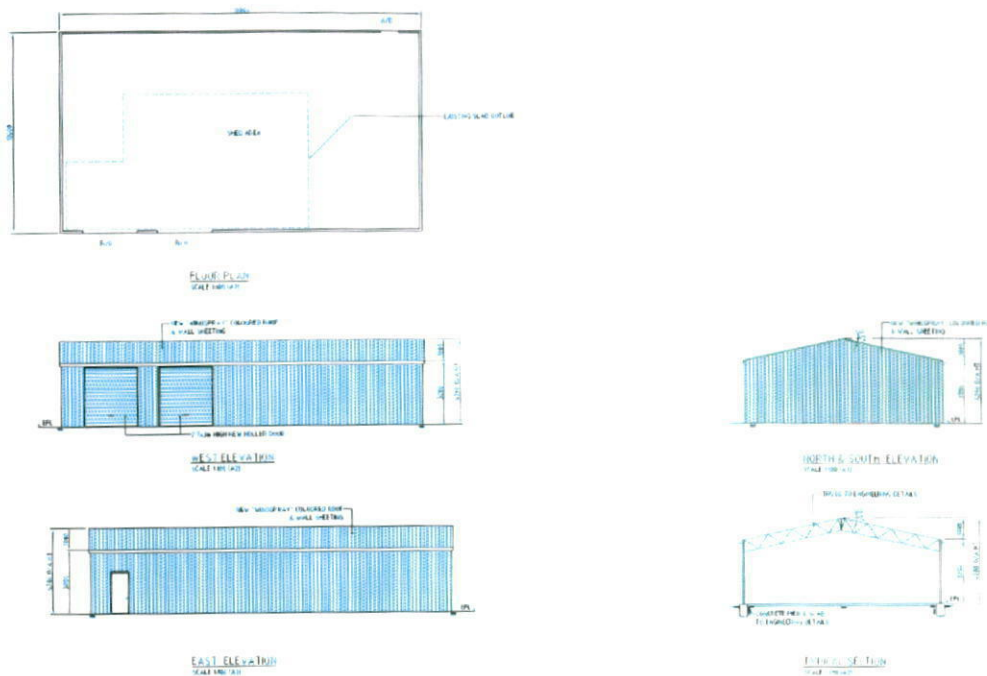


Figure 8 – Proposed new agricultural shed plan, elevations and section.

Heritage Impact Assessment

The NSW Heritage Office publishes Guidelines for the assessment of potential heritage impact with questions designed to address the issues arising from development in the vicinity of a heritage item. In the current application, the site is a working farm with requirements for the storage of equipment and materials. The current small shed is unsuitable for continued use in this regard and has no identified heritage value.

Demolition of a building or structure

Because the structure has no identified heritage value its demolition should not be an issue in regard to an assessment of the current application

- Have all options for retention and adaptation been explored?

The existing building is not functional and is in less than satisfactory condition making it unsuitable for continued use. The structure is not a significant part of the heritage item or its principal setting.

- Can all the significant elements of the building be kept and any new development located elsewhere on the site?

Construction of an additional shed elsewhere in the working area of the estate would have more impact than the reconstruction of the existing shed in the current location.

- Is demolition essential at this time or can it be postponed in case future circumstances make its retention and conservation more feasible?

The owners have identified a need for improved storage and functionality in regard to agricultural activities associated with the farm that will be met by the construction of the new shed. There is no future foreseeable circumstance that would lead to the retention of the existing structure.

- Has the advice of a heritage consultant / specialist been sought? Have the consultant's recommendations been implemented?

This application is the result of consultation which has resulted in the current solution which is considered acceptable in the circumstances of continued agricultural use of the site and the limited impact of the proposal, particularly in relation to the setting of the homestead building and its garden setting.

New development adjacent to a Heritage Item

The proposed shed exists in the wider curtilage of Nepean House which is identified as a heritage item. The shed is an ancillary use that supports the continued agricultural use of the site which is part of its identified heritage value to the region. The shed replaces a dilapidated shed in the same location which has no heritage value.

- *How is the impact of the new development on the heritage significance of the item or area to be minimised?*

The proposed shed is located in a position within the existing farm structure that is well away from the homestead's immediate visual context and is screened by existing mature landscape elements. The proposed shed continues the historic use of the site for agricultural and pastoral activities which maintain the long historic use of the site in this setting. The shed is aligned to and compliments the other contemporary agricultural shed on the site and has low visual impact from any public vantage point.

- *Why is the new development required to be adjacent to a heritage item?*

The shed is a replacement of a Post War structure used for the feeding of calves and is located in the working area of the farm yard which is at a little distance from the listed homestead.

- *How does the curtilage allowed around the heritage item contribute to the retention of its heritage significance?*

While there is a large setting for the Homestead its immediate curtilage does not include this working section of the farm yard and there will be minimal impacts arising from this new building in relation to appreciation of the heritage item.

- *How does the new development affect views to, and from, the heritage item? What has been done to minimise negative effects?*

Due to the location of the proposed shed there is no significant impact on any important or historic views to and from the Homestead. The existing landscaping provides a substantial visual barrier between the house and the working yard area.

- *Is the development sited on any known, or potentially significant archaeological deposits? If so, have alternative sites been considered? Why were they rejected?*

Despite the continued occupation of the site since the early 19th century there is no evidence of any significant archaeological disturbance as a result of this application.

- *Is the new development sympathetic to the heritage item? In what way (eg form, siting, proportions, design)?*

The new shed mirrors the existing shed and is well related to it in orientation, location, materials and form. There is no significant relationship of either shed to the distinctive character of the heritage listed house. This does not however result in any adverse impacts on the item or its principal setting.

- *Will the public, and users of the item, still be able to view and appreciate its significance?*

Public appreciation of the Nepean Park Homestead and its garden setting will not be affected by the proposed replacement of the existing agricultural shed by the current application. The site is in private ownership and is a considerable distance from any public vantage point. Views to and from the house from the public domain will remain unaffected by this proposal.

Conclusion

In conclusion I consider that the present application for the demolition of the existing Post War structure and the construction of a new purpose designed agricultural shed is acceptable in heritage terms and will not have any unreasonable adverse impact on the Nepean Park Homestead or its historic setting. For these reasons I recommend approval of the shed application. I further recommend that materials recovered from the demolition of the existing structure including framing, timber slabs and corrugated iron sheeting, be stored on site for future use in repairing other structures in the future.

Yours faithfully,
NBRS+PARTNERS



ROBERT STAAS
Director / Heritage Consultant
May 2013