

Rayner's Sawmill, Mudgeeraba

Location

On northern side of Gold Coast-Springbrook Road just west of intersection with Hardy's Road and Mudgeeraba Creek bridge. GPS 28 deg 5 min 18 sec S and 153 deg 20 min 52 sec E.

Recommended Heritage Boundaries

The recommended boundaries are lines five metres distance from the outer boundaries of the sawmill and sawn timber storage area extending across the log dump to the road boundary, and modified if necessary not to extend beyond the property boundary or interfere with the owner's residence.

History

Rayner's mill beside the northern side of the Springbrook Road, just west of its the Hardy's Road intersection, began life around 1943 on a property at Little Nerang, a case mill.¹ It was subsequently moved to its present site and has been operated for half a century by the Rayner family. It demonstrates the ability of family enterprise to survive. The mill, electrically powered, is a small one, worked by three family members, its layout and equipment otherwise little changed from that in vogue a century earlier. The equipment remains effective, with the use of tractor for log and sawn timber handling and a chain saw to supplement the fixed equipment and increase productivity.

Site Description and Condition

This is an operating sawmill, selected as an example of a 'Case Mill' which has kept operating by adapting to satisfying other markets for rough sawn timber. The mill, although electrically powered, uses technology of wooden and steel saw benches, tramways for log carriage and partly sawn timber. It retains belt drives to the saws. This has been supplemented with portable chain saw and tractor for log handling.

Assessment of Significance

The sawmill is an intact and substantially unchanged surviving example of small family sawmills without dressing machinery. Hundreds of case mills once existed principally to provide timber for fruit cases as did small sawmills providing rough sawn timber for building and other purposes. While there has been adaptation for survival when the fruit case market collapsed, this

mill is significant not for technological achievement but for its rarity as an operating and little changed example of the once common but now comparatively rare case mill (criteria b and d).

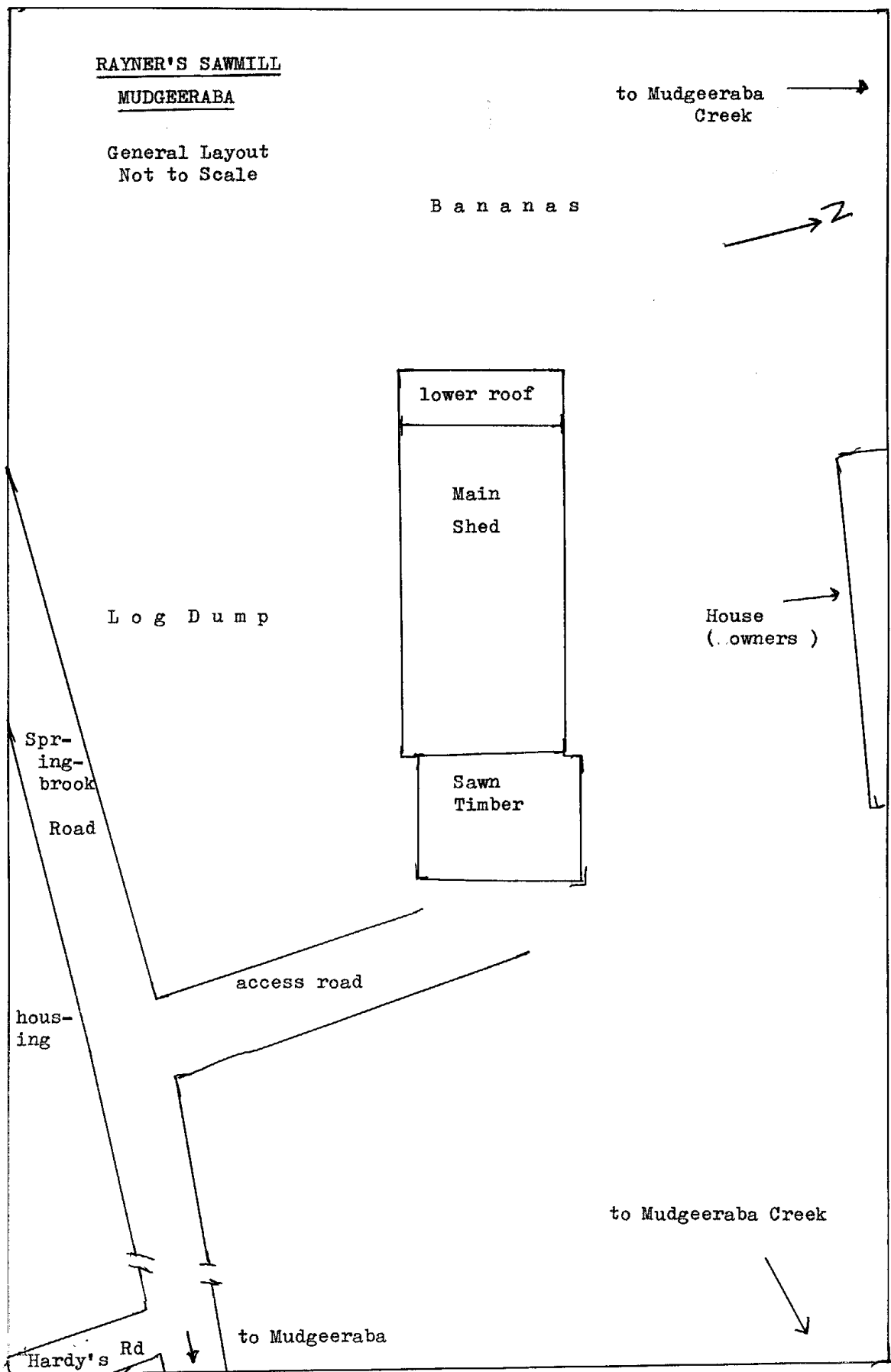
Recommendations

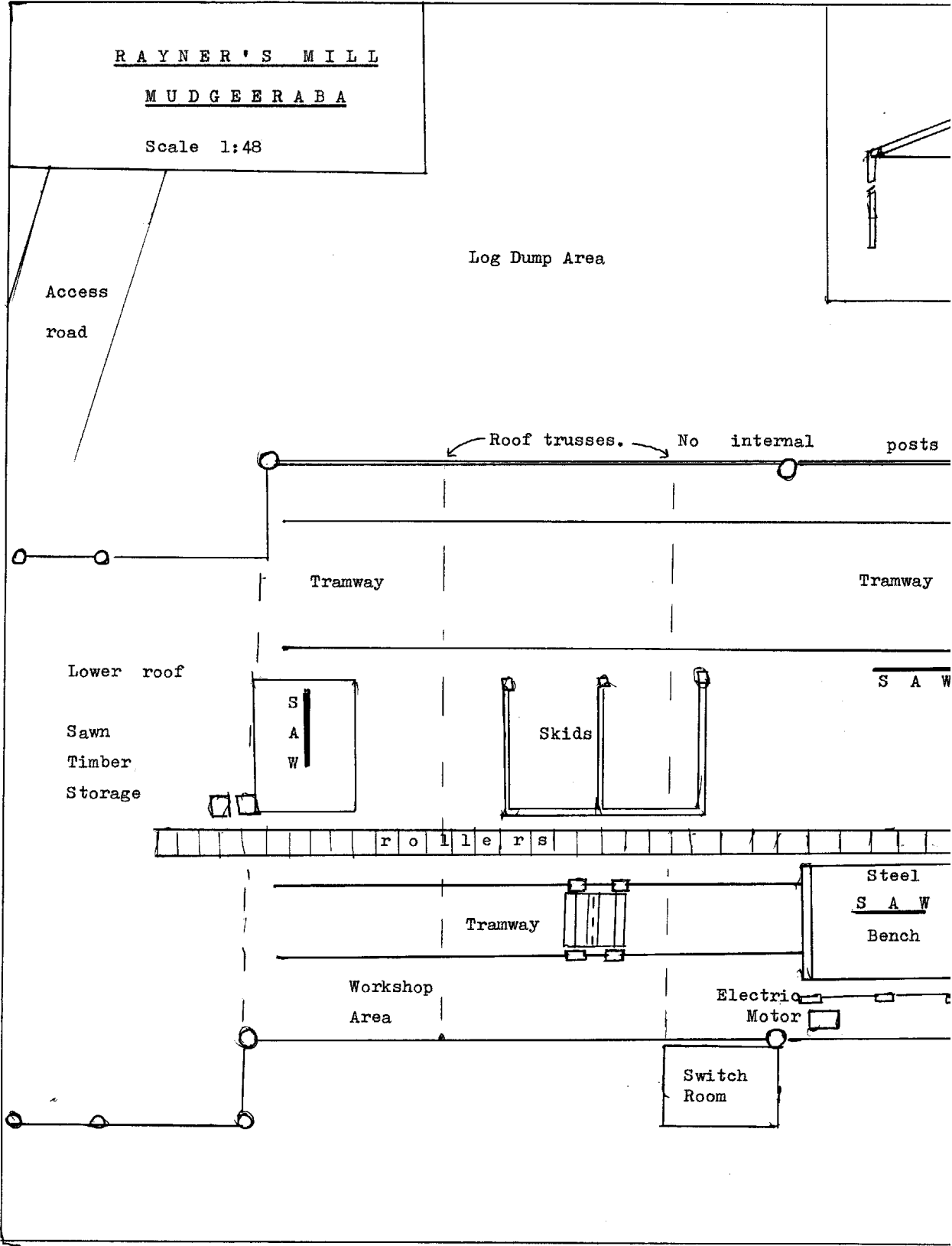
Sensitive prior negotiation is required so that any move to heritage listing does not result in closure, and dismantling or destruction by vandalism and theft. It is an exposed and insecure site with the owner living effectively on-site as its chief protection. It is in an area becoming increasingly suburbanised. Detailed recording may be the most practical outcome if further assessment concludes that preservation is not realistically practical.

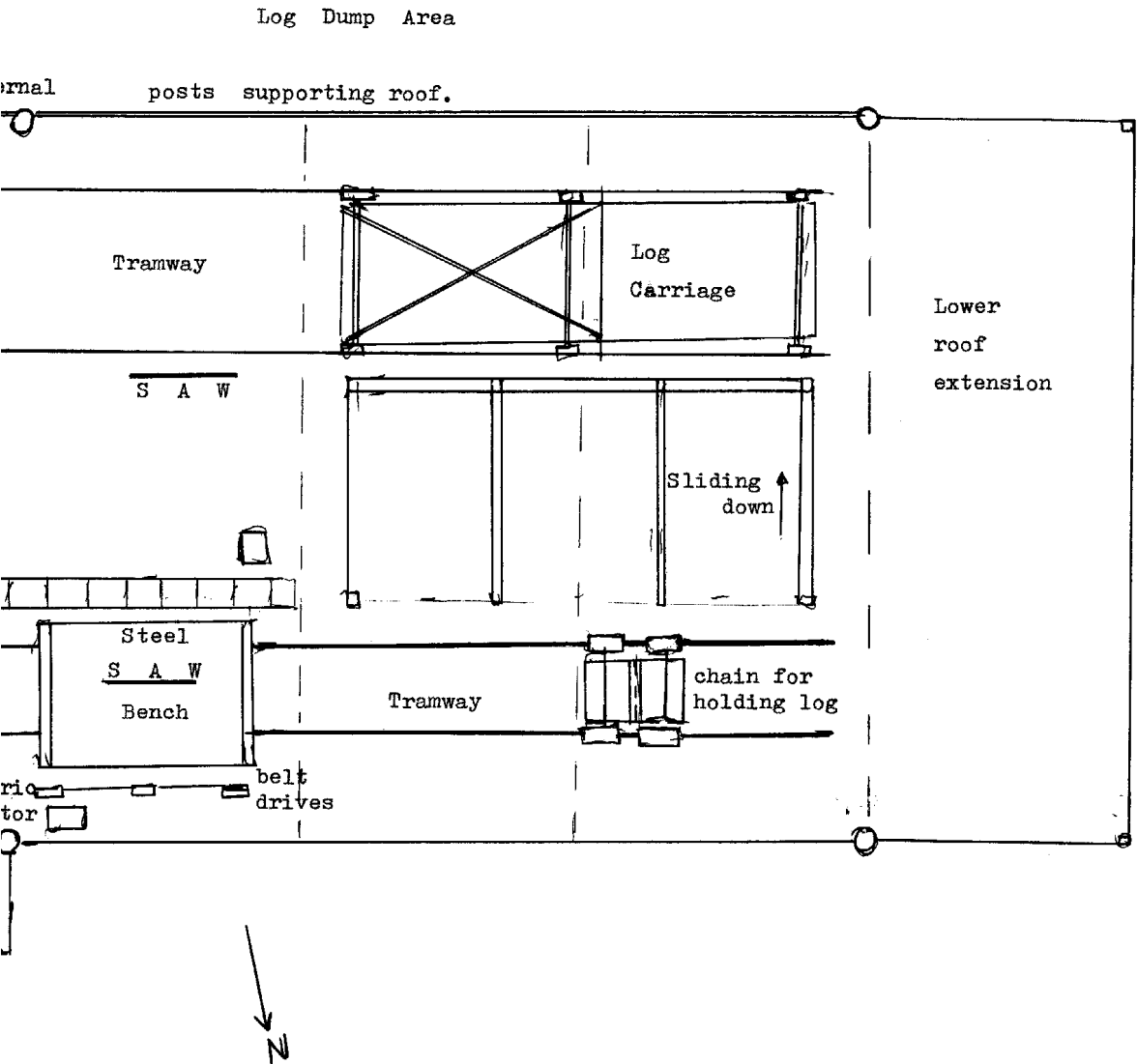
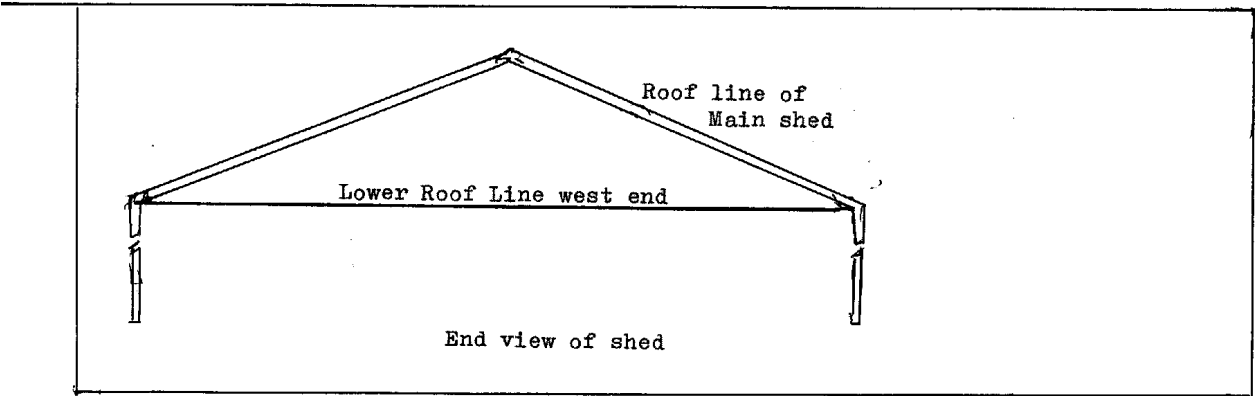
References

1. Robyn Burrows, *Dairies & Daydreams*, Brisbane, Boolarong, 1989, p. 65.

256







Raynor's Sawmill, Mudgeeraba

View of sawmill
from road and log
dump area



View of log
carriage on right
and skids to next
bench on left. The
sawbenches are in
the background



Closer-up view of
log carriage and
second saw bench
and its carriage



Scrubby Creek Tramway

Location

The shortest road access is by Scrubby Creek Road to a Gate (GPS 26 deg 54 min 44 sec E, 152 deg 39 min 39 sec E) and then by what appears to be private road 0.8 to 0.9 where it ends / turns into a private residence. Concrete Telecom cable covers at this point are believed to be close to the former sawmill site.

The tram may be most readily located from the State Forest Road. Near the southern boundary of Bellthorpe State Forest on the western side of Scrubby Creek a steep track (or fire trail) descends into Scrubby Creek and up the eastern side at what appears to be the northern terminus of the tramline. (Too much of a gorge for a GPS reading). The tramline ledge could be seen immediately on the southern side of the road on the eastern side of the creek. If the tramline proceeded further, the formation is too eroded to positively identify and in addition the creek rapidly ascends too steeply, so it is likely the chute descended to this point or nearby.

The tramline generally follows the eastern side of the creek, starting near the bed and in part paralleled and in part obliterated by a road but then gradually rises above the creek (thus reducing the tramway grade), crossing a couple of side gullies and descending to the sawmill site.

Recommended Heritage Boundaries

A ten metre wide strip centred on the tramway formation is recommended. Closer survey is needed to determine actual boundaries. For real protection, this might be from the property boundary or fence line to the creek; for much of the route the tramline is close to a fenceline to the east.

History

Davie Thurecht had a mill at Mary Smokes Creek. Tram lines (wooden) were built to the foot of the range and logs were loaded on trolleys and carted to the mill. This mill was demolished by a wind storm.¹ Thurecht Brothers were listed as having a sawmill at Kilcoy in the 1923/24 to 1927/28 *Post Office Directories* and this could mean the one at Scrubby Creek in the Mary Smokes Creek area. The Department of Environment map shows Mount Mary Smokes lookout at 26 deg 53 min 19 sec S 152 deg 39 min 45 sec E (GPS or map location) in Bellthorpe State Forest with Beard

Road, running to top of range; chute and tramline to a mill on private property.²

The Glasshouse 1 inch: 1 mile military map prepared in 1942 shows neither sawmill nor tramway although it shows access to the area by what is now signposted as Gray's Road which follows the western side of Scrubby Creek. Mr Prior suggested that the tramway had been in use until about 40 years ago, but this may not have been first hand knowledge.³ Demise in the late 1920s or depression years is plausible.

Site Description and Condition

The tramway was constructed with generally minimal earthworks. The tramway can be located in sections by the formation which remains, often as a ledge beside the creek, or small cutting or embankment. There are sections with sleepers - mostly with only a third or less of the sleeper top visible, the rest being buried in earth. At the more southerly of the two side gullies, there is one straight log which appears to be a bridge girder remaining from the bridge and in situ. No rails were found suggesting that tramline had steel rails. Given the number of sleepers still visible, some traces of wooden rail could have been expected. However wooden rail being above the surface is more vulnerable to fire and physical dislodging. Steel rail was valuable for reuse.

Assessment of Significance

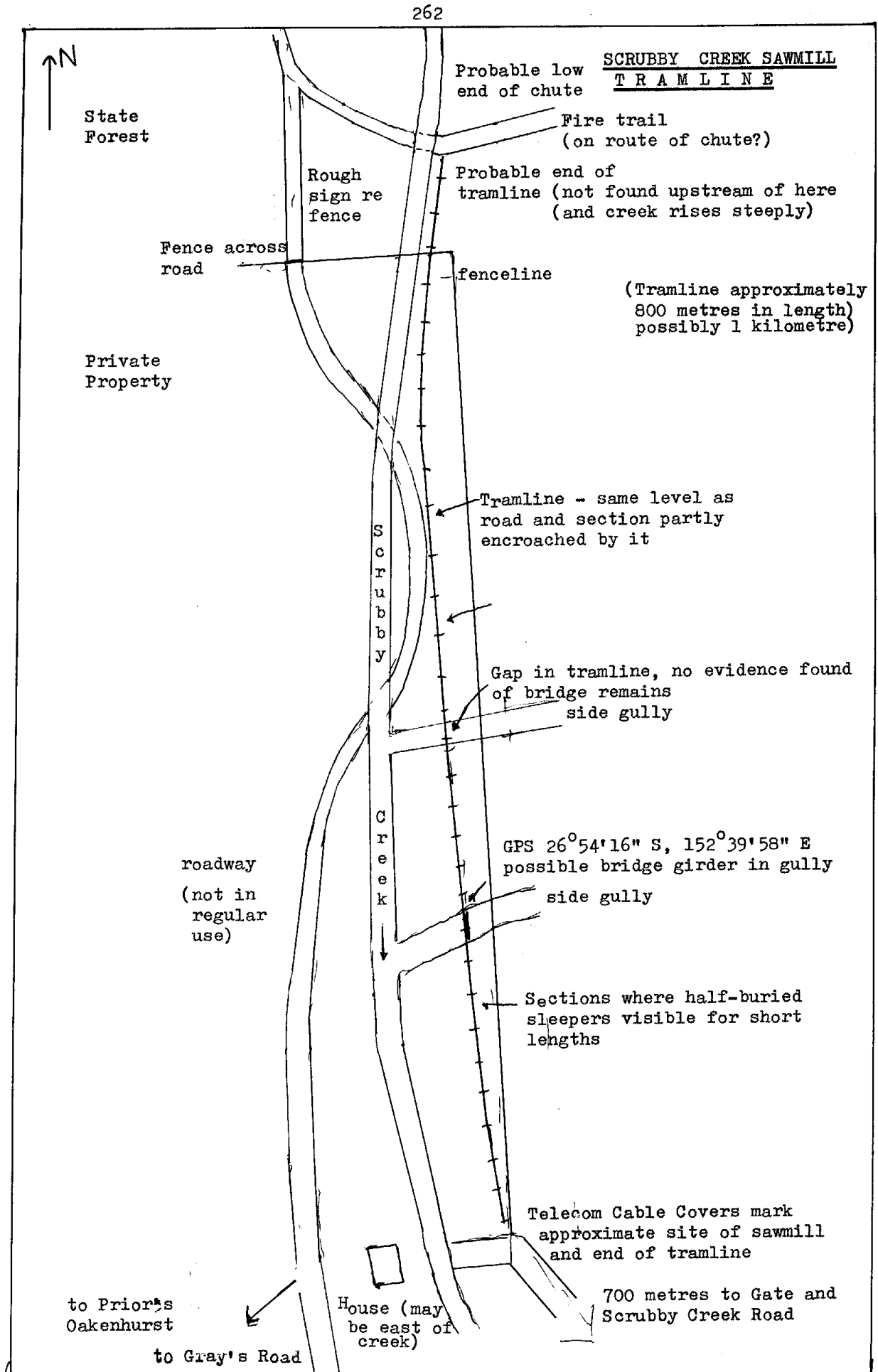
This is an example of a short timber tramway, apparently used in conjunction with a chute (rather than an incline tramway). It is unusual for having some sleepers still in situ. Its significance lies in being one of a type of timber tramways (criterion d) and despite its decaying state, rare for the amount of evidence remaining (criterion b).

Recommendations

This tramline could possibly be preserved in its entirety. There are, however, only sections where it is clear, and a walking track along it would hasten the decay of the remaining sleepers. Further investigation is recommended.

References

1. *From Durundur to Woodford, Woodford State School* (Brisbane, K.L.A.N. Genealogical Supplies, 1982) p. 41.
2. Margaret Kowald, Notes Red Folder 4 Bellthorpe, Department of Environment.
3. Information from Mr L.G. Prior, Oakenhurst (property owner).



Woombye Sawmill

Location

The sawmill is located close to the railway at Woombye, separated from it by the Old Palmwoods Road and accessed from Barts Street, a short access road (whose name may itself be an abbreviation of Bartholomew's). The former manager's house on the Bowling Green side of the mill building is accessed from Campbell Street. GPS 26 deg 39 min 40 sec S, 152 deg 57 min 45 sec E.

Recommended Heritage Boundaries

The recommended boundaries are parallel lines four metres from the outer extremities of the building.

History

The name Thomas Bartholomew was synonymous with sawmilling at Woombye from just before the turn of the century. He had saw and planing mills. An early photograph of the site, beside the railway on the town or eastern side, shows two rail sidings visible, not necessarily private sidings as the mill was close to the rail yard. From around 1908 the firm was a partnership of Bartholomew and Cary with premises at Wickham Street, Valley, Brisbane. Bartholomew was presumably the same family as were partners in Ferguson and Co. of Gympie. From 1927 the Woombye mill was simply J.B. Bartholomew and Sons. The building, now clad in steel, remains but is shared by local businesses, not having been a sawmill for some time. The distinctive character of the building is a reminder of its heritage.¹ Other sawmillers at Woombye included William Brookes and Rose Brothers in the 1905-12 period, and from 1935 Alfred Kuskoff plus others postwar.

Site Description and Condition

The building has been altered from its original use as a sawmill by cladding the exterior in metal sheeting, the addition of doors at each end and alteration to the interior layout and effectively the removal of all traces of its former use as a sawmill. The shape of the building remains that of a typical larger single shed sawmill.

Assessment of Significance

Sawmilling was a major industry in Woombye paved the way for the district's transformation into agriculture. Bartholomew's was the main mill for many decades. The building could be considered

for its heritage value under Criterion (a) for its contribution to forming the history of the district and under Criterion (d) as an example of a sawmill shed with its distinctive style and shape. The building has been adapted effectively to other uses and has few visible remains of its origins and is of rather more local than wider significance.

Recommendations

No action unless it is considered that the paucity of surviving sawmill structures makes heritage listing of the mill building. The building is a clear reminder of the importance of sawmilling in the development of Woombye (criterion a). The adjacent house, believed to be formerly the manager's house is a good example of housing but was not considered to show obviously distinctive features to warrant listing it specifically as a sawmill manager's house.

References

1. All information from Queensland Post Office Directory trades listings.

Shed of Sawmill, Woombye



View of Sawmill Shed as currently clad and adapted for reuse

