

# **Appendix I**

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Insite Heritage, Heritage  
Assessment

**Aboriginal And European Heritage Assessment Of The  
Proposed Resource And Recycling Facility  
11 Kyle Street, Rutherford, NSW.**

**Report to  
Parsons Brinckerhoff  
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**Report by  
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## Notes on Measurement

The measures used in this text and drawings include both metric and imperial terms. When quoting or citing measurements taken from historic records and documentary sources, the imperial measurement has been used. In cases where measurements have been taken in the field or from modern sources, the metric measurement is quoted. While this may appear a clumsy and inconsistent method of recording, the imperial measurements have been quoted to maintain the integrity of the original work.

### Conversion Table – Imperial to Metric

1 foot (ft)	=	30.5 centimetres
1 mile	=	1.61 kilometres

# **1 BACKGROUND**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Insite Heritage Pty Ltd was commissioned by Parsons Brinckerhoff to prepare an aboriginal and European heritage assessment of Lot 223 DP 1037300 Kyle Street Rutherford, NSW.

The proponents Transpacific propose to create a resource recovery and recycling facility utilising the existing buildings upon the site.

The approval body for the facility will be the NSW Department of Planning. The EPA have requested that consultation be undertaken with the local Aboriginal community to determine the significance of the site or part of the site to the community. On the basis of this consultation the need for a full site survey was determined.

Due to the historic use of the site as a munitions factory in the 1940's a site history was prepared. This report does not include detailed architectural description of the original buildings. This report provides a historic context of the study area that now comprises a portion of the munitions factory. There is no record of a heritage assessment being conducted at the time of subdivision. The site is not listed on any heritage registers.

The general aims of this cultural heritage assessment were to:

- Determine the significance of the site to the local Aboriginal community.
- Identify any areas of cultural heritage significance that require mitigation measures to be addressed allow the impact of the development to be addressed.

The study found that due to the history of site use and resultant disturbance the archaeological potential for in-situ material was low. Inspection of the site by representatives of Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council and Lower Hunter Wonnarua Council was conducted to allow the community to form their opinion regarding the cultural significance of the site.

The heritage significance of the site was found to have been impacted by the subdivision of the entire site. The area is zoned industrial.

## **1.2 STUDY AREA**

The study area is located is described as Lot 223 DP 1037300, at Kyle Street Rutherford, Parish of Gosforth. The study area comprises approximately 10.2 hectares, and is located on flat land located 2.5 kilometres from the Hunter River to the north east, and one kilometre from Stony Creek to the east.

The study area was a Commonwealth munitions factory in the 1940's and was subsequently reused with some modification by Bradmill Pty Ltd for fabric production. Bradmill operated on the site from 1945 until 2000. The site was subdivided in 2000-2001. Numerous light industrial pursuits operate in the remnants of the former site around the study area including warehousing, transport depots, steel fabrication and concrete batch plants (ERM 2001). The study area contains the former Bradmill dye house adapted from the 4 inch shell forge and machine shop's of the 1940's.

Figure 1. Study area location. (courtesy of Parson Brinckerhoff)

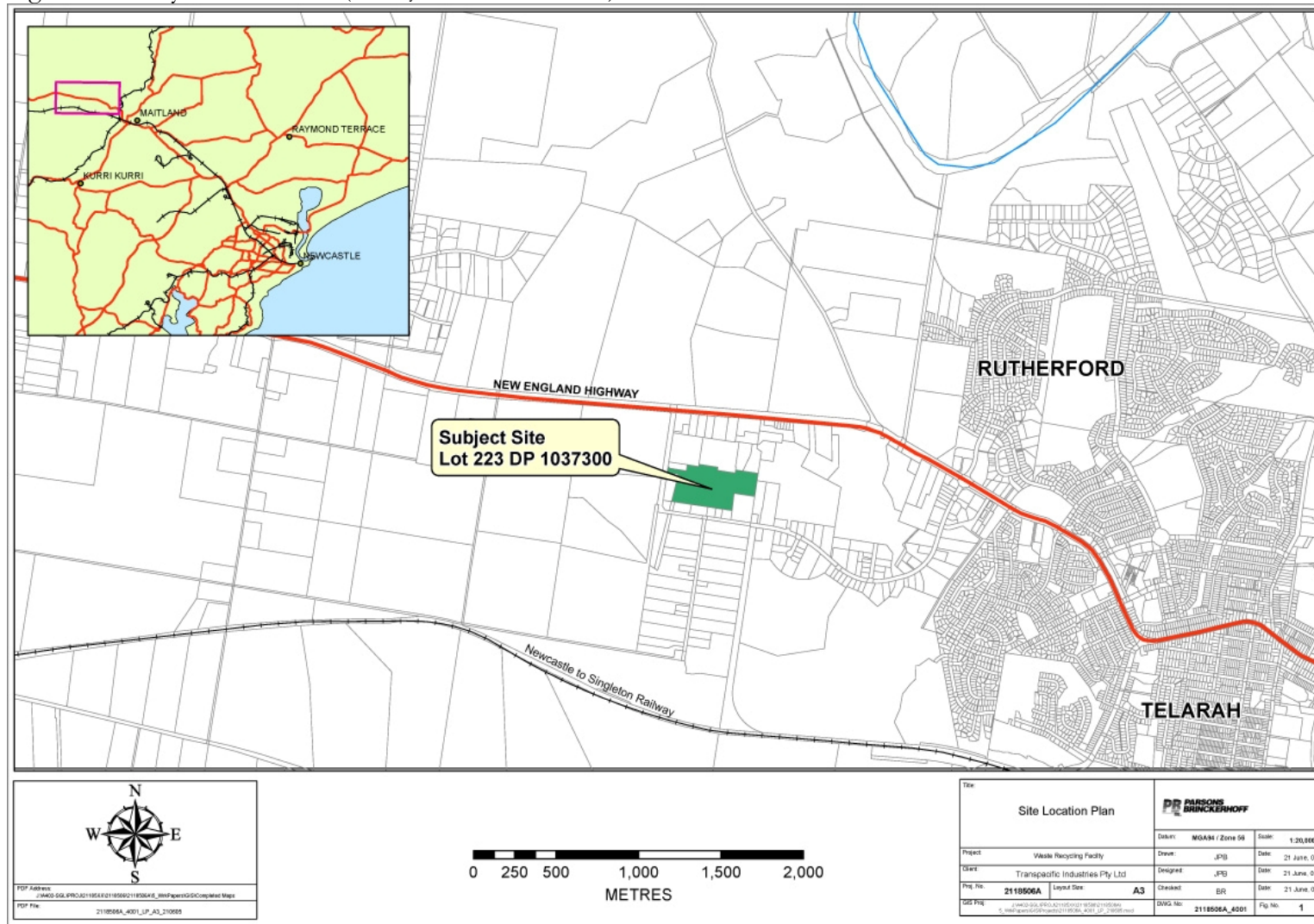
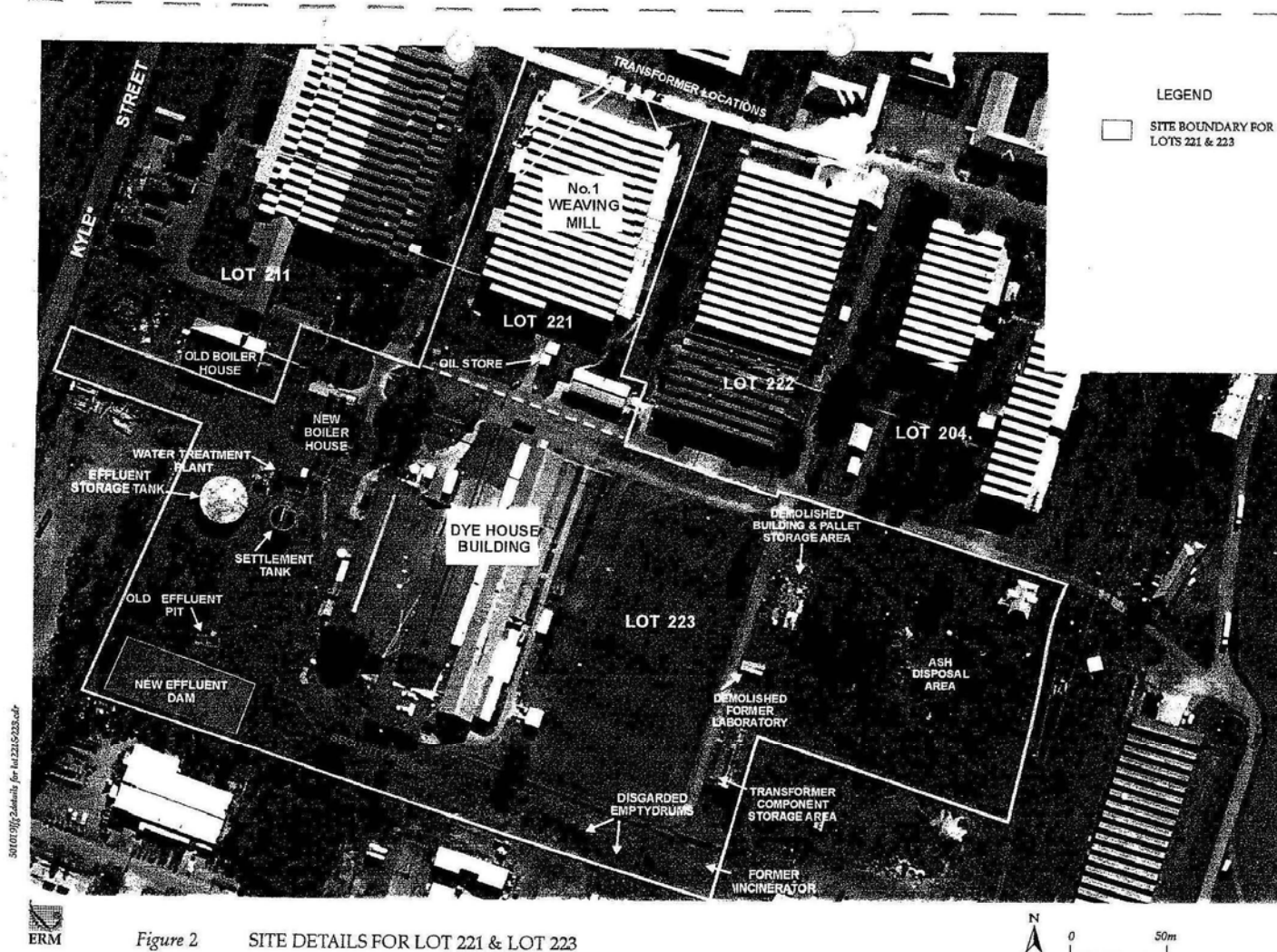


Figure 2: The study area as part of the Bradmill site. (source: ERM 2000)



### 1.3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Transpacific Industries Group Limited (TPI) propose to operate a resource recovery and recycling facility on the study area at Kyle Street Rutherford. TPI propose to renovate the existing buildings, build and operate a facility to store, treat, recycle, recover and transport waste. The waste to be treated will include most categories of industrial wastes generated within the Hunter Valley region. The plant will incorporate green waste, liquid waste and waste oil recycling. The development will require a depot for a large fleet of vehicles operated by TPI for the collection and transportation of liquid wastes, treated and recycled products.

Used oils will be recovered and recycled to lubricant specifications, aqueous-based industrial wastes will be treated to a level that poses negligible risk to the receiving environment, and waters from industrial wastes will be treated to a quality suitable for reuse on-site or discharge to sewer (Parsons Brinckerhoff 2005).

The proposal provides for the transport of raw materials, waste, waste by-products, treated wastes and saleable products by road. Racecourse Road, which adjoins the New England Highway will be used as the heavy vehicle transport route. Wastes delivered to the site will be sampled by the onsite laboratory and directed to the various treatment or transfer areas subject to the source and nature of the waste (ibid).

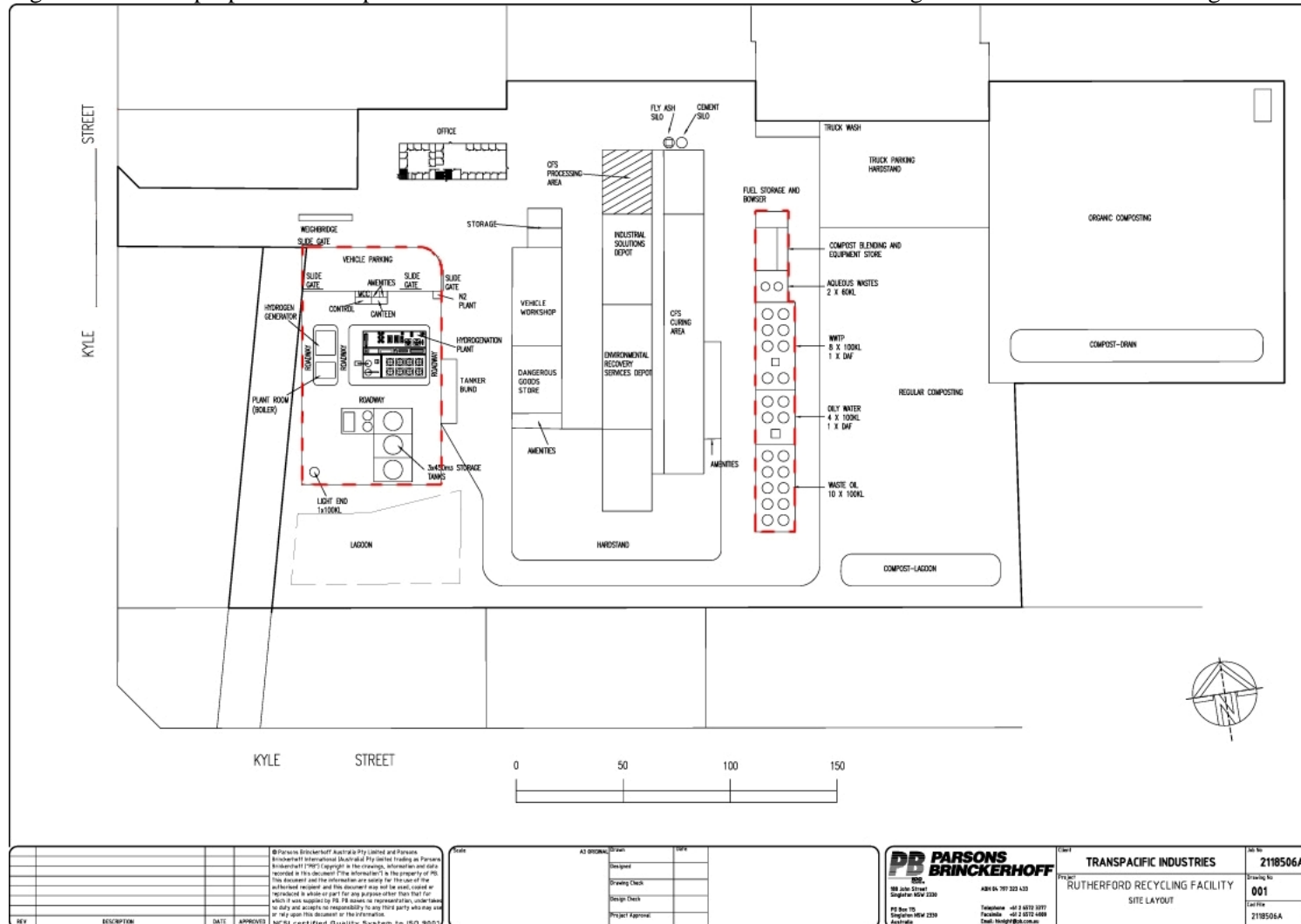
Infrastructure such as service utilities (power, water, sewerage and telephone services) are available at the Rutherford property. Existing structures including a number of large warehouses, and a lined lagoon, will be refurbished to the new enterprise reducing the need for construction of infrastructure.

The proposal is a Major Infrastructure Project under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment (EP&A) Act 1979* as it constitutes a development for the purposes of resource recovery and recycling that handles more than 75,000 tonnes per year of waste. As such, the Minister for Planning would be the Consent Authority for this proposal (Parsons Brinckerhoff 2005).

The proposed development will result in a slight increase of heavy and light vehicle movements to and from the site. Assessment of the intersection of the New England Highway and Kyle Street has demonstrated that the proposal will only marginally impact on the local road network past the planning year 2015 and the current level of service will not be impacted (Parsons Brinckerhoff 2005).

The proposed development is likely to lead to socioeconomic benefits through the creation of an additional 100 jobs within the region and the annual injection of \$9 million into the regional economy.

Figure 3: Plan of proposed development – the structures outlined in red are new buildings. The remainder are existing.



#### **1.4 METHODOLOGY**

The research commenced with searches of various heritage registers and planning instruments to ascertain whether any heritage sites had previously been recorded within or adjacent to the study area. Registers, databases and plans of the Australian Heritage Council (National Heritage List and Commonwealth Heritage List), Australian Heritage Commission (Register of the National Estate), National Trust (NSW), Heritage Council of NSW (State Heritage Register) and Maitland City Council Local Environmental Plan were inspected. Historical records retained by Maitland City Council Library, including the rates books, were also consulted. The author inspected the study area on 17 October, 2005.

The DEC Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System was searched for previously recorded indigenous sites in the surrounding area and the study area. The geomorphology of the study area and the environmental context of the site were considered in the development of a model of occupation.

A site visit was held with members of the local Aboriginal community on the 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2005.

#### **1.5 SCOPE OF WORK AND AUTHOR IDENTIFICATION**

Insite Heritage Pty Ltd were commissioned to provide the data required by the EPA, namely in recognition of the disturbance of the site, a cultural heritage assessment by consultation with the local Aboriginal community. Insite Heritage advised the client that an historic review would be advisable also due to the early history of the site, as a munitions factory. This report was prepared by Angela Besant of Insite Heritage with the assistance of Hunter History Consultants.

#### **1.6 CONSULTATION**

The study area lies within the boundaries of Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC). The area also lies within the area of interest of registered Native Title group Lower Hunter Wonnarua Council.

The project was advertised in the Maitland Mercury on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, 2005. A three week period was allowed for responses however none were received. The relevant Government departments have also been advised of the project.

## 2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

### 2.1 NATIONAL

#### NATIONAL HERITAGE LIST:

The National Heritage List will record the natural, indigenous and historic places with outstanding heritage value to our nation. These places will have values or characteristics that have special meaning for all Australians. They will show important aspects of the history of the continent on which we live, and will reflect the diverse experience of its human occupation. The list may also include important places overseas such as Anzac Cove – subject to the agreement of the sovereign country in which they are located. Places on the National Heritage List will be protected under Section 15 (b) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

#### REGISTER OF THE NATIONAL ESTATE:

The Register of the National Estate is a list of more than 13,000 heritage places around Australia that has been compiled by the former Australian Heritage Commission since 1976. It will continue as an evolving record of Australia's natural, cultural and indigenous heritage places that are worth keeping for the future.

Members of the public can still nominate places to the Register. The Australian Heritage Council will then assess nominations and will list places meeting relevant criteria. It will maintain information about places on the Register in a publicly accessible database that will be used for public education and to promote heritage conservation in general.

Places on the Register are protected under the *EPBC Act* by the same provisions that protect Commonwealth Heritage places.

### 2.2 STATE LEGISLATION

#### NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE ACT:

The NPW Act (section 90) provides statutory protection for all material evidence of Aboriginal occupation of NSW. Aboriginal places which are areas of cultural significance to the Aboriginal community, are also protected by the 1974 Act (section 84) that states “the Minister may declare lands to be ‘protected archaeological areas’ to preserve Aboriginal places and relics and it is an offence to disturb or destroy an Aboriginal place or relic without first obtaining written consent from the Director of National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW”.

The National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 requires the obtaining of a Section 87 Permit if a person wishes to excavate land to disturb or discover an Aboriginal object (relic) or disturb or move an Aboriginal object.

A Section 90 Heritage Impact Permit is required if an activity will or is likely to destroy, damage, desecrate or deface an Aboriginal object or Aboriginal place.

A relic is defined as any deposit, object or material evidence (not being a handicraft made for sale) relating to indigenous and non-European habitation of the area that comprises NSW, being habitation both prior to and concurrent with the occupation of that area by persons of European extraction, and includes Aboriginal remains (NPW A s.5(1)).

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & ASSESSMENT ACT (1979):

The Act and its regulations, schedules and associated guidelines require that environmental impacts be considered in land use planning and decision-making. Environmental impacts include those to cultural heritage.

There are three main areas of protection under the Act:

- ❑ Planning instruments allow particular uses for land and specify constraints. Part III governs the preparation of planning instruments. Both Aboriginal and Historic (non-indigenous) cultural heritage values should be assessed when determining land use;
- ❑ Section 90 lists impacts that must be considered before development approval is granted. Part IV relates to the development assessment process for Local Government Authorities. Impact to both Aboriginal and Historic (non-indigenous) cultural heritage values are included; and
- ❑ State Government agencies that act as the determining authority on the environmental impacts of proposed activities must consider a variety of community and cultural factors in their decisions, including Aboriginal and Historic (non-indigenous) cultural heritage values. Part V relates to activities that do not require consent but still require an environmental evaluation, such as proposals by government authorities.

The Minister administering the *EPA Act 1979* may make various planning instruments such as Local Environment Plans (section 70). The Minister may direct a public authority such as a Local Council, to exercise certain actions within a specified time, including the preparation of draft Local Environmental Plans and appropriate provisions to achieve the principles and aims of the Act (section 117).

These planning instruments may identify places and features of cultural heritage significance and define various statutory requirements regarding the potential development, modification and conservation of these items. In general, places of identified significance, or places requiring further assessment, are listed in various heritage schedules that may form part of a Local Environmental Plan (LEP). Listed heritage items are then protected from certain defined activities, normally including demolition, renovation, excavation, subdivision, and other forms of damage, unless consent has been gained from an identified consent authority. The consent authority under a LEP is normally the Local Government Authority.

In addition to the development of these environmental planning instruments, the Director-General of Planning NSW or a Council may prepare a Development Control Plan (DCP), where it is considered that more detailed provisions or guidelines are required over any part of land covered by an LEP or their Drafts (sections 51A and 72).

In determining a Development Application (DA), a consent authority, such as a Local Government Authority, must take into consideration any of the following that are relevant to the subject application (section 79C(1) Potential Matters for Consideration):

- ❑ The provisions of any environmental planning instrument, or draft environmental planning instrument (which has been placed on public exhibition), any development control plan, and the regulations;

- ❑ The likely impacts of that development on the natural and built environments, and the social and economic impacts on the locality;
- ❑ The suitability of the site for the development;
- ❑ Any submissions made in accordance with the Act or the regulations; and
- ❑ The public interest.

Best Practice Guidelines have been issued by the Department of Planning on the use of Section 79C(1) and include an assessment of how the proposed development will affect the heritage significance of the property, or adjacent properties, in terms of the historic, scientific, cultural, spiritual and archaeological value of indigenous, non-indigenous and natural heritage.

#### NSW HERITAGE ACT (1977):

The purpose of the *NSW Heritage Act 1977* is to ensure that the heritage of New South Wales is adequately identified and conserved. In practice the Act has focused on items and places of non-indigenous heritage to avoid overlap with the *NSW National Parks & Wildlife Act, 1974*, which has primary responsibilities for nature conservation and the protection of Aboriginal objects and places in NSW.

The Heritage Act is concerned with all aspects of conservation ranging from the most basic protection against damage and demolition, to restoration and enhancement. It recognises two levels of heritage significance, State significance and Local significance, across a broad range of values. Some key provisions of the Act are:

- ❑ The establishment and functions of the Heritage Council (Part 2);
- ❑ Interim heritage orders (Part 3)
- ❑ The State Heritage Register (Part 3A);
- ❑ Heritage Agreements (Part 3B);
- ❑ Environmental planning instruments (Part 5);
- ❑ The protection of archaeological deposits and relics (Part 6); and
- ❑ The establishment of Heritage and Conservation Registers for state government owned and managed items (Part 7).

Generally this Act provides protection to items that have been identified, assessed and listed on various registers including State government Section 170 registers, local government LEPs and the State Heritage Register. The Interim Heritage Order provisions allow the minister or his delegates (local government may have delegated authority) to provide emergency protection to threatened places that have not been previously identified. The only 'blanket' protection provisions in the Act relate to the protection of archaeological deposits and relics greater than 50 years of age.

*The State Heritage Register:*

Changes to the Heritage Act in the 1998 amendments established the State Heritage Register which includes all places previously protected by Permanent Conservation Orders (PCO's) and items identified as being of state significance in heritage and conservation registers prepared by State Government instrumentalities. Sites or places which are found to have a state level of heritage significance should be formally identified to the Heritage Council and considered for inclusion on the State Heritage Register.

*Environmental Planning Instruments:*

Part 5 of the Act gives the Heritage Council the authority to request that an environmental planning instrument be prepared covering certain lands. It also directs that the Heritage Council shall be consulted by others when preparing a draft planning instrument affecting land to which an interim heritage order applies or which includes an item listed on the State Heritage Register. In addition it gives the Heritage Council the authority to produce guidelines for the preparation of such planning instruments.

*Protection of Archaeological Relics and Deposits:*

Section 139 of the Act specifically provides protection for any item classed as a relic. A relic is defined as "... any deposit, object or material evidence –

- a) which relates to the settlement of the area that comprises New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement; and
- b) which is 50 or more years old."

(*Heritage Act 1977*, Part 1, Section 4).

Section 139 of the Act disallows disturbance of a relic unless in accordance with an 'excavation permit' from the Heritage Council. In practice, excavation permits are required only for relics, which according to their assessed heritage significance warrant this form of documentation and control.

Section 146 of the Act requires that the discovery of a previously unknown relic be reported to the Heritage Council within a reasonable time of its discovery.

*Heritage and Conservation Registers:*

Section 170 of the Act requires all state government instrumentalities to establish and maintain a Heritage and Conservation Register that lists items of environmental heritage. The register is to include items which are, or could potentially be, the subject of a conservation instrument, and which are owned, occupied or otherwise under the control of that instrumentality.

## **2.3 STUDY AREA HERITAGE LISTINGS**

The study site is not listed on the Maitland LEP, National Trust or the State Heritage Register. There are no Aboriginal sites recorded within the study area.

### 3. STUDY AREA CONTEXT

#### 3.1 ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

Aboriginal occupation within the Central Lowlands of the Lower Hunter Valley took place over 20,000 years ago. Koettig (1987) recorded a date of 20,200 BP from a hearth at Glennies Creek to the north of Branxton. An Aboriginal site on the Liverpool Plains has been dated to at least 19,000 BP (Gorecki *et al*, 1984). Despite these and other dates extending back to the Pleistocene, the majority of dated sites within the Hunter Valley are less than 4,000 years old (Brayshaw, 1994).

Tindale (1974) places the study area within the territory of the Wonnarua clans. The Awabakal are described as occupying land between Wyong, Maitland and Newcastle. The Worimi people occupied land north from Maitland and Newcastle and the Wonnarua territory extended west from Maitland to the Dividing Range.

The local Aboriginal population were able to exploit a wide range of subsistence resources. The numerous wetlands of the region provided abundant floral species and early settlers to the region noted Aboriginals catching eels and fish (Brayshaw, 1986b). Available faunal species included kangaroo, wallaby, echidna, possums, waterfowl, emu and reptiles.

Material culture of the local Aboriginal people included items made of wood, bark, plant fibres, stone, shell and bone including such items as spears, clubs, shields, dishes, canoes, nets, cloaks, cord and cutting implements.

The Aboriginal population of the region suffered greatly following the arrival of European settlers. Populations were greatly reduced due to the introduction of previously unknown diseases and traditional social structures disintegrated. A significant Aboriginal population remains in the area today and they take an active interest in their cultural heritage.

#### 3.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

A number of archaeological surveys and excavations have been conducted within the Rutherford area and the wider Lower Hunter region in a development context.

Of particular relevance to the study area is Dagg's (1996) survey and (1997) subsequent test excavation of a parcel of land adjacent to the study area. The area was subject to the development of a light industrial sub-division at West Rutherford. The site is located on tributaries to Stony Creek, 1 kilometre east of the study area.

Seven Aboriginal sites were located during his survey along with three areas of Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD). Dagg concluded that the area consisted of low density concentrations of artefacts with a higher frequency associated with the confluence of watercourses. His report recommended a program of sub-surface testing be carried out. Umwelt Australia (1997) subsequently completed a series of test excavations in the area.

The subsurface testing was conducted in four locations, sites KS 1, 4, & 6 and PAD 2 & 3. A total of 22 pits were excavated. It was found that the highest artifact frequency in any pit was 11 and that three raw materials were present, mudstone, quartz and silcrete. The density of artifacts was found to decrease with distance from the watercourse. The sites were assessed as low significance and a Section 90 Heritage Impact Permit sought.

Figure 4: The location of the Dagg (1997-98) study area in relation to the current study area.



In 2004 Kuskie completed an Aboriginal Heritage Assessment for a proposed residential development adjacent to the Rutherford golf course. This area is approximately 5 km east, south-east of the current study area and includes an area previously investigated by Dagg in 1996. A total of 27 Aboriginal sites were located during this survey and 116 lithic items were recorded. Twenty-four of the twenty-seven sites were assessed as being of low significance within a local context and three sites were assessed as being of moderate significance with a high potential for sub-surface artefacts to be present on these sites. The landform units contained within this survey included simple slope, ridge crest, spur crest and drainage depressions. Stony Creek flows through this area.

In 2005 Insite Heritage conducted surveys over two proposed small scale residential developments on previously developed sites. These sites are the former Rutherford Drive-in and a privately held parcel of land fronting the drive – in. The landscape had been significantly modified on both these sites and no sites or evidence of potential archaeological deposit was found.

#### *AHIMS search results*

A site register search was conducted over an area of 30 square kilometres surrounding the study area. A total of 74 sites were recorded. The sites recorded are generally open camp sites, artefact scatters and isolated artefacts. These sites were generally located on undulating ground near watercourses and wetlands. 27 of the sites were recorded by P. Kuskie in the vicinity of Stony Creek.

#### *Site Types*

The following is a brief description of the site types that may have occurred in the general area:

**ARTEFACT SCATTERS:** In most archaeological contexts, an artefact scatter has been defined as either the presence of two or more stone artefacts within an arbitrary 50 metres of each other, however the boundaries of a site may be determined by other factors such as disturbance, significant break of slope or a distinct change in site character suggesting an overlay of different events.

An artefact scatter may consist of surface material only, which has been deflated by erosion, or it more typically involves a sub-surface deposit of varying depth. Other features may be present within artefact scatter sites, including hearths or stone-lined fireplaces, and heat treatment pits.

Artefact scatters may represent the evidence of:

- camp sites, where everyday activities such as habitation, maintenance of stone or wooden tools, manufacturing of stone or wooden tools, management of raw materials, preparation and consumption of food and storage of tools has occurred;
- hunting or gathering events;
- other events spatially separated from a camp site (eg. tool production or maintenance); or
- transitory movement through the landscape.

The detection of artefact scatters depends upon conditions of surface visibility and ground disturbance and post-depositional change through either sediment accumulation or surface erosion. Vegetation cover and deposition of sediments generally obscures artefact scatter

sites and prevents their detection during surface surveys. High levels of ground disturbance can also obscure or remove evidence of a site.

**BURIALS:** Human remains tended to be placed in hollow trees, caves or sand deposits. Usually burials are only identified when eroding out of sand dunes or creek banks, or when disturbed by development. Aboriginal communities are strongly opposed to the disturbance of burial sites.

Burials have been located in the Hunter Valley) and the Bolwarra Burial Site (AHIMS Site No. 36-4-0061) is located in the general vicinity of the study area. However, the probability of detecting burials during fieldwork is extremely low.

**GRINDING GROOVES:** Grinding grooves are formed in stone where stone hatchet or axe 'blanks' have had their edges ground sharp. Suitable blanks are prepared by taking flakes off the edges of pebbles then grinding the edge smooth and sharp with a repeated, linear motion across the surface of the grind-stone. Sandstone is generally preferred, as the sand particles have excellent abrasive qualities, particularly when water is introduced onto the grindstone. grinding grooves are located near the Walka Waterworks Reserve, Maitland (NPWS Site No. 38-4-0144).

**SCARRED TREES:** Scarred trees contain scars caused by the removal of bark for use in manufacturing canoes, containers, shields or shelters. Mature trees, remnants of stands of the original vegetation, have the potential to contain scars.

### **3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT**

Lot 223 comprises 10.28 hectares with the main building (the former dye house) having a footprint of approximately 18,000 sq metres. Nine other buildings stood on the site in 2000 however plans were made for the demolition of the majority of these buildings.

The site now comprises the dye house remodelled from the 4 inch shell shops, a new office building, new weighbridge, storage and settlement tanks.

The geotechnical report (ERM, 2000) found ash fill in at least 50% of their test pits to a depth of 0.4 metres. Around the ash disposal area a layer of silty sand fill is 2 metres thick. There was also noted a high potential for on-site burial areas of industrial refuse.

### **3.4 MODEL**

The area is situated in a resource rich environment and the topography of the site would have been conducive to open camp sites. Dagg's 1997 sub-surface testing has shown the presence of knapping floors near the study area and also a significant dispersal of artefacts in areas of disturbance. On this basis and the evidence in the physical condition of the site and the geotechnical report for those areas not built over, it is predicted that few if any artifacts would remain on the site and those that do would no longer be in context.

### **3.5 SITE VISIT**

A site visit was undertaken with representatives of Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Lower Hunter Wonnarua Council on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October, 2005, selected on the basis of the DEC consultation guidelines.

The site was walked over although there was negligible opportunity for natural ground exposure due to fill.

The cultural significance of the site was discussed with the representatives in the field.

## 4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### 4.1 SUMMARY

European settlement brought farmers into the area, but the construction of a munitions factory during World War II transformed a largely undeveloped, rural area to a place of industry which provided much needed employment for former coalminers and local residents, including significant numbers of women. As the war drew to a close, the decision to establish a textile factory on the site ensured the continued employment of coalfields workers, who were joined by ex-servicemen and migrants from the U.S.A., Britain and Europe. However, from the mid-1970s the factory struggled to remain viable and since the cessation of textile manufacture in 2000 the site has entered another phase, as a light industrial estate.

### 4.2 RUTHERFORD MUNITIONS FACTORY

The study site is part of a large parcel of land which was acquired by the Commonwealth of Australia for the construction of a munitions factory during World War 2. Negotiations for the acquisition began in 1941 but the legalities were not finalised until January 1944. The majority of the land had previously been used for grazing purposes, with the exception of an area of 268 acres on the eastern boundary which had been a racecourse for the past 55 years. The site, shown on Plan 1<sup>1</sup>, was described as:

That piece of land situated in the Shire of Kearsley Parish of Gosforth and County of Northumberland containing four hundred and twenty three acres two roods thirty five perches or thereabouts ... being part of 2100 acres (Portion 69 of Parish) originally granted to George Cobb by Crown Grant dated the 30<sup>th</sup> day of June 1823 also part of 500 acres (Portion 64 of Parish) originally granted to Tom White Melville Winder by Crown Grant dated the 19<sup>th</sup> day of April 1836 also part of 2560 acres (Portion 70 of Parish) originally granted to George Shaw Rutherford by Crown Grant dated the 19<sup>th</sup> day of July 1841 and also part of 600 acres (Portion 65 of Parish) originally granted to Henry Dower by Crown Grant dated the 6<sup>th</sup> day of November 1846.<sup>2</sup>

Following the fall of France in June 1940 the Australian government moved to increase the preparedness of the home defence force in the event of attack, and also adopted a policy of providing maximum material support to AIF divisions rather than relying on Britain. These developments led to a significant increase in the demand for equipment, and the consequent construction of additional factories specialising in munitions production. Shortage of labour precluded the most strategically secure states of South Australia and Victoria as factory sites, but various factories were constructed in all other states. In New South Wales, the munitions programme included erection of a filling factory at St. Marys, an explosives factory at Villawood and a cartridge case factory at Rutherford.<sup>3</sup>

### Selection of the Rutherford Site

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<sup>1</sup> Creer & Berkeley, Estate Agents and Valuers, "Valuation of Vacant Land near Rutherford (West Maitland) New South Wales. Undated, in response to instructions dated 18 September 1941. NAA:SP228/1, CL10094; Certificate of Title, Vol.5408 Fol.64, 6 January 1944, New South Wales Land and Property Information (NSW LPI);. *Newcastle Morning Herald* 14 June 1941

<sup>2</sup> Certificate of Title, Vol.5408 Fol.64, 6 January 1944 (NSW LPI)

<sup>3</sup> A.T. Ross, *Armed and Ready: The Industrial Development and Defence of Australia 1900-1945*, Sydney, 1994, pp.239-160

In selecting factory sites, the Department of Munitions stipulated that:

Labour must be available, the locality must be reasonably accessible for movement of materials and products, and, in general, a building must be available in the town so that building construction may be avoided.<sup>4</sup>

Although there were no available buildings in Rutherford, in March 1941 the Federal Government announced that the area had been selected as a site for a large explosives factory which would create work for about 3,000 people. The news was welcomed by local government representatives in West Maitland and Cessnock, who had been lobbying for the construction of such a factory to relieve unemployment in the coalfields communities.<sup>5</sup> Following its announcement, the government found that the humidity and dust in the Rutherford area rendered it unsuitable for the manufacture of explosives. Consequently, it was decided to build the explosives factory in Tasmania and to construct a shell factory at Rutherford. Employment benefits for the coalfields area were adjusted accordingly, with a reduced promise of work for “about 1,500 men and 200 women”.<sup>6</sup>

### **Construction of the Factory**

Having acquired the Rutherford site, the Federal Government moved quickly to establish the factory and by June 1941, fifteen architects were working on the plans.<sup>7</sup> Instructions were issued stating that the buildings were “to be designed on the most economical basis, having regard to the purpose and the period for which such factories will be required”.<sup>8</sup>

Anxious for construction to begin, local politicians became impatient with the lack of obvious activity on the site where in July it was reported that “apart from some surveyors, nobody had been on the ground”.<sup>9</sup> In response, the Department of Munitions prepared a report in August, pointing to the need for time and care in the preparation of plans and specifications, and the need to source materials which included several thousand tons of steel. It was noted that plant had been ordered and was being built, and that the previous manager of the Government Ammunition Factory at Footscray, J.D. Statton, had been appointed as manager of the new factory. The report, signed on behalf of the Prime Minister, concluded with the reassurance that “the officials concerned with the development of Munitions Factories are straining every nerve and working incessantly to bring them into being”.<sup>10</sup> However, it was well into October before work began, and it was announced that it would be “February or March before machinery was installed”... with production following a few months later.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Factory in Operation**

In its completed form, the munitions factory comprised a complex of buildings in which the various stages of shell production were carried out. A layout of the site in 1943 shows the various buildings at the time, including a Hull Shop, No.1 Case Shop, 3.7 Case Shop, 25 Pounder Case Shop, Hull Shop, Component Shop, Shell Forge Shop and Shell Machine Shop. Ancillary buildings included a General Store, Bulk Store, Box Store, Maintenance

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<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p.261

<sup>5</sup> *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 19 March 1941

<sup>6</sup> *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 5 May 1941

<sup>7</sup> *Newcastle Morning Herald* 21 June 1941

<sup>8</sup> Copy of G.L.440/21, War Cabinet Minute, Canberra 9 May 1941. NAA:SP228/1, CL10094

<sup>9</sup> *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 9 July 1941

<sup>10</sup> Prime Minister to R. James Esq., 8 August 1941, NAA:SP228/1, CL10094

<sup>11</sup> *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 16 October 1941

Engineering, Stores and Transport Office, Garages, Boiler House and Casualty Centre (Plan 2).<sup>12</sup> The Rutherford factory was the largest of six such enterprises in the New South Wales Division, which stretched from the Victorian border to the New South Wales tablelands.<sup>13</sup>

The benefits of the factory to the coalfields community were highlighted in an article produced in the *Gunam Flash: Bulletin of a Northern NSW Munitions Factory* in June 1943. Recording that “it was partly due to local enterprise that the factory was established in this district”, the author pointed to benefits already flowing to the community:

The facts are that in an almost incredibly short time, an establishment has been planned, erected and put into production. Much money has been spent locally and circulated locally through the pay roll, many have found employment, and the possibility of a post-war industry for the district has been definitely established.<sup>14</sup>

Employment was provided for a wide range of workers, including skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled. Qualified tradesmen worked side by side with trainees who had special war training, often working 60 hours a week. Women were also employed in the factory wherever possible, but they appear to have been subjected to a more rigorous selection process which was conducted by employment officers trained in scientific methods of selecting labour for industrial work. This process involved psychological testing and registration at the National Service Office followed by an “interview and placement tests”. Consideration was given to a woman’s health and physique, home arrangements and, at times, economic need. It was claimed that this procedure ensured the woman was well suited to her job, and would be “a happy and successful worker, and thus both factory and community benefit”.<sup>15</sup>

### 4.3 TEXTILE FACTORY: 1944

#### **Establishment**

In August 1944, the Prime Minister announced that part of the Rutherford factory was to be leased for the establishment of a textiles factory. It was anticipated that munitions manufacture would continue in the remaining buildings. This move was in accordance with the Federal and State Governments’ plan to decentralise industry, and was predicted to make Rutherford “the textile and cotton manufacturing centre of Australia after the war”.<sup>16</sup> Allied successes in New Guinea in early 1943 removed the fear of Japanese attack on Australia so munitions production, which had been based on a higher demand than now emerged, was reduced accordingly. Factories nearing completion never began full production while others, including Rutherford, had their production reduced.<sup>17</sup>

Construction and operation of the textile factory, known as Burlington Mills (Aust), was a joint venture involving Burlington Mills (USA.) and Bradford Cotton Mills (Aust.) Pty. Ltd.,

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<sup>12</sup> Former Site Layout – 1943, McElwee Associates, provided by Transpacific Industries

<sup>13</sup> “A Message from the Works Manager” in *Gunam Flash*, 17 February 1943. NAA:SP113/1:633/3/-(A)

<sup>14</sup> “The Factory and the Community” in *Gunam Flash*, 9 June 1943. NAA:SP113/1:633/3/-(A)

<sup>15</sup> “Women in Industry: Scientific Selection and Placement” in *Gunam Flash*, 9 June 1943. NAA:SP113/1:633/3/-(A)

<sup>16</sup> *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 1 August 1944

<sup>17</sup> A.T. Ross, *Armed and Ready: The Industrial Development and Defence of Australia 1900-1945 ...* p.273 Sydney, 1994, pp.239-160

later known as Bradmill. Bradford Cotton Mills Limited was established in 1927 in a small building in Newtown, Sydney by F.M. Keighley. Beginning operation with twenty looms and ten employees, the company purchased the Burlington shareholding in the Rutherford factory in 1953 and went on to become the largest textile and clothing company in Australia's history, with a workforce of over 7,500.<sup>18</sup>

Local workers were involved in erection and mechanical aspects associated with the establishment of the textile factory, but in the early stages technicians from Burlington U.S.A. provided specific textile skills. "On floor" workers were initially drawn from the local area, the mining industry and returned servicemen, but within a few years they were joined by large numbers of migrants from the United Kingdom, Europe and Eastern Europe. As well as bringing labour to the area, these migrants contributed to the creation of a more cosmopolitan culture on the coalfields. Insights were provided into racial problems in the United States and the impact of war on Britain and Europe, while the local cuisine expanded to included dishes such as "Southern fried chicken," pickled fish and a range of continental delicacies.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Plant in Operation**

Installation of machinery began in early 1945 and production of synthetic textile woven products was under way before the end of World War II in August 1945. Facilities for the production of ribbon and furnishing fabrics followed in 1946. Records indicate that by November 1947, an extended lease of the former munitions factory had been finalised, and Burlington Mills (Aust.) Ltd. had "nearly completed the process of taking over the area from the Commonwealth".<sup>20</sup> Buildings on the site at that time are indicated in a plan produced in association with the provision of additional water supplies to the site in September 1947 (Plan 3). In 1948 the plant expanded to include the production of cotton fabrics, including cotton drills, sheeting, canvas and moleskin, a function which had previously been carried out at Bradford's Newtown factory.<sup>21</sup> A plan of the site in 1991 (Plan 4) clearly shows the changed usage of the various munitions factory buildings.

In 1963 the Rutherford factory, occupying an area of 120 acres, contained the largest single concentration of textile equipment in Australia and provided employment for about 1300 people. A wide range of textiles was produced, from high fashion sheer fabrics to heavy gauge belting ducks. The success of the factory encouraged Maitland City Council to promote the Rutherford area as a centre for secondary industry by developing over two hundred acres of land for industrial sites. Three clothing factories were established in Central Maitland, two of them built by the Council and leased to tenants.<sup>22</sup>

Changes in tariff policies in 1974-75 had a dramatic effect on the textile industry and virtually halved the output of the Rutherford plant. By the middle of 1982, the factory was struggling to cope as orders declined and this led management to introduce a shorter working week, and to ask 200 employees to take a weeks holiday. Despite these moves,

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<sup>18</sup> "Summary of Historical Events Calendar for Bradford Cotton Mills" – National Textiles Collection, University of Newcastle Archives (UNA) (unaccessioned collection)

<sup>19</sup> Information included in National Textiles Display held at Bowman William Bowman Gallery, Maitland, October 2001, National Textiles Collection, UNA

<sup>20</sup> Surveyor and Property Officer, Department of the Interior, to Surveyor-General, Department of the Interior, 18 December 1947. NAA: SP228/1; CL10094/129

<sup>21</sup> Bradford Cotton Mills Limited: Proceedings of the NSW Management Conference, 1958. National Textiles Collection, UNA

<sup>22</sup> *Maitland Mercury*, 3 October 1963

retrenchment notices were issued to 72 workers in December.<sup>23</sup> Over the following months the situation continued to deteriorate and by mid-1983 closure of the factory was imminent. According to the *Newcastle Morning Herald*, the hundreds of workers who faced unemployment were “the victims of long-held policies ostensibly designed to protect their employment”. Tariffs and import quotas which had been introduced to protect the footwear, clothing and textiles industries were described as “crutches” which prevented such industries from “standing on their own productive feet”.<sup>24</sup> With the factory on the point of closure, salvation came in October 1993 in the form of a newly formed company, National Textiles, which took over three Bradmill owned concerns – the yarn spinning business at Kotara, the apparel fabric business at Devonport, Tasmania and the Rutherford factory which was manufacturing fabric and towels.<sup>25</sup>

Over the following years equipment was upgraded, with significant investments being made to install computerised equipment which greatly increased the production capacity of the mills.<sup>26</sup> In November 1995, fifty years of textile production at Rutherford was celebrated with an anniversary dinner which was attended by more than 700 employees and former workers. At that time, the factory had a workforce of 480, with 384 looms producing 112,000 metres of cloth weekly. Products included cotton, polyester/cotton and polyester/viscose fabrics for markets in the United Kingdom, North America, Singapore and Japan.<sup>27</sup>

Despite investment in new technology, the Rutherford factory was unable to continue as a viable concern. In 2000, following the loss of a major customer and the Government’s removal of its export subsidy scheme, National Textiles Factory at Rutherford was closed by receivers.<sup>28</sup>

### **The Former Fabric Dye House**

The building which stands on the study site originally served two functions - the shell forge shop and the shell machine shop. Following the establishment of the textile factory it became the fabric dye house. The interior layout of this building, which featured preparation, dyeing, finishing and inspection areas as well as a chemical laboratory, office, general store, chemical store and amenities, is shown in Plate 4. Detailed descriptions of the functions of various sections are included in Appendix 1.

## **4.4 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX**

Documentary evidence indicates that subdivisions of the National Textiles estate at Rutherford were carried out as early as 1968 and continued at regular intervals until 2002, leading to the creation of a light industrial estate featuring numerous separately owned allotments of various sizes. The study site, Lot 223, DP 1037300, was created as the result of a subdivision of a larger allotment in February 2002. (Plan 6)<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Maitland Mercury*, 16 December 1982

<sup>24</sup> *Newcastle Herald*, 30 July 1983

<sup>25</sup> *The Mercury*, 26 October 1983 News Release, “Bradmill Sells Textile Operations to National Textiles Limited”, clippings file, National Textiles Collection, UNA

<sup>26</sup> G. Goodwin, “Cotton Weaving”, National Textiles Collection, UNA

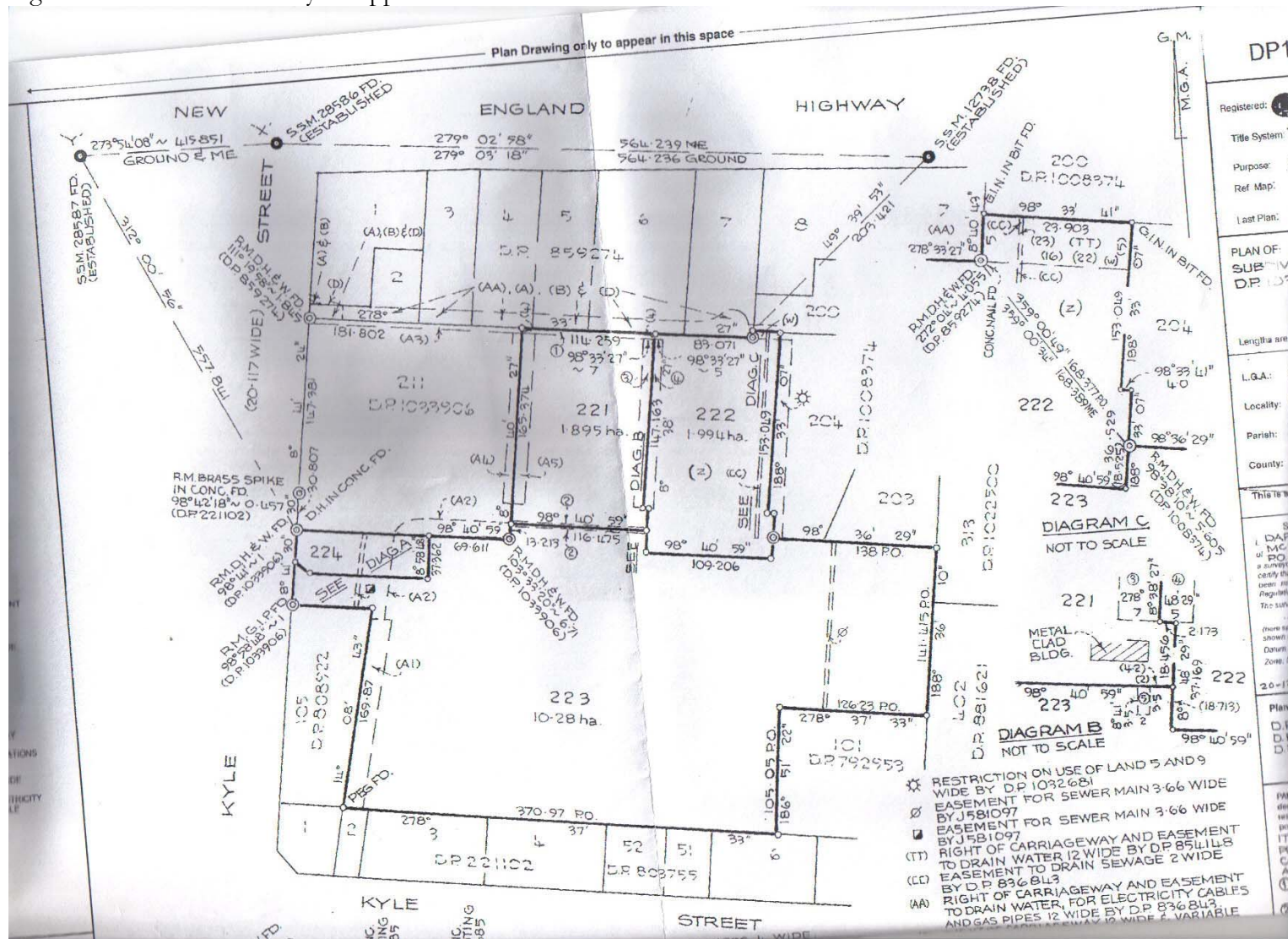
<sup>27</sup> *Maitland Mercury*, 13 November 1995, *The Post*, 26 July 1995

<sup>28</sup> M. Baston, “Bradmill – The Story”, National Textiles Collection, UNA

<sup>29</sup> DP 1037300, 22 February 2002, NSW LPI. Other Subdivision Plans, including DP532959; DP808922; DP836843; DP854148; DP866021; DO1008374 and DP1033906. NSW LPI

## **CONCLUSION**

The former National Textiles site is of historic interest on a number of levels. It was a place of great importance to the nation during World War II, as a place where munitions were manufactured for military use overseas and at home. At the end of the war, it became a textile factory where some of the first synthetic fabrics were woven in Australia. The building located on the study site initially housed equipment for forging and machining operations associated with the production of ammunition shells. With the conversion of the site to a textile factory, the building became a fabric dye house and continued in that role until textile production ceased in 2002. The site is also of significance to the Rutherford area because of its role in the local economy, creating employment for thousands of people between 1947 and 2002 and providing the impetus for the expansion of industrial activity in the area. Following the cessation of textile manufacture at Rutherford and the subdivision of the property, buildings which were “designed on the most economical basis” under wartime conditions are once again being put to a new use, ensuring the preservation of some of the area’s most historically significant structures.



## **5 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

### **5.1 DISCUSSION**

The Aboriginal community representatives found that the site is of low cultural significance. The study area has been highly modified during the development of the munitions factory and its continued use as the Bradmill site.

The heritage value of the site as representative of the munitions factories built during World War 2 has been greatly diminished by the 2001 subdivision. The site has not been listed on the Maitland LEP and was not subject to heritage assessment prior to subdivision. To effectively manage the heritage value of the site a full assessment of the entire munitions factory site would be required.

### **5.2 DEVELOPMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The proposed development entails the reuse of the main existing buildings and the construction of several new buildings.

The positive aspects of the development are;

- The renovation and reuse of the existing dye house building.
- The construction of the new buildings will be in keeping with the light industrial character of the surrounding segments of the former munitions site.

The negative aspects of the development are:

- The possible demolition of the tea rooms at the rear of the property.

In general the development is in keeping with the surrounding use of the industrial area.

### **5.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

A review of the history of the site has shown the following buildings that date to the munitions period have been demolished:

- The lavatory and store. This is now located under the Bradmill ash dump area and will have been destroyed.
- The laundry. The archaeological potential of these potentially disturbed footings is considered to be very low. The laundry in isolation is unlikely to contribute any information to our knowledge of the workings of the munitions factory. The potential remains comprise a concrete pad.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the basis of the research, consultation with the Aboriginal community, and field inspection it is considered that:

- There are no constraints to the development as presented in this report.
- The tea room should be retained and potentially put to adaptive reused.
- If it is not possible to retain the tea room a full heritage assessment of the building should be undertaken by a suitably qualified professional. A Section 140 application would then be required to gain a permit from the Director General of the NSW Heritage Office prior to demolition.

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15. Ross, A.T., *Armed and Ready: The Industrial Development and Defence of Australia 1900-1945*, Sydney, 1994

## LIST OF PLANS

1. Proposed Factory Area, Rutherford NSW  
Plan for purposes of land acquisition  
NAA:CL7651E1: Plan MS384  
9 May 1941

2. Plan showing water mains adjacent to Rutherford Reservoir  
*NAA:PM46/599*  
12 October 1947
3. Site Layout during the Munitions Factory period  
*McElwee Associates, provided by Transpacific Industries*  
1943
4. Site layout during the Textile Factory period  
*McElwee Associates, provided by Transpacific Industries*  
1991
5. Fabric Dye House  
*National Textiles Collection, UNA*  
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22 February 2002

## DISCLAIMER

The information contained within this report is based on sources believed to be reliable. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy by using the best possible data and standards available. The accuracy of information generated during the course of this field investigation is the responsibility of the consultant.

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