Summers & Zwisler's Mill, Builyan

Location

The mill is at the end of a short access road which joins the Builyan-Bundaberg road on the south-eastern fringe of Builyan township. GPS 24 deg 32 min 6 sec S 151 deg 23 min 30 sec E.

Recommended Heritage Boundaries

The recommended boundaries are difficult to define as this is an operating site, although a workshop site now rather than a sawmill. The access road merges into the site and tentative boundaries are the road, and lines five metres from the buildings which include the office, main former sawmill shed and the second shed adjoining.

History

The sawmills which gave life to the settlements along the Boyne Valley Railway have closed, except for those at Builyan. Harry and Jack Mossman, who erected a steam sawmill at Littlemore near the Boyne River, moved it within a few years to Builyan.[1]

In 1914 Dave and Albert McLachlan, William Fitzhenry and Frederick and Richard Walker (and possibly others) combined to form a syndicate to purchase the Mossman sawmill and operate it as the Boyne Valley Sawmilling Company which was listed at Builyan from 1917.[2] Summers and Zwisler established their mill from about 1943 having been a decade in the hauling business.

The Central Queensland Timber and Plywood Company was formed in 1920 and purchased a sawmill at Calliope, possibly Ibbotson's which appeared to close at this time, and moved it to Builyan. J.M. Stewart of Brisbane was the promoter and managing director and the board included D.A. McLachlan. The venture soon failed and the Boyne Valley Sawmilling Company bought it and used it as a pine mill, operating on the same site for fifty and more years.[3] In 1972 the company amalgamated with Builyan Sawmills, which may mean Summers and Zwisler. The old mills closed and a modern mill was built on the site of the old plywood mill. It was variously owned since then by Wilson Hart and Company, Carricks Limited and now by Parkside (Tapiolas of Ayr).

Lewis Summers, a stockman born at Aramac in 1909, became involved in the timber industry around Goomeri in the depression years and joined his brother Charles who began working in the timber industry at Goomeri when it offered work during the depression. When his employer offered work at Builyan he didn't refuse. They joined with Percy Zwisler who, with two brothers had been cutting and carting timber at Imbil. In 1937 they moved to Builyan, and joined the Summers to form Summers and Zwisler in logging and carting. In 1940 they purchased a sawmill at Kalonga and moved it to Builyan where erected it and operated as Builyan Sawmills until the amalgamation with the Boyne Valley Sawmilling Company. There were about 12 to 15 men employed at the Builyan mill, more like 20 after amalgamation.

Summers and Zwisler's mill originally cut pine, later hardwood, and the firm railed its sawn timber and logs until the 1990s. Logs were also loaded at Golembil, Nagoorin and Wietalaba.

The firm retained its logging business, and saw the opportunity and need to mechanise, obtaining motor winches, tractor, Republic truck and trailer to haul pine logs. With bulldozers available after World War II, the amount of timber accessible was greatly increased, extending the ten year life thought then to have been the limit to the Builyan sawmills. The early roads on Bulburin had grades steeper than 1 in 4 and a brake boy was employed to operate the back brake on the truck. The Public Estate Improvement branch later improved the roads. In later years the firm hauled many logs to Miriam Vale.[4]

The Summers and Zwisler mill buildings remain intact but with most of the machinery removed. The shed is used as a workshop for the logging and trucking equipment. It still has features of its former use and includes some of the old equipment. It is now owned my Charles Summers son-in-law, John Hopf, proprietor of the hotel at Many Peaks.

The sawmill was originally powered by suction gas plant, bought from Peters Ice Cream and reassembled locally. The cement block some six deep feet remains inside the mill building. It provided cheap reliable power. A Model A Ford and belt were used to start it, more reliable than a compressor to start. The partners bought an alternator set from the old Ayr Powerhouse intending to electrify but power came and it was not used. It and the suction gas plant were later sold for scrap.

Horse teams were used on top of mountain area. Logs were rolled over the side, then pulled up on both sides of creek and hauled in to the mill.

Horses came down the road before trucks were used but had finished by the time the Summers arrived. Teams continued to work up top, also the Mount Jacob road (which was awful).[5]

Site Description and Condition

The office and sheds are structurally in good condition, being in regular use. Only small amounts of original machinery remain in the main sawmill shed. The principal sawmill machinery has been removed with only traces of equipment and pulleys for belt drives and the like remaining. The buildings have had some internal changes but basically retain the form of the sawmill and appear to be substantially now as built.

Assessment of Significance

The sawmill was for many years an important one in Builyan and formative in the evolution of the district (Criterion a). The sawmill shed and what remains of the machinery are important as a surviving member of the once large class of country sawmills (Criterion d). The site retains strong links to the industry as the sheds are used to house and maintain a fleet of logging vehicles used in timber harvesting in the district and shows the adaptation of past assets to current uses.

Recommendations

The sawmill buildings have been adapted to the changing requirements of the industry with larger sawmills served by efficient log harvesting and hauling equipment. The structures here have significance for both their former and present uses, and it is recommended that present use continue.

References

1. Lorna McDonald, p. 283.
2. *Calliope Shire Council Centenary*, pp. 121-2. The *Post Office Directory* lists all the partners as if owning separate sawmills, a fact which causes confusion here and elsewhere.
3. *Calliope Shire Council Centenary*, p. 122; Jim Threadingham, p. 97.
4. Jim Threadingham, pp. 99, 100.
5. Interview Mr Charles Summers, 21 July 1997.

Summers and Zwisler's Sawmill, Builyan

General view of main sawmill shed (office on right) from north

View of main shed mill shed (on right) from east
with second shed on left

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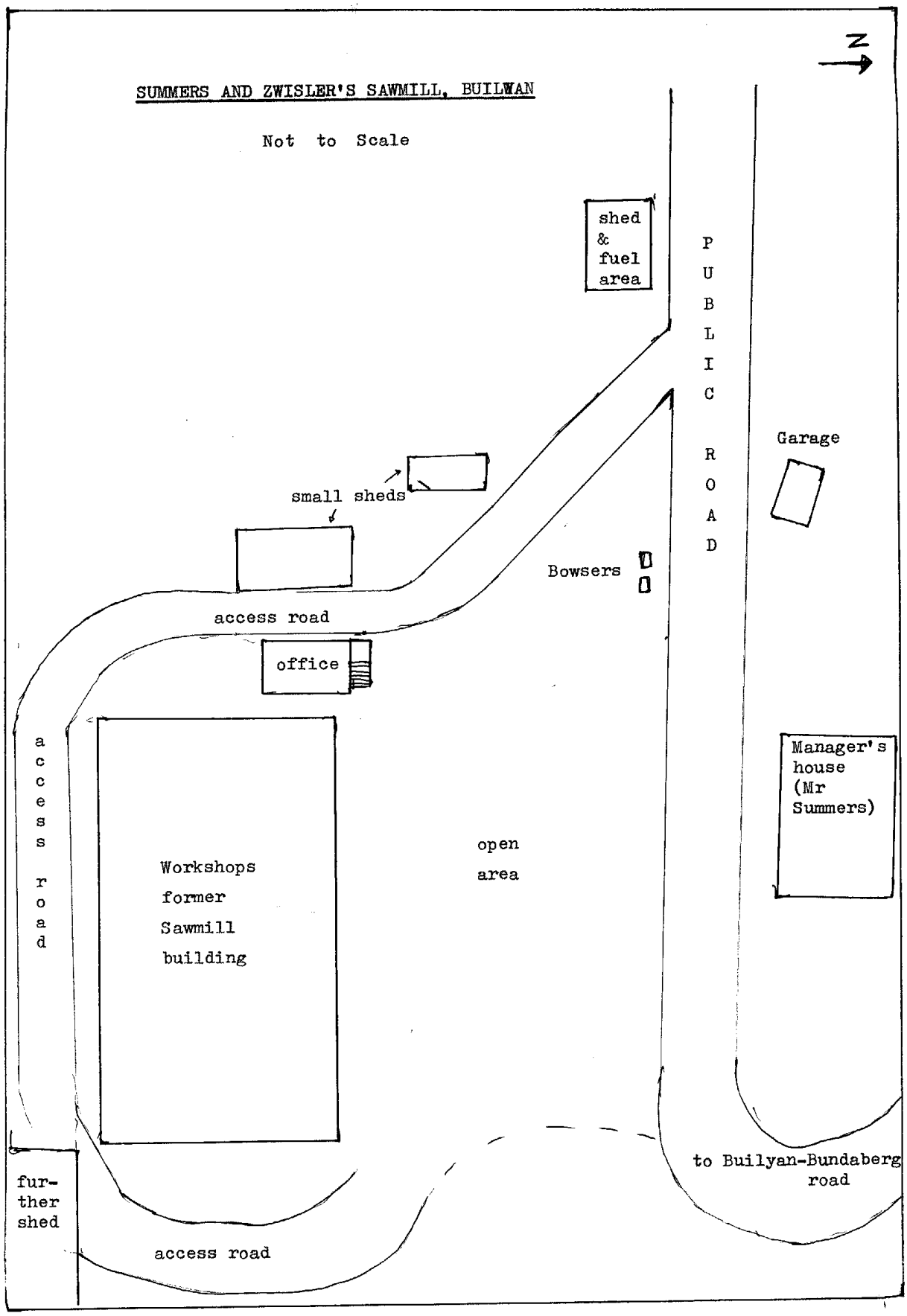
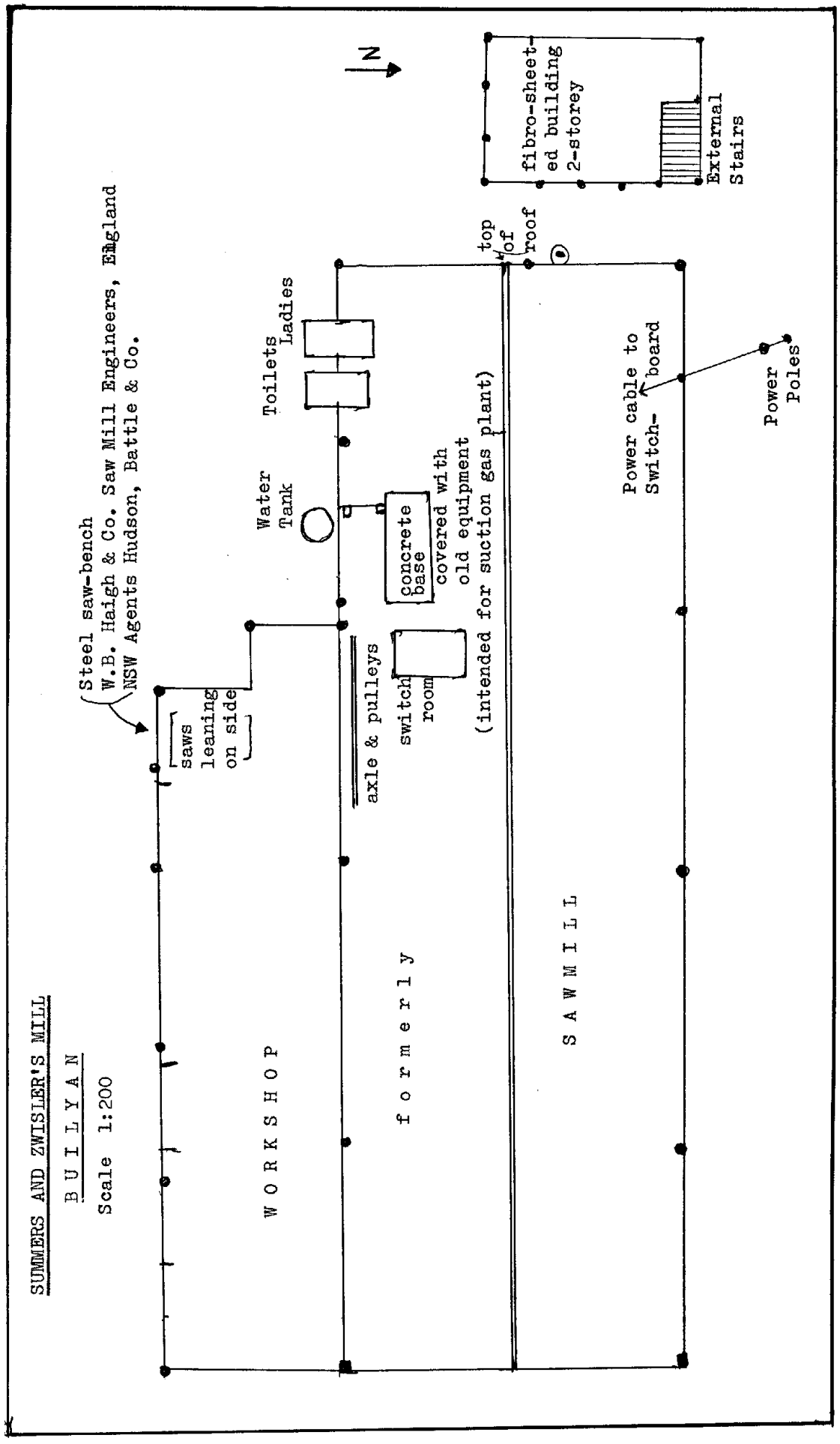

N
SUMMERS AND ZWISLER'S SAWMILL, BUILWAN
Not to Scale
shed & fuel area
PUBLIC ROAD
Garage
small sheds
Bowsers
access road
office
Manager's house (Mr Summers)
access road
Workshops former Sawmill building
open area
further shed
access road
to Builyan-Bundaberg road


SUMMERS AND ZWISLER'S MILL
BUILYAN
Scale 1:200
N
Steel saw-bench
W.B. Haigh & Co. Saw Mill Engineers, England
NSW Agents Hudson, Battle & Co.
saws leaning on side
WORKSHOP
Water Tank
Toilets Ladies
axle & pulleys
switch room
concrete base
covered with old equipment
(intended for suction gas plant)
formerly
top of roof
SAWMILL
fibro-sheeted building 2-storey
External Stairs
Power cable to Switch-board
Power Poles

Yarraman Forestry District

Bunya Mountains Tramway

Location

The incline tramway descends from the ridge followed by the Maidenwell-Bunya Mountains road at a Bunya tree down to the east bank of Saddle Tree Creek. From there the conventional tramway follows Saddle Tree Creek down to the terminus. Global coordinates 26°52'54" S, 151°37'12" E.

Recommended Heritage Boundaries

Recommended heritage boundaries are five metres each side of the tramway.

History

Andersen erected the Wengenville mill near Maidenwell was at the junction of Wengen and Tureen Creeks, operating from 1922, and incorporating the flywheel (said to be the largest in Queensland) and much other machinery from the Mount Binga sawmill.[1]

Bob Andersen was mill manager, Les Juillerat yard foreman and Donald Barr operated the Canadian bench.

Hyne and Sons, fearing the exhaustion of kauri pine on Fraser Island and Cooloola, bought Wengenville in 1928 to give access to Bunya Mountains timber. The mill closed in the depression and then Hynes leased it to Jim Hayden, Julius Shire and Peter Morris in 1931. They operated it for 3 years with Hayden as manager. (These years were 1935-37 as judged by the Post Office directory; perhaps 1934-36 is more accurate). Bert Argo with a Thorneycroft truck carted logs from Little Saddletree Creek. Hynes then resumed operations (1936?) and until it closed in 1960 and cut close to 3 million super feet of hoop and bunya pine annually.[2]

A provisional school was established at Andersen's mill and named Maidenwell in 1926. The former Tureen school was 3/4 mile from the mill and had closed. Brooklands and later Tarong were used as railheads. In the 1950s chainsaws and crawler tractors replaced crosscut saw and bullock teams before the mill closed in 1960 or 1961.[3]

To get the logs down from the top, a few earth chutes were used in the head of Saddletree and also Wengen Creeks but the logs were splintered and picked up stones damaging the saws.

Lars Andersen decided to build a tramway like that at Cressbrook Creek and asked Hugh Connolly to build it. The 4 kilometre surface tramway with 3 x 3 inch hardwood rails and sleepers buried in the ground to permit horse traction was completed in 6 to 9 months. The mountain incline tramway was then built with three steel rails with a centre loop of four rails for passing, and wire rope. It was completed in 4 months and both tramways worked for 6 years 1922-28 and were dismantled after the sale to Hyne. There were two trolleys on the incline connected by rope to a brake drum at the top and up to 3000 super feet could be let down at a time, a drop of about 800 feet.[4]

For timber at the head of Little Saddletree Creek, Andersen bought an engine and built a 10 horse-power winder into the bed of the creek from a spot about 80 metres above the head of the incline tramway (which is in 1997 still marked by a Bunya pine beside the bitumen road). This was later combined with a flying fox with long heavy cable strung across the gorge, with 4 hp Campbell engine and 5-speed Albion gear box and 3 speed winch. Martin Langton worked the tramway. Logs were lifted out of the creek bed, conveyed upstream, dropped onto skids, rolled onto the trolley of the winder, winched up, pulled by horse teams worked by Jim Hedges to the top of the incline, down it, along the surface tramway and then by teams to the sawmill. The amount of handling was uneconomic and Hyne quickly ended the tramway operations. In six years Andersens had cut about 13 million super feet of pine and they sold as the operation was not paying.[5]

On the surface tramway, horses could pull 3 trolleys of logs. There was a dump at the end for transfer to bullock wagons or steam traction engine. The sawmill was steam powered. Bob Andersen had plans to convert a T model Ford to use on the tramway but it was not a success and horses were used to the end.[6]

Site Description and Condition

The tramway has been out of use for 70 years and is in an advanced state of disrepair. Some earthworks remain visible of the incline and some remains of the timber bridging.

Assessment of Significance

This was the second and steepest of two incline tramways built by Lars Andersen in the 1920s. It

introduced this form of transport to the Queensland sawmilling industry but as motor vehicles were being introduced to haulage those few sawmillers with the necessary capital did not adopt it. Its significance value lies in its rarity (criterion b) despite the loss (since 1970) of the remains of the control gear at the top of the ridge.

Recommendations

It is recommended that steps be taken to conserve what remains of the tramway. Heritage listing while there are sufficient remains of the tramway to warrant continued listing is recommended to protect the remains from unnecessary destruction.

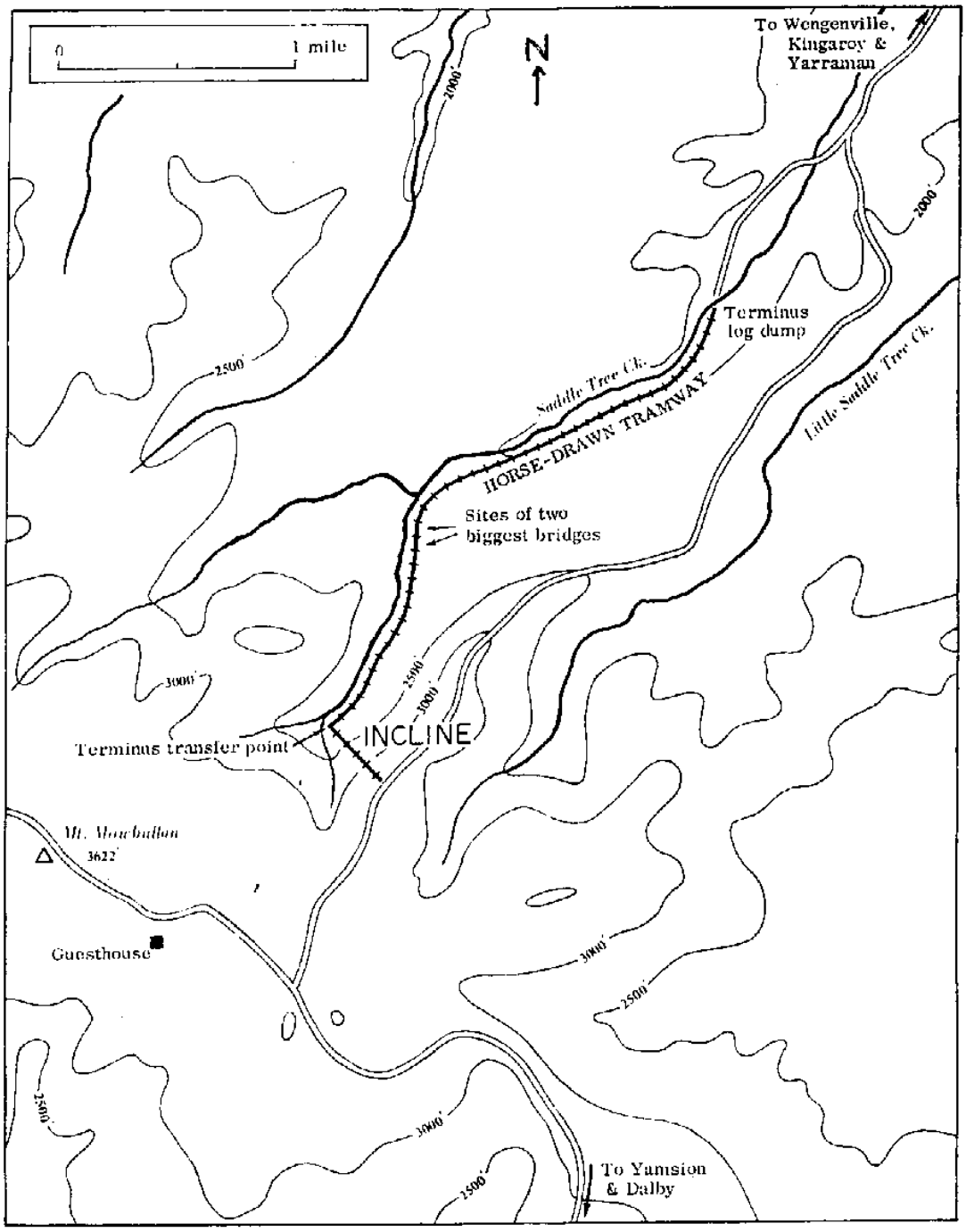
References

1. *In the Shade of the Bunyas,* pp. 18-22; Ray Humphrys, p. 119.
2. *In the Shade of the Bunyas,* pp. 21-3; Kerr, J.D. & Philpott, M.M., pp. 21-9.
3. Ray Humphrys, p. 169.
4. *In the Shade of the Bunyas,* pp. 18-22.
5. *In the Shade of the Bunyas,* pp. 20-21. Ray Humphrys, pp. 124-8.
6. Ray Humphrys, pp. 118-24.

Steel rail in situ on incline section of Bunya Mountains Tramway

Decaying remains of bridge on conventional section of Bunya Mountains Tramway, 1970

Remains at Wengenville Sawmill, October 1970



Bunya Mountains tramway

Cressbrook Creek Tramway

Location

The incline tramway descended from the ridge area known as Pine Cliffe east south east to and across Cressbrook Creek and the conventional tramway then followed along the eastern side of Cressbrook Creek to the sawmill. Global Coordinates, 27°13'30" S, 152°17'54" E.

Recommended Heritage Boundaries

The recommended boundaries extend a distance of five metres either side of the tramway centre line.

History

Robert Archibald Andersen was in 1921 manager of the mill at Deongwar, generally known as Kipper Creek mill or the Cressbrook Creek sawmill.

In 1922 Lars Andersen, owner of Cressbrook Creek sawmill, constructed an incline tramway to bring timber down from the Pine Cliffe plateau to obviate the more damage process of sending logs down a chute. Nearly 300 residents gathered in August 1922 to see logs of more than a 1000 super feet brought down a track 37 chains (three quarters of a kilometre) long with grades described as ranging from 1 in 1 to 1 in 3. It was a three rail tramway with a four rail centre section to enable the counter-balancing empty truck to pass the loaded truck descending.[1]

This operation lasted until 1926 when Andersen sold the winder and tramway to James Campbell and Sons. They installed heavier winding gear to handle larger loads but their operation ended in 1942.[42] At the bottom of the incline was a turntable and a mile of conventional tramway.[3]

The line was much steeper than the incline at the Bunya Mountains, and much of the incline was built with hardwood rails on 3 feet gauge and sleepers 2 feet 6 inches apart. The maximum trolley load was about 1400 super feet. The surface tramline terminated at the sawmill.[4]

The 1931 flood washed out the bridge at the foot of the incline tramline, which James Campbell and Sons had by then taken over but the tramline was hardly damaged.[5]

Site Description and Condition

The tramway is in an advanced state of decay. In 1970 the most substantial remains were found where the incline terminated bridging the creek with some remains of the turntable being found. Only light earthworks were used.

Assessment of Significance

Lars Andersen was an important Queensland sawmiller, particularly in the Brisbane Valley and Bunya Mountains area. The still operating sawmill at Esk formed his headquarters and along with his residence and his tramlines the structureds most strongly associated with him. (Criterion j). Andersen introduced the three/four incline timber tramway, common in Victoria and elsewhere, to Queensland. This was the first one and soon followed by that at Bunya Mountains. The tramways not being built until the 1920s when motor transport was on the horizon, did not have a major impact on sawmilling. The significance of the Cressbrook tramway likes in its rarity (Criterion b). The advanced state of decay means that heritage listing will do little more than prevent acceleration of the decay.

Recommendations

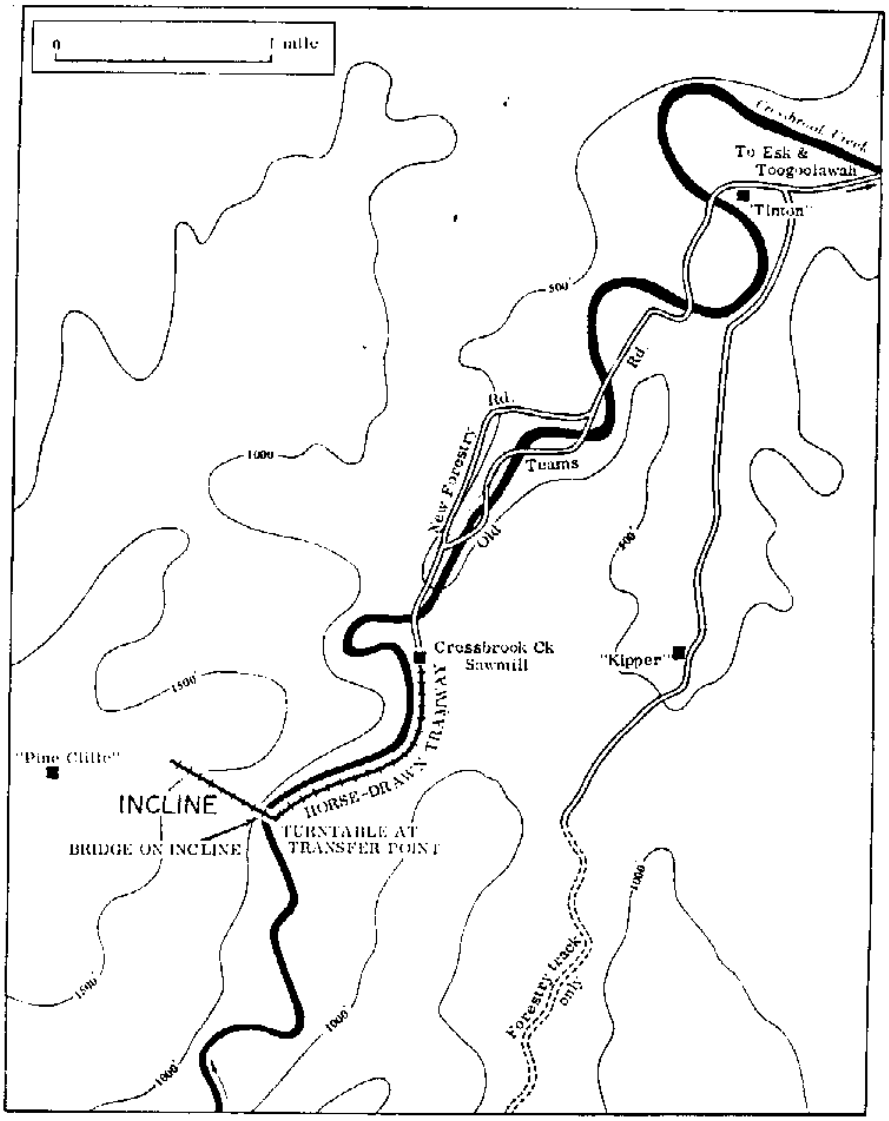
Steps should be taken to conserve what remains of the tramway, particularly the incline tramway and remains of the bridge. The advanced state of decay makes heritage listing questionable.

References

1. BC 30.8.22 p7.
2. Joe Walker, p. 57, the winder described in detail pp. 55-71.
3. Refer also J.D. Kerr and M.M. Philpott, *Queensland Heritage* Vol. 2 (Nov. 1973) pp. 21-9.
4. Joe Walker, pp.55-71.
5. *Esk Record* 21 February 1931.

Remains of bridge at book of Cressbrook Tramway Incline, 1970

Former Sawmill Site, Cressbrook Creek



Cressbrook Creek Tramway