

Cossart's Mill, Dugandan

Location

Cossart's Mill, Dugandan is beside the road leading east from the Boonah-Beaudesert Road at the Dugandan Hotel and about 300 metres east of the hotel on flat ground, at the southern end of what was the Dugandan railway station terminus. GPS 28 deg 0 min 20 sec S 152 deg 40 min 31 sec E

Recommended Heritage Boundaries

The land boundaries of the sawmill site.

History

In 1886 Josias Hancock also established a sawmill at Dugandan, downstream from the present Dugandan bridge, and it was devastated in the 1887 January flood. James Cossart entered into partnership with Hancock and the sawmill was rebuilt with Cossart becoming sole owner. After the mill was destroyed by fire in 1897, it was rebuilt on the present site beside the railway.¹ Cossart also had a timber yard (or another sawmill) at Wellington Road, South Brisbane from this time.

There was also a fire in 1908 and the mill was rebuilt. In 1922 the branch sawmill from White Swamp (across the border) was re-erected at Dugandan.²

In 1907 S.J. and C.E. Cossart were taken into partnership with their father as James Cossart and Sons, James retiring in 1917. Under the sons the firm rapidly expanded with new machinery and became the largest butter box maker in Australia, exporting to other states. Employment peaked at over 200, and with still 200 in 1944. In 1961 James Cossart and Sons Pty Ltd employed 136 men and three women and sold 425,000 butter boxes in 1959-60.³ The sawmill provided a large part of the traffic on the Fassifern branch railway until the railway closed in 1964. The sawmill had its own siding.

Hancock Brothers established a sawmill at or near Dugandan, listed for the years 1896-1904. The only secondary source seen referring to it adds nothing to the above.⁴

Site Description and Condition

The site is a diverse collection of buildings and sawmill equipment built and erected over a period of three quarters of a century and modified as dictated by the demands of the business. Only a

small portion of the site is now in regular use for the needs of a wood recycling company and very little sawing of logs is undertaken. Much of the fabric is decaying for lack of maintenance but it is still a substantially complete major Queensland sawmill. It was equipped with both hardwood and softwood mills, planing equipment, saw sharpening facilities and steam power generation equipment. All trace of the rail siding appears to have been removed; the railway closed in 1964 many years before the sawmill ceased to operate.

Assessment of Significance

Cossart's Mill, in its present state, is a rare surviving example of one of the state major sawmills of the middle of the 20th century. Because of lack of modernisation, it largely reflects a mill of that period, post electrification, but still retains the boiler house from the earlier era. The mill was the largest employer in the district for many years, brought logs from a large radius and for many years provided a substantial portion of the revenue for the railway and provided the bulk of its freight traffic. The mill was important as a major sawmill in the evolution of Queensland history (Category a) and as a surviving relic is now rare and in danger of serious decay without conservation. (Category b). It is also an important surviving representative of a number of sawmills which were major employers and producers of building timber (Category d).

Recommendations

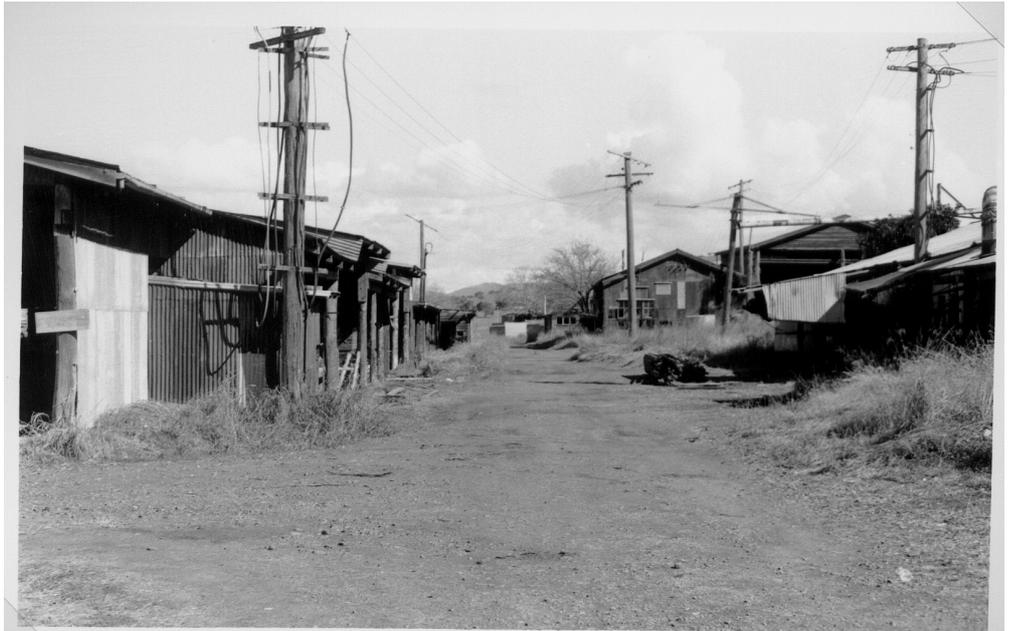
The sawmill is currently leased by Ironbark Recyclers who use a portion of the equipment remaining on the site. Most of the equipment would be of little more than scrap value as it is no longer economic as a conventional sawmilling operation. Maintenance of the site would be a major undertaking requiring community and council support and cooperation from the owner. As timber was such a major component of the Boonah district, action is recommended to secure the necessary support and assistance for the practical conservation of the site.

References

1. C.K. Pfeffer, p.49.
2. Angela Collyer, pp. 46, 47.
3. *Fassifern District Centenary 1844-1944*, p. 59; H.A. Krause, p. 27.
4. *Fassifern District Centenary 1844-1944*, p. 60.

Cossart's Mill Dugandan

View along road
separating main
halves of mill



Further view of
buildings of
Cossart's Mill



View of log
carriage on east
part of mill
(section in use)

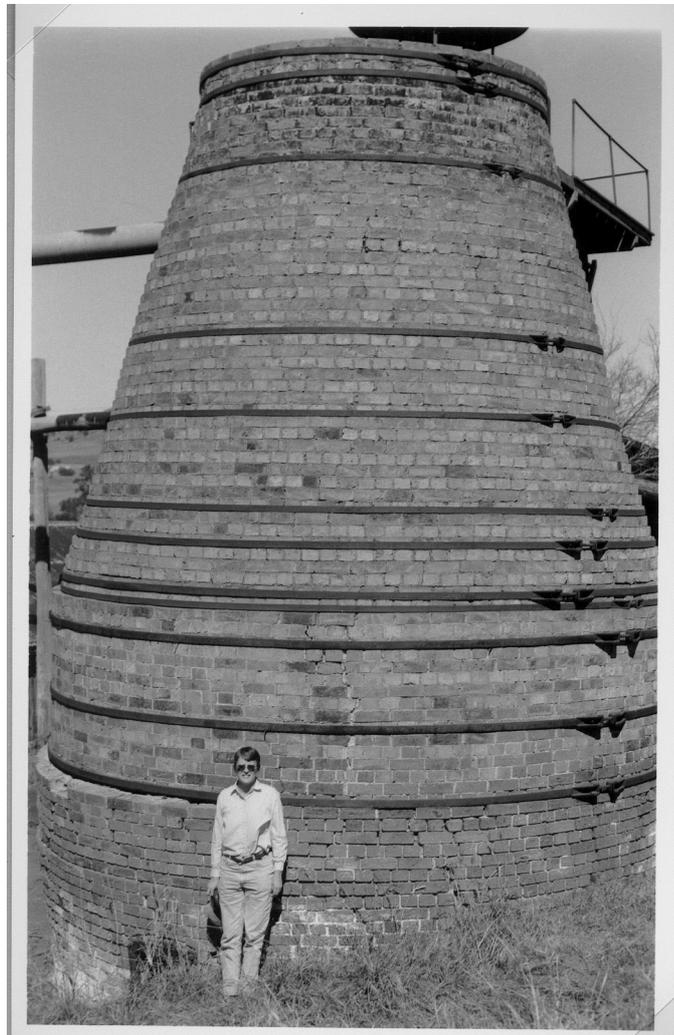


Cossart's Mill Dugandan

View of log
carriage in
western section of
mill (not in use)



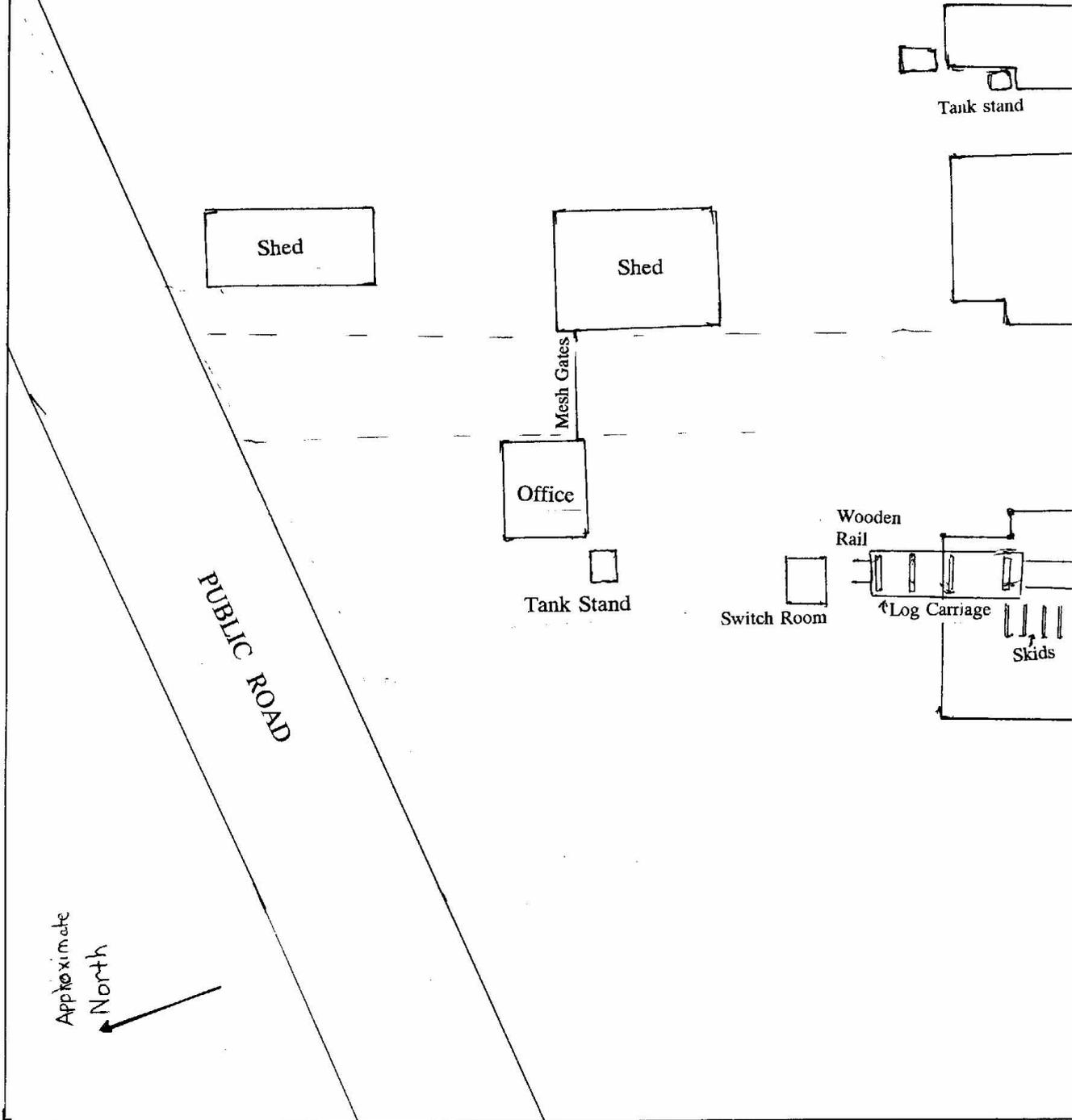
View of large
brick furnace/kiln
for sawdust
disposal

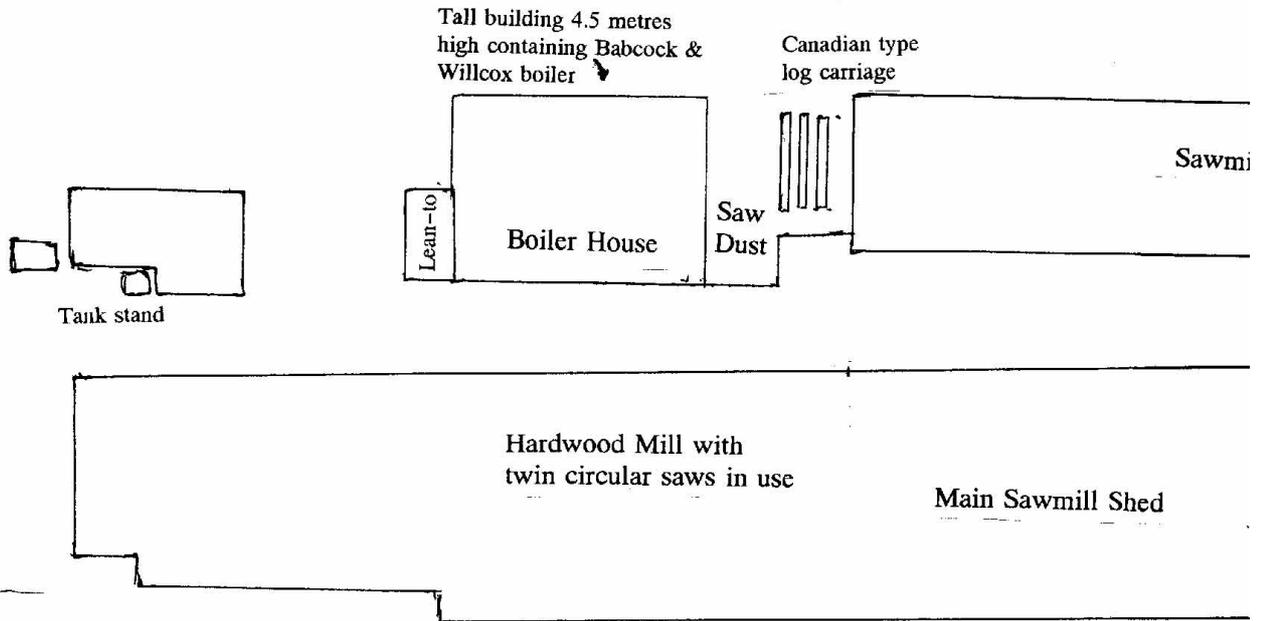


COSSART'S SAWMILL DUGANDAN, BOONAH

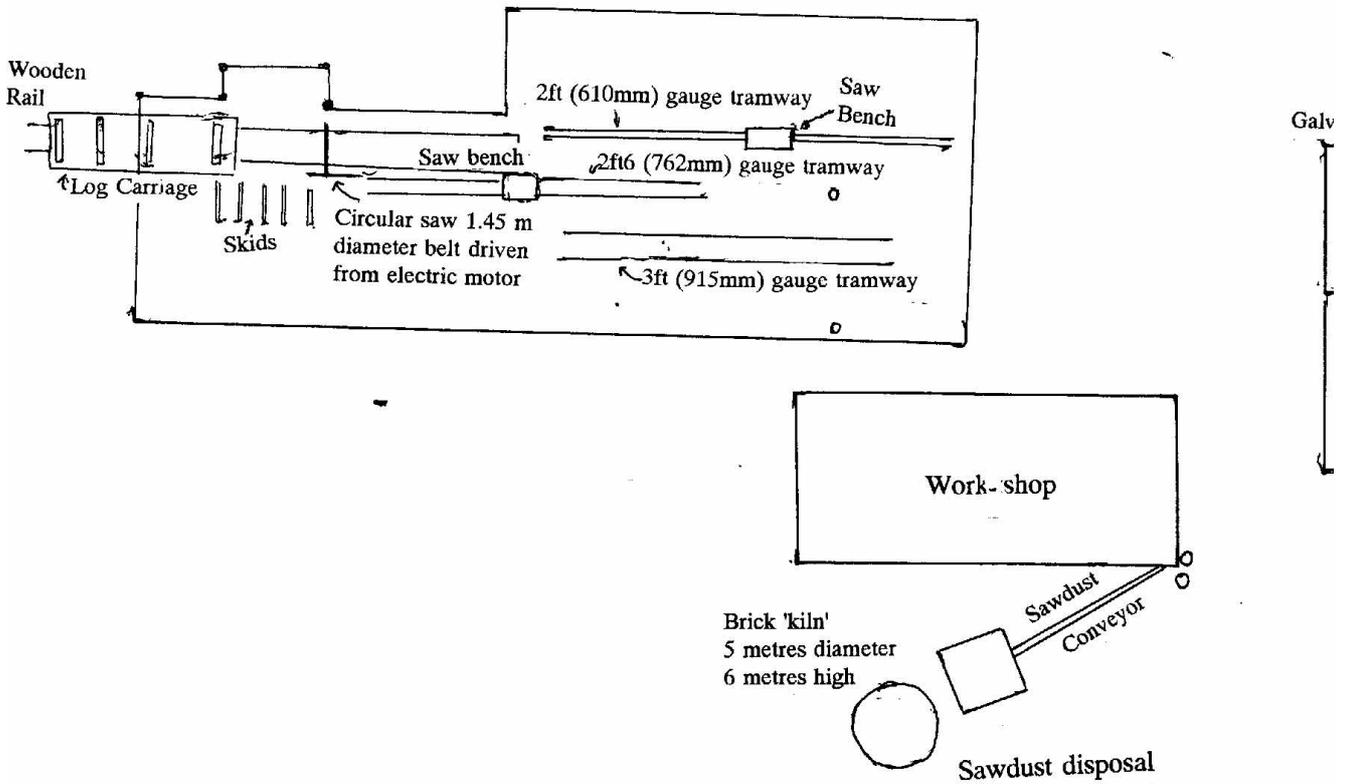
General Layout Scale 1:400

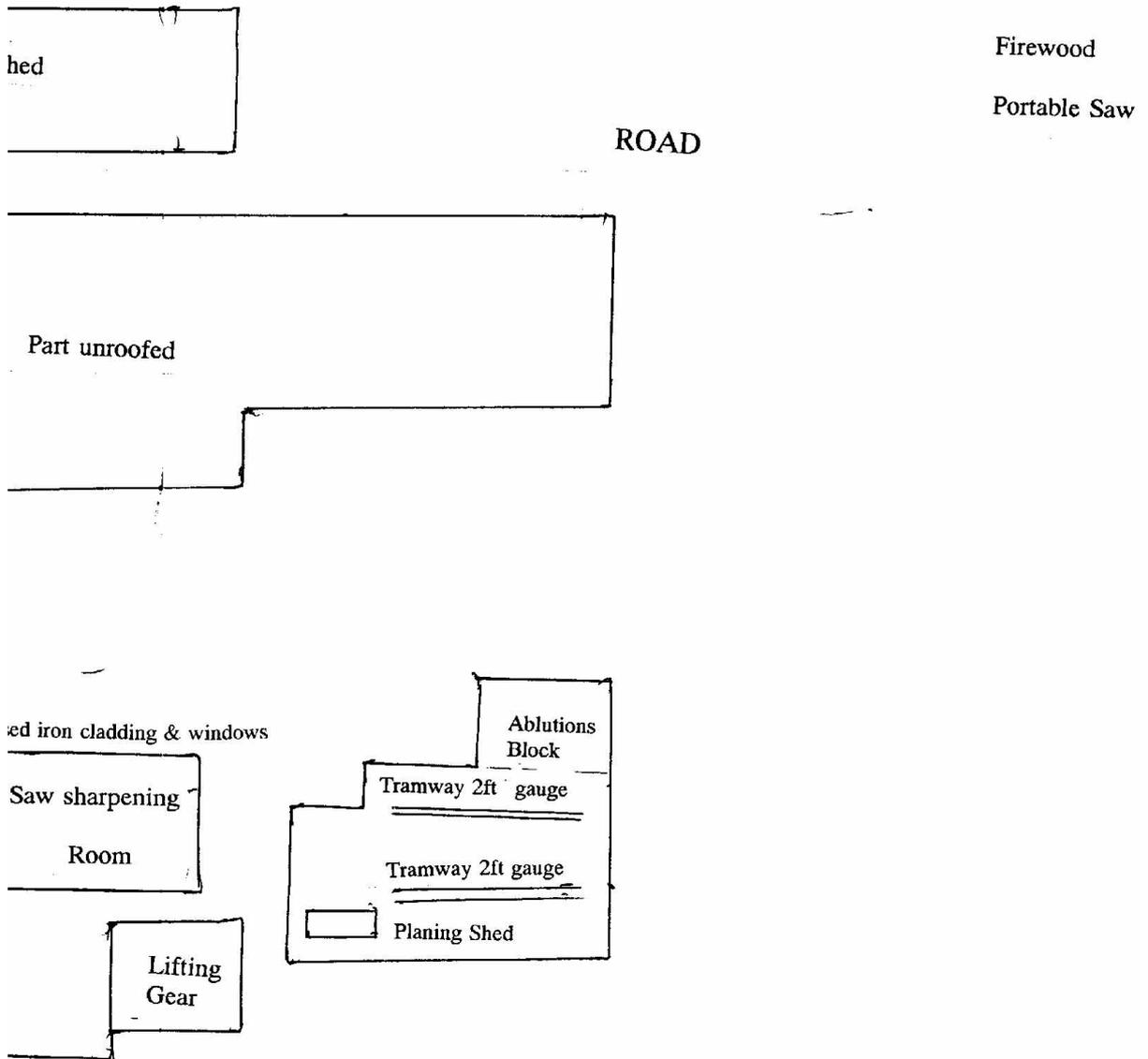
Note that a site as large as this
is only outlined here

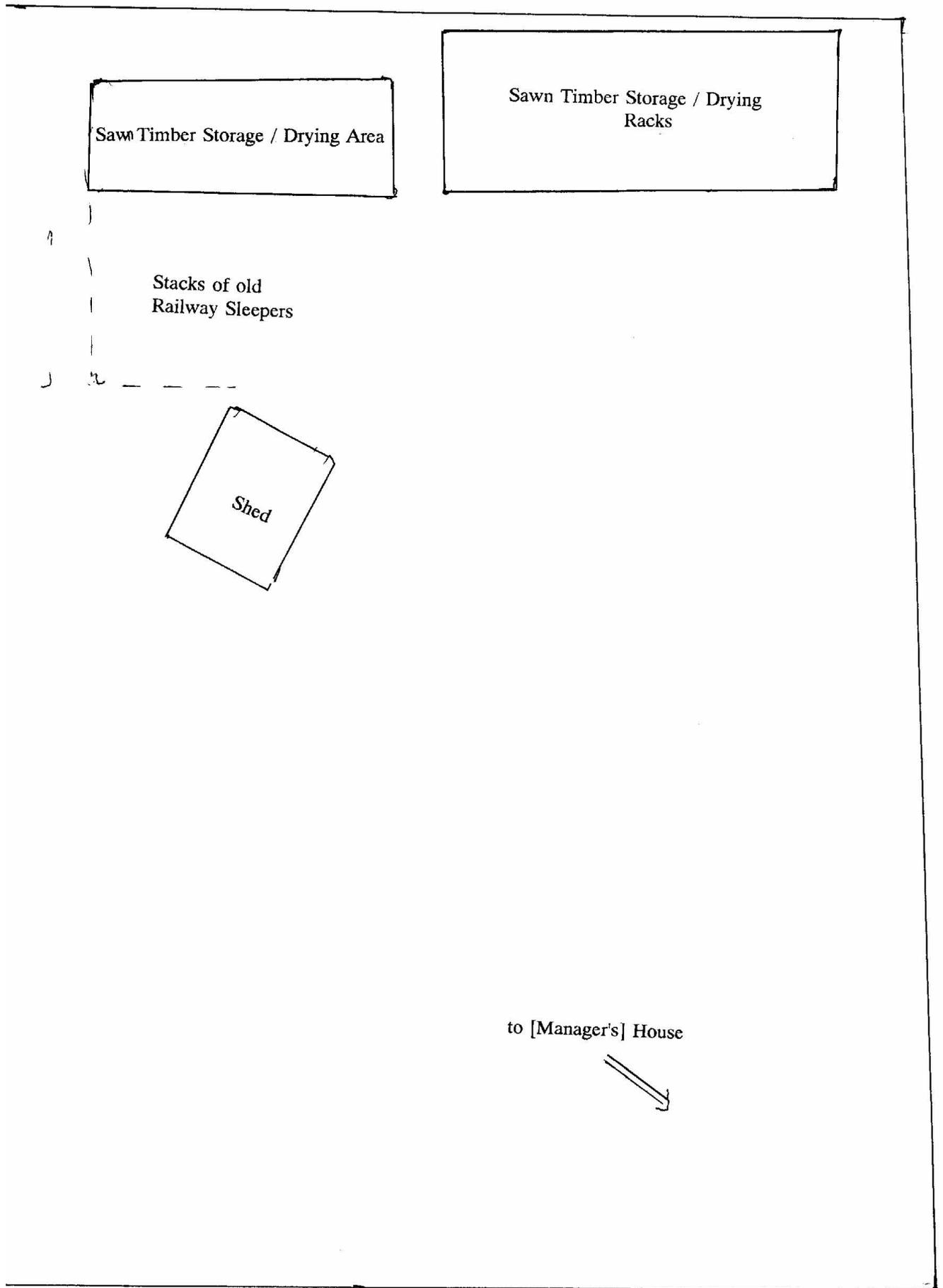




MAIN ACCESS ROADWAY







Emu Creek Sawmill via Emu Vale

Location

Between the north branch and south branch of Emu Creek just above their junction. By road up Emu Creek from Emu Vale. GPS 28 deg 12 min 43 sec S, 152 deg 23 min 44 sec E.

Recommended Heritage Boundaries

The land between the north branch of Emu Creek and the south branch of Emu Creek above their confluence and bounded on east by a line 10 metres east of the east end of the boiler.

History

Emu Creek and particularly the township of Emu Vale, has a long history of sawmilling.

On 8 October 1872, James McAra, George Hall, Thomas Hall and William Hall applied for a special lease of 5 acres on Upper Emu Creek for the erection of a sawmill. It was granted and the mill was operating by April 1873.¹

A. and D. Munro erected a mill in 1911 at the junction of the north and south branches of Emu Creek but closed the mill two years later and subsequently removed it during a downturn in trade.²

In the 1920s another mill was built, on Portion 1564, where Emu Creek and Emu Creek South are divided by the Steamer Mountains by Boldery and Brett, apparently to tret pine. Bretts, in partnership with H.J. Myers in the 1930s and 1940s. A school was established in 1942.³

The licence for the mill was transferred to Bretts Sawmilling on 29 January 1958 and later to Corbett Brothers Pty Ltd of Oxley who owned the mill when it closed in 1968.⁴

Site Description and Condition

Although the site was described on the 1:250,000 map as abandoned saw mill, none of the machinery now remains. Mr Kevin Ahearn advised that a few years ago there was a considerable amount of machinery present. The remains now comprise the boiler and its setting, a number of vertical posts showing the main layout of the sawmill building and a considerable amount of concrete foundations.

Assessment of Significance

The remains are tangible evidence of the part sawmilling played in this part of the state (Criterion a). They are ruins of a typical moderate sized mill dating from the 1920s (Criterion d). The degraded state of the ruins detracts from their heritage significance. To a large degree, the site may reveal the fate of abandoned machinery without adequate protection. In its present state, the remains of the sawmill are now fairly safe from further vandalism and may realistically be all that can be preserved at most remote sawmill sites and given the small number of sites in which the layout of the mill can be seen, reach the threshold for listing (Criterion b as well as a, d).

Recommendations

Any practical steps available could be taken to retard destruction of the site. Interpretative signs to explain the layout may assist in increasing respect for the site and understanding of it.

References

1. Kevin Ahearn, *From Crosscut to Chain Saw*, pp. 77.
2. *ibid* p. 81.
3. *ibid* p. 86.
4. *ibid* p. 90.

**Emu Creek
Sawmill (via
Emu Vale)**

View from east of
sawmill remains

View from west
of sawmill
remains (boiler in
background at
left)

View of boiler
and steel firebox



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