

Imbil Forestry District

John Doyle's Mill, Kandanga Creek

Location

The shed of John Doyle's Kandanga Creek sawmill is located just beyond Upper Kandanga school on the river hand side of the road which now terminates at the next farm residence, and on the left hand side of the road crossing the creek to join the main bitumen Upper Kandanga Creek road (and forestry road to Manumbar). GPS 26 deg 24 min 16 sec S 152 deg 37 min 54 sec E.

Recommended Heritage Boundaries

Recommended heritage boundaries are five metres from the perimeter of the sawmill shed.

History

John Doyle began milling at Kandanga a decade before the railway was built. It was there by 1904 and may have been the first Doyle mill and the first in the area. The mill was on Kandanga Creek, near the Kandanga Creek school. John Doyle is commemorated in the naming of a drive near the school, not far from the sawmill shed which still stands close by the creek.

John Doyle was born at Condamine in 1861, followed the Western Australian gold rushes, droving and then pit sawing in Queensland before settling Kandanga in 1897. He built his mill with a 25 horsepower engine powered by Cornish boiler. Doyle used his own teams for log hauling. The mill had a vertical breaking down frame with two saws. The output was taken by dray to Traveston siding, travelling in pairs to be able to double up at the steep Mary River crossing. John Doyle stayed at Upper Kandanga until the late 1920s.

Bill Sterling married Alice Doyle, John Doyle's daughter. He took over the Upper Kandanga mill and purchased a 10 ton Caterpillar tractor to get logs from the steep ranges above Kandanga.¹

After the railway opened, James Doyle bought a mill near the railway, a mill started by Charles Mitchell, Sid Stephens, Reg Rasmussen (the manager) and Steve Polkinghorne. Dakin Peberdy had the mill 1920-24 and sold it to James Doyle, although Post Office Directory trade lists indicate Meyer Brothers operating at Kandanga 1925 to 1939, and then Alfred G. Doyle from 1941.²

Andrew Doyle established at Bollier by 1911, a settlement east of Imbil and not to be served closely by the railway.

Site Description and Condition

The sawmill shed is in relatively good condition but is obviously receiving minimal maintenance. None of the original sawmilling equipment appears to remain inside the building which is currently used for storing cattle feed and motor vehicles both current and out of use. The former boiler adapted to farm water use is currently located across the road to the creek crossing having presumably been moved there from its original site.

Assessment of Significance

The Doyle family were strongly associated with sawmilling in the valley of the upper Mary River and its tributaries. The sawmill shed demonstrates the characteristics of the once large class of bush sawmills. Given their rarity now, even without machinery, it may meet heritage criteria (b) and (d). It may also be considered significant for its special association with John Doyle and the Doyle family (Criterion h). Nearer to the school a roadway has been signposted as the 'John Doyle Memorial Drive'. The sawmill shed would provide a more tangible heritage site. It has not been included in the recommended heritage boundaries but may warrant further investigation.

Recommendations

The sawmill shed appears to be vulnerable from fire and decay. Further assessment is needed to establish whether the site meets one or more of the criteria listed above and whether a larger precinct should be declared as a heritage site, which could include the boiler, memorial drive and school as remains of a sawmilling village.

References

1. Pat Towner, pp.13, 33, 37, 60; Pedley p. 251; map opposite p. 208, PP 1904-05 Vol. 2.
2. Pedley, p. 251.

John Doyle's Kandanga Creek Sawmill

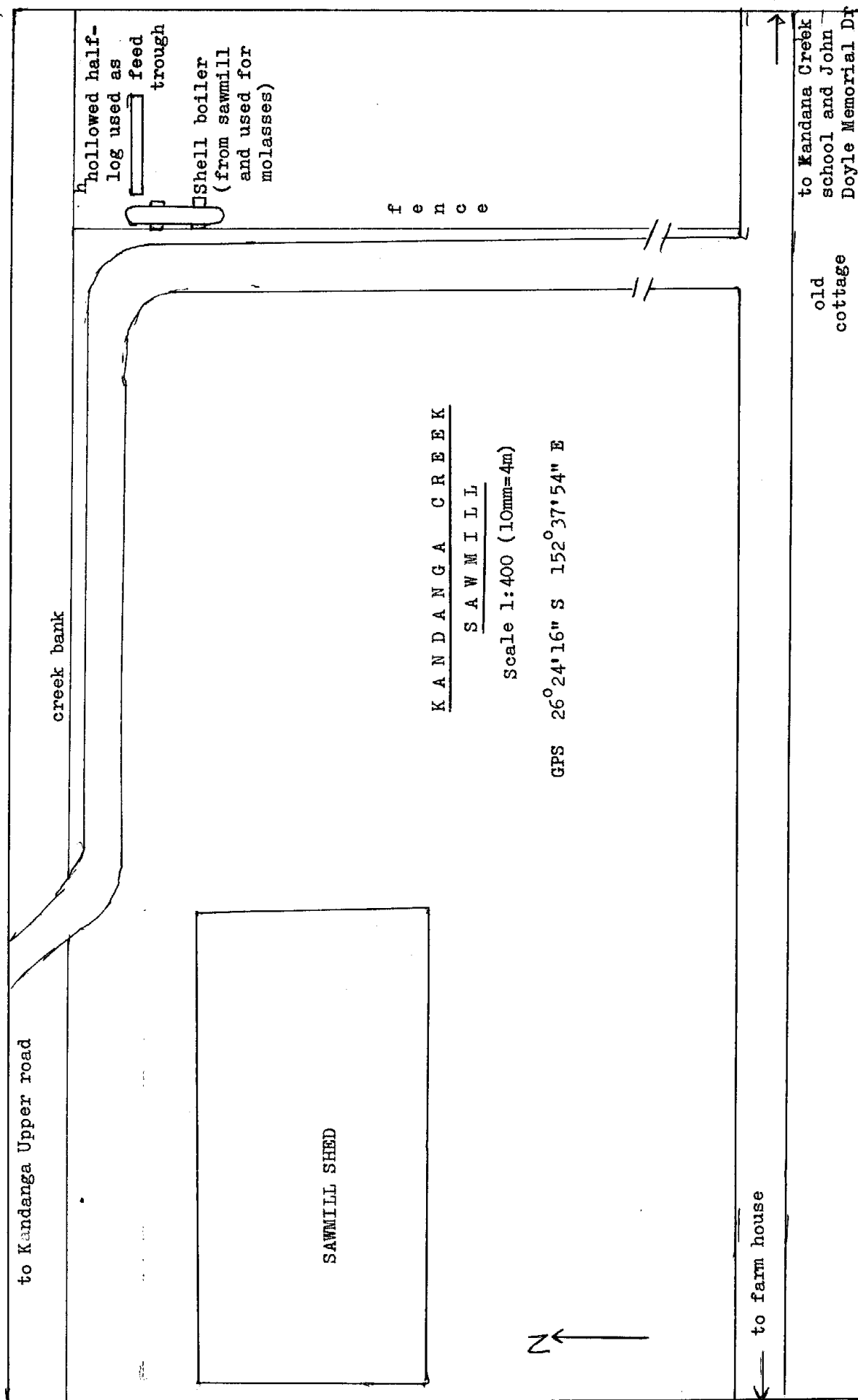


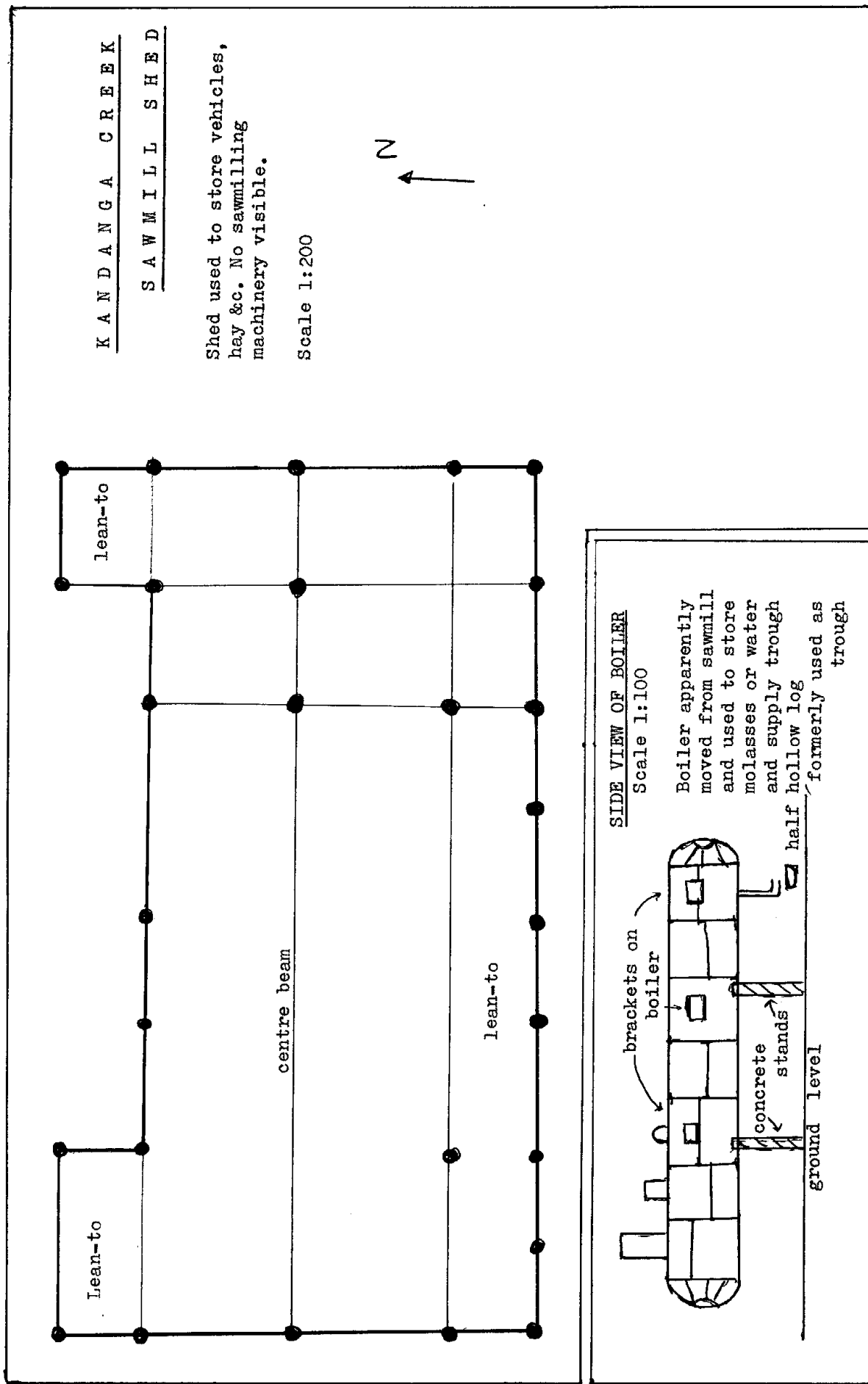
General view of sawmill shed



View of former sawmill boiler in use for molasses feed storage

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Greendale Mill, Glastonbury

Location

On the right hand side of Greendale Road 2.3 km from the start of the road and 4.8 km from Glastonbury road junction. GPS 26 deg 10 min 52 sec S 152 deg 31 min 34 sec E.

Recommended Heritage Boundaries

Recommended boundaries five metres from the outer perimeter of the concrete slab and posts which were the rebuilt sawmill.

History

The Glastonbury Sawmill Company at Greendale, north of Glastonbury employed about 15 men. It was built in 1912, steam powered until 1962. It was then electrified but was burnt down in 1966. It was rebuilt in reinforced concrete and steel but closed finally in 1979.¹

The first mill at Glastonbury was erected by Paddy Green (who selected land there) and his son Austin. In 1922 he sold to Walker Brothers trading as Glastonbury Sawmilling Company, Richard W. Walker was described by his accountant as too honest to have made money during the war. By 1946 he was running out of local timber supplies and needed Forestry allocations.²

Prongers took over in 1949 and later a Maryborough Syndicate bought the mill. The mill was steam operated with 40 horsepower boiler and an engine from one of the Gympie mines. There was a camp of 2000 servicemen not far from the mill. The new mill would appear to have been electrically operated from its construction but reportedly could not complete when Forestry introduced the quota system.³ Alternatively the management was too extravagant, according to oral comments of people not directly involved.

From the 1940s Smith and Blane, and postwar Alfredson and Company operated a sawmill at Widgee.

Site Description and Condition

The site is in the common condition of many abandoned sawmills, in that all the moveable remains have disappeared. The remains reflect a reaction to the ever present problem of fire with substantial concrete posts which supported the

roof (none of which remains) and concrete slabs for the machinery and work areas representative of a mid 20th century sawmill construction. There are also posts for electricity supply and closer to the creek some minimal remains of the earlier sawmill.

Assessment of Significance

This sawmill was an important industry in the area, helping to explain its history after the early burst of gold mining. The site may be significant under Criterion (a). It is interesting in its substantial use of concrete in the main roof supports where traditionally sawmillers would have used wood. To an extent this makes the sawmill less than typical and reduces the significance under Criterion (d). Although the use of concrete here is unusual, it does not give the site the importance to quality under Criterion (b).

Recommendations

Further investigation is recommended, particularly whether any of the remains of the earlier mill on the site warrant extension of the heritage boundaries recommended and whether the mill is sufficiently important to warrant listing, in view of the small number of more complete sites.

References

1. *Timber, Logger & Sawmiller*, p. 5.
2. Letter Ronald Grant to Director of Forests, 20 Sep 1946, R82 Brooyar B Batch, Forestry File, extract held by M. Kowald, DoE.
3. *Rural Lifestyles*, May 1996 pp. 6-8.

Glastonbury Sawmill, Greendale



Two lines of concrete posts which delineate the main shed of the sawmill with former manager's house in background

