

Camden Residents' Action Group

Incorporated

Camden – Still a Country Town

HERITAGE STUDY

CAMDEN

NEW SOUTH WALES

Documentary Evidence

addressing criteria for statutory heritage listing

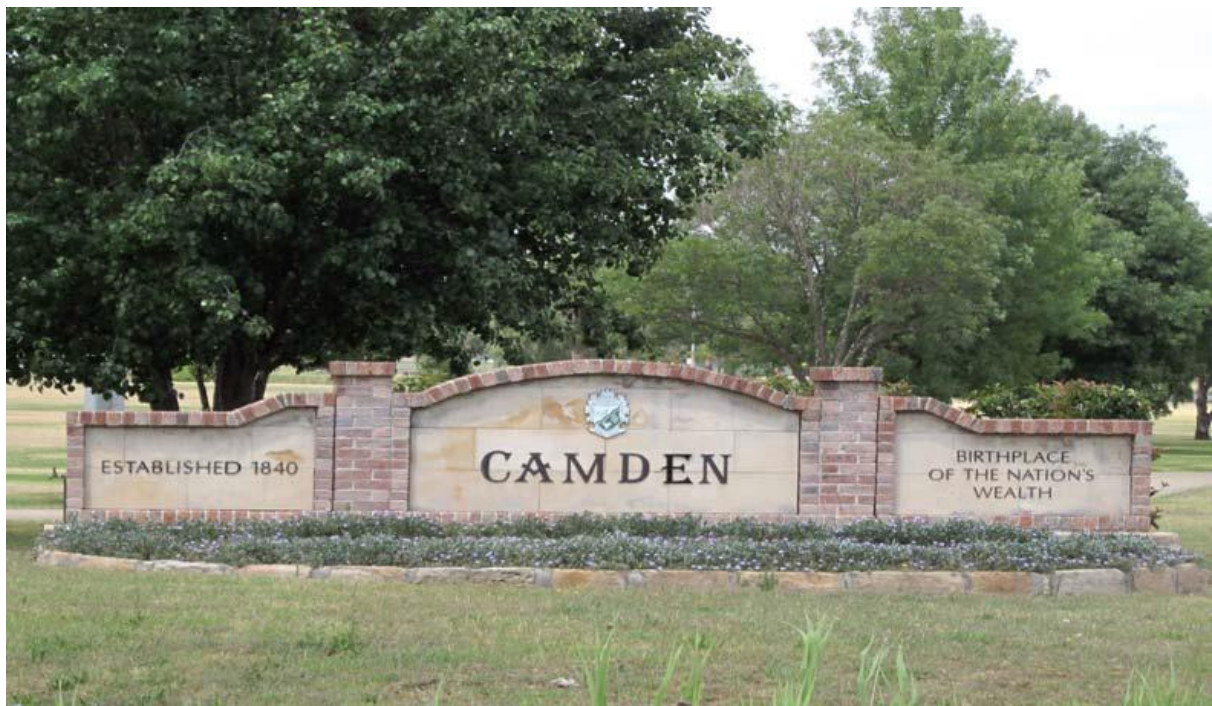


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Photo: Charles Cowell

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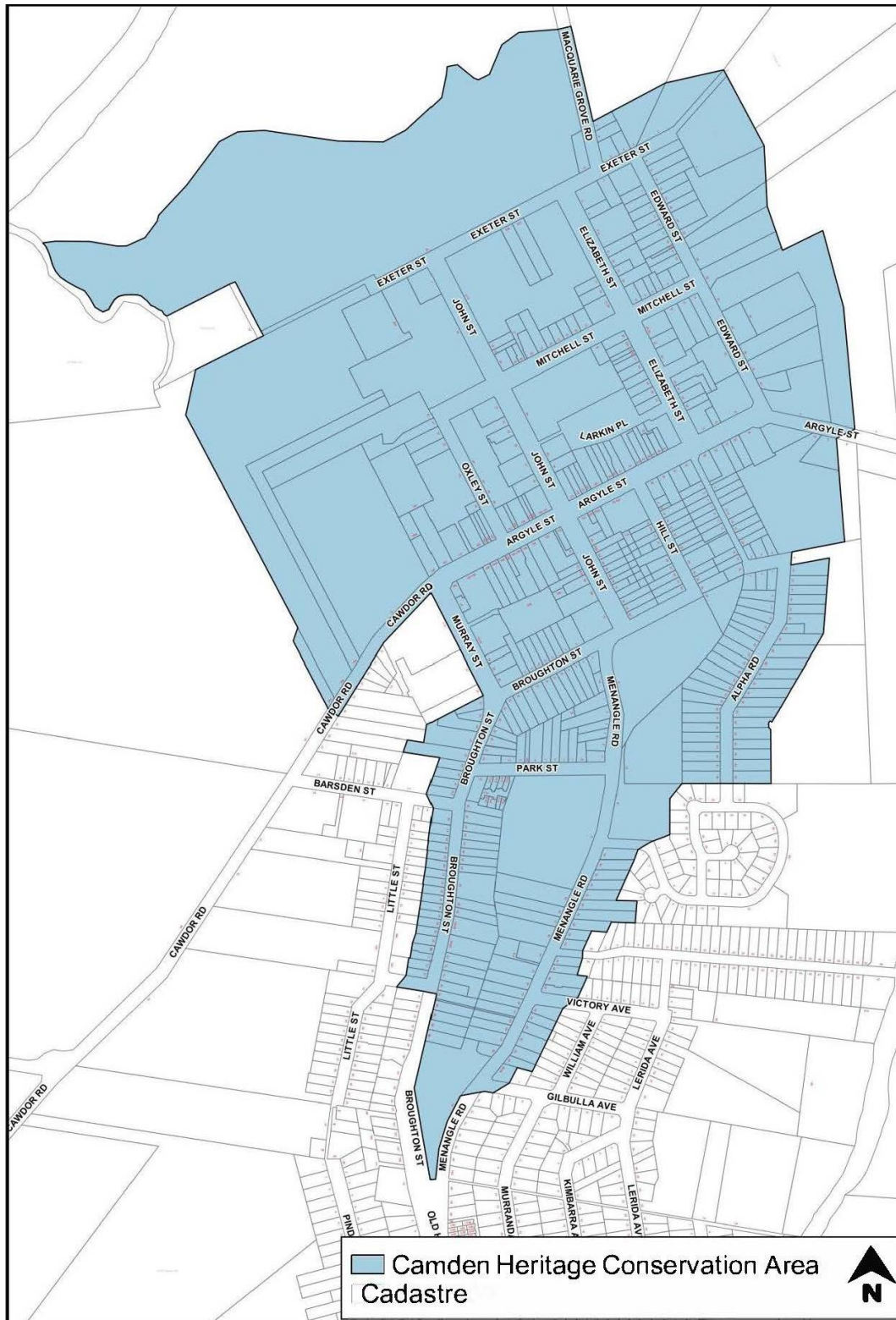
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A. Nominated Place

Camden Heritage Conservation Area (LEP listed)



B. Significance

Statement of State Significance

Camden township is of state heritage significance as a rare example of a privately designed English-style rural village on the Macarthur colonial estate of Camden Park following early town planning principles from 1829 and incorporating religious and civic services. The planning, establishment and development of a village at the ford of the Nepean River, on the Great South Road were of special interest in the colony from the 1830s. Camden village, designed in 1836 by James and William Macarthur and Surveyor General Sir Thomas Mitchell and founded in 1840, remains as an historic asset in its relationship with Sydney and within the older settled areas around the Nepean River. Although it has been subject to continuous social and economic activity throughout the historical development of NSW, its deliberately planned social and spiritual focus of St John's Anglican Church Precinct, its village form, human scale and original grid street pattern remain intact. It continues as an iconic landmark, within a colonial estate landscape formed during early European settlement.

The European history of Camden stems from the first grant of rich Cowpasture land west of the Nepean River, found by the cattle that escaped in 1788 from the First Fleet settlement, to John Macarthur in 1805. The Macarthurs established Camden Park including Belgenny Farm, the oldest rural landscape and group of farm buildings in Australia. Despite encroaching on traditional lands, the Macarthurs maintained a long continuous and protective relationship with the Dharawal people and corroborees comprised of different tribes were held in Camden, despite European incursion into Aboriginal land culminating in the Appin Massacre of 1816.

Camden township is strongly associated with Camden Park, which remains home to Macarthur descendants, and the lives and works and place in NSW's cultural and economic history of the Macarthur family, particularly John and Elizabeth, their sons James and William and James' granddaughter Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow. The town's economic prosperity throughout the European history of NSW owed much to the agricultural activities of the Macarthurs, and their early development of the sheep, wine and horticultural industries in Australia, and dairying from the 1890s. Its social development also owed much to the Macarthurs who, as well as founding the town, have been socially and culturally involved in it, donating land for parks, replicating Camden Park tree plantings and sponsoring buildings and social institutions. This uncommon involvement of one family has shaped Camden's cohesive social fabric, including a great many community and social organisations that have existed over generations.

The town also has a special association with Professor Graeme Clark, the pioneer of the bionic ear, who was born and grew up within its streets. He credits his family's deep roots in the town and its social fabric and open spaces as shaping his character and resilience in pursuing his scientific aims.

Despite Camden's long history and developmental pressures, it presents a rare, highly aesthetic and cultural presence within the landscape with its village form and the spire of St John's Church clearly visible from all directions. It continues to abruptly interface with verdant floodplain of the Nepean River and to demonstrate its rural origins with livestock sale yards and agricultural machinery and supply outlets, the town farm, equestrian centre and Camden Agricultural Show. As well as its original civic and commercial buildings, its housing stock of

Victorian, Edwardian, interwar and post war cottages and their gardens demonstrate a country town development pattern that is uniquely rare so close to Australia's largest city.

Camden township, as the area's cultural and social hub over its long and unique history, has resulted in a special and strong association with a large community of individuals and families who are current local residents or who have history with the town. Many families can trace their history to Camden, such as immigrants sponsored to work on Camden Park or other estates and free settlers. Generations of children have been educated in schools within Camden township. Many people have worshipped and marked life events in the town's churches. Networks and community organisations have always been a feature of everyday life creating a community with shared memories that strongly identifies with the town.

The town is renowned for its intactness and is held in high esteem for its cultural and aesthetic values. Its rarity and its importance in early colonisation attract researchers who continually expand the existing wealth of documentation, which provides a rich source of archival and research material into NSW history and perspectives on Australian Aboriginal and European history.

Many early colonial towns have been overtaken by later development and although may retain substantial buildings of the colonial period, whatever spatial relationship their town centres had with the surrounding land is being or has been lost. Of the principal towns existing in 1849, Camden is extremely rare in that it is the only one that was privately founded and which has survived in its original form. Place names within the town evidence its Macarthur history. Planned according to early 1829 regulations with a distinct street grid, accommodating religious and civic services needed by the area's population, the town demonstrates the principal characteristics of an early country town.

Camden town, endangered by its proximity to growth of Sydney and Badgerys Creek airport, is a unique and irreplaceable heritage asset of high conservation value.

Overview of State Significance

Camden's heritage story begins with the land near the Nepean River being particularly fertile and productive and which prior to European settlement was an excellent source of food and a meeting place for Aboriginal peoples. The escaped cattle from the First Fleet settlement in 1788 found their way to the Nepean River near Camden today, and stayed, indicating by their preference that "the Cowpastures" was possibly the best land yet found in the colony. John Macarthur, an officer in the NSW Corps, in particular saw its potential. But the Governors, in order to maintain a food source for the struggling colony, decreed that settlement on the Cowpastures beyond the boundary of the Nepean River was prohibited to protect the wild cattle.

Being exiled to England in 1801 after a duel John Macarthur took wool samples from his experimental flock in Parramatta and successfully lobbied the Colonial Secretary, Lord Camden, for a large land grant in the Cowpastures to pursue his entrepreneurial work in producing fine wool to meet high British demand, particularly due to the Napoleonic wars. John Macarthur took up 5000 acres in what was to become known as Camden Park in 1805 and built a slab hut, the first European dwelling west of the Nepean. Other large land grants followed on the east side of the river and a rural hegemony of landed gentry estates using convict labour developed, producing the Loudon style landscape still apparent around Camden today. Conflict with the Aboriginal people, the traditional owners, was caused by encroachment on their lands and food sources, culminating in the Appin massacre of 1816.

John and Elizabeth Macarthur and their sons, James and William, developed Camden Park (Belgenny Farm and Camden Park Estate), which forms the oldest, intact, rural landscape and group of farm buildings in Australia, into not only the “mother sheep station of the Commonwealth” but a great experimental farm. Due to repercussions for his part in the 1808 Rum Rebellion, John Macarthur left for England in 1809 and returned in 1817 after using his political influence to overturn an order for his arrest in New South Wales. He brought back many vine cuttings from Europe to Camden and so established the first commercial vineyard in the colony. The Macarthur family were instrumental and influential in the development of Australia’s agricultural, pastoral, horticultural and viticultural industries.

In 1835 James and William Macarthur, after their father's death in 1834, supported the idea of a private town on Camden Park in the vicinity of Cowpasture Bridge on the Great South Road as had been petitioned for by settlers due to policing problems in 1830. The planning, establishment and development of Camden village were of special interest in the colony and it remains as a heritage asset in its relationship with Sydney and its position within the older settled areas. Camden township was shaped from its inception by the Nepean River and its location on the Great South Road, which have contributed to its strong historical connections to early life in the colony.

The Macarthurs cleared 20 acres of land in 1835 for the town foundations, planning the hill-top location of St John's Church to be symbolically highly picturesque and commanding. In 1836, the Surveyor-General drew up the street plan using Darling’s 1829 regulations. The grid pattern remains intact today, with two main streets crossing near the centre of a rectangle, one being Argyle Street for commerce and the other, John Street providing a vista leading to the proposed St John's Church crowning the hilltop. Camden's heritage resonates in its street and place names. It is a rare Australian town planned in the pre-gold-rush period which survives in its original layout.

Camden is an extant rare original town demonstrating representative characteristics of an English village form imported into a land of traditional owners, during early European settlement. The township is prominent through its juxtaposition with the surrounding floodplain, presenting an Arcadian profile with its small-scale character emphasised by the landmark spire of St John's, which dominates the landscape from all directions. It is unusual that it has retained its original village form despite its long history and being close to Sydney's developmental pressures.

The town is strongly associated with the Macarthur family and remains as a testament to their original Arcadian vision. The Macarthurs had a highly developed sense of landscape aesthetic and borrowed heavily on the traditions of the English Landscape School and Romanticism. Importantly, the Macarthur family in many cases replicated in the Camden township the unique plantings established at Camden Park, which included both newly discovered native trees as well as introduced species. The Macarthur family were socially dominant and very involved with the town, donating land for parks, replicating Camden Park tree plantings, sponsoring buildings and social institutions, and benevolently presiding over town life at least until the 1950s.

The Camden aesthetic is fundamental to Camden's identity and sense of place. The high visual and aesthetic landscape quality of Camden is the result of a unique combination of natural and cultural heritage. The township's idyllic quality is emphasised by the surrounding landscapes and hill tops influenced by Loudon's Gardenesque principles set within the historic pattern of the colonial estates of Camden's "gentry". The human-scale of the town, combined with its visually detached built forms screened by exotic and native vegetation, with the focus of St John's Church

and its spire rising clearly visible from the verdant floodplain of the Nepean, presents an inviting profile of rare character in Australia. The picturesque rural landscapes that surround Camden tell the story of the Cowpasture patriarchs and Australia's farming heritage, as does the town itself which interfaces abruptly on three sides of the street grid with rural open land including the town farm, and contains livestock sale yards, the old Macarthur milk depot building and agricultural outlets.

From a national historical point of view, the evolution of town planning in NSW and in Australia, Camden can be shown to demonstrate the main characteristics of a colonial private village that was planned according to the first town planning regulations in Australia, planned to contain the religious and civic services needed by the area's population, particularly that of Camden Park, and also planned to be an aesthetic icon within the cultural landscape.

Adjacent to the Camden township is the highly significant Kings Bush, now classified as Eucalypt River Flat Forest which is state listed as an endangered ecological community. This forest was originally part of the St John's Church estate, and intergrades into Cumberland Plain Woodland (critically endangered ecological community). The rarity of these NSW vegetation types is recognised at the state level, and in the view of the NSW Scientific Committee both River Flat Eucalypt Forest and Cumberland Plain Woodland are 'likely to become extinct in nature in New South Wales unless the circumstances and factors threatening its survival or evolutionary development cease to operate'. There would be very few locations in NSW that have two good conditioned, listed endangered ecological communities in such close proximity to a central heritage precinct.

Today, Camden's sense of place is evidenced by features which are esteemed by the community for their cultural values and that contribute to the community's sense of identity such as the river landscape and its remnant endangered vegetation, the human scale village townscape set within the floodplain and its abrupt interface with rural surrounds as well heritage buildings, wide leafy streets, Macarthur Park, the iconic socially significant St John's church, the town farm, sale yards and rural outlets, Camden Museum, library, schools and a great many community and social organisations that have existed over generations. Events such as the Camden Show, Light Up Camden and commemorations of the historic relations of our defence forces with Camden are part of the cultural fabric of the town's community.

The old town is an important symbol of a deep and long-standing community connectedness to the area. The Township has cultural and spiritual value to many individuals and families who have lived for generations in Camden. Many immigrant families who had settled on estates as tenant farmers started businesses in the village. Long lived families in Camden are often concerned to trace their early connections to the landed estates, and research has been undertaken to record the workers on Camden Park and nearby Brownlow Hill.

The story of early European settlement in the Camden area is one of a unique connection between estates and town, with the Macarthurs of Camden Park setting high moral principles, a benevolent engagement with the local community and involvement and active participation in both local and wider issues.

The town's prosperity and employment opportunities owed much to the Macarthur agricultural activities, especially innovative dairying from the 1890s which was introduced by James Macarthur's daughter Elizabeth. The founding Macarthurs influenced the town in ways that have the potential to contribute to an understanding, not available elsewhere, of human adaptation to new opportunities in a different land and climactic conditions.

From the beginning the role of women has been central to the Macarthur story and from farm management they extended their skills to charitable and social development and provided leadership to Camden women to take up opportunities beyond rural life. The town, which is renowned for its cohesive spirit, takes pride in its high number of around 250 community groups, which continue the Macarthur legacy of social contribution. Connectedness, sense of place and the value that the community place on the township and surrounds is evidenced by the many photos and reminiscences that are shared within the community on social media as well as Camden's local paper providing history notes through its "Back Then" series and Camden Library providing an ongoing, on-line archival record of Camden images. Inarguably the Camden community has a special association and very strongly identifies with Camden town and its sense of place. It is a special association rarely displayed so consistently in one community.

Camden township is unique because of its physical features, landscape setting, its cohesive community and its long and important history in the foundation of NSW and Australia. Camden's heritage, historic environment and location distinguish it, enrich its character and influence how people identify and connect with it. It continues to have a strong and special association with its community that is bound up with people's sense of self, their local knowledge, folklore and family connectedness and human experiences over generations.

Visitors likewise see it as a different and unique place, one that has retained its original aesthetics and is largely intact although it has experienced continuous social and economic activity through the historical phases of NSW to present times. Camden continues to have a reputation as a picturesque historic and rural town, with high tourist potential being so close to Sydney.

Camden township is an important benchmark site because research indicates that it is the only extant town of private origin in NSW, and possibly Australia. Camden is a town that was not influenced by the gold rush and has importantly retained its colonial form and presents a culture of long-lived connections that today remains influenced by its patriarchal past and pastoral and agricultural origins.

The wealth of writings about Camden's place in colonial history and the work of Camden's current active community of researchers has produced an ever-expanding archive of material that can be mined to assist in answering research questions about Camden, NSW and Australian history. Archaeologically Camden is significant because of its ability to demonstrate a way of life, community functions, customs dating back to its origins on Camden Park and extant agricultural features and processes of particular interest. Also, archaeologically Camden, given its history contains physical remnants of the past with human activity near the Nepean crossing and on its surrounding fertile soils being long and more intense than many places. Aboriginal artefacts found near the Nepean River, housed in the Camden Museum indicate that the town site would also contain artefacts. Material evidence of former buildings, structures and works could also provide evidence of prior occupations and add to an understanding of the history and way of life of the colony.

Camden, a beloved and valued township, its entrenched culture developed over generations and its people's strong sense of place present an important societal reference point of how a community responds when it is subject to pressures of current and future development and change in its settled way of life. Active citizenship and societal organisations have been entrenched in the political process in Camden from its foundation, beginning with the Macarthur family who were well educated, philanthropic and who presided over the township as their personal community. These

beginnings have led through the generations to a strong and renowned social cohesiveness in Camden.

The community's strong sense of place is evidenced by its solidarity and outrage when its values are threatened. The imminent sense of loss is profound when outsiders, with no understanding of long-lived connections and culture and who do not listen to the community, try to enforce change on the town.

Camden Township although associated with significant continuous social and economic activity and change through the historical phases of NSW from 1836 to present times is a rare example of an extant private town, designed using early town planning principles from 1829, that has remained intact since its origins between 1836 and 1841. Interest in who we are, where we have come from and how we learn from our history are fundamentally important in this fast-changing world. Camden township is the focus of an inherited, rich narrative from colonial times that helps define our present and inform our future.

Many colonial town centres have been completely rearranged by later planning and although towns close to Sydney such as Windsor, Campbelltown and Penrith retain substantial buildings of the colonial period, whatever spatial relationship their town centres had with the surrounding land is being or has been developed away. Short sightedness today could destroy Camden, and should this happen there will be no intact colonial towns as old or as close to Sydney remaining as a window into Australia's earliest European history.

The present esteem in which Camden is held and its special heritage qualities demand a careful balance between necessary development and the perpetuation of the town's unique and treasured historical character. The town, particularly being so close to Sydney, can establish a benchmark case of how much local and state governments respect the ideals of settled communities of citizens and our heritage, which has long term societal value and economic value in tourism, when faced with pressure from developers seeking short term gains.

As demonstrated in this Study, the town demonstrates heritage significance under all NSW heritage assessment criteria.

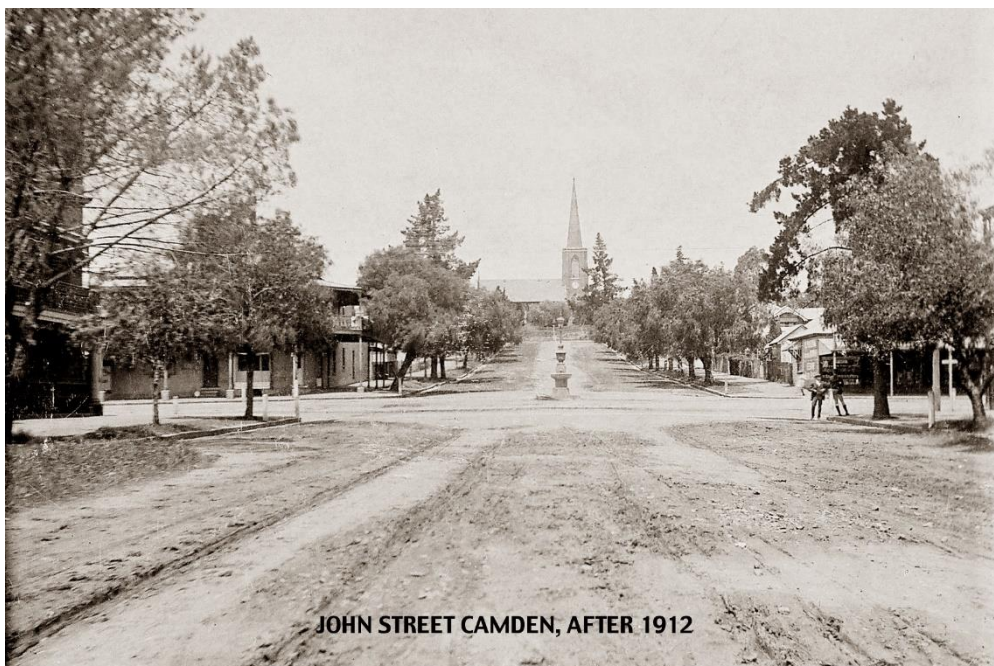


Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

Eminent Testimonials on Heritage Significance of Camden Township

Emeritus Professor Alan Atkinson University of Sydney



13 April 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I have been asked to say something about the importance of the original town of Camden from a heritage point of view.

The town plan of Camden was drawn up in 1836. Though the town was a private foundation, the plan came from the office of the Surveyor-General, who was the explorer Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell. It was therefore a part of Mitchell's complex design for the entire colony of New South Wales, which included a great variety of beautifully designed towns and villages, carefully interconnected.

Adelaide, in South Australia, is famous for its town-plan, which dates from 1837, but Mitchell's planning was more ambitious and more intricate. Camden is one of the best preserved aspects of it. Camden was, of course, designed with the understanding that its buildings would not go beyond two or three floors, which was the normal limit for country towns in that period. From a visual point of view, the dimensions on the ground are tied to that presumed height. The relationship between horizontal and vertical determines the visual effect, and also the charm, of such country villages – and is no less important for the fact that it is unconscious.

Equally important is its positioning within a particular landscape. Mitchell, as a geographer and explorer, was highly sensitive to the human and natural dimensions of landscape, and in that respect Camden is a small masterpiece.

Camden was also a creation of the Macarthur family, and as such it was the home of an engineered community, and the most successful such community during that period in colonial Australia. The sense of community was integral with the physical layout, and to some extent still is.

From a historical and heritage point of view then, Camden is a profoundly important place. For some, its importance may be hard to appreciate at a casual glance. It is the sort of place which cannot be preserved, for its present inhabitants, for tourists and for the future, without a good deal of dedication, imagination, expertise and ongoing care.

Emeritus Professor Alan Atkinson MA, MEd, DLitt, PhD, FAHA, FRAHS
Author of *Camden: Farm and Village Life in Early New South Wales*

Associate Professor Grace Karskens FAHA University of NSW

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School of Humanities and Languages

11 June 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am writing to express my strong support for the Camden Residents Action Group's nomination of the town of Camden for State Heritage listing.

I am a historian specialising in Australia's early colonial period, particularly the history of the Cumberland Plain and the Sydney region. A constant theme of my work is the legacy of the past in the present and historical consciousness of place.

It is clear to me that, given the rapid expansion of Sydney over the past sixty years especially, Camden is an astonishingly intact survival of early colonial Australia. And it is not just a collection of historic buildings, but a living, working place with a strong sense of community and identity.

Camden and its surrounding rural landscape clearly have national as well as state significance because of their links with vital developments in the early colony, including foundational contacts between Aboriginal people and settlers, ongoing Aboriginal history, early breakthroughs in the cattle industry, the strong association with the illustrious, and at times infamous, Macarthur family and the wool industry, and the way this landscape – which you can still see today – was so much admired by settlers. The town itself is beautiful. It remains in its 1836 planned form and is also important for its early history as a private town. In addition, there are rare surviving stands of Cumberland Plain Woodland and of endangered River Flat Forest.

Camden is precious. Its historic, natural, social and aesthetic significance should be acknowledged and protected from unsympathetic development.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Grace Karskens', written over a light blue rectangular background.

Emeritus Professor Grace Karskens FAHA FAASS FRSN

*Dr Ian Willis Historian and Scholar***Dr Ian Willis OAM****Historian and Independent Scholar**

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16 June 2023

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing to offer my support for the Camden Resident's Action Group nomination of the Camden town centre for State Heritage Listing.

I am a historian specialising in local studies with a particular interest in the Camden District's history and the Sydney region's Cumberland Plain. A recurring theme of my research is place and identity.

Since the Second World War, the movement of Sydney's rural-urban fringe across the Cumberland Plain has absorbed some former country towns. In recent years Sydney's urban sprawl has encroached on Camden's fringe and threatened its sense of place. The response of the Camden community, particularly in the last fifteen years, has been to defend its rural heritage and village-like nature.

The Camden town centre is essentially unchanged in form and structure from its 19th-century origins as a privately developed village by the Macarthur family. Combined with Edwardian and Inter-war growth and infill, the town centre has amazingly retained its integrity and rural aesthetic, particularly given its location on the Nepean River floodplain.

Camden's aesthetic was noted in publications as early as the 1880s and re-enforced by tourist journalism of the Inter-war period, which championed its Englishness and village nature. These characteristics, surprising to some, are still identifiable and have shaped the community's sense of place and identity.

Fortunately, the Camden town centre has not yet been subject to development from Sydney's urban growth, which has changed its character. It would be regrettable if unsympathetic changes were allowed to radically alter the town centre's morphology.

I commend community efforts that have tried to protect the rare combination of these features, contributing to New South Wales's heritage.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Ian Willis OAM



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

15 April 2016

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing to offer my support for the Camden Resident's Action Group nomination of the Camden town centre for State Heritage Listing.

I am a historian specialising in local studies with a particular interest in the history of the Camden District and the Cumberland Plain of the Sydney region. A recurring theme of my research is place and identity.

Since the Second World War the movement of Sydney's rural-urban fringe across the Cumberland Plain has absorbed a number of former country towns. In recent years Sydney's urban sprawl has encroached on Camden's fringe and threatened its sense of place. The response of the Camden community, particularly in the last fifteen years, has been to defend its rural heritage and the village like nature.

The Camden town centre is essentially unchanged in form and structure from its 19th century origins as a privately developed village by the Macarthur family. Combined with Edwardian and Inter-war growth and infill the town centre has amazingly retained its integrity and rural aesthetic, particularly given its location on the Nepean River floodplain.

Camden's aesthetic was noted in publications as early the 1880s, and re-enforced by tourist journalism of the Inter-war period which championed its Englishness and village nature. These characteristics, surprising to some, are still identifiable and have shaped the community's sense of place and identity.

It is fortunate that the Camdentown centre has not yet been subject to development from Sydney's urban growth that has changed its character. It would be regrettable if unsympathetic changes were allowed to radically alter the morphology of the town centre. I commend community efforts that have tried to protect the rare combination of these features, which I feel make an important contribution to New South Wales heritage.

Yours sincerely



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John Wrigley OAM Camden Historian

**John Wrigley OAM
Camden Historian**

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Camden NSW 2570

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am writing to express my support for the nomination by the Camden Residents' Action Group for the historic town of Camden as an item of State Heritage Significance. I believe that the remarkably intact nature of the colonial town established by the Macarthur family warrants its more significant protection by such a declaration. Camden's town centre has distinctive heritage significance and it is important we take steps to retain the town centre's character. State heritage listing would ensure its unique historical development is retained and protected into the future.

Since 1979 I have been actively involved in heritage protection for the town of Camden through the work of the Camden Residents' Action Group and the Camden Historical Society. I am a former President and a current Vice President of the Camden Historical Society.

As part of this activity, I have been either the author or co-author or editor of the following publications:

A History of Camden 1980

Pioneers of Camden 1981

Historic Buildings of Camden 1983

Camden Interim Heritage Study 1985

Camden Characters 1990

The Best of Back Then 2007, which contains 78 published newspaper articles on the history of Camden and its people. I have written about 150 such newspaper articles.

For 30 years I have been the archivist at Camden Park House as a volunteer for the Macarthur-Stanham family.

The heritage values of the historic towns are under increasing attack from various insensitive development proposals which pay scant regard to guideline standards. Current proposals to water down the existing heritage planning documents are a threat to the future survival of this beautiful Colonial-Edwardian rural town. Camden is an outstanding gem surrounded by large-scale, often crass modernisation and should be valued for what it is, a rare gem.

John Wrigley OAM
Local Historian
6 June, 2023

Camden Historical Society



Camden Historical Society Inc.

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8 November 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: Nomination of Camden Town Centre for State Heritage Listing

This letter is to support the request by the Camden Residents' Action Group and others for a Nomination of State Heritage Listing to protect the Camden Heritage Conservation Area.

Formed in 1957, Camden Historical Society is instrumental in keeping history alive in the Camden district and is responsible for the preservation and display of this heritage through the Camden Museum. Our volunteers actively work to preserve, record, and celebrate Camden's history, by their work in the Museum, the production of publications and journals which give an insight into the rich history of the area, and by advocacy on heritage matters.

Camden town centre is a small and well-defined heritage-based area within a larger council area undergoing rapid development. Camden township is the only extant town of private origin in NSW, and it is still associated with its founders, the Macarthur family who remain at Camden Park, part of the original Camden Park estate on which Camden was founded. There are clear connections to the Macarthur family throughout the township. Despite the surrounding development the town centre has amazingly retained its integrity and rural aesthetic, and its connection with the surrounding Nepean River floodplain and remnant Cumberland Plain Woodland.

Camden is located at an important intersection between three Aboriginal peoples - the Dharawal, the Dharug, and the Gundungurra - and their connections with early settlers are an important part of its history.

There are prominent connections between the Macarthur family and early colonial development, and the phases of development of the rural township are preserved in its buildings, places, and spaces. The nature of the original township is remarkably intact. The structure of the planned township and the functions of its various areas are unchanged in form and clearly evident, as are the layers representing the living history of the years since its foundation.

The community and visitors highly value the township of Camden, and Camden has a long history of community involvement in its conservation.

Locals express their strong support for preservation of its heritage in council surveys and reports, submissions to council, on social media, and at events. Locals and visitors attending Camden Museum and our guided walking tours frequently tell us of their interest in Camden's history, and their wish that Camden's unique country town and rural heritage be celebrated and preserved.

Camden township is facing considerable impact from the pressures of development. Established planning guidelines within the LEP and DCP designed to protect local heritage have not prevented inappropriate development and the removal of contributory buildings and fabric. Unsympathetic changes are threatening the unique and precious history of the Camden Heritage Conservation Area.

State Heritage listing would ensure that the remarkable legacy which has been preserved by generations of Camden locals will be there for future generations to appreciate, so they can see for themselves the development of Camden from its early colonial beginnings to a thriving country town.

We commend and fully support the efforts of Camden Residents' Action Group in nominating Camden Township for State Heritage Listing.

Yours sincerely,

Rene Rem
Hon. Secretary
Camden Historical Society

Comparisons

Research into other early towns in NSW and associated analysis and comparisons of elements of significance reveals that Camden is of State and National significance. Please also see the table in Criterion f that provides an analysis of *Principal Towns in 1849 of present-day NSW* for more detail on how townships compare.

Elements of the significance of Camden township for comparison

Location

During the first few decades of the British penal and military period precedence was given to the functional and practical requirements of colonisation of the distant new territory. Town planning was a secondary concern.

By the end of the 1820s, settlement in NSW was expanding to the Hunter Valley in the north-west and beyond into the Liverpool Plains, to the Illawarra in the south, to Wellington in the west and as far as the Murrumbidgee to the south-west. In 1829, intending to halt the spread of the colony too far from Sydney, Governor Darling reviewed the office of the new Surveyor-General, Thomas Mitchell and extended the limits of location of NSW settlement to an area defined as the Nineteen Counties. The limits of location extended in the north to Kempsey (1836) to Wellington (gazetted in 1846) in the West and in the south to Batemans Bay (1885) (cedar-getters were in the district as early as the 1820s). However, it was impossible to prevent farmers allowing their livestock beyond the limits. In 1841 Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell drew attention to the poor quality of the land remaining in the settled districts, which made squatting beyond the boundaries attractive (Jeans 1972). Despite the uncertainty of land tenure, squatters ran large numbers of sheep and cattle beyond the limits and from 1836 legislation was passed to legalise squatting with grazing rights or leases.

Much of the Cumberland Plain is now suburbanised which has left little remnant within easy distance of Australia's largest city to exemplify the colonial past and the agricultural way of life (Kass 2005 pp. 11, 32). The exception is **Camden** (1836) which is described as the best-preserved town on the Cumberland Plain (Willis 2008a). Throughout the history of NSW Camden has retained its original village form, nestled within the Nepean River floodplain, adjoining farmlands and Loudon inspired cultural landscapes. Many of the grand houses and landscapes of the colonial estates including Camden Park (1805/1835), that looked to Camden town as the area's social, cultural and economic centre sit within the rural surrounds of the township, such as Brownlow Hill (1828), Denbigh (1822), Camelot (1888), Studley Park (c1870s), Wivenhoe (c1837) and Kirkham Stables (1816).

No other historic and working country town is situated so close to Sydney and has also retained its immediate interface with its rural surrounds.

Braidwood, which features in the Australian film "The Year my Voice Broke" and is understood to be currently the only a state heritage listed townscape in New South Wales, has also importantly retained its historical relationship with its rural surroundings, including 'Jillamatong', the brooding hill adjacent to the town. However, Braidwood does not have a continuous connection to a founding pioneering family and is 285 kms from Sydney, while Camden is less than 70 kms.

Earliness

Few towns were planned and laid out before 1830. In 1829 Governor Darling in the interests of potential town dwellers set out the first comprehensive set of Town Planning Regulations in the colony. The essential elements of an officially determined cultural landscape were beginning to form (Jeans 1972 p. 114).

For those towns established before this time no regulation required attention to town planning principles such as the civic benefits of public buildings, roads, and services and town aesthetics.

Although public uses could be identified in towns of Macquarie's time such as Windsor (1796/1810), Richmond (1810) and Liverpool (1810/1819), the Darling Regulations, modelled on a basic grid form, required sites to be specifically marked out for public and civic purposes. Existing early towns were classified according to a hierarchy: the sea ports included Sydney, Newcastle (1804) and Port Macquarie (a penal settlement, 1824/1831); towns at the head of river navigation included Parramatta (1790), Liverpool (1810/1819), and Maitland (1827); towns without the advantage of a stream of fresh water included Campbell Town (1820), Castlereagh (1810), Pitt Town (1810), and Wilberforce (1810).

The Hawkesbury and Penrith areas are historically significant, particularly the Macquarie Towns of Windsor, Richmond, Pitt Town, Wilberforce, and Castlereagh and twin towns of Mulgoa and Wallacia in the Mulgoa Valley.

Windsor is today the administrative centre of the Hawkesbury region. Modern development has encroached on the town but a substantial number of its historic buildings are still standing. The Georgian colonial courthouse (1822) and St Matthew's Church of England (1817-21) were designed by ex-convict architect Francis Greenway. The buildings of both the church and the rectory (1825) are connected with William Cox, who had earlier constructed the first road across the Blue Mountains. Richmond expanded during the mid-1800s due to its location at the intersection of two major stock routes and today is a business centre for the surrounding agricultural district. Postal services to Richmond began operating around 1829 and the first official office opened in 1844. A number of early private residences remain, *Bowman Cottage* (c1815) and *Clear Oaks* homestead which is thought to pre-date 1819. The Hawkesbury Agricultural College was established at its current site in 1896. Aviation experiments were conducted as early as the 1910s and the aviation school that opened in 1916 became an RAAF base in 1927 and is now Australia's oldest Air Force base.

The *Slab Barn Study 2010* (Edds 2010) identified many slab barns and outbuildings as potentially the earliest rural timber structures remaining in Australia, many located from Freemans Reach along the Hawkesbury River to the Macquarie Towns of Pitt Town and Wilberforce. Pitt Town is today a rural village (used as the setting of 'Wandin Valley' in the long-running television series 'A Country Practice'). It was moved to its present location in 1815 but grew slowly being then a considerable distance from the holdings of farmers on the rich river flats of Hawkesbury River. Pitt Town Bottoms was the location of the first settlements in the district and retains historic slab buildings. The Hawkesbury Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012 (Schedule 5) lists many buildings and sites of heritage significance, including two conservation areas listed as locally significant, Pitt Town (Map HER 008C) and St Albans (Map HER 011) and two in Windsor listed as State significant, North Street Conservation Area (which takes in both sides of North Street between its intersections with Arndell and Palmer Streets) and Thompson Square (one of the oldest public squares in Australia with buildings built between 1815 and 1880).

Wilberforce is today home to the Australian Pioneer Village, which incorporates Rose Cottage (1811-16), the oldest timber house in Australia still standing on its original site.

The Penrith LEP 2010 (Schedule 5) lists the site of the Macquarie town of Castlereagh as a locally significant archaeological site. Castlereagh is today a suburb in Penrith of surviving farmhouses, outbuildings, churches and cemeteries. *Hadley Park* (c.1806), one of the earliest known European buildings is located between what is now Castlereagh Road and the Nepean River.

The village of St. Albans was surveyed in 1837 as "McDonald" and in 1841 gazetted under the name of St. Albans. It is situated further than the Macquarie towns from Sydney (94 kilometres north west of the CBD) on the banks of the Macdonald River, a branch off the much larger Hawkesbury River. St Albans has been by-passed over time by all the major road and rail routes and associated development pressures. It remains as a village of small population (305 at the time of the 2011 census). As such it has few elements in common with Camden.

The environmental and heritage significance of the Mulgoa Valley which, like Camden, is surrounded by the backdrop of the Nepean River and Blue Mountains is recognised in precinct E9 of Penrith Development Control Plan (DCP) 2014. The Mulgoa Valley was home to members of the William Cox family who settled there and Cox's Cottage (c1811), and their colonial estates Fernhill (c 1845) and Glenmore (c1825) are state heritage listed.

The twin villages of Mulgoa and Wallacia today are much smaller than Camden and are not of comparable origins.

None of the towns referred to above are directly comparable to Camden township which was privately designed by the Macarthur family on their estate, Camden Park at the gateway to the historic Cowpastures on the Nepean River, nor have any had their social fabric influenced by one family over generations.

Unlike these earlier towns Camden was planned to Darling's 1829 regulations, with two main streets crossing near the centre of a rectangle, one being Argyle Street for commerce and the other, John Street providing a vista leading to the proposed St John's Church, which was to crown the hilltop. Camden was designed from the beginning to have a range of civic purposes and aesthetic appeal with St John's Church providing a symbolic focus for the community.

Private town origins

Camden town retains the original grid pattern marked out by the Macarthur brothers with the help of Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell in 1836. Camden is one of few Australian towns planned in the pre-gold-rush period which survives in its original layout. The town's proximity to the river and the flood plain was carefully ordered to provide access for transport, some protection from floods and a connection with the productive areas around the town. The exceptional influence of the well-educated and high-minded Macarthurs in founding Camden as a private town using aesthetic vistas and symbolism gave the planning process a degree of social sophistication rarely found in Australia.

Comparatively Enoch Rudder purchased land in 1836 and had riverside blocks surveyed for a private town but the collapse of red cedar prices in the early 1840s nearly led to its failure; in 1854 a government town was surveyed at West Kempsey and Rudder's town became known as East Kempsey. Other early towns much further from Sydney and not founded privately were Yass (1837), a rest stop for travellers enroute from Sydney to Melbourne and Gundagai (1840) the appointed crossing of the Murrumbidgee River, both servicing prime agricultural regions. Armidale (1839) was established to provide a market and administration for the region's farms, and grew rapidly after the discovery of gold in the area in the 1850s.

No other town compares on the private town criterion because no other private town established before 1849 and before the gold rush period, is extant (Proudfoot 1996). Camden's early buildings are largely preserved and mainly function as originally intended. **Camden township presents a rare and possibly unique village setting given the history of its private town origins.**

Mining

Many colonial towns were established or grew due to the gold rushes of the 1850s or experienced significant alteration and development due to other mining.

Gold rush

The gold rushes of the 1850s had a very significant impact on immigration numbers, on the Australian economy, and the development of towns which grew quickly at Sofala, Hill End, Ophir, Forbes and Lambing Flat. The number of new arrivals to Australia was greater than the number of convicts who had been transported in the previous seventy years. The total population trebled from 430,000 in 1851 to 1.7 million in 1871.

Camden and Bathurst have a similar pastoral history, but Camden was not directly affected by the gold rushes of the 1850s. Although Bathurst is older, the official town planned in 1833, the discovery of payable gold in 1851 by Edward Hargraves meant that by the 1860s it was a booming first gold centre of Australia. Gold was transported from the nearby gold fields at Ophir and Hill End to Bathurst then on to Sydney.

Other mining

Many other regional areas across NSW were later established or grew through mining for instance Wollongong (1834) in the south, Lithgow (1869, first industrial town) and Orange (1829) on the western edge of the Blue Mountains, Gunnedah on the Liverpool Plains, and Muswellbrook and Cessnock in the Hunter Valley. Singleton in the Hunter Valley, for example, was first settled in the 1820s, but grew when the first mine opened in 1860, ultimately becoming its biggest service town.

Camden in the post World War II period experienced economic stimulus from Burragorang Valley coal mining, which put pressure on housing and additional housing was constructed, within what was to become in 2010 the (local) Conservation area, in Edward Street and Alpha Road and Chellaston and Little Streets on its edges. However, the mines were in remote areas some distance away and the town's character, rural amenity and village profile were not affected.

Railway Connection

From the late 1850s railways began to provide an efficient means of land transport. Between 1855 and 1857 Sydney's CBD was connected by rail with Parramatta and Liverpool. Early economic wealth was largely generated from pastoralism and railway expansion connecting Sydney to inland settlements across the Blue Mountains to Bathurst and across the Southern Highlands to Goulburn, provided transport of freight to markets. Inland settlements could expand their economies beyond high value-for-weight products like wool. Towns were shaped depending on whether the railway bypassed them or linked them with the wider world, although generally, only connected larger towns such as Goulburn (an early government town, now an inland city, was originally surveyed in 1828 and moved to its present site in 1833), Bathurst, Dubbo and Tamworth, experienced significant longer-term boosts to their economies.

The first section of the Main North line was built from the port of Newcastle to Maitland (1857) and extended to Singleton (1863) through to Tamworth (1878) and Armidale (1888).

The main western line to Parramatta was extended to Penrith (1863) then crossed the Blue Mountains between 1867 and 1869 reaching Blayney and Bathurst in 1876, and Orange (1877) and extended on to Wellington (1880) and Dubbo (1881). Beyond Dubbo, the railway opened up new land to European settlement, reaching Narromine and Nyngan (1883) and Bourke (1885) and was more directly responsible for the development of outback townships (McKillop 2009).

The south line to Liverpool extended to Campbelltown (1858), Picton (1863), Mittagong (1867), Marulan (1868) reaching Goulburn in 1869, and was extended on to Yass Junction (1876) reaching Wagga Wagga and Albury in 1881, bypassing Camden.

Although close to Sydney, Camden was not connected by a spur line to the main railway at Campbelltown until 1882. Only from this significantly later time were opportunities available at Camden to use the steam engine "Pansy" to expand businesses using the more efficient railway.

Agricultural heritage

Camden's rural past is evidenced within or at the very edge of its original and intact 1836 street plan. Camden is unusual in the abruptness with which it opens into farmland, now community spaces, at the end of Mitchell Street and along Exeter and Argyle Streets with Onslow Park (Camden Show Ground), the Bicentennial Park (an old dairy farm) and equestrian centre and the Camden Town Farm (another old dairy farm). Macarthurs' old Camden Vale milk factory is on the corner of Argyle and Edward Streets and the heritage listed Camden saleyards and farming supply outlets are in Edward Street. The picturesque rural landscapes that surround Camden tell the story of Australia's farming heritage, most recently dairying. There are no other towns known to exhibit this immediate interface with its farming history and none so close to Sydney that are acknowledged as working country towns.

Dairying

In 1805 Dr John Harris built Sydney's first commercial dairy in what's now inner-suburban Ultimo, while the Van Diemen's Land Company established Australia's first commercial cheese factory in Tasmania in the 1820s. Not long after, farmers from the NSW district of Illawarra began to send their cheese and butter to Sydney by sea, and as more ports opened, dairying extended all the way down to Bega in southern NSW. Jeans (1972) defines the historical context of the

Shoalhaven LGA in terms of the 'Dairy Revolution [industrialisation]', which began in the 1880s in the Illawarra as it did in Camden, and shows how the number of South Coast dairy farmers increased rapidly in the 1850s and 1860s.

The great 1890s depression and slump in wool prices caused a change in many areas to alternative primary industries. The Macarthurs of Camden Park turned to dairying, which positively affected the prosperity of the Camden township for many decades. Large scale dairying became commercially viable due to the introduction of a number of technological developments during the 1880s and 1890s. In 1873 the first commercial refrigeration was developed in Sydney. In 1882 Danish cream separators first arrived in NSW which encouraged the establishment of cooperatives as the machines were too costly for most farmers. By 1886 it was reported that 45 separators were in use in NSW. By 1893 there were many separating stations situated throughout dairy districts usually in villages to which farmers would take fresh milk twice a day and wait until the cream was separated and then return home with the skim milk, which would be fed to calves or pigs. Villages grew around separating stations. After separation the cream was processed at the nearest butter factory. The advent of the railway system also made it more practical to transport fresh milk to larger population centres from further afield. Growth in the dairy industry also followed the introduction of the milking machine, which although first patented in 1836, was not introduced into Australia until around 1900 and did not become commonly used until the late-1930s when electricity was more readily available to farms.

NSW became a net exporter of butter by the early 1900s. Nearly all dairy products were made in factories, mainly owned and operated by farmer co-operatives producing butter, cheese and bacon. Today the dairy industry of NSW, which prior to the 1970s, was made up of large numbers of small family-owned farms milking under 70 cows, is large scale and intensive, and spread throughout the climatic zones of NSW including the hot dry inland relying on irrigation. However, Camden Park remains an active dairy farm producing, over 2 million litres of milk per annum.

Dairying in Camden and the effect it had on the prosperity of the township can be somewhat compared to that of the old towns of Berry and Kiama in the Illawarra and South Coast Districts. The best agricultural land was settled by 1835, although cedar-getters were in the area from as early as 1810 using boats for transport. The first surveys of the district were undertaken in 1816 and the first land was granted in 1817. Wollongong was surveyed in 1834; Kiama and Ulladulla were established by the 1830s. Ports were established, including Moruya and Merimbula, in the 1860s.

Kiama's history has some similarities with that of Camden, although cedar-getters were first in the area. Cedar was being shipped out from Kiama's main beach by 1815 and by the 1820s Kiama was supplying ninety percent of Sydney's demand. One sawyer, David Smith built a permanent house in 1832 which became the village's first tavern, the Gum Tree Inn, in 1837.

Town surveys were undertaken by 1831 and the town gazetted in 1839.

The Kiama area was settled by wheat farmers and early Jamberoo was the population centre from about 1830 to the 1860s. In 1851 Kiama's population was recorded as being 199.

Kiama developed as a shipping and service centre for the local industries. In the 1840s secure moorings were affixed to rocks and an iron post that functioned as an anchor pin for the securing chain is Kiama's oldest surviving historic artefact. A postal service commenced in 1841, the first church (Anglican) was built in 1843 which also housed the first school. A jetty was erected to facilitate export trade in 1849. The first public school opened in 1861.

In July 1863, the Kiama Independent was founded, which published by one family throughout its history until its sale in 2005 was at that time the oldest surviving family-owned newspaper in NSW. Like the recent fate of many regional newspapers, it ceased publication in 2020 and is now incorporated into the Illawarra Mercury and is under the company umbrella of Australian Community Media. Camden's regional newspapers similarly recently ceased publication with the exception of The District Reporter, an independent local newspaper.

When the wheat failed as it also did in Camden and elsewhere, many farmers switched to dairying. Kiama was one of the birthplaces of the Australian dairy industry, it being established in 1842 with butter being shipped directly to England by 1880 and the first Dairy Factory and first Dairy Co-operative in Australia established there.

A population boom occurred with the founding of quarries for blue metal used to pave Sydney's roads and as ballast for its railways. Kiama Harbour was hollowed out over 17 years and flooded in 1876 to allow larger steamers to enter and a flourishing sea trade followed. The Kiama Pilot's Cottage, now a local history museum, was completed in 1881 and the Kiama Lighthouse in 1887.

Kiama (119 km south of Sydney) is further from Sydney than Camden. It was not a private town nor associated with a prominent historical family and developed differently with its harbour location and quarries.

The best comparison found is Berry NSW as it more closely parallels the development of Camden in association with a "gentry" estate.

Berry (settled 1822, surveyed 1882)

There are similarities between Berry and Camden in that both centred on a large gentry estate, Macarthur's Camden Park and Berry's Coolangatta, both are dairy towns with a similar timeline for the industry and both towns were a similar size up the 1950/60s. Also, the morphology of the towns is similar. The street layout is relatively intact up to present, with similar types of buildings, local newspapers, similar community organisations for instance a show society, Red Cross, CWA, Hospital Auxiliary and a similar social structure with gentry at the top and social layers below. Berry, with a population of less than 2000, is a small and historic rural town set in dairying country 142 kilometres south of Sydney. The many oak, elm and beech trees planted at the end of the 19th century help to create the ambience of an English town.

In the 1810s, George Evans, Government Surveyor, reported on the Berry district as a possible settlement and on the good stands of red cedar. Cedar-getters were soon cutting and sending cedar to Sydney by boat. A Scotsman, Alexander Berry, with his Sydney-based business partner Edward Wollstonecraft, received a land grant of 10,000 acres extending from the mountain, rising from the Shoalhaven River Plain to approximately the location of what is now the town of Berry. In July 1822, with an allocation of 100 convicts Berry pioneered European settlement in the Shoalhaven region by beginning to establish what he called "Cullengetty Farm" after the indigenous name for the mountain. The date 23 June 1822 has since been recognized as the first European settlement on the South Coast of NSW. Five years after arriving at Coolangatta, Berry married Wollstonecraft's sister Elizabeth (cousin of Mary Shelley nee Godwin- author of 'Frankenstein') and in 1836, Berry's three brothers John, William and David and two sisters arrived from Scotland to live at the Settlement.

Berry began in 1825 as a private town named Broughton Creek within the granted estate, later known as Coolangatta. Its first settlers were seven free sawyers and soon after a tannery began operation. In the 1840s a saw mill powered by a water wheel started. By 1866 a substantial town with a Post Office, school, tannery, inn and store was established on either side of Broughton Creek with a population of approximately 300.

Berry established a homestead on the property at the base of Mount Coolangatta and a village grew up around this site. Using convict and free labour, the partnership developed the land and produced grains, potatoes, tobacco, pigs and cattle. A tannery, mills and workshops were constructed. Shipbuilding and horse breeding were also undertaken but it was the export of cedar, mainly to Europe, that provided the greatest profit. Berry's employees included 242 Aboriginal workers by 1838. Coolangatta quickly developed into a self-supporting estate with mills, workshops, tradesmen and artisans. Within years Coolangatta was exporting thoroughbred horses to India, cedar to Europe and cattle, tobacco, cheese and wheat to Sydney.

To provide for boat traffic on the Shoalhaven River, Berry arranged to link it to the Crookhaven River with a 209-yard canal, Australia's first, which was constructed by Hamilton Hume and a group of convict workers. After its construction, Berry set up shipbuilding facilities, completing his first vessel as early as 1824. The town of Coolangatta in Queensland is named after a Berry vessel wrecked nearby in 1846.

Leases of the Shoalhaven property were granted to tenant farmers by the 1850s. The Broughton Creek settlement began to expand under this arrangement. In 1859 its inaugural church service occurred. Three years later a post office was established. The current post office building opened in 1886.

By 1863 Berry and Wollstonecraft (who ran his side of the business from Sydney) had property totalling in excess of 40,000 acres. The area was proclaimed a municipality around 1868, by which time Broughton Creek also contained an inn, store, school and tannery as well as 300 residents.

In 1873 Alexander Berry died and his brother, David Berry became the owner of the estate. Similar to the Macarthurs, though later, David Berry encouraged the growth of the town by establishing an Agricultural Showground and giving land to four religious denominations to build churches in the town.

Work on the former ES&A Bank building commenced in 1884. The building became the Berry Museum in 1975. A survey was conducted in 1882, with the first town lot being sold in 1883. The town continued to grow and flourish as a service centre for a mainly saw milling and dairying district. The National Bank building was built in Victorian Classical Revival-style in 1889 and is still standing. Also in that style is the Court House (1891), which was designed by colonial architect James Barnet.

A rail connection was made in 1893, eleven years later than Camden. In 1900, the Coolangatta Estate became a government stud farm and school. Paddocks were stocked with a broad range of cattle breeds, including Shorthorns, Holstein-Friesians, Guernseys, Jerseys, Red Polls, Ayrshires, Kerries and Dexter-Kerries, with the aim of improving knowledge of dairy breeds and butter making.

The name of the town was changed from Broughton Creek to Berry in 1889, following the death of David Berry, to honour the Berry family. David Berry bequeathed the local public hospital and the outlying land of the Coolangatta Estate was gradually sold, with most sold by 1912 to existing

tenants and new comers to the area. The estate was in the hands of the Hay family (cousins of the Berry's) until the late 1940s.

Coolangatta Estate fell into a state neglect and disrepair and centuries of history looked to be lost. In 1946, Coolangatta House was all-but destroyed when fire raged through the 19-room property leaving only one wing including the library, billiard room, hall and some outbuildings. During the 1970s and 1980s the homestead site was redeveloped as a historic resort, and a vineyard was planted in 1988 (State Library of NSW (2013 (a)). Today it is part of Coolangatta Historic Village, a winery and retreat, which contains a number of 19th-century, convict-built workshops and cottages and historic outbuildings built between the 1820s and 1840s.

The town relied on timber cutting and dairy farming through its early history, with a tannery and boat building. Today, Berry is a town of independent businesses including boutiques, homewares stores, gourmet cafes and restaurants.

Berry was not listed as a principal town in 1849 (Proudfoot 1996) and the town was not surveyed until 1882. It has always been much smaller than Camden and is further from Sydney (143 kms). Its original settlement is now part of a private estate, whereas Belgenny Farm is owned by the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

Conclusion

An analysis of old towns in New South Wales has not found any that compare on the elements of location close to Sydney and being an extant early private town. Camden also has the distinction of being strongly and uniquely associated with the Macarthur pioneering family, both currently and over many generations, the birth of the wool, wine and horticultural industries and Camden Park which is still a large and productive farm. Camden was found to be unique on a state and potentially a national basis.

C. Description

The Camden district, in an area once known as the Cowpastures, is part of the Sydney Plain located in its south-western section in the valley of the Upper Nepean River. Camden Township, enclosed on three sides by a sweeping bend in the Nepean River, is located 62 km south-west of Sydney and 68 m above sea-level, on the traditional land of the Dharawal people. Its position on the line of the exit corridor from Sydney to the south-west towards Melbourne has been a significant feature from early times.

The surrounding land is fertile, though subject to flooding. To the north the land rises, to form less fertile uplands, adjacent to the higher reaches of South Creek. In its pre-1788 condition, the district was well-wooded. Now the Township is largely bounded by clear floodplain.

The current rural landscape quality is based on a mixture of remnant native vegetation and historic rural plantings. Adjacent to Camden township's central heritage precinct are two listed endangered ecological communities, Eucalypt River Flat Forest and Cumberland Plain Woodland. Within the town are communal open spaces (showground and equestrian centre, Macarthur Park) and rural features (town farm, sale yards and agricultural outlets).

Camden township is laid out in a grid pattern designed by the Macarthurs and Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell in 1836. The town abruptly interfaces on three sides of the original grid pattern with rural land. The township's village profile made up of the landmark spire of St John's Church, its small-scale built forms, and its screening qualities of exotic and native trees and vegetation is prominent in the landscape due to its juxtaposition with the surrounding floodplain.

With development only able to extend to the south, the town reflects a broad cross section of quality architectural and cultural landscape features dating from its origins.

Condition of fabric and/or archaeological potential:

Camden Township is in generally good condition.

Integrity/intactness:

Camden townscape has retained its integrity since its foundation and the intactness of the original form of the town in its setting is rare and significant. Camden is regarded as the most intact country town on the Cumberland Plain (2008 (a)).

D. Historical Outline

Camden area originally inhabited by the Dharawal people with neighbouring Dharug people of the Cumberland Plain and the Gundungura of the Southern Highlands. Ceremonial grounds in the Camden area provided a meeting and trading place.

Jan 1788	First Fleet arrives.
1788 -1792	Governor Captain Arthur Phillip
May 1788	Government cattle (one bull and five cows) escape from the First Fleet settlement at Farm Cove, and make their way to the Camden area.
1790	John and Elizabeth Macarthur arrive in Port Jackson, the first married military officer and first educated woman to make the colony their home.
1790	Captain Watkin Tench discovers Nepean River; climbs Razorback range.
1793	First land grant to Macarthur.
1794	Second land grant to Macarthur making a total of 200 acres adjoining Parramatta. Property called 'Elizabeth Farm'.
1795 -1800	Governor Captain John Hunter
1795	Explorer Henry Hacking and others discover lost government cattle; Governor Hunter and party inspect cattle pasture area and Hunter makes it an offence to kill cattle to enable numbers to increase for the survival of the colony.
1796	Area surveyed and named Cowpastures by Hunter.
1797	Macarthur purchases a small flock of merino sheep (3 rams and 5 ewes) imported from the Cape of Good Hope with the intention of producing fine fleeced sheep at 'Elizabeth Farm'. Macarthur begins his merino flock at Elizabeth Farm in Parramatta which expands to more than 4000 by 1803.
1798	Emancipist John Wilson, by Hunter's order, leads a party which reaches the Wingecaribbee River. First recorded sighting of a koala near Bargo.
1800 -1806	Governor Captain Philip Gidley King
1801	Ensign Francis Barrallier, attempting to cross Blue Mountains, discovers the Nattai and Wollondilly Rivers.
1802	Barrallier makes second attempt to cross the Blue Mountains. George Caley explores Camden district looking for the source of the Nepean River and discovers the Picton Lakes at Thirlmere.
1803	Governor and Mrs King visit the Cowpastures and Cawdor. King prohibits settlement at Cowpastures except with his permission.

1804	George Caley explores area between Nepean River at Camden and Razorback.
1801-1805	<p>In 1801, when Macarthur is involved in a duel, Governor King places him under house arrest and sends him to England to face military court martial, which was not pursued there.</p> <p>Macarthur takes with him samples of the fine woollen fleece from his flock, and outlines progress of his sheep breeding enterprise in NSW to key figures.</p> <p>In 1803 Macarthur writes a <i>Statement of the Improvement and Progress of the Breed of Fine Woolled Sheep in New South Wales</i>, supported by clothiers to the Privy Council.</p> <p>Macarthur's influence was sufficient to secure permission through Lord Camden for his resignation from the army and for his return to New South Wales protected from prosecution, to develop its wool industry.</p> <p>In 1805 Macarthur arrives back in Sydney with Spanish merino sheep purchased in England.</p>
1806 -1808	Governor Captain William Bligh
1807	Macarthurs send the first bale of Australian wool to England for sale.
1808	<p>Rum Rebellion</p> <p>Governor Bligh overthrown by military; the NSW Corps also known as the Rum Corps, gained control of the colony.</p>
1809	<p>Bligh sails to Van Diemen's Land hoping for support of Lieutenant-Governor David Collins; is considered an 'intolerable nuisance'. Remains there, isolated, until 1810 when he returns to Port Jackson and Governor Macquarie arrives.</p> <p>Macarthur returns to England as a result of his role in Rum Rebellion and overthrow of Governor Bligh.</p> <p>Elizabeth Macarthur and nephew Hannibal Macarthur placed in charge farming interests in New South Wales. Macarthur instructs them from London to focus on wool quality as demand and prices increase.</p>
1810 -1821	Governor Colonel Lachlan Macquarie arrives with own regiment and disbands the NSW Corps.
1810	<p>Governor Macquarie was sent instructions from England that Macarthur was to be arrested and tried in NSW as soon as he returned.</p> <p>Governor and Mrs Macquarie visit Cowpastures and Mrs Elizabeth Macarthur at Belgenny, Camden. Her living conditions described as 'a small miserable hut'. Governor meets members of the Murrumbidgee aborigines (Cowpastures clan).</p>
1812	Beginning of major land grants east of Nepean.

	1812 Macquarie Grove land grant. Purchased by Macarthur-Onslow family in 1916. Used as a private airport, which became a World War II airbase and then Camden Airport.
1814 – 1816	Aboriginal wars. William Baker and Mary Sullivan killed on Elizabeth Macarthur's property at Camden. Wars end with 1816 Appin massacre of remaining Aboriginal warriors.
1809-1817	Macarthur remains in exile in England. Macarthur merino fleece establishes a reputation in British market for the colony as a centre for wool growing.
1815	Cowpastures renamed Cawdor.
1817	Macarthur arrived in Sydney after using his political contacts in London to revoke Macquarie's orders to arrest him on return to New South Wales.
1819	Government built residence at Cawdor.
1820	Belgenny Cottage built for the Macarthurs to replace the 'miserable hut'.
1821-1825	Governor Major-General Sir Thomas Brisbane
1822	Lands west of Nepean River opened up. Additional land grants to James (1150 acres) and William (1150 acres), sons of Macarthur.
1823	British Parliament enacted "The NSW Act" for better administration of justice, with Chief Justice having right of review of bills. Supreme Court of NSW established
1824	First meeting on 24 August of Australia's first legislative body, the Legislative Council. The Currency Act, the first Act passed on 28 September.
1825	Legislative Council restructured to include four official executive members and three non-executive members. John Macarthur appointed as non-executive member representing landed interests, wealthy free settlers and squatters, Additional land grant to Macarthur of 5000 acres at Cawdor increasing 'Camden Park' to approx. 27,000 acres. Alexander Riley establishes merino stud ('Raby') at Raby with imported sheep: 180 Saxon ewes and twenty rams.
1826	First bridge built over Nepean River at Camden; toll charged. 'Brownlow Hill' granted by purchase to Alexander Macleay.
1827-29	Riley's Saxon sheep from 'Raby' win every gold medal for sheep at Aust. Agric. Society's show. Riley family recognised as leading stud breeders.
1828	Heber Chapel, Cobbitty, (named after Bishop Heber of Calcutta) opened and dedicated by Rev Marsden. Laws of England adopted in NSW.
1829	Legislative Council reformed to include a minimum of ten and maximum of fifteen members. Seven executive and seven un-official non-executive members appointed, including John Macarthur.

1832	Macarthur removed from Legislative Council on grounds of insanity. Road over Razorback to Picton built using convict gangs.
1833	School house at Narellan built.
1834	John Macarthur dies at Belgenny Cottage; he is buried in family vault nearby.
1835	'Camden Park' house, designed by John Verge, completed. 'Brownlow Hill' house built.
1836	Thomas Mitchell surveys and plans for the town of Camden based on James and William Macarthurs' private design for Camden. First Post Office established at Cawdor. William Riley accidentally killed; property and stock disposed of; end of the Riley prominence in sheep and wool.
1837-1839	James and William Macarthur (sons of John) bring out forty-two families plus some single men from Dorset and Wiltshire under bounty scheme. Indentured for three years. After indenture, most suitable families settled as tenants.
1838 -1846	Governor Sir George Gipps
1838	'Wivenhoe' house (attributed to John Verge) built for Charles Cowper. Macarthurs bring out six German vigneron and families from Rhine Valley to develop vineyards at Camden Park. James Macarthur marries Emily Stone.
1839-1843	James Macarthur appointed member of NSW Legislative Council.
1840	Camden village allotments for sale. Wheat begins to replace wool as main produce. End of transportation of convicts.
1841	Court House and Police Station built at Camden. Land sold in town of Camden; first buildings erected.
1842	NSW Constitution Act. Membership of Legislative Council increased to 36 with 24 to be elected by property owners. St Paul's Cobbitty consecrated and opened.
1843	Governor ceased to be a member of the Legislative Council. Camden-Narellan-Campbelltown-Picton District Council formed; lapses after a few years.
1846 -1855	Governor St Charles FitzRoy.
1848-1859	James Macarthur elected Member for County of Camden in Legislative Council.
1849	St John's Camden consecrated and opened.
1840s	First water-powered flour mill in Edward St, Camden. First drapery shop, Thompson & Sons, opens in Edward St, Camden. Decline in sheep and wool activity; part of merino flock sold and

	taken to Victoria. Increased local wheat growing industry. Economic depression in the colony for several years.
1849-1855	William Macarthur elected member of Legislative Council, member for Lachlan and Lower Darling from 1851.
1850	Mrs Elizabeth Macarthur dies; buried at Camden Park.
1851	Camden National School opened. Thomas Dunk wins first prize for wheat grown at Cawdor at the Great Exhibition, London.
1852	James and William Macarthur bring out a further twelve German vigneron and their families.
1854	Camden School of Arts opened.
1855 -1861	Governor Sir William Denison
1855	Self-government granted to the colony. Camden wheat wins gold medals at Paris International Exhibition.
1856	William Macarthur Knighted and commissioned as Justice of the Peace.
1857	Permanent court house opened at Camden.
1858	Thompson's flour mill built. Adult white male suffrage achieved in NSW.
1859	St Paul's Catholic Church consecrated and opened. James Macarthur refuses Knighthood.
1861-1867	Governor Sir John Young First high-level bridge over Nepean River built to replace earlier bridge.
1863	Wheat rust destroys wheat growing industry. Many farmers leave for Riverina area, others change to hay farming.
1864-1882	William Macarthur life appointed to the Legislative Council.
1865	Bank of NSW opens in Camden.
1867- 1872	Governor Earl of Belmore (Sir Somerset Lowry-Corry)
1867	31 January James' only child, daughter Elizabeth marries Captain Arthur A.W. Onslow. 21 April James Macarthur dies. Very high flood in Camden.

1869 -1880	Captain Arthur A.W. Onslow is member for Camden, NSW Legislative Assembly.
1872 -1879	Governor Hercules Robinson
1873	Camden's highest flood recorded.
1878	CBC Bank Camden opens. Whiteman's General Store opens in Argyle Street.
1879 -1885	Governor Lord Augustus Loftus
1880 -1882	Captain Arthur A.W. Onslow member of NSW Legislative Council. Life appointed 10 December 1880. Captain Onslow dies 1 January 1882.
1882	Railway from Campbelltown to Camden constructed. Passenger service known as 'Camden Tram', also known as "Pansy". Telegraph service installed in Camden Post & Telegraph Office. R H Inglis commences stock auctions.
1885 -1890	Governor Baron Carrington
1885	'Camelot' built, designed by Horbury Hunt.
1886	First Camden Show
1887-1889	Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow, with children, in England and Europe, studies dairying and share farming.
1889	Elizabeth founds dairying complex founded on Camden Park including relative A.J. Onslow-Thompson as manager. Elizabeth converts her ownership of Camden Park into a private company including her children as shareholders and directors. Camden Municipal Council proclaimed and incorporated.
1890	Carrington Hospital opened.
1891 -1893	Governor Earl of Jersey
1892-1902	James Macarthur-Onslow, son of Elizabeth and Arthur 1892: commissioned captain of Camden Squadron of NSW Mounted Rifles. Active service in India and in South Africa, for which he received Queen's medal with four clasps.
1893 -1895	Governor Sir Robert Duff
1895 -1899	Governor Viscount Hampden
1897-1901	Francis Macarthur-Onslow, son of Elizabeth and Arthur commissioned in the New South Wales Mounted Rifles. Saw active service the South African War in 1900-01. Recipient of the Queen's medal with five clasps.

1898	Camden Cottage Hospital opened in Mitchell Street.
1899 -1901	Governor Earl Beauchamp arrives.
1899	Camden reticulated water supply turned on.
1901	Celebration of Federation of Australia throughout the nation.
1902	New Cowpasture steel rail and road bridge opened. Women in NSW given right to vote.
1902-1909	James Macarthur-Onslow, son of Elizabeth and Arthur 1902: Commander 5th Battalion in Australian Commonwealth Horse 1907: Promoted Colonel in command of the 1st Light Horse Brigade 1902-1909 A.D.C. to the governor-general.
1902-1904	George Macarthur-Onslow, son of Elizabeth and Arthur, Mayor of Camden 1903: made a lieutenant in the reorganized 2nd Light Horse.
1905	Camden Cottage Hospital moved to Menangle Road. Macarthur Park given by Mrs Elizabeth Macarthur Onslow, granddaughter of John Macarthur, to the Council 'in trust for the people'.
1906-1907	George Macarthur-Onslow, son of Elizabeth and Arthur, is Mayor of Camden.
1909-1910	George Macarthur-Onslow, son of Elizabeth and Arthur, is Mayor of Camden.
1907-1922	Major-General James William Macarthur-Onslow, son of Elizabeth and Arthur, is member for areas of Eastern Sydney in Legislative Assembly.
1910	Camden Telephone Exchange opened with seventeen subscribers.
1911	Mrs Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow dies in England.
1912	Gasworks constructed in John Street; first gas-lit street lighting.
1914	World War I begins. Camden Red Cross formed.
1914-1919	Camden sewing circle actively supported war effort.
1917	Camden Fire Station opened at 38 John Street.
1914-1918	George Macarthur-Onslow, son of Elizabeth and Arthur. Active service in Gallipoli and Sinai Palestine campaigns. Commanding officer of 7 th Light Horse Regiment at Gallipoli, who organised famous cricket match two days before mass evacuation of Anzac Cove.

	Recipient of Distinguished Service Order and appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George.
1918	End of World War I.
1920-1923	Brigadier General George Macarthur-Onslow, son of Elizabeth and Arthur acted as an honorary A.D.C. to the Governor-General.
1922-1934	Major-General James William Macarthur-Onslow, son of Elizabeth and Arthur, member of NSW Legislative Council. Life appointed 3 July 1922.
1919	Influenza epidemic affected the town.
1925-1928	Francis Arthur Macarthur-Onslow, son of Elizabeth and Arthur, Mayor of Camden
1926	Camden Milk Depot opened by wife of Francis Arthur Macarthur-Onslow, Camden Mayor and shareholder and director of Camden Park's Camden Vale Milk Company.
1927	Remaining Gundungurra people of the Burragorang Valley moved by Aboriginal Welfare Board from their lands to a mission at La Perouse.
1929	Electricity supply to Camden turned on.
1931	Coal mines established in Burragorang Valley; machinery gradually replaced pick and shovel method.
1932	Electric street light replaced gas lighting in Camden.
1934	One-hundred-year anniversary of the death of John Macarthur; commemorative 'merino' stamps issued.
1935-1940	Camden Airport founded as a private airport in 1935 by the Macarthur-Onslow family, in particular Edward Macarthur-Onslow (1909-1980), son of Francis Arthur and great grandson of John and Elizabeth Macarthur, who was a pilot and started a flying school in 1937. Acquired by Australian Federal Government in 1940 following the start of World War II as a base for the Royal Australian Air Force.
1936	'Camden Park' now seven dairies, fifty cottages, fodder crops, sixteen overhead silos and numerous silage pits.
1939	1 September World War II commences. Camden's first reticulated sewerage scheme completed.
1939-1946	Camden branch of the Red Cross reconvened sewing circle to contribute to war effort.
1941-45	Air Force training operations at Camden Airport. Army training camps at Menangle and Studley Park.
1944	Lieutenant Colonel Edward Macarthur-Onslow is recipient of Distinguished Service Order.

1945	World War II ends.
1952	Edward Macarthur-Onslow commissions the “Rotolactor” a very advanced innovation in dairying that was not broadly adopted in Australia until late 1980s.
1949	Nepean Shire incorporated into the Municipality of Camden.
1956	Camden High School and new Camden Public School buildings opened.
1957	Camden Historical Society formed.
1963	Camden Railway line and station closed.
1964	Highest 20th century flood in Camden.
1960s	Housing estates established in South Camden and Narellan. Coal industry reaches peak with nine collieries in Burragorang Valley by 1969.
1973	Camden Residents’ Action Group formed as a result of threats to Camden’s heritage.
1976	New Cowpasture Bridge (concrete) replaces earlier bridge wrecked previous year by flood waters. 1800 acres of Camden Park Estate including Belgenny Cottage and farm buildings purchased by NSW government.
1982	Camden Civic Centre opened.
1983	Dharawal Aboriginal Land Council established.
1984	1100 acres of Camden Park Estate purchased by NSW Government. The purchase excluded land surrounding Camden Park House, which remains the home of members of the Macarthur-Stanham family.
1990	Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) opened on old Camden Park Estate lands.
1993	Camden Municipal Council becomes Council of Camden. Aldermen now known as Councillors.
1995	Bicentenary celebrations of the discovery of the Cowpastures.
1999	Nant Gwylan, Exeter Street, Camden is state heritage listed.
2000	NSW dairy industry de-regulated; numerous local dairies closed.
2001	Centenary of Federation celebrated.
2014	Camden Council announces major town works to be undertaken.

2015	Petition, Public Meeting in civic centre, “Monster Rally” and exhibition in Camden Show Ground to stop destruction of historic Camden. 129 th Camden Show launched with running of 300 sheep through Camden’s main street.
2016	Camden Council move from Camden to Oran Park.
2018	132 nd Camden Show features parade of bullock teams in Camden’s main street. St John’s Church Precinct, Camden state heritage listed.
2023	Camden Red Cross sewing circles commemorated with NSW Blue Plaque located at Camden Library in John Street.

Historical Themes

NSW Heritage Council (2001) lists and correlates nine (9) Australian historical themes and thirty-eight (38) NSW historical themes. NSW Heritage (2006 (a) and (b)) explain how two (A and B) of the seven NSW heritage assessment criteria are particularly related to historical values linked to historical themes.

The following Criterion A analysis, how *Camden is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history* identifies the following Australian (numbered 1 to 9) and associated NSW themes

Pre 1788

1. *Tracing the Natural Evolution of Australia: Environment Naturally Evolved*
2. *Peopling Australia: Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures*

1788 to 1810

1. *Tracing the Natural Evolution of Australia: Environment Naturally Evolved*
2. *Peopling Australia: Aboriginal interaction with other cultures*
3. *Developing local, regional and national economies: pastoralism; transport*
4. *Building settlements and towns: Land tenure*
7. *Governing: Government and administration*

1810 to 1820

2. *Peopling Australia: Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures*
3. *Developing local, regional and national economies: Agriculture; Pastoralism; Environment-cultural landscape; Events*
7. *Governing: Government and administration*

1820 to 1830

1. *Tracing the natural evolution of Australia: Environment Naturally Evolved*
2. *Peopling Australia: Migration*
3. *Developing local, regional and national economies: Agriculture; Commerce; Pastoralism*
4. *Building settlements, town and cities: Land tenure*
7. *Governing: Government and administration*
8. *Developing Australia's cultural life: Creative endeavour*
9. *Marking the phases of life: Persons*

1830 to 1880

1. *Tracing the Natural Evolution of Australia: Environment Naturally Evolved*
2. *Peopling Australia: Migration*
3. *Developing local, regional and national economies: Agriculture; Commerce; Pastoralism; Transport*
4. *Building settlements, town and cities: Towns, suburbs and villages; Land tenure*
7. *Governing: Law and order*
8. *Developing Australia's cultural life: Religion; Social institutions*
9. *Marking the phases of life: Persons*

1880 to 1901

- 3. *Developing local, regional and national economies: Commerce; Environment-cultural landscape*
- 4. *Building settlements, towns and cities: Towns, suburbs and villages; Land tenure*
- 6. *Educating: Education*
- 8. *Developing Australia's cultural life: Creative endeavour; Religion; Social institutions*
- 9. *Marking the phases of life: Persons*

1901 to 1950

- 1. *Tracing the natural evolution of Australia: Environment Naturally Evolved*
- 3. *Developing local, regional and national economies: Agriculture; Commerce; Environment-cultural landscape; Events; Industry; Pastoralism; Science; Transport*
- 4. *Building Settlements, Towns and Cities: Towns, suburbs and villages*
- 7. *Governing: Defence*
- 8. *Developing Australia's cultural life: Religion; Social institutions*
- 9. *Marking the phases of life: Persons*

1950 to 2010

- 1. *Tracing the natural evolution of Australia: Environment Naturally Evolved*
- 3. *Developing local, regional and national economies: Agriculture; Commerce; Environment-cultural landscape; Events; Industry; Pastoralism; Transport*
- 4. *Building settlements, town and cities: Towns, suburbs and villages*
- 7. *Governing: Government and administration*
- 8. *Developing Australia's cultural life: Religion; Social institutions*
- 9. *Marking the phases of life: Persons*

2011 to 2023

- 3. *Developing local, regional and national economies: Environment- cultural landscape*
- 4. *Building settlements, towns and cities: Towns, suburbs and villages*
- 7. *Governing: Government and administration*

The Criterion B analysis addresses how *Camden township has a strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history*, the Macarthur family and Professor Graeme Clark. The analysis identifies the following historical themes.

*Australian and NSW Themes**Macarthur family*

- 2. *Peopling Australia: Migration*
- 3. *Developing local, regional and national economies: Agriculture; Commerce; Environment-cultural landscape; Industry; Pastoralism; Technology*
- 4. *Building settlements, town and cities: Towns, suburbs and villages; Land tenure*
- 6. *Educating: Education*
- 7. *Governing: Government and administration*
- 8. *Developing Australia's cultural life: Creative endeavour; Religion; Social Institutions;*
- 9. *Marking the phases of life: Persons*

Professor Graeme Clark A.C.

3. Developing local, regional and national economies: Health; Industry; Science; Technology

6. Educating: Education

9. Marking the phases of life: Persons

Thematic conclusions

A collation of the Australian and NSW themes identified under Criteria A and B shows that Camden's cultural significance can be evidenced under many of them. As summarised below, in the order of set out by the Heritage Council of NSW (2001), eight of the Australian themes and twenty-three of the NSW themes are represented in the analyses of the two criteria.

Relevant National / Australian themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tracing the natural evolution of Australia 2. Peopling Australia 3. Developing local, regional, national economies 4. Building settlements, towns and cities 6. Educating 7. Governing 8. Developing Australia's cultural life 9. Marking the phases of life
Relevant NSW / State themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment - naturally evolved Aboriginal interaction with other cultures Migration Agriculture Commerce Environment - cultural landscape Events Health Industry Pastoralism Science Technology Transport Towns, suburbs and villages Land tenure Education Defence Government and administration Law and Order Creative endeavour Religion Social institutions Persons

E. Criteria

Camden is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (Criterion a)

The largely intact Camden township plays a significant part in the course of NSW's cultural and natural history through to the present day. The natural feature of the Nepean River with its ready source of water, its floodplains and resultant fertile soil influenced Aboriginal culture and practises, early exploration and the pattern of later European settlement southwest of Sydney. Camden with its social settlement based on the English model has strong historical connections to early life in the colony, the Macarthur family and the development of the sheep, wine and dairy industries in Australia.

Following NSW Heritage (2001; 2006(a)), Australian themes (1 to 9) and associated NSW themes are annotated throughout the following chronological narrative.

Pre-1788

The Camden area known as Benkennie or Baragil, was located at the intersection of three main aboriginal language groups; the Dharawal (or Tharawal), the Dharug, and the Gundungurra. The Cubbitch Bartha (meaning 'white creek') clan of the area, who used a distinct dialect called Gur Gur, and the Murringong (meaning 'many swamps') tribe of the Cowpastures are members of the Dharawal people, the traditional owners.

The Camden area was a productive source of food through fishing in the Nepean River, gathering of shellfish from local lagoons and swamps, and animal husbandry and agriculture using plantings and fire stick farming (Willis 2015a, p.2).

The Dharawal called the area centred on Mount Annan down to the banks of the Nepean River Yandel'ora, meaning land of peace between peoples. Culturally it was an important meeting place for Aboriginal nations and neighbours to meet, make laws, settle disputes, arrange marriages, feast, celebrate, perform religious observances and trade the local valuable white pipe clay, which was widely used to decorate bodies and tools. It has been overtaken by Camden, Narellan, Campbelltown and its suburbs, with the South West Growth Area encroaching further on the Camden side.

One of the conditions needed for new development around Camden is an archaeological survey to locate possible Aboriginal sites. No records exist for the site of the old 1840 Camden town, but stone tools have been found close by in Elderslie and along the Nepean River. The Camden Museum in John Street displays aboriginal artefacts.

Australian and NSW Themes

- 1. Tracing the Natural Evolution of Australia: Environment Naturally Evolved* (Nepean River has shaped human life and culture)
- 2. Peopling Australia: Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures*

1788 to 1810

The arrival of Europeans in 1788, of which the Aboriginal people of the Camden area quickly became aware, soon impacted on the natural landscapes and ecosystems that Aboriginal people depended on for their physical and spiritual well-being.

Initial European focus in the Camden area concerned the cattle that strayed soon after the First Fleet's arrival, a disaster for the young and ill-fed community. There seems to be a consensus that two bulls (one a bull calf) and five cows were purchased at the Cape of Good Hope and landed at Sydney Cove with the First Fleet in January 1788. Egan (1999 p. 57) notes that: *"The Commissary...signed an account of the livestock in the settlement at Port Jackson, May 11th, 1788 which showed that there were seven horses, two bulls and five cows, 29 sheep, 19 goats, 74 pigs and a number of various species of poultry."* The mature bull was described as being of the Afrikander breed.

The next mention of the cattle is in one of Governor Phillip's despatches to the Home Secretary stating that: *"A bull-calf has been wounded by a spear..."* (Barton 1889 para. 2.1. The plausible explanation is that it was the bull calf that later went mad from its spear injuries as referred to in the journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, *"...according to George Barrington in his 'History of New South Wales', this animal went mad and had to be shot"* (Campbell 1928 p.43).

The livestock were guarded with reverential care. As Governor Phillip had put to the convicts, the life of a breeding animal was worth a man's (Hughes 1987 p. 96).

Several sources note that the colony celebrated the King's birthday on Wednesday 4th June 1788 and that the convicts were given half a pint of rum for each man. The next morning: *"Four cows, one bull with one bull calf was drove or strayed away from the governor's farm"* (Hughes 1987 p. 66). The convict responsible for the security of the cattle (named Corbett) was hanged (Hindmarsh 1969 p. 25).

Although Governor Phillip reported the incident in his despatches to Great Britain as: *"... The loss of four cows and two bulls will not easily be replaced"* (Barton 1889 para. 2.1), the accounts of Captain Watkin Tench, one of the best primary sources about the first 5 years of the settlement at Sydney Cove, indicate that it was five cows and one bull that were lost. Watkin Tench, a captain in the marine contingent sent out with the First Fleet, was an educated man, and an astute observer (Flannery 2009). Tench, familiar with livestock and on the spot at Sydney Cove at the time the cattle strayed describes the incident as follows:

*"In June, an accident happened which I record with much regret. **The whole of our black cattle, consisting of five cows and a bull**, either from not being properly secured or from the negligence of those appointed to take care of them, strayed into the woods and in spite of all the search we have been able to make, are not yet found"* (Flannery 2009 p. 67).

A veterinarian with 40 years of cattle experience in the Camden area agrees with the account of Captain Watkin Tench in relation to the make-up of the stray cattle (Hart 2016). He states the

presence of 5 cows rather than 4 in the original herd makes the high number of cattle of 61 subsequently counted in 1795 in the area that would become known as "The Cowpastures", much more credible. Even so, given that the herd was founded by just 1 bull and 5 cows, and the gestation period for cattle is 9 months, the rate of multiplication over only 7 years spoke volumes for the quality of the country in which the herd was running.

On Wednesday 11th June, 1788 several parties were sent in quest of the cattle belonging to the settlement, but they were not found (Egan 1999 p. 66). After three weeks, Governor Phillip abandoned the search, concluding that the cattle had been speared by Aboriginal people, or strayed far into the interior in quest of better feed (Timbury 2013; Burrenuick 1932).

A remarkable piece of evidence has subsequently come to light which provides insight into the direction the straying cattle took on their way to the Cowpastures. Under a sandstone rock shelter at Kentlyn, an outer suburb of Campbelltown near Georges River, there is a charcoal drawing by an aboriginal artist from the local Dharawal tribe depicting what can only have been the mature bull that strayed from Sydney Cove in June 1788. The shelter is called the Bull Cave and has been described as "*the oldest-known indigenous record of European colonisation*" (McGill 2016). The pendulous scrotum/penis and the cloven hooves in the drawing of the mature bull do not apply to any marsupial, but are typical of the bull of the black Afrikaner breed of cattle which arrived at Sydney Cove with the First Fleet. The drawing shows the bull without horns, which is consistent with the fact that the cattle were dehorned to prevent injury during their sea voyage. Of rare heritage significance, the drawing had been subjected to erosion and vandalism before its state listing on 28 August 2017 (Kontos 2017 (a), (b); Zautsen 2017; NSW Heritage n.d.(c)).

The European party of Tench, Dawes and Worgan was the first to cross the Nepean River a little upstream from the future town of Camden on August 3, 1790, but saw no signs of the cattle.

In 1795, Aboriginal people brought stories of a significant herd of cattle seen grazing some 60 kms to the south west of Sydney Cove. Governor Hunter formed a small party to verify these reports and towards the end of 1795, they found a herd of 61 cattle grazing in open country beyond the Nepean River (Atkinson, 1988 p. 8). An expedition including Governor Hunter and explorer George Bass was undertaken in November 1795 to inspect them. The Governor's party camped beside a natural lagoon, probably the one known as the Barigal (after the Aboriginal people's name for the Camden area), and now located within the NSW Government owned Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute. In June, 1796 the Governor again visited and climbed the highest view point in the vicinity of the present Camden township, naming it Mount Hunter and the area that could be seen from Mount Hunter, the Cow-pasture Plain or the Cowpastures. In the interests of securing an ongoing food source for the fledgling colony it was made a crime to kill the cattle.

The discovery of the cattle was a salient event of the early years of white settlement in New South Wales as it showed that areas of this new country provided fertile grazing for livestock.

The significance of the cattle seeking out this area is recorded in Collins et al (1889 Vol. 1, Ch. XXIX) as follows:

" They travelled without interruption in a western direction until they came to the banks of the Nepean...and finding the crossing as easy as when the Governor had forded it, they came at once

into a well- watered country, and amply stored with grass...remarkably pleasant to the eye; everywhere the foot trod on thick and luxuriant grass; the trees were thinly scattered...several beautiful flats presented large ponds, covered with ducks and the black swan, the margins of which were fringed with shrubs of the most delightful tints, and the ground rose from these levels into hills of easy ascent."

From the agricultural perspective for European settlement in Australia and the Camden area, its significance is explained in the Sydney Morning Herald (Timbury 2013; Burrenuck 1932) as quickly appealing *".... to that astute and grand pioneer, Captain John Macarthur (father of the Golden Fleece in Australia). He at once saw the possibilities of the "Cowpastures" country for meeting the requirements of his fine wool sheep, which did not thrive to his satisfaction near Rosehill, and he early lodged an application for a part of that country. But this was opposed by the Governor and his successors, who desired to reserve the area for the exclusive use of the wild cattle, as they had thrived so well there"*. Macarthur subsequently petitioned colonial authorities in England for land to develop his interest in the wool industry.

Governor Hunter was replaced by Governor King in late 1800. Explorer Francis Barallier, an Ensign in the NSW Corps, visited the area in 1802 in his search for a way over the Blue Mountains and made the first recorded contact with the local Aboriginal people. Atkinson (1988 p. 9) reports that during Governor King's time, the Cowpastures were frequently visited by naval officers and gentlemen who wished to see the new land and cattle, seemingly to have an experience similar to an African safari.

Governor King travelled to the area in 1803 with his wife, who became the first white woman to cross the Nepean River. There had also been some unauthorised killing of the cattle, probably by escaped convicts. To protect the cattle Governor King declared the Cowpastures a government reserve where settlement was prohibited. He also forbade any crossing of the Nepean River without his permission in July 1803. To preserve the cattle a hut, officially referred to as "The Cowpasture House", was built in early 1805 to house two police constables. It was located at Elderslie near the ford of the Nepean River, the site being on the southern side of the present Cowpasture Bridge. (Wrigley J. D. 2008)

This is the first record of the Nepean River being used as a boundary to development-related activity. For a long time, the Nepean River was a boundary dividing Cumberland, the heartland of the colony, from the *"scrub and raw enterprise on the other side"* (Atkinson, 1988 p. 34).

However, due to Macarthur's lobbying in London, the Cowpastures was first settled in 1805 with two land grants being made across the Nepean River, 2000 acres to Davidson and 5000 acres to Macarthur for the raising of Merino sheep in Australia. Macarthur's slab hut built in 1805 was the first white dwelling on the other side of the river and only the Macarthurs and Davidsons were allowed to ford the Nepean.

The land chosen by John Macarthur in the Cowpastures was ideal for the Spanish merino breed of sheep. To solve the problem of sheep becoming dirty in the hot dry summer and ensure a high quality of wool they were washed in the Nepean River, dried in clean straw-lined pens for two

days and shorn on a cloth lined floor of the shearing shed. In 1807 the Macarthurs sent the first bale of Australian wool to England for sale and in 1813, they exported Australia's first commercial shipment of wool (National Museum of Australia n.d).

The first road leading southward from Sydney, surveyed by explorer James Meehan in 1805, went west to Parramatta then south following what, from 1823, was called the Cowpastures Road-which continued to present day Narellan and the Nepean River ford at Camden. The earliest survey of the route of the future Hume Highway seems to have been carried out by William Harper in 1821. His field books detail his path from the Nepean River near Camden, over the Razorback Range and on to the Wollondilly River near Paddy's River (NSW RMS 2019 (a)).

Initially efforts were made to comply with the British Government's dictum of not harming the natives. But by 1802 colonization was having a dire effect on Hawkesbury Aboriginal people who complained to Governor King about being *"driven from the few places that were left on the banks of the river where they alone could procure food ..."* (Nichols 1995).

Australian and NSW Themes

- 1. Tracing the Natural Evolution of Australia: Environment Naturally Evolved*
- 2. Peopling Australia: Aboriginal interaction with other cultures*
- 3. Developing local, regional and national economies: pastoralism; transport*
- 4. Building settlements and towns: Land tenure*
- 7. Governing: Government and administration*

1811 to 1820

Governor Macquarie, arriving in 1810, brought a vision of transforming the colony from a penal settlement to a society reflective of British lifestyles by reforming convicts, implementing public works and establishing legal and commercial institutions. John Oxley (1784 to 1828) was appointed Surveyor-General. In 1810 small land grants were made fronting the Nepean River on the eastern, Sydney side. Oxley was the first to be granted a large area of land on the eastern side of the Nepean with 1000 acres in 1815 named "Kirkham" after his birthplace in Yorkshire and last with 850 acres in 1816 which he named Ellerslie (now Elderslie). These estates initially became semi-autonomous villages and the names remain attached to areas peripheral to the Camden township.

Governor Macquarie visited the Cowpastures four times during his time in the colonies; in 1810, 1815, 1820 and 1822. During his second visit in 1815 in an attempt to preserve the cattle of the Cowpastures, he ordered the construction of stockyards and established three cattle stations, the main one being at Cawdor, 3 km south of present-day Camden township.

Initially meetings between Aboriginal people and Europeans in the Camden area were peaceful. In 1810 Macquarie, with his wife Elizabeth and a large party, travelled by horse and carriage from Parramatta to the Cowpastures and from there was guided by John Warby, a constable based at the government hut. The Governor met Aboriginal people, including Koggie (Cogy) Native Chief

of the Cow-Pasture Tribe and witnessed their dancing. Governor Macquarie met Mrs Elizabeth Macarthur in what he called a 'small miserable hut' on Monday 19 November 1810 on the Macarthur property (named "Benkennie" after the Aboriginal name of the area, later becoming "Belgenny"). (Macquarie 1810). In 2008 this hut site was located by a team of archaeologists (Belgenny Farm n.d. (g)).

Two hundred years later to the day, in 2010, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of New South Wales, visited the same locality and met descendants of the Dharawal people and the Macarthur family. More than 300 people witnessed the Governor unveil a plaque at Baragil lagoon where Governor Macquarie's party camped (NSW DPI Agriculture 2010)

Glenda Chalker, born at the old Sunshine Hospital in Camden, and Chairperson of the Cubbitch Barta Native Title Group and a member of Dharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council, told those assembled that the Dharawal people had an important role in establishing Camden Park. They formed close bonds with the Macarthur family and remained on the property until the 1970s (NSW DPI Agriculture 2010).

Conflict with Aboriginal people arose due to their dispossession and loss of traditional food sources. Early records tell of Macarthur's shepherds and their wives being killed by Aboriginal people.

Though it was not necessarily absolutely the case, it was early understood by white settlers that there was deep enmity between the Cowpastures tribe, the Muringong people and the Gandangara people of the mountains who came down into the Cowpastures. By 1814 the Muringong people were regarded by white settlers as helpful and friendly and the Gandangara as dangerous. (Karskens 2015). On 10 March 1816, Samuel Hassall at Macquarie Grove (later owned by the Macarthur family and also site of modern-day Camden airport) received a message from two local Aboriginal men who informed him that the Gandangarra intended to attack Macarthur's farm and others and murder all before them (Gapps 2018).

This battle and growing number of raids and settler deaths forced Governor Macquarie's hand. Macquarie recognised that the settlers were guilty of provoking acts of violence, but the settlers used their influence to pressure him into a declaration of war which escalated into what is now known as the Frontier War. In 1816, Governor Macquarie sent three detachments of the 46th Regiment, their main base established at Camden, to "chasten these hostile tribes, and to inflict terrible and exemplary punishments on them..." (Macquarie 1816).

Macquarie's "terrible and exemplary punishments" were inflicted on the night of 17 April 1816 at a camp at Appin, where 14 Dharawal and Gundungurra men, women and children were massacred and five surviving women and children were taken prisoner. This became known as the Appin Massacre, which Winga Myamly Reconciliation Group and the local Aboriginal community remember in April each year. (Winga Myamly Reconciliation Group n.d.)

Several south-western Sydney Aboriginal people are descended from those caught up in Macquarie's actions. In most cases Aboriginal peoples could use their greater knowledge of the

land to escape, although about 30 indigenous people had been killed by May 1816. Survivors were essentially forced off their lands into the mountains of the west and south, or onto the farms of friendly settlers. According to information held by St John's Church, Camden, Nanny (Annie) Murringong of the Cowpastures Clan was born at Camden Park in 1818 but was taken as a small child to the Parramatta Native Institution. In 1915 the death of Suzanne Sophaline, the paternal great grand aunt of Glenda Chalker, was recorded (incorrectly) as the passing of the last of the local Aboriginal person in the Camden area (Simon and Chalker 2007, pp. 7-14).

Although Hassall reported seeing a corroboree at Camden in the 1820s, at which over four hundred aboriginal people took part, aboriginal resistance in the Camden area had all but collapsed. In 1914 A. L. Bennett recorded the recollections of William Russell or "Werriberrie", the "Chief Man of the Gundungorra Aboriginals of the Burraborang Valley" near Camden, and stated that Werriberrie was almost the last of his tribe. (Sukovic and Read n.d.) Although the Aboriginal population in Camden was heavily affected by the encroachment of white settlers, the 2011 Census showed that 3% of both Camden High School and Camden Public School enrolments and 1118 people in the area identified as Aboriginal, a considerable increase since 1970.

A rural hegemony of self-styled large gentry estates, using convict labour, grew around the Nepean River. These included *Kirkham* (1810, Oxley), *Macquarie Grove* (1812, Hassall), *Wivenhoe* (1812, Cowper), *Elderslie* (1816, Oxley), *Brownlow Hill* (1827, Macleay), *Glenlee* (1818, Howe), as well as the earliest *Camden Park* (1805, Macarthur) (Willis 2015(a), pp.7-17). A cultural landscape was created by these early European settlers that followed the ordered patterns of their ancestral homes.

John and Elizabeth Macarthur continued to develop Camden Park Estate. Among Australia's great agricultural pioneers, the Macarthur family enterprises were to become a model for Australia's agricultural traditions (NSW Government Department of Industry n.d; Heritage Council of NSW 2008).

Australian and NSW Themes

- 2. Peopling Australia: Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures*
- 3. Developing local, regional and national economies: Agriculture; Pastoralism; Environment-cultural landscape; Events*
- 7. Governing: Government and administration*

1821 to 1830

Many small holders of land granted by Macquarie from 1810 had drifted off by 1820, from which time he made larger grants of Cowpastures land available to settlers, merchants and officials. The Cowpastures became the transport hub of the district from that time when the road network was largely set by the pattern of land grants.

Cawdor became the main government cattle station, growing to a village, containing by 1822 housing for superintendents and a tanning house. Despite orders banning trespass on the Cowpastures, poaching of the cattle was a problem. In 1825, a Court of Petty Sessions was opened, but closed in 1828. In 1826 the government cattle stations were closed and John Macarthur purchased the land and buildings. The Cawdor settlement became a mail centre on the Great South Road in 1832.

In August 1826 a bridge, designed by a convict named Wainwright, was erected over the Nepean River into the Cowpastures. Its removable handrails helped it withstand a significant flood in October 1826. The bridge became part of the Great South Road (explored by Hamilton Hume from 1814 on and which became the Hume Highway to Melbourne through the Camden township) and anyone who wished to cross had to pay a toll and on Sundays was forbidden to cross at all. The current Cowpastures Bridge, opened in 1976, is the fourth to be constructed in that location, leading into the area that was surveyed in 1836 for the village of Camden.

In 1822, John Macarthur was awarded two medals by the Society for the Arts in London for the quality of his wool exports. In 1827, a bale of Macarthur wool sold for a world record price, which remained the world record until 1949.

In 1824 John Macarthur was instrumental in setting up a chartered company to organize the production of Australian wool, something he had sought since 1804. The Australian Agricultural Company (AACo) was founded under a British Act of Parliament with capital of one million pounds, a land grant of one million acres at Port Stephens and harbour rights at Newcastle. Although the venture was well subscribed in London, it was regarded in the colony as a Macarthur family contrivance for their own ends which would "...entail inevitable destruction of the industry...". Disagreements seemed to be usual with any involvement by John Macarthur in public ventures, such as the Agricultural Society, the Bank of Australia and the Australian and Sydney colleges. He was nevertheless appointed to the reformed Legislative Council in 1829 (and remained until 1832 when he was removed as mentally deranged).

The legacy and reputation of Macarthur's practical achievements in founding the Australian wool industry are largely due to the persistence and loyalty of his sons and his wife Elizabeth (Steven 1967). They developed Camden Park (Belgenny Farm and Camden Park Estate) which forms the oldest, intact, rural landscape and group of farm buildings in Australia, into a great enterprise. By the early 1820s, the Camden Park Stud was established which was a major breeder and supplier of blood horses and thoroughbreds in the colony (Binney 2006; State Library of NSW 2011).

The Macarthurs installed the first sheep wash and wool press. They imported expert workers such as Australia's first skilled wool-sorter from Silesia, shepherds from Scotland, vigneron from Nassau and dairymen from Dorset. In 1830 they also installed the first irrigation plant in Australia, an Archimedean screw pump that pushed 5000 gallons an hour from the Nepean River. The water was used to irrigate 200 acres at Camden Park for dairying, which had begun in 1826 with 14 female convicts as dairymaids.

Camden Park became great experimental farm that served as a prototype for other 19th century farms (NSW Heritage n.d.(a)) from which other landholders could learn.

Australian and NSW Themes

- 1. Tracing the natural evolution of Australia: Environment Naturally Evolved* (Nepean River has shaped human life and culture)
- 2. Peopling Australia: Migration*
- 3. Developing local, regional and national economies: Agriculture; Commerce; Pastoralism*
- 4. Building settlements, town and cities: Land tenure*
- 7. Governing: Government and administration*
- 8. Developing Australia's cultural life: Creative endeavour*
- 9. Marking the phases of life: Persons*

1831 to 1880

The Macarthurs were founding entrepreneurs, and highly influential, in the development of Australia's agricultural, pastoral, horticultural and viticultural. By the 1830s the Camden Park estate of 28,000 acres included the greatest and most advanced mixed farm in NSW (NSW Heritage n.d.(a)).

In December 1830, as settlement continued along the Great South Road, local residents wrote to Governor Darling requesting a town site in the 'vicinity of the Cowpastures Bridge on the banks of the Nepean, a central situation in the most populous parts of these districts and abundantly supplied with water'. In particular they petitioned for the establishment of a police station, court house and gaol near the bridge as the Great South Road needed policing. Governor Darling agreed, proposing a small town which he intended to replace Campbell Town (1820) as the administrative centre to provide order over the new settlements. The Surveyor-General, Sir Thomas Mitchell, suggested the western bank at the edge of Camden Park as most suitable and least likely to flood, and that John Macarthur be asked to surrender some of his land for such a purpose. Macarthur declined stating the formation of a town would "greatly endanger the security of the whole establishment on that estate". Campbell Town remained the centre for law and justice in the south.

John Macarthur died in 1834. Macarthur's sons, James and William, were not against the idea of a village. They wrote to the government outlining their intentions which were approved. In 1835 the brothers began to prepare its foundations, clearing 20 acres of Camden Park and setting up a subscription fund for a church, "the situation of which will be highly picturesque and commanding", to ensure its moral foundation. James and William appealed to neighbours and employees for assistance with the church and planned for a "first rate commodious hotel" which became the Camden Inn (1841) in Argyle Street, well placed for travellers of the Great South Road.

Surveyor-General Mitchell, in 1836, based on the vision of James and William prepared a street plan and surveyed Camden town, named in honour of Lord Camden who, in 1805, had sanctioned the first grant of 5000 acres to John Macarthur.

The foundation stone of St John's Church was laid by Bishop Broughton on 3 November 1840. The Macarthur brothers organised land sales through Sydney auctioneer Samuel Lyons in 1841. Advertisements for the land stated that allotments had been cleared and stumped and that the village already had a number of cottages, occupied by a cooper, wheelwright, master builder and brick maker as well as a post office, inn and partly completed church (Willis 2015 (a), p. 34).

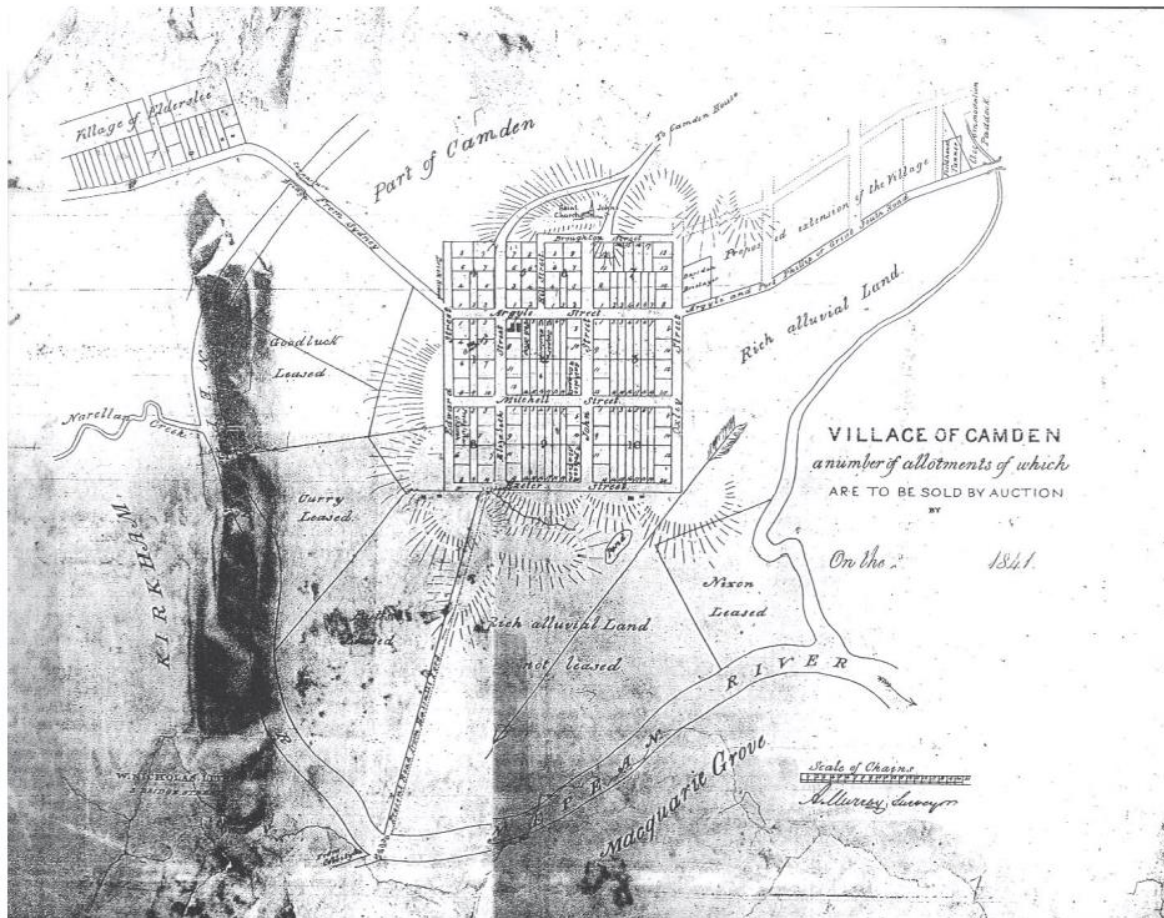
An influx of settler families between 1830 and 1860 helped shape the economic and social fabric of Camden (Sidman 1939; Atkinson 1988). Many immigrant families who had settled on surrounding estates as tenant farmers started businesses in the village. The village introduced another layer of urban based *petite bourgeoisie*, made up of shopkeepers and tradesmen, into the social hierarchy of the district (Willis 2006 (a)). In the 1840s Camden's growth would see a vital change in the colonial countryside and its ties with Sydney.

The original street plan as shown below, which is identical today, includes an area at the southwest corner of the intersection of Argyle and Oxley Streets set aside for the Church's builder Richard Basden, who used 386,000 bricks in the building (Clive Lucas Stapleton 2004 p.12)).

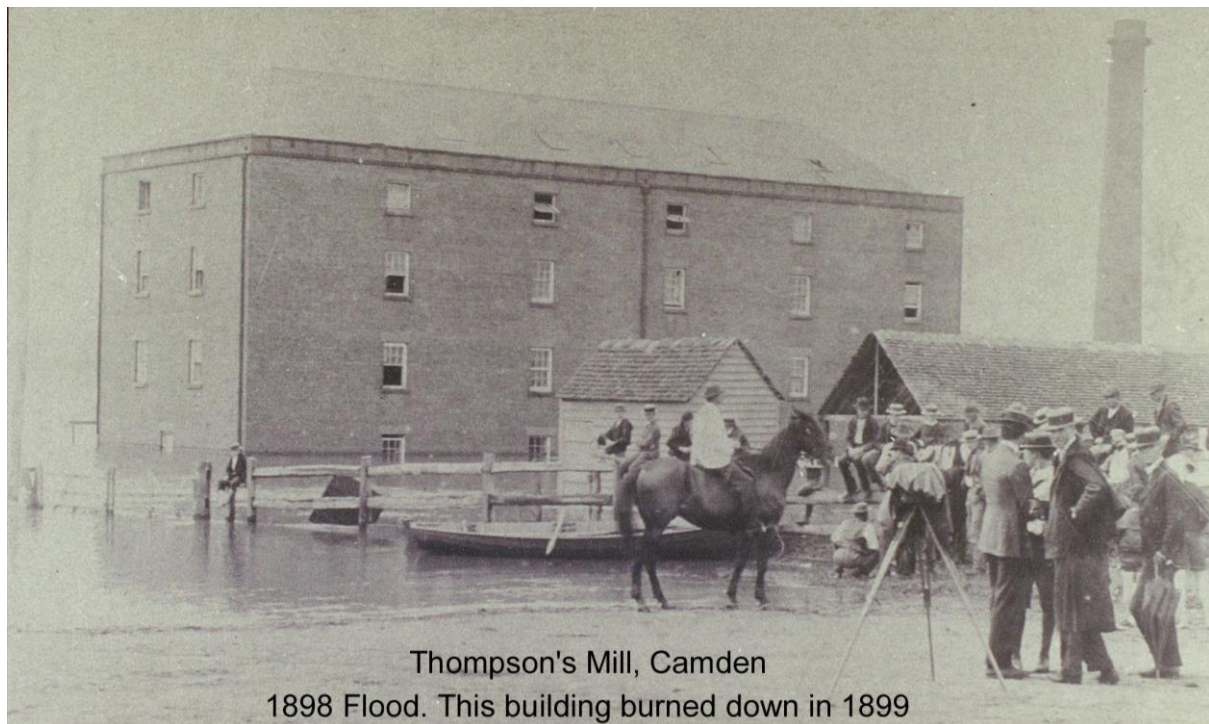
Local innkeepers provided a rudimentary banking service and were vital as a meeting place to bring Sydney to the bush.

Joseph Thompson and Son, wholesale drapers of Pitt Street, Sydney set up a branch in Camden, a first for business in the colony. Two of Joseph Thompson's sons came to Camden; Samuel, who became very active in village affairs, looked after the shop and Henry, who took charge of the newly constructed Camden Steam Flour Mills (which commenced operation on the 2nd October 1843), built in Edward Street. Because, as independent investors, they owed nothing to Macarthur' patronage the Thompsons thought of themselves as gentlemen and as having moral purpose. They were seen as different, as part of a new elite which included David Jones and John Fairfax, and as having power in both Sydney and Camden (Atkinson 1988).

It was the Macarthur family though that held most power and influence, including through their private development of the Camden village.



Source: Clive Lucas Stapleton and Partners 2004 (Figure A3.1). *Original Street Plan*
 Original source Murray, A. 1841 State Library of NSW



Thompson's Mill, Camden
 1898 Flood. This building burned down in 1899
 Thompsons Mill (1843) Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

St John's Anglican Church was completed and consecrated in 1849. Its earliest gravestone is dated 1843. The first church wardens were James and William Macarthur and George Macleay of Brownlow Hill. James and William provided funds to build the rectory in 1859. The Macarthur family as patrons who built the church and endowed its ministry had varying rights over time to appoint the Minister and provide the Rectory at nominal rental. (Clive Lucas Stapleton and Partners 2004)

The Camden Village and St John's Church, sponsored by the Macarthurs, was culturally central not only to the Macarthurs of *Camden Park* but also to other Protestant landholders, whose wealth, based on convict labour, was concentrated in the nearby large estates of Brownlow *Hill*, *Kirkham*, *Elderslie* and *Macquarie Grove*.

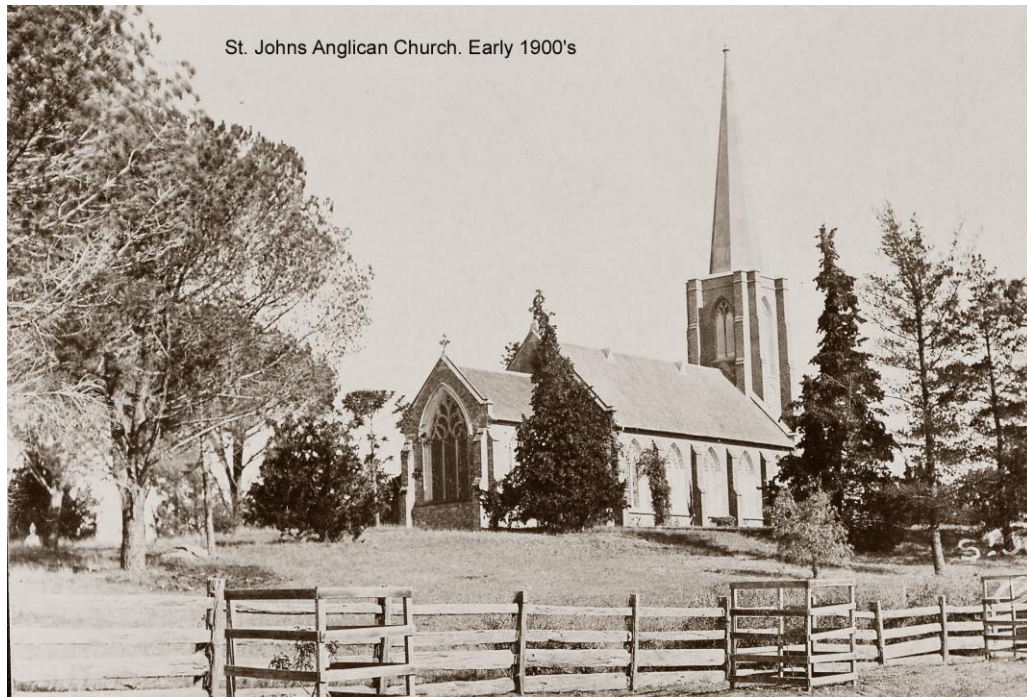
Although the Macarthurs granted village land to each of the major denominations for churches, the early Anglican foundation of St John's, supported by the generosity of the Macarthur family, reinforced the family's social and moral standing. St John's church was designed to be the moral heart of the village (Atkinson p.35) and the location of the village on the Great South Road was symbolic of the Macarthur's economic and social authority over the countryside (Willis 2020)).



Camden c1890 Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

The local gentry took on the outward signs of the British ruling elite often creating networks that functioned on a Camden-Sydney-London basis, and developed a social dominance that persisted for over 100 years. The social structure of the district had four tiers, self-styled gentry, overseers, convicts and Aboriginal people. The Camden village provided a central focus for a rural hegemony based on property, education and political influence (Willis 2006 (a)).

Through the village the Macarthurs would exercise British Victorian philanthropy, display their wealth and influence, and set the moral tone. Community organisations, earlier being male-dominated, usually led by the landed gentry holding informal political power through patronage, have been part of Camden life from its beginnings. (Willis 2006 (a)).



St John's Anglican Church (1849). Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden



St John's Rectory (1859) Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

The Camden village soon eclipsed Cawdor, the first village of the Cowpastures district after the establishment by Governor Macquarie of the government cattle station in 1812. A court building (1824) is now the site of the Uniting Church (1902). Situated on the main convict-built road to southern NSW and Victoria, the settlement grew and was a stopping place for mail and passenger coaches at the post office, opened in 1836. This Post Office was transferred to the Camden village in 1841. (Akers 2008)

Local policing was a problem, with only a slab hut lock-up over the river in Elderslie. In 1844 magistrates were accommodated in rented rooms in John Street. A wooden lock-up was built in 1849 in John Street, the site of the Court House which was built in 1857. Police barracks were built next door in 1878 (Willis 2015(a), p. 36).



Camden Court House (1857) Photo Charles Cowell 2016

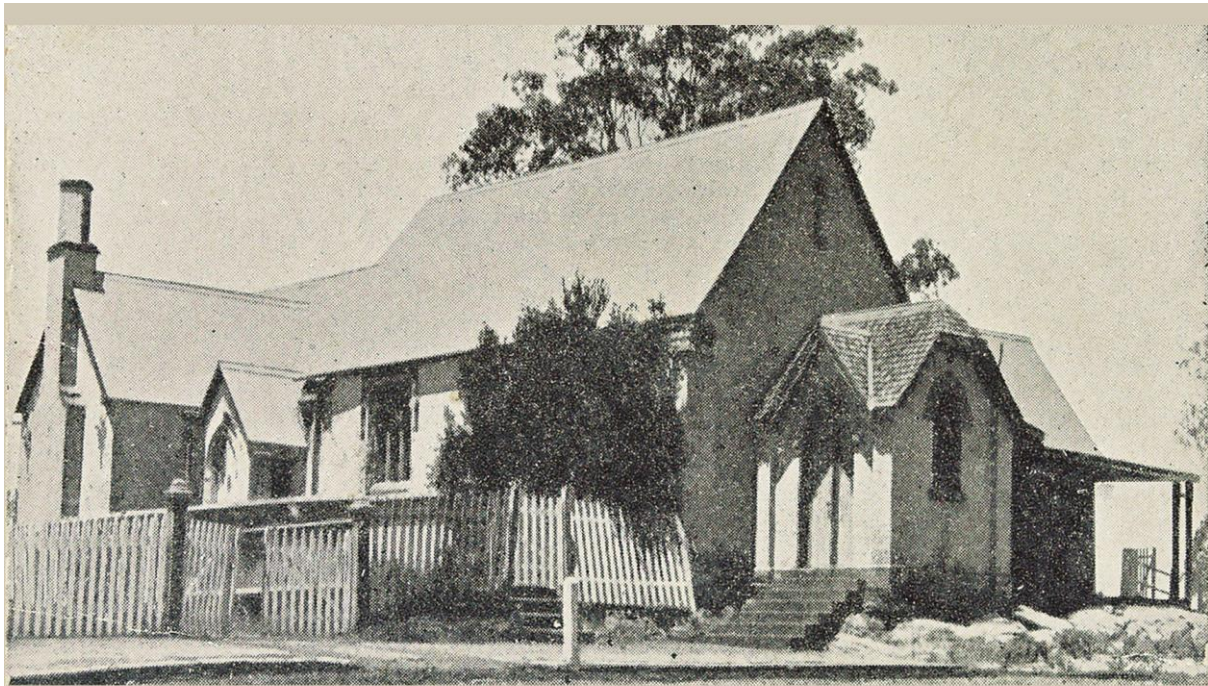


Camden Police Barracks (1878) *Photo Charles Cowell 2016*

In May 1844 the Macarthur brothers sold land to the Catholic Church at the corner of John and Mitchell Streets for St Paul's Church, which was opened in 1859 by Archbishop Bede Polding of Sydney.

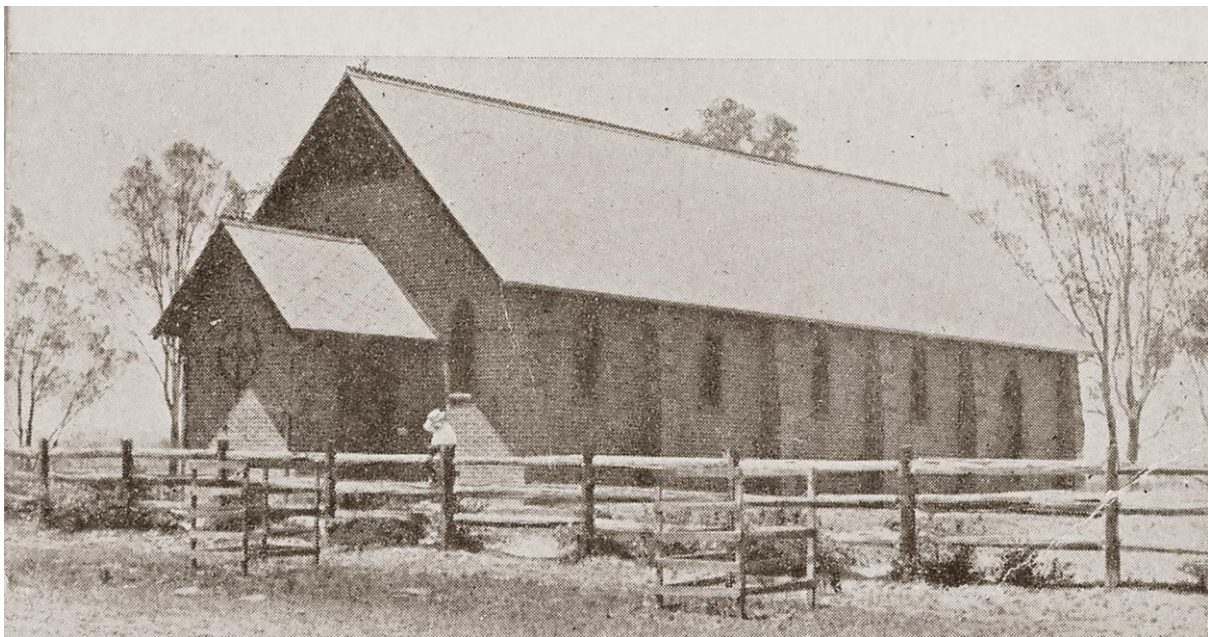
In 1844 the school, that had been running at Camden Park since 1838, was moved to the village and later merged with a smaller Catholic school. In 1845 a separate Church of England school began which moved in 1852 to a newly constructed building near St John's Church located at the intersection of Hill and Broughton Streets. This school closed in 1879 but the building and site were retained by the Church until their sale in 1906. The sale proceeds were used to construct the extant church hall in the St John's Anglican Church Precinct.

In 1849, 61 people signed a petition for a National School to be set up in Camden and James Macarthur presented it to the National School's Board for its approval. Receiving approval, James and William Macarthur gave an acre block of land on the corner of Mitchell and John Streets. The school which opened in January 1851 was built by Richard Basden, the builder of St John's Church with funding from the National board, money raised locally and donations from the Macarthurs. Alterations and improvements to the school were made in 1876, 1879 and 1892. By 1906 the local Municipal Council was considering replacing the school building due to needed repairs and its suitability. The building below was replaced in 1909 by a single-storey, iron-roofed building with a capacity for 200 pupils. By 1948 it became clear that the new school was unsuitable and unable to accommodate higher school students. Two new school buildings were built on opposite sides of John Street, a primary school and a new high school, which opened in 1956. (Camden Public School n.d.).



*Denominational School , top of Broughton Street 1850
This building was demolished about 1906*

Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden



*Extant church hall (1906) St John's Church Precinct
1907 Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden*

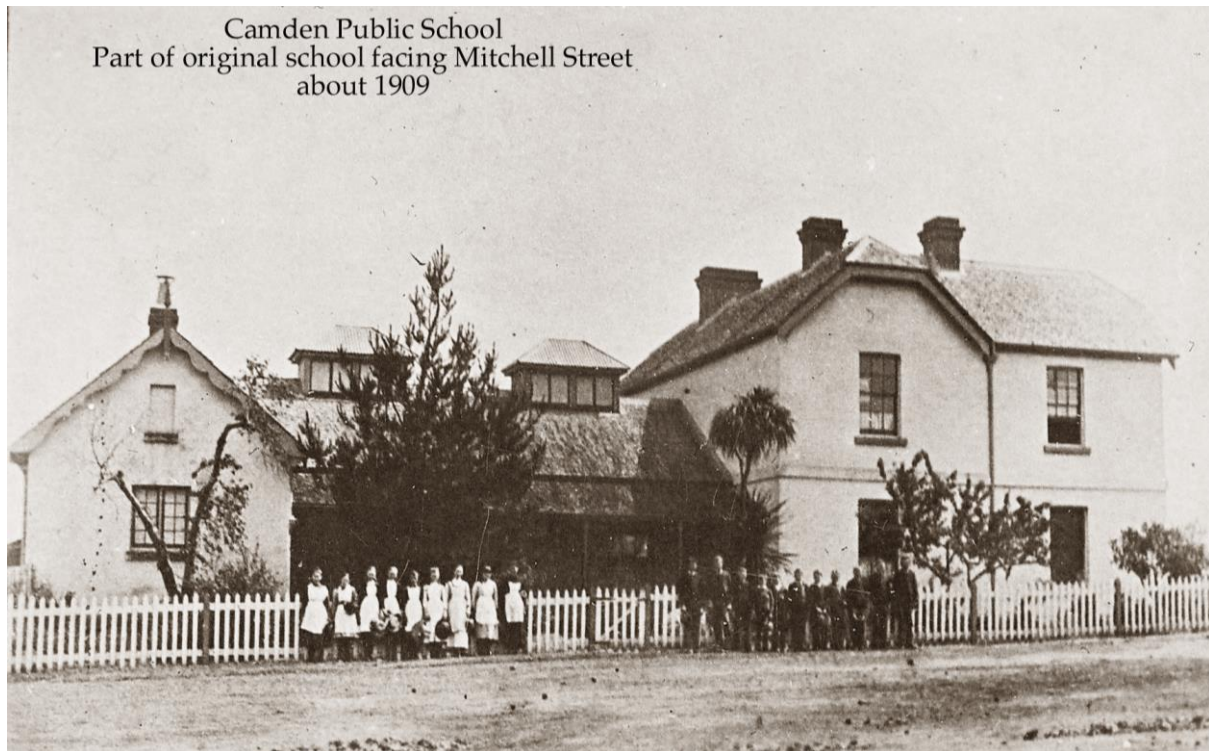


Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

The School of Arts of Mechanics Institute movement arrived in NSW in the 1830s. Camden's building (1866) for the School of Arts (1866 to 1869), also served as the Camden Town Hall, while the rear of the building was occupied by Camden Municipal Council from 1889 until it built a new office complex behind Macaria (1859-1860) on the opposite side of John Street. It was also used for the inaugural meeting of the Agricultural, Horticultural and Industrial (A. H and I) Society (now the Camden Show Society) in 1885. (Camden News 1936; 1939) In 1963 it was turned into the Camden Library.



Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

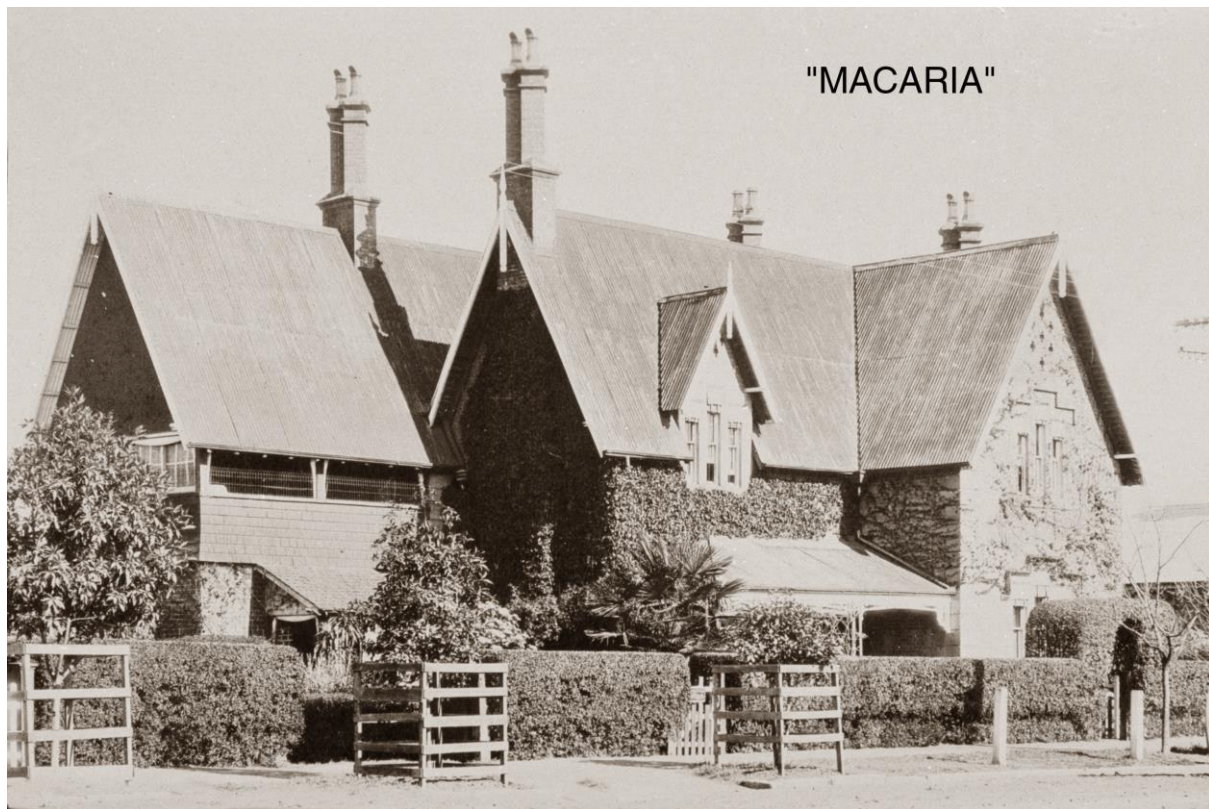


Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden



Macaria prior to move by Camden Council to Oran Park in 2016 Photo Charles Cowell

The international temperance movement arrived in Australia in the 1830s. Rum arrived with the First Fleet in 1788 became a common currency. Alcohol consumption was accepted as a way of life in colony. In Camden the temperance movement and even total abstinence gained ground in the 1850s. In 1858 the Camden Band of Hope for local children was established to bring them to the cause (Atkinson pp. 181-182). A Temperance Hall (1867) of the Methodist Total Abstinence Benefit Society was built for local meetings in John Street. It later served as the Camden Fire Station from 1916 to 1993.



Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

In 1878 two brothers, George Spencer and Charles Thomas Whiteman started a farm produce store at the corner of Argyle and Oxley streets. The Whiteman family later developed Camden's iconic general store. Whiteman's Store was one of the longest surviving family businesses in Camden occupying the late Victorian/Federation building in Argyle Street for most of the 20th century and until its closure 2006. Another business that occupied the building was that of Woodhill family from 1903 to 1906.

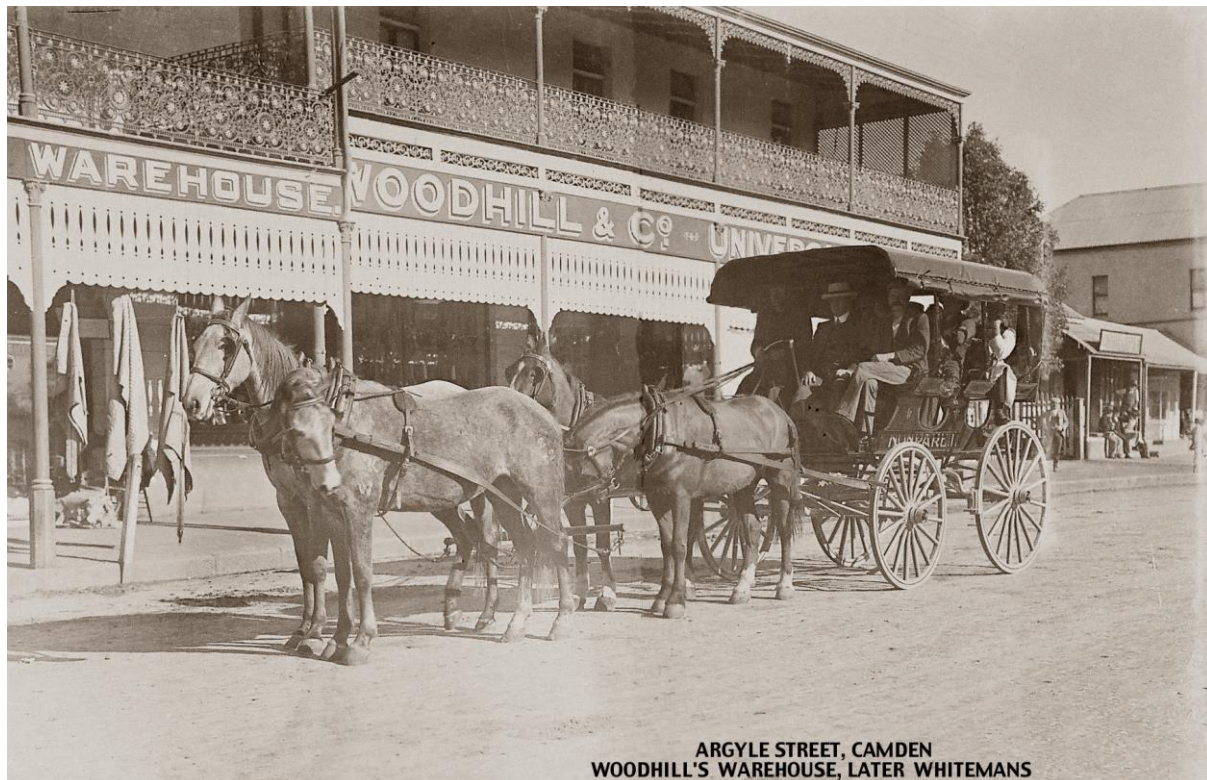


Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

By 1880 other substantial Victorian buildings filling out the 1836 street plan included: Taplin's or Bransby's Cottage (1842-1843) which was tenanted by Dr Bransby, the local magistrate between 1848 and 1852; the Woolpack Inn ((1852) which was taken over in 1873 by the Bank of NSW (which had opened in Argyle Street in 1865); the Camden Inn (1841); the Plough and Harrow Hotel (1851); the Crown Hotel c1880; Nepean House (1857) which housed Camden's leading doctor, Dr John Bleek; Macaria (1859-1860) which has been used as a Grammar School, doctor's surgery and council offices; Camden police barracks (1878); Dr Crookston's House (c 1860s) which was built by the Macarthurs for their estate manager and CBC Bank (1878).

The earliest accounts of Camden village, its planning, establishment and development, were carried in the Sydney newspapers, particularly *The Sydney Morning Herald*. During the 1840s the Camden Clerk of Petty Sessions, Charles Tompson, was a regular correspondent to the newspaper (Willis 2015 (e)).

As transportation ended in NSW in 1840, the large estates could not depend on a future supply of convict labour. Growth had not flourished in the existing earlier European settlements of Cawdor (1822), Narellan (1827), Cobbitty (1828) and Elderslie (1828). These earliest settlements now looked to Camden for cultural and economic leadership as the district's major centre.

Camden became a transport node of a district which spread from Campbelltown to the lower Blue Mountains and in its early years was one of the most important commercial and administrative centres between Sydney and Goulburn on the Great South Road (renamed as the Hume Highway in 1928). The road which followed the town's main street from colonial times until a bypass was opened in 1974, brought international influences of modernism and consumerism to the town, and the goods and services that supported them (NSW RMS 2019 (a)).



Corner Argyle & John Streets, early 1890s.
Bank of N.S.W on the right, Commercial Banking Company behind, built 1878

Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

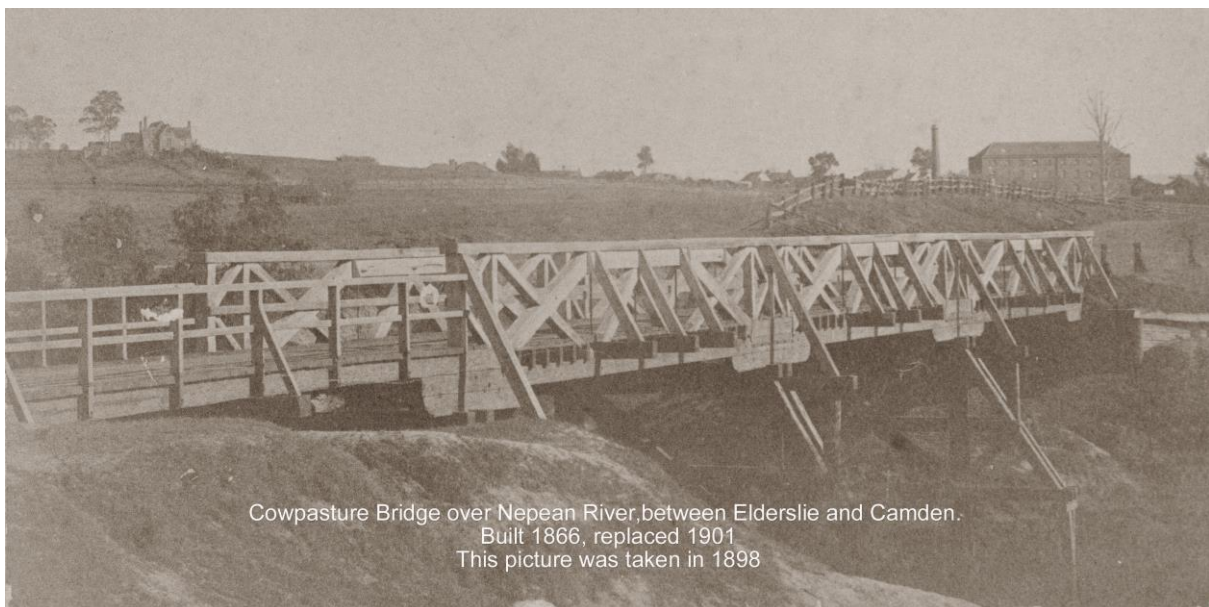


Dr Crookston's House Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden



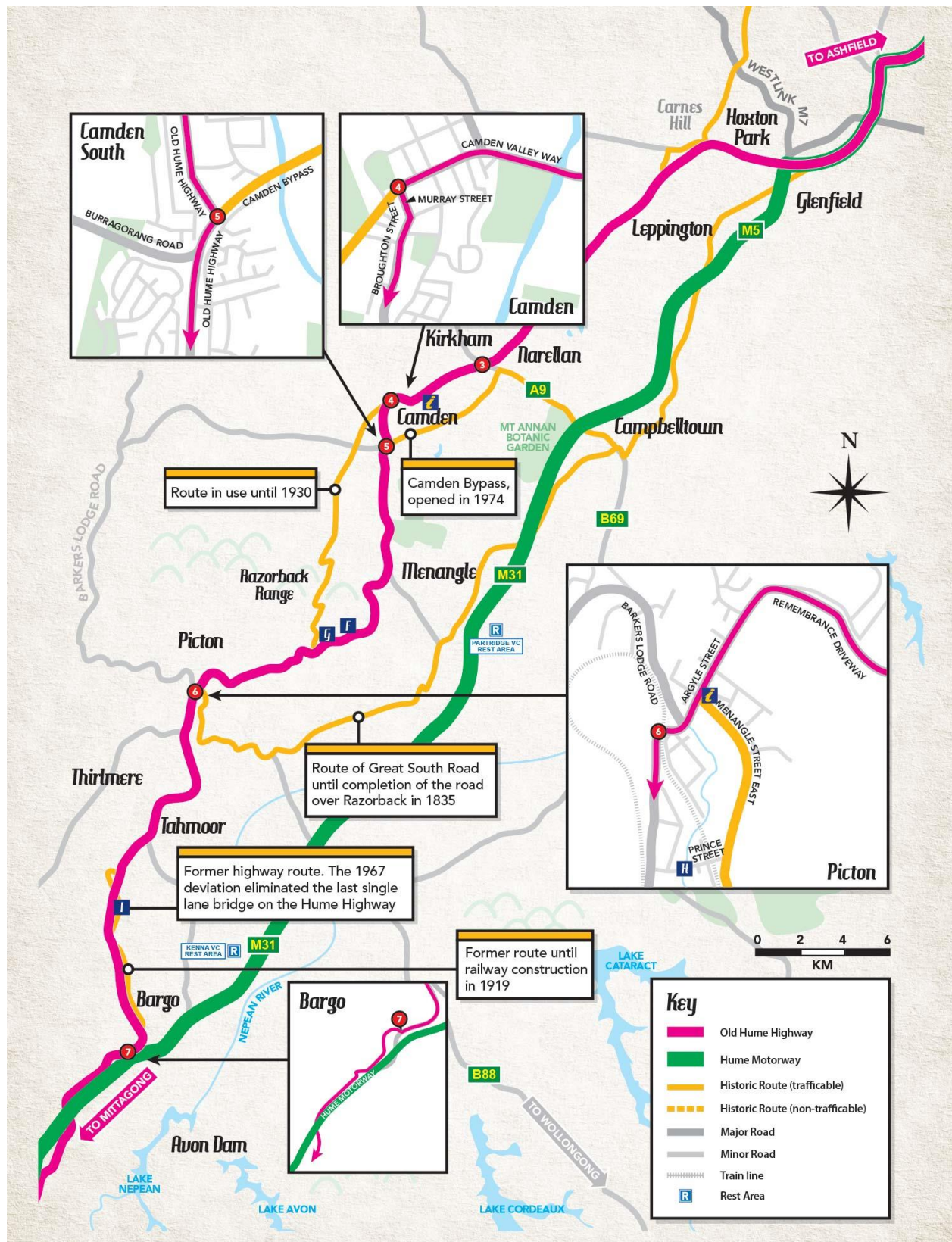
Crown Hotel Argyle Street Camden

Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden



Cowpasture Bridge over Nepean River, between Elderslie and Camden.
Built 1866, replaced 1901
This picture was taken in 1898

Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden



Source: NSW RMS 2019 (b) *Old Hume Highway Route Maps*

Australian and NSW Themes

1. *Tracing the Natural Evolution of Australia: Environment Naturally Evolved* (Nepean River has shaped human life and culture)
2. *Peopling Australia: Migration*
3. *Developing local, regional and national economies: Agriculture; Commerce; Pastoralism; Transport*
4. *Building settlements, town and cities: Towns, suburbs and villages; Land tenure*
7. *Governing: Law and order*
8. *Developing Australia's cultural life: Religion; Social institutions*
9. *Marking the phases of life: Persons*

1881 to 1900

Other progress in the village during this period included commencement of weekly stock sales (1883), the formation in 1885 of the Camden Agricultural, Horticultural and Industrial (A. H and I) Society, the first Camden Show (1886), building of a drill hall which was to become Camden A. H and I Hall (1894), a new post and telegraph office (1898), the foundation of two weekly newspapers (*Camden Times*, 1879; *Camden News*, 1880) and the formation of a fire brigade (1900) (Willis 2008 (b); Atkinson 1988).

Also, Camden was first served by a railway connecting to Campbelltown from 1882 until the line closed on 1 January 1963. On 1 July 1863 the NSW rail line, extended in stages, had reached Menangle and Picton via Campbelltown, bypassing Camden. Camden's steam locomotive, affectionately known as 'Pansy', is on display at the New South Wales Transport Museum at Thirlmere.



Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

The railway station and goods yard were located on the north-eastern corner of the village. The terminus was originally located in Argyle Street between Edward and Elizabeth Streets but was relocated nearby at Edward Street in 1901. A carriage and siding are on display adjacent to Edward

Street. The stationmaster's house is in Elizabeth Street, and now operates as a restaurant. Traces of the original line's route that was elevated due to potential flooding of the Nepean River are still visible looking up Kirkham Lane from Camden Valley Way.

With the coming of Pansy in 1882 entrepreneurs saw opportunities for profitable industries in town that would provide stable employment for its residents.

In the 1880s dairy farming became a main industry. After the deaths of James and William Macarthur, Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow (1840-1911), daughter of James and granddaughter of John and Elizabeth Macarthur, spent time in England studying British dairying methods and the French landlord-tenancy system. Elizabeth used the knowledge to install twelve dairies and a creamery at Camden Park and reorganised its administration in the 1890s. The prosperity of the estate and the village was ensured for the next 50 years through the dairy industry and its innovations. (Willis 2008 (b); Atkinson 1988).

The first cream separators arriving in Australia from 1881 meant that producing cream and butter no longer had to occur on site at the farm. By the late 1880s many milk factories and creameries were operating in New South Wales. During the 1890s Camden Park established four creameries separating milk into cream and skim at Menangle in 1892, Cawdor in 1895, at Mount Hunter in 1896 and at the home farm in 1898. By the end of the 1890s, milk of more than 1,000 cows was delivered each day to Camden Park's four creameries from the estate's share-farmers, Camden Park's tenant farmers and small land owners in the district. A butter factory operated at Menangle from 1883 – 1948 producing the Camden Park brand “Laurel” butter. (Belgenny Farm n.d. (b))



Camden Park, Creamery
Menangle, opened in 1898
Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

On 9 April 1896 the *Camden News* reported, as an important event for the milk producing area, the opening of the *Camden Refrigerating, Butter Making and Bacon Curing Works* and a full description of the works was included in [The] Ulladulla Milton Times (1896). It was described as the most modern equipped factory in Australasia. The factory was located at the Camden station

terminus in Argyle Street, for ease of handling and despatch of produce. It ceased operation due to damage caused by the highest recorded flood of 1898 (Matterson 2022).

By 1867 Sydney was outgrowing its water supply. The Upper Nepean Scheme (1869-1888), which in a modified form is still in use today, was hydraulically engineered (without the advantage of reinforced concrete and using gravity), to harvest water in upland catchment areas, store it in major dams and transport it in canals and pipelines. (WaterNSW n.d.) In 1880 a water canal was constructed through the Macarthur region employing over 1000 men in tent camps (Willis 2015(a), pp.49-51).

Public health was a concern during the 1890s. Townsfolk were forced to draw water from the Nepean River during a dry period in 1893 and Camden Municipal Council began moves to install reticulated water in the town. Camden was connected to town water with the completion in 1899 of the Camden Water Supply Works. Two water troughs were placed at each end of Camden to commemorate and symbolise this progress (Willis 2015(a), p.52).

Local dairy farmers initiated the idea of a Community Hospital after an outbreak of scarlet fever and in 1898 Camden Municipal Council called for its construction. The Mayor offered Edithville (c1898), his home in Mitchell Street. The Cottage Hospital, capable of taking 12 patients nursed by a Matron and supported by local Doctors, opened in April 1899. Collection of funds from the community to build a new Camden Hospital (opened in 1902) was commenced after a public meeting in 1898. On 24 May 1902 Camden Hospital was officially opened on Windmill Hill (now known as Menangle Rd) in Camden by NSW Premier Sir John See. (NSW Health SW Sydney 2012)



Camden Hospital

Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

In 1885 the Camden Woollen Mills were established in Thompson's old flour mills (opposite the rail way station) taking in raw wool to make tweed and woollen goods and providing an additional source of employment until 1899, when they were destroyed by fire (Quiz 1895; SMH 1899). This prompted calls for a Fire Station in Camden and a volunteer fire brigade was formed in 1900 (Willis 2019(a)).

In 1883 a public meeting was held to form the Municipality of Camden, which was proclaimed in 1889.

Pansy's whistle could be heard all over town and marked the arrival of Sydney's newspapers and other goods. Some wealthier Camden families sent their children to high school at Parramatta and Homebush on the train. Tourists from Sydney would alight on Friday afternoon at Camden station to be bussed to their holiday boarding houses in Burragorang Valley (which was flooded by the construction of Warragamba Dam between 1948 and 1960).

Silver had been discovered at Yerranderie in 1871, which became a rich silver field, with Yerranderie Silver Mine opening in 1887. By 1899 a road had been built from Camden across the Burragorang Valley which was used to bring silver ore from Yerranderie and, from the 1930s, coal from the Burragorang Valley mines.

Andrew Garran's successful *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* portrayed Camden, in an engraving, as an idyllic English village surrounded by an ordered farming landscape, accompanied by an account of the exploits of John Macarthur and the foundation of the colonial wool industry (Garran 1886). A local and national mythology and romantic *rural conception* about Camden was evolving, reinforced by community celebrations and many publications including Sibella Macarthur-Onslow's *Some Early Records of the Macarthurs of Camden*. (Willis 2012 (b); Macarthur-Onslow 1914).

The Macarthur family was memorialised through its donation of a clock and bells to St John's Church in 1897 and the gift to the people of Camden of 10 acres for Onslow Park in 1882 (also used as the Camden Show Ground).

Importantly, the Macarthur family in many cases replicated in the Camden township the unique plantings established at Camden Park, which included both newly discovered native trees as well as introduced species. Camden Municipal Council also contributed by planting Pepper Trees in Elizabeth and Mitchell Streets in 1897 for Arbour Day and in 1898 undertook street planting of 150 trees. School students were also routinely involved in tree plantings in the 1890s to celebrate Arbour Day. Systematic historic plantings in the town remain and endow the township with a distinctive character which emphasises its 19th Century townscape. The character is emphasised by Loudon style vegetation patterns evident in the surrounding landscape and hilltop colonial estates. (Cuneo 2016; Willis 2015(a) p. 18, 2016 (b), (c)).

Australian and NSW Themes

3. *Developing local, regional and national economies: Commerce; Environment-cultural landscape*
4. *Building settlements, towns and cities: Towns, suburbs and villages; Land tenure*
6. *Educating: Education*
8. *Developing Australia's cultural life: Creative endeavour; Religion; Social institutions*
9. *Marking the phases of life: Persons*

1901 to 1950

Progress in this period included the opening of a telephone exchange (1910), the installation of reticulated gas (1912) and electricity (1929), the replacement of gas street lighting with electric lights (1932), and a sewerage scheme (1939) (Willis 2008 (b); Atkinson 1988). Building in this period included the Royal Foresters Lodge (1908), Masonic Temple (1926), the Camden Vale Milk Depot (1926), Bank of NSW (1936 Georgian Revival), Dunk House (1937 Art Deco), a block of four flats (1930 Art Deco) and Clinton Motors (1946 Art Deco style).

Martin, the Camden Clerk of Petty Sessions had made the point (*Camden Times* 1883) in his reminiscences that the history of several English counties had been written and that a similar venture was worthwhile for the Camden district. The unique Arcadian nature of Camden as an English-style village surrounded by farmland with prominent vistas of the spire of St John's Church was inspiring reminiscences of its progress and history. These were published in the *Camden Times*, *Camden News*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Town and Country Journal* and in Samuel Hassall's *In Old Australia* (1902) as well as the unpublished reminiscences of Camden businessman Samuel Thompson (1905). (Willis 2022 (a)); Johnson et al 2012).

Social networks and the interests of the landed gentry continued to order daily life in the village. Camden Park remained the largest rural property in the district and dominated both the village and the surrounding area until the 1950s.

In 1905 Mrs. Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow (1840-1911), daughter of James Macarthur, gifted six acres in central Camden for Macarthur Park. The deed of gift required the best English practices and retention of native timbers. Macarthur Park was traditionally designed for promenading and display of gentility. At Onslow Park the lower classes could aspire to the gentlemanly conduct of the gentry, with healthy games from the "old country", such as cricket, which brought out the best in competitors (2006 (a)). Two palm trees planted at the official opening of Macarthur Park on 10th October 1906, at which Elizabeth officiated, can be seen on either side of its main entrance in Menangle Road.

The Yerranderie mine, though some distance to the west, channelled more people and goods through Camden. By 1912 about 40 horse teams competed for the round trip of five days over 42 miles to bring silver ore to the railhead at Camden. In the 1920s motor lorries were able to transport the ore in about 13 hours (Willis 2015(a) p.51; Willis 2006 (a)). Miners left Yerranderie during World War I and long periods of industrial unrest were experienced up until World War

II. Yerranderie became a ghost town by the end of the 1930s and in 2012 Yerranderie Regional Park was created around the remnants of the town and old mining sites (Elder 2016).

In 1906 the Camden Tourist Association joined with the Yerranderie and Burragorang Progress Associations with the aim of boosting tourism through improving the road that had been built in 1899 from Camden into the Burragorang Valley (Willis 2015(a) p.52).

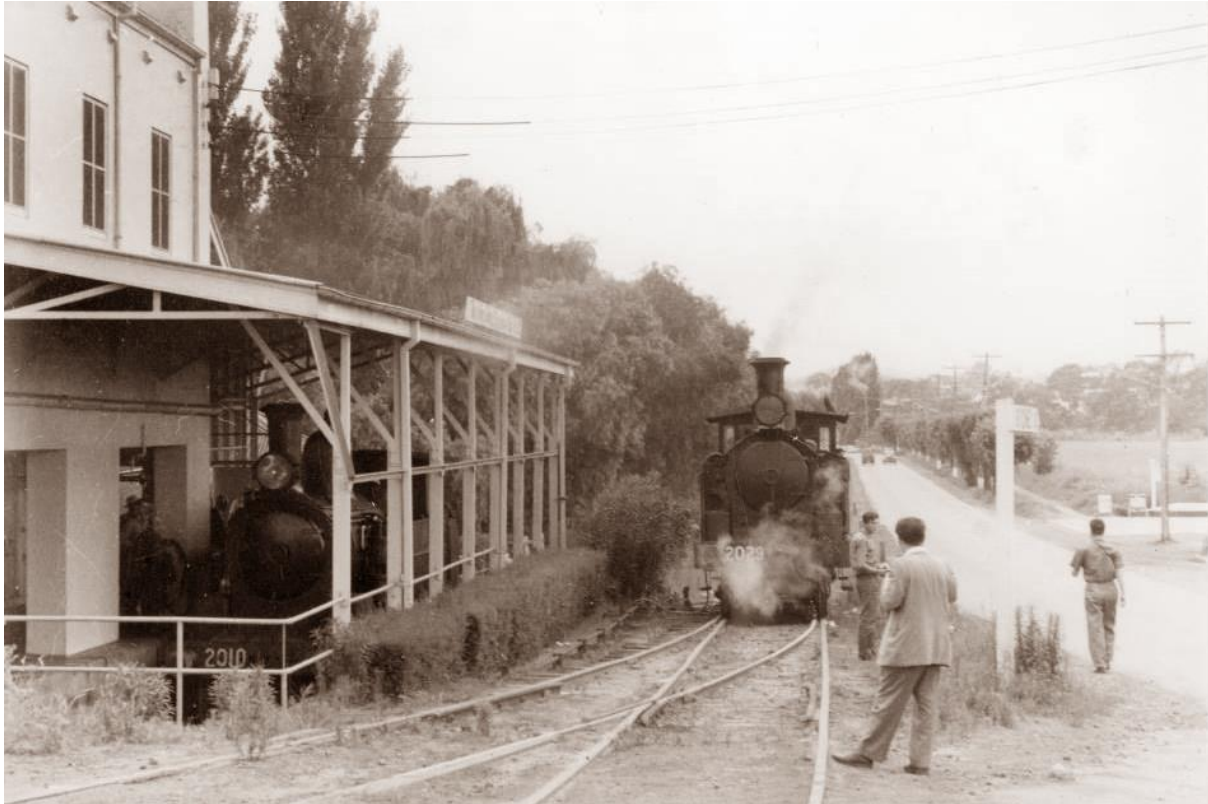
In 1920 the Macarthur family set up the Camden Vale Milk Company, a milk processing and distribution company, with the aim of competing in the Sydney market. Milk came in the form of 'raw', warm straight from the cow and 'cold' from factories where it was pasteurised, bottled and chilled. Camden area produced both types. Between 1920 and 1922 Camden Vale Milk, which became a cooperative in 1921, had 162 milk suppliers and 289 cream suppliers. It processed its milk at its Menangle and Camden factories, railed raw milk to goods yards at Darling Harbour, and also sold bottled milk under its own label from 1926.

In 1926 the foundation stone of the Camden Vale Milk Company depot and processing plant was laid in Edward Street, Camden, by the wife of Francis Arthur Macarthur-Onslow, the company's Managing Director and Mayor of Camden (and son of Elizabeth, granddaughter of John Macarthur (1767- 1834)). In 1928 Camden Vale Milk merged with Dairy Farmers. Milk continued to be delivered throughout Sydney and elsewhere by milkmen in vans advertising *Camden Vale Bottled Milk* (Wheeler 2016).

Camden Vale Milk with the Golden Cap was at a premium in Sydney, and won many prizes at the Camden Show, Maitland Show and Sydney Royal Easter Show. The Macarthur family followed the latest scientific methods of pasture management, herd breeding and TB testing, and milk pasteurisation. Camden Park's dairy interests were the life blood for the district and centred on the processing plant and depot in Edward Street (Willis 2015(a) pp. 88-89). Milk was delivered daily to the Camden factory and railway by horse and cart up until the 1940s (2008 (b)). The heritage listed factory building and its rail siding are still located on the corner of Edward and Argyle Streets.

An automatic rotary milking machine, the Rotolactor, was installed at the Camden Park dairy between 1950 and 1952, which significantly increased the efficiency of the Camden Park dairy operations and remained in use until 1983. The Rotolactor was the largest of its design in Australia and an icon of innovation. By 1965 Camden Park Estate was known as the Australia's largest dairy (Belgenny Farm n.d (d), (f)).

Another historical feature of Camden's development was the turn of the twentieth century establishment by the Chinese of vegetable gardens along the river in Camden which supplied fresh produce to the Macarthur district and Sydney markets (Wrigley J.E n.d.; Elmerhebe 2015a). After World War II labour saving machines, shifting markets and the arrival of Italian farmers who encroached on the Chinese gardeners' operations saw the end of most of the Chinese market gardens across NSW.



Pansy at the Camden Vale milk factory siding on corner of Edward and Argyle Streets.
Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

The Tudor-style Camden Valley Inn on the outskirts of the town was built in 1938 as a milk bar, complete with drive-through, to sell the Camden Vale milk brand from Camden Park.



Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

Because Camden's population lived in a food growing area and a high proportion of the population lived on farms the depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s had less impact than it did in the cities. Camden Park and other big pioneer properties had always operated as benevolent largely self-reliant communities, with low wages compensated for by accommodation and farm produce. The Macarthur family in particular took a personal interest in the welfare and education of its employees and their families.

The development of the coal mines from the 1930s offering high wages changed Camden's economy by reducing its reliance on the rural activities of dairying, cattle grazing, cropping and vegetable production (Wrigley 2007 pp. 32-33). By the end of World War II Camden District was prospering from the wealth created by the Burraborang Valley coalfields.

The community largely considered itself as an outpost of the British Empire. There was strong support for British militarism in the Boer War, World War I, and for the defence of Australia in World War II.

Good works were encouraged not only by Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow from the 1880s but also her daughter Sibella (1871-1943) and daughter-in-law Enid (1867-1952), the granddaughter of Hannibal Hawkins Macarthur who married Elizabeth's son, James Macarthur-Onslow (1867-1946) in 1897. Through their independent means the women were able to tread different paths and so help define the roles of women in the town. They dominated the town socially, culturally and economically and their moral authority and social influence were absolute (Willis 2006 (a)).

Camden's influential Edwardian women, particularly Sibella Macarthur-Onslow C.B.E., great granddaughter of John Macarthur, were wealthy and powerful with extensive transnational networks between Camden, Sydney, Melbourne and London. They were able to provide leadership at a local, state and national level that created new empowering opportunities for Camden women within the otherwise strict confines of rural life (Willis 2013 (d)). Sibella helped to form the *Ladies' Empire Club* in London. She was a founder and deputy president in 1924-43 of the *Victoria League* in New South Wales; president of the *Queen's Club*, Sydney, in 1920 and 1922-25; and active in the *Bush Book Club of New South Wales* and the *National Council of Women of New South Wales*, representing the latter at the 1927 biennial conference of the *International Council of Women* in Geneva. She joined her brother, George (1875-1931) to found the *People's Reform League of New South Wales*, to raise the standard of morality in public life and rallied women about the importance of their vote.

In 1914 Sibella joined the central executive of the New South Wales division of the *British Red Cross Society* and on 14 August 1914, in the week following the outbreak of World War I, in a wave of patriotism for 'the old country' and Australian soldiers, the *Camden Red Cross* was founded. Sibella was involved with the Red Cross from its inception in Australia, including as an executive member of the Central Executive in Sydney and in Menangle and Camden of which she was Secretary or President until her death in 1943 (Simpson 1986).

The place-based nature of the Red Cross branch network provided opportunities for parochial women to make a difference outside their usual duties and the Camden Red Cross was amongst

the highest fundraisers during World War II. Camden district women joined local Red Cross branches and their affiliates in the towns and villages around the colonial estate of the Macarthur family at Camden Park. Social events included hosting visits to the area by servicemen. A 1917 visit of French troops to Camden became a large social event, recorded in a series of photographs, with many people from the area participating and included a lunch held behind the CBC (now NAB) Bank. (Willis 2013 (b)).

Sibella devoted her life to humanitarian issues and played a powerful role in what was a structured and closely controlled community in Camden. In 1911, her mother, Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow, bequeathed Camden Park to Sibella for life (instead of to her older brother James (1867-1946)), due to her capabilities. She combined patriotic good works and fundraising with social activities within a conservative village, which strongly reinforced its social order. She was awarded the Jubilee Medal in 1935 and honoured by King George V as Companion of the British Empire for her services to country and community. Her funeral service was held in St John's Church Camden and a week later a memorial service was conducted by the Archbishop of Sydney in St Andrew's Cathedral. (Wrigley J.D. 2007 p.43; Simpson 1986).

Prominent Camden women continued Sibella's legacy of works with the Red Cross (Mrs Street, Mrs Downes, Mrs Faithful Anderson).

The Camden Show has been an important agricultural event every year since 1886. It has been opened by State Governors, and in 1914 by Australia's Prime Minister Joseph Cook. The 1927 Show was visited by the Duke (later to be King George VI) and Duchess of York and (the later to be) Queen Elizabeth II (in Australia for the opening of Parliament House in Canberra) who were guests of the Macarthur family at Camden Park (Willis 2016 (c); Wrigley 2007 J.D. p.25).

The A. H and I Hall in Onslow Park had been built by the Macarthurs in 1894 as a military drill hall for the local squadron of the volunteer Mounted Rifles militia unit. It is the last surviving feature of the military activity that took place in Camden in the 1880s and 1890s (Mylrea 2005). The Camden Show Society used the hall as required and with the demise of the voluntary army groups the hall came into its ownership. In 1915 a large ceremony, attended by the local member of Parliament, was held to unveil a drinking fountain erected in Onslow Park in honour of the Show's first president, Mr James Chisholm of Gledswood estate. In 1933 memorial gates were added to the show grounds in honour of Brigadier General George Macarthur-Onslow who had served on the Show Society's Committee since 1896. In 1936 improvements were made to the hall in celebration of 50 years of the Camden Show. Particular heritage items in the show grounds include a sandstone water trough for horses (one of two initially installed in Argyle Street in 1899), a timber rotunda shelter built in 1913, wooden fencing and pavilions for showing of livestock.



Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

The community's continuing use of the show grounds and hall demonstrates how an item of heritage can adapt to the needs of the community. An Act of Parliament entitled the *Onslow Park Act No. 43* of 1924 clearly states that the park is to be used for the purposes of public recreation. On the 28 November 2005 Camden Council adopted a specific Plan of Management for Onslow Park and the adjacent Camden Bicentennial Equestrian Park. (Wrigley 2007 pp. 92-93; Camden Council n.d. (b)).

The Macarthur family's quest for innovation and the pursuit of gentleman's past times is exemplified by Sibella's nephew, Edward Macarthur-Onslow, opening a flying school on their family property at Macquarie Grove in 1935. Macquarie Grove remains today as the site of Camden Airport (Willis 2006 (a)). The hangar erected by the Macarthur-Onslow family still stands today as do a number of historic Bellman hangars from World War II, during which the government purchased the site for a RAAF Central Flying School. In 1941 the airport also became a film set for *The Power and the Glory*. Camden also hosted the RAAF 32 Squadron and its members developed a special relationship with the local community. In the post war period airmen from the squadron have had regular reunions, with a number being held in Camden. In May 1987, a 45th anniversary reunion included a remembrance address at the Camden Cenotaph and an ecumenical service at St John's Anglican Church which the organisers stated had been arranged as a special 'thank you' to Camden townsfolk. In February 1992, around 70 squadron members and their families attended the 50th anniversary in Camden, which included a civic reception, the Mayor presenting a citation and granting the squadron membership of the municipality, a march along Argyle Street, a flag-raising ceremony at the John Street intersection, an address at the Camden Cenotaph, an ecumenical service at St John's Anglican Church, a tree-planting and fly-

overs. In 1997, the squadron held its 55th anniversary in Camden with a remembrance ceremony at the Camden cenotaph and its 60th anniversary was commemorated by a tree planting ceremony in Macarthur Park. (Willis 2014 (b); Willis 2017 (a)). On 6 December 2015 the 303 Squadron, a unit of the Australian Air Force Cadets based at Camden Airport, exercised their Freedom of Entry to Camden at a special ceremony and parade through Argyle Street (Camden Council 2015 (c)). Today the airport is also used for light aircraft flying training, private flying, sports aviation, gliding and ballooning.

The completion of the construction of the Cataract Dam in 1908 required that downstream farmers along the Nepean River be compensated for loss of their natural riparian rights by building of weirs, which are now controlled by the Sydney Water Board. The flow of the Nepean River has also been affected by the building of dams in the Upper Nepean catchment (the newest being the Nepean Dam completed in 1935) and by the building of Warragamba Dam (in the 1950s) across the steep gorge of the Warragamba River, the Nepean's major tributary, to meet the needs of the growing Sydney metropolitan area. (Wrigley 2007 pp. 44-45; Willis 2012(a), 2015(e))

The most well-known weir is Camden Weir which creates the body of water, highly appreciated for its recreational value, between the Cowpastures Bridge and Macarthur Bridge alongside the Camden bike path.

The Camden Aquatic Sports carnival was organised in 1909 and attracted over 1000 spectators, and this was the location of the Camden Swimming Club in the 1920s. There were two popular swimming holes at Kings Bush Reserve and Little Sandy, where the Australian Army first built the footbridge during World War II.



Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

Another weekly newspaper, the *Camden Advertiser*, was first published in 1935 but printed at Parramatta by Cumberland Newspapers whereas the *Camden News* was printed in Argyle Street, Camden.

During the Second World War the steam locomotive, Pansy, provided transport for many servicemen (Army, RAAF) who were based at local military establishments. Airmen from Camden airfield would catch the train to Sydney for weekend leave, joined by soldiers from Narellan military base and Studley Park Eastern Command Training School. (Willis 2010). As tensions rose along the coast in 1942, accommodation was at a premium for women and children in Camden. In 1942 plans were drawn up for a scorched earth evacuation from Camden through the Burratorang Valley (Willis 2006 (b), 2021 (c))

A prominent identity, Albert Baker, formed the Camden Soccer club in 1943 for organised sport between the servicemen stationed around Camden and locals, but struck a problem because Camden's conservatism had resulted in a ban on Sunday sport in Onslow Park since 1925. The ban was overturned by referendum, supported by St John's Church, as Council felt it was too sensitive an issue for it to handle (Willis 2021(a)).

The voluntary Australian Women's Land Army arrived in Camden to replace the male farm workers who were engaged in the war, and many worked at Camden Park producing food for the war effort. At the end of the war the Commonwealth Post-War Reconstruction helped establish two factories in the A H and I Hall and the Forester's Hall.

Camden's proximity to Sydney and rural picturesque nature has led to a number of movies being made in the area. Early ones include *Silks and Saddles* (1920) and *On Our Selection* (1932). Camden's rural setting also attracted artists, writers and poets including poet Hugh McRae OBE (1876-1958) and architect, artist and author Hardy Wilson (1881-1955).

Australian and NSW Themes

1. *Tracing the natural evolution of Australia: Environment Naturally Evolved* (Nepean River has shaped human life and culture)
3. *Developing local, regional and national economies: Agriculture; Commerce; Environment-cultural landscape; Events; Industry; Pastoralism; Science; Transport*
4. *Building Settlements, Towns and Cities: Towns, suburbs and villages*
7. *Governing: Defence*
8. *Developing Australia's cultural life: Religion; Social institutions*
9. *Marking the phases of life: Persons*

1951 to 2010

Camden and its surrounds continue to be used as film settings for instance in *Smiley* (1956), *Smiley Gets a Gun* (1958), *My Brilliant Career* (1979), *X-Men Origins Wolverine* (2009), *The Sapphires* (2011), *A Place to Call to Home* series (from 2012), *Unbroken* (2014) and *The Daughter* (2015).

Until the 1950s the Macarthur family clearly dominated Camden and the Camden township was the social and cultural hub of settlement in the Camden area, including smaller villages such as Yerranderie, Burragorang Valley, The Oaks, Oakdale, Elderslie and Narellan. Many large estates that the town serviced are listed on the State Heritage Register: Camden Park (SHR 00341), Camden Park Estate and Belgenny Farm (SHR 01697), Camelot (SHR 00385), Denbigh (SHR 01691), Gledswood (SHR 01692) Harrington Park ((SHR 01773), Brownlow Hill (SHR 01489), Kirkham stables and precinct (SHR 01411), Oran Park (SHR 01695), Orielton (SHR 01693), Studley Park (SHR 00389) and Macquarie Grove (SHR 00493).

The newly formed Camden Rotary Club (1947) and Camden Community Centre commissioned the University of Sydney to undertake a sociological survey of the town which was followed up in 1952 by sociologists Jack and Beth Mason from the University of Kansas City. Despite the passing of more than a century it was established that a five-tier social structure existed which had its origins in the colonial period and the Cowpasture patriarchs (Willis 2015 (e)).

In the post war era the growth of the town, increasing levels of education, and economic prosperity provided by the local coal industry, broke down many of the old hierarchies and challenged the existing political power structures.

In 1946 the decision to construct Warragamba Dam in the Burragorang Valley affected the district as farming towns and coal mines would be lost. The town of Burragorang was established in 1827 as a mining town, and mining in the Valley grew in 1878 with the establishment of the Nattai mine and in the 1930s, with the Clinton and Fox families establishing mines. Construction of the dam commenced in 1948 and was completed in 1960. The Burragorang Valley's boarding houses and camping grounds remained busy with tourists until 1958 when the valley was flooded. Valley families relocated, many into the Camden area.

Burragorang Valley coal mining ramped up after the war, providing employment and supplying Sydney power stations, hospitals, woollen mills, brickworks and Port Kembla Steel works. The growth of coal mining put pressure on housing and additional housing was constructed in Edward Street and Alpha Road, within what was to become in 2010 the (local) Conservation area, and Chellaston and Little Streets on its edges. By 1960 there were 150 mineworkers living in the town, but the isolation of the mines themselves preserved the town's rural and historic character (Willis 2015(a), pp. 109-112). By 2001 all coal mining near the Burragorang Valley had ceased (Robinson, S 2001).

In 1962, at the southern entrance to the town, Camden Rotary Club erected a mural on sandstone blocks salvaged from St Paulina's Church in Burragorang Valley cleared as part of the Warragamba Dam project. The mural commemorates the original inhabitants, the early settlers

and birthplace of the Australian wool industry and tells the story of Camden's indigenous culture and its farming and mining heritage.

Camden became isolated whenever the river was in flood, which was impractical for coal trucks and through traffic along the section of the Hume Highway which was also Camden's main street (Argyle Street). The long Macarthur Bridge was opened upstream from the Cowpasture Bridge in 1973, creating a flood-free bypass around Camden which was further bypassed in December 1980 by the South Western Freeway. Physically and culturally the floodplain has defined the Camden township which continues to embrace its historical function of servicing the local communities.

In 1977 a wagon wheel was erected by the Camden Historical Society to celebrate the teamsters who brought silver ore from Yerranderie through the Burragorang Valley to the Camden railhead in Edward Street. In 1978 a heavy horse-drawn farm wagon was located outside the council chambers in John Street to memorialise Camden's agricultural heritage. In 1979, a water trough (one of a pair originally in Argyle Street) was added to these civic monuments to commemorate when the town was connected to reticulated water in 1899. Each of these monuments recall the values of the frontier; tenacity, stoicism, ruggedness, individualism, adaptability and Britishness (Willis 2015 (e)).

Although the Nepean River created problems of flooding, with which Camden has had to cope through its long history, it was also a natural focal point for social gatherings along its banks with regattas, fishing and swimming. Today, scenic focal points can be easily accessed from the bike path that follows the river from near Cowpasture Bridge to Elizabeth Macarthur Road near Macarthur's Belgenny Farm. Kings Bush along the bike path contains remnant Cumberland Plain Woodland (Willis 2021(d); Cuneo 2016).

Competition from road transport hastened the demise of the Camden railway, Pansy making her last trip on New Year's Day 1963 with over 500 passengers.

Community organisations like *Rotary* and later the *Chamber of Commerce* (1970) fostered business networks in the town. Ownership of the town's pioneering past was taken up by the *Camden Historical Society* (1957) and the threat of over-development to the town's cultural identity by the *Camden Residents' Action Group* (1973). In 2008 the Camden local government area had over 250 voluntary organisations helping create the social capital that encourages community participation (Willis 2008 (b)).

In 1973 the *Three Cities Structure Plan* of the State Government, for a major city complex incorporating Camden, Appin and Campbelltown, gave the green light to developers. A move to have the historic property of Camden Park turned over to housing was covered in the media and generated questions in state and federal parliaments. Eventually the State Government purchased much of Camden Park farmland in 1988 and a large area and homestead continues to be owned and occupied by the Macarthur family. In 1990, under the NSW Government Department of Primary Industries, the acquisition became the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute incorporating Belgenny Farm, which promotes itself as the birthplace of Australian agriculture.

Belgenny Farm is used for functions and the Friends of Belgenny Farm, which has as its president a member of the Macarthur family, manage heritage tourism.

In the town itself developers demolished the Royal Hotel (1841), replacing it with a different style single story building which contrasted bluntly with the other hotels in the streetscape. Medium density housing was proposed around St John's Church, and this was resisted by the community led by the Camden Residents' Action Group (CRAG).

The Land and Environment Court (1996) ruled in favour of Council against a development application by Gledhill Constructions for an aged persons' home in the vicinity of St John's Church. The Honourable Justice M L Pearlman AM, stated:

"It is abundantly clear that the Camden Township represents a particularly significant and sensitive heritage site in which conservation, involving reuse of buildings or land, must necessarily be approached with considerable care."

Camden District Hospital continued to grow and by 1985 the hospital was providing network services to the greater community of Macarthur. In 1990 a Day Unit and Aged Care and Rehabilitation Centre opened. The University Medical Clinics of Camden/Campbelltown (UMCCC) were established in 2008 and in 2010 a new eight-bed Karitane Residential Family Care Unit was opened. Camden Hospital benefits from strong community support from groups such as the United Hospital Auxiliary Camden, Palliative Care Volunteer Network, Rotary Clubs, and the wider community (NSW Health SW Sydney 2012).

The Camden area was targeted in 1973 as a growth area under the Macarthur Three Cities Plan. This galvanised the community to fight to retain its heritage and tourism potential. Dr Elizabeth Kernohan (1939-2004), a researcher and later Director of University of Sydney Farms, opposed the Three Cities Plan, which prompted her to stand for election to Camden Municipal Council based on the platform of retention of Camden's character. Camden Residents' Action Group, formed in 1973, and the community at large welcomed her community advocacy and embraced her political platform. She was elected onto Camden Council in 1973, remaining until 1991 (with two terms as Mayor) when she was then elected as member for Camden holding the Liberal party seat for 11 years until her political retirement in 2003 (Willis 2005, 2008 (a); 2013 (a)). She was also a founding member of the Camden Art Prize Committee (1975), as well as an active member of the State Emergency Services, Camden Show Society, Camden Justices Association, Camden Theatre Group, and other local organisations. For Kernohan progress was represented by groups like CRAG, which received her strong support, because they respected historical links that strengthen a community's sense of belonging and participation as well as the town's sense of place (Willis 2005).

Community organisations have been part of the political processes in Camden from its beginnings and have arguably provided the basis for democratic community representation in decisions. The population of the local government area of Camden increased, with new retail developments in nearby Narellan on the other side of the river keeping apace, particularly with the opening in 1995 of the Narellan Town Centre (with 36 retail outlets and 1200 car parking spaces). Business interests in Camden led by the Camden Chamber of Commerce, campaigned for a decked car park

promoting the argument that it would attract customers away from Narellan to the old town. A feasibility study was conducted in 2002 and Council approved the John/Murray Street site (2003) near St John's Church, which was the site favoured by the Chamber of Commerce. The major stakeholder was Camden Council, as the owner, operator, financier, planner, and consent authority for the proposal. As the Council needed loan funds beyond its budget it had to seek ministerial approval from the Department of Local Government, which demanded further community consultation in 2003 and a public exhibition period. The overall community did not feel the same way as the Chamber of Commerce, and the Camden Historical Society and CRAG had grave reservations about the impact of such a large structure on the human scale, nineteenth century townscape. Council commissioned a heritage architect, Clive Lucas Stapleton, who reported that the decked car park would compromise the integrity of the *"most intact country town on the Cumberland Plain"*. The report had not been made publicly available. The personal contact networks developed by the leaders of the community organisations facilitated dissemination of the heritage information and access to local politicians and the media, which led to the car park proposal being abandoned in 2006. (Willis 2007).

In December 2004 the NSW government announced a Sydney metropolitan strategy of growth areas for new land releases in SW and NW Sydney. The SW Growth Area includes northern areas of Camden LGA which has seen the growth of new population centres, particularly Oran Park and Leppington.

In 2004 a move by some Councillors sought to remove heritage controls over heritage listed buildings on the basis that they cost too much to preserve and that owners should have the option to build a new heritage style property in its place. They also sought to resist the listing of another 63 heritage properties. This led to a counter move and in January 2005 community groups supported a draft heritage report recommending the confirmation of 86 heritage items and the listing of 63 new items including the creation of two heritage conservation areas, Camden township and Struggle Town in Narellan. The Heritage Report was adopted by Council in December 2006. Camden Residents' Action Group argued that significant economic benefits would likely flow from heritage conservation and that the appeal of Camden as a place to live and visit would be substantially enhanced by the heritage provisions in the draft Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP). Both instruments are currently in force, being legislated and adopted in 2010 and 2011 (updated 2019) respectively.

Australian and NSW Themes

- 1. Tracing the natural evolution of Australia: Environment Naturally Evolved*
- 3. Developing local, regional and national economies: Agriculture; Commerce; Environment-cultural landscape; Events; Industry; Pastoralism; Transport*
- 4. Building settlements, town and cities: Towns, suburbs and villages*
- 7. Governing: Government and administration*
- 8. Developing Australia's cultural life: Religion; Social institutions*
- 9. Marking the phases of life: Persons*

2011 to 2023

Although the need to retain adequate access to rural areas for the people of Sydney was a major tenet of twentieth century town planning, the attempt to isolate an area zoned as the “Green Belt” in the post-war County of Cumberland Plan failed against the suburban expansion of Sydney. The collapse of the green belt opened Camden and other rural towns to further landscape evolution through residential and industrial developments.

Camden is generally recognised as highly significant in NSW cultural history as a rare surviving representation of early colonial settlement through federation to current times. Although on the fringe of Sydney’s growth, unlike many colonial towns it has not been lost to later planning.

In 2015 the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) was constituted to provide advice and recommendations to the Minister in relation to its objectives, amongst others, of leading the orderly development of the Greater Sydney Region and promoting the supply of housing. District Plans were formulated upon consultation with communities (GSC 2015). In November 2016 the draft SW District Plan (GSC 2016) was released which featured Camden on its cover page and included the following statement and Priority about Camden Town Centre:

Camden Town Centre enjoys exceptional heritage significance and a distinctive local character that has long been valued by the community. Its town centre is a highly attractive location for local businesses and new residents from the growing communities elsewhere in the South West District, who are drawn to Camden’s heritage, character and high amenity. The popularity of Camden Town Centre means that the pressure to develop new homes and businesses needs to be managed carefully, so that the heritage values, amenity and the unique character of the centre are maintained. (p. 113)

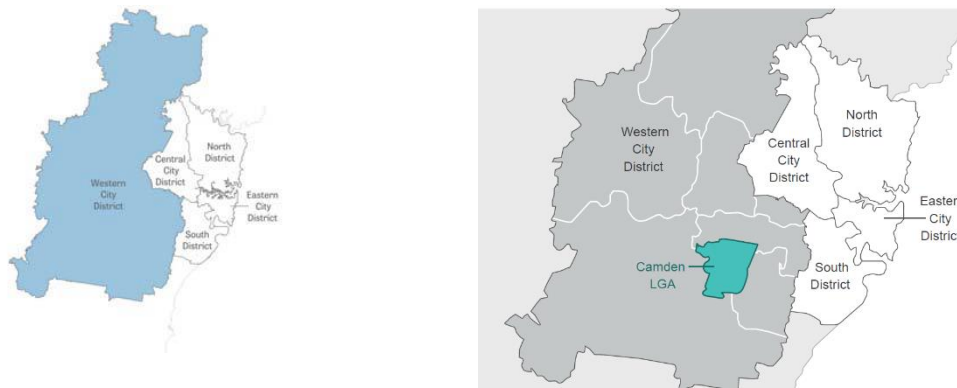
Liveability Priority 7: Conserve heritage and unique local characteristics

Relevant planning authorities should:

- *protect Aboriginal, cultural and natural heritage and places, spaces and qualities valued by the local community*
- *require the adaptive re-use of historic and heritage listed buildings and structures in a way that enhances and respects heritage values*
- *protect the heritage values of Camden Town Centre and consider how its amenity and character can be maintained.*

How these matters have been taken into account is to be demonstrated in any relevant planning proposal. (p. 115)

This specific acknowledgement of the 1840 town’s exceptional heritage significance was lost in 2018 when the draft SW plan was amalgamated with other district plans into the Western City District (WCD) Plan. This adopted WCD Plan takes in an extensive area to the north, west and south of inner Sydney, as shown below (GSC 2018) with Camden LGA a small proportion (Camden Council 2020).



The WCD does refer to historic and picturesque towns such as Camden and states *Camden town centre's heritage is founded by its associations with Australia's early agricultural industries, including the wool industry, and its role in early colonial settlement.* (p. 54)

To implement the WCD Plan, each local Council was required to prepare a Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) that aligned with it. Camden Council (2020) in its LSPS acknowledges the need to preserve the historic significance of Camden Town Centre. For instance, it (p. 25) prioritises celebrating and respecting Camden's proud heritage and states:

Camden Town Centre was established as part of the agricultural expansion of the early settlement of Sydney, being one of Sydney's oldest towns. The local community holds Camden Town Centre in high regard for its attractive streets, beautiful heritage buildings, and rural village feel. (p. 14)

Camden Town Centre's traditional main street layout that is framed by an extensive selection of historic buildings, and the burgeoning food and hospitality scene offer a unique visitor experience. The retention and preservation of urban and rural heritage items that tell nationally important stories offer the potential for heritage-based tourism across the LGA. (p. 65)

The visionary town plan of the Macarthur brothers and Sir Thomas Mitchell remains intact with the Camden town centre largely retaining its historic and visible presence in the surrounding landscape. Although towns close to Sydney such as Windsor, Campbelltown and Penrith retain substantial buildings of the period, whatever spatial relationship their town centres had with the surrounding land is being or has been developed away.

Despite the Camden town centre's local heritage listing as a conservation area and heritage protections in place in Camden LEP and DCP the town is often threatened by proposals for inappropriate development that would degrade its significance. The Camden community remains on the front line of the ongoing fight to save Camden's irreplaceable heritage.

Most recently the community has rallied to protect the Camden Town Centre Heritage Conservation Area and St John's Anglican Church Precinct, designed by James and William Macarthur to the aesthetic and spiritual focus of the town.

In November 2016, it became public knowledge that St John's Anglican Church intended to sell approximately two-thirds of the historic Church Precinct, the glebe or horse paddock and the

Rectory. The funds were to be used to build a 400-set worship centre next to the iconic 1849 Church. This would be a cultural and heritage loss not only to the historic Precinct but also the town, the Camden community and the people of NSW. Subject to a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) since 2004, St John's Anglican Church Precinct, is the aesthetic and spiritual focus of the original Macarthur 1836 design for the town. Within and overlooking the Camden township on St John's Hill, this Precinct includes the church, rectory, cemetery, two parish halls set in historic landscaped grounds. The 1849 Church has been described as perhaps the finest single example of early Gothic Revival architecture in Australia (Clive Lucas Stapleton and Partners 2004, s. 1.1). Within the local Heritage Conservation Area, the ridge on the southern side of the town is topped by Menangle Road, the original road via the gatehouse (now located on the Old Hume Highway) between Camden Park House on Macarthur's property and St John's Church and the town.

Throughout 2017 and 2018, the Community rallied and sought advocacy against Anglican plans to sell the Rectory and horse paddock to raise funds for a new 400-seat worship centre next to the 1849 Church. In April 2017, the President of the National Trust and Heritage Architect vowed to help however he could to save the Precinct (Layt 2017). In May 2017 the National Trust (2017) published its position paper opposing the sale.



*Horse paddock from Menangle Road towards Church.
Source: Camden Residents' Action Group flyer. Photo: Charles Cowell*

A former Warden on behalf of the community nominated the Church Precinct for state listing and it was placed on the State Heritage Register (No. 02006) on 24 August 2018. The registration exempted a DA approved in 2012 for an extension to the 1973 Church Hall. The community had no memory of this DA. The community believes the 2012 DA is a mistake of due process in that the people of Camden were not properly and widely consulted, and in any case was approved by a majority of councillors under different circumstances. A policy of the CMP is that St John's Church remain the main place of worship in Camden, and the Church has served the community over generations.

In September 2018, Moran Group entered into an option to purchase the Rectory and horse paddock for \$7.7m to develop seniors' housing on the Precinct (McGookin 2018).

It was generally understood in the community, that the Macarthur land gifts in establishing the town were for the people of Camden forever. Much research was undertaken into the Macarthur gifts to the Anglican church including the trust deeds and caveats on the land.

CRAG sought legal advice (dated 20 April 2020) which found that the Church has not established any legal basis whatever which would give it the right to vary the trusts or to sell any part of the Precinct.

Correspondence was entered into with the Sydney Diocese and St John's ministry. The Church called a public meeting at which the community loudly voiced its opposition, to no avail (McGill 2017).

On 1 July 2021 St John's ministry announced that the Moran Group had not renewed the purchase option.

On 23 August 2021 and 1 June 2022, the community was notified that the Anglican Church had lodged a modification and a revised modification respectively to a DA approved in 2012 for alterations and extensions to a 1973 Church Hall. The resurrected DA was for a new build of a 400-seat worship centre at an approximate cost of \$8m. The community was not aware of the 2012 DA, which was found to be exempted in the gazettal of the 2018 state heritage listing.

A GIPA Request revealed that the 2012 consent conditions had not been followed with no certifier having been appointed and no construction certificate issued. CRAG on behalf of the community sought legal advice (dated 9 October 2022), which was that the DA had rightly lapsed, and was not available for modification. Camden Council recommended approval and sought its own legal advice which was not made public. The Local Planning Panel on the recommendation of Camden Council approved the modification to the 2012DA. A GIPA Request for Council's legal advice was refused.

The community maintains that any development on the Precinct requires a new DA to be publicly exhibited and assessed rigorously in terms of its State listing and CMP Policies.

The threat to the state significant Precinct remains current in 2023. The Church has an active sales ordinance in place for the Rectory and horse paddock, which if sold for development could fund the 400-seat worship centre. The community remains on high alert to any potential sale of Precinct property (Camden Residents' Action Group Inc 2023).



Source: NBRS Architecture 25 March 2022 *Architectural Plans St John's Anglican Church Precinct*
Artist Impression from Broughton Street

Camden's heritage today

Today, Camden, described in tourism information as an historic country town on the Cumberland Plain, sits at the rural-urban fringe of the Sydney metropolitan area.

The town's agricultural heritage remains evident in the operating livestock sale yards in Edward Street, the Town Farm, community gardens, weekly farmers' market, agricultural outlets, Equestrian centre and Camden Show which uses as its slogan "Still a Country show".

The heritage of the dairy industry within Camden town itself is apparent in the Camden Vale Milk Depot and its railway siding in Edward Street and the Town Farm, previously a dairy farm, in Exeter Street. Within the district the importance of the dairy industry is evidenced by the operation, since 1959, of The Dairy Research Foundation, and its annual dairy research symposium at the University of Sydney's Camden campus and the nearby historic town of Menangle (1863), also linked with the Macarthurs and their early dairying activities. Dairying remains in the area but is less economically important due to high production costs and milk quotas. Furthermore, attractive offers from land developers have led to the demise of many small, family dairy farms (increasingly replaced by large dairy companies).

Camden's grid pattern of streets remains as originally designed and contains a mix of commercial, educational, religious, residential and industrial uses, as it did in the 1840s. In 2015 working bells were installed in the bell tower of St Paul's Church to replace the poor-quality bells installed in 1987. St Paul's is the 59th church in Australia to have bells installed and one of few Catholic churches across Sydney with a peal of bells to announce hours of prayer, funerals and celebrations such as weddings. Church bells are somewhat rare in Australia, compared to England with more

than 5000 churches having bells (Elmerhebe 2015 (b)). St Paul's joins St John's Anglican Church which had bells installed in 1897 by the Macarthur family.

Within the township, which is in its entirety a locally listed Heritage Precinct, there is a long list of locally listed heritage buildings. Camden Post Office in Argyle Street is on the Commonwealth Heritage Register. As well as St John's Anglican Church Precinct, Nant Gwylan and Garden, the home of the original owner of the town dairy farm in Exeter Street, is state listed.

One reason for the current historic nature of Camden is the large number of early pioneer families who continue to live and work in the area, often in the same business. Many have played an influential role in the development of the town, as illustrated by the Furner family. Charles Furner purchased land in the township in 1840 and his son, also Charles, built many of the buildings in the town including the School of Arts and the Flour Mill. His son Walter followed in his father's footsteps and built the CBC Bank (now NAB) on the corner of John and Argyle Streets, the Police Station and Dr Crookston's House in John Street. His son George followed with many buildings including the old Methodist Church and the Show Society Hall. Percy Furner was the proprietor of Furner Brothers Hardware, Merchants, Tinsmiths and Plumbing Supplies in Argyle Street for many years. Many from the Furner family have participated in the life of the town including as Mayor and Alderman. Other notable long-time family names still prominent in the town today include Taplin, English, Whiteman, Boardman and Inglis as well as German immigrant families such as Bruchhauser, Feld and Thurn. Greater detail is available in the Camden pioneer register¹ (Camden Area Family History Society Inc. 2008).

Many other families have lived for generations in the Camden district with Camden as their social hub. Social networking has continued and remains as a dominant characteristic of Camden, made durable by the cultural aspects and functions of buildings located within the original grid pattern of the 1840s town. It has been reinforced and continued through to contemporary times by activities of schools, churches, town farm, equestrian centre, sales at the livestock saleyards in Edward Street, the Camden Show in Onslow Park and other cultural activities organised by the many community organisations.

A cafe culture has also arisen in recent years which also reinforces one of Camden's principal 'country town' characteristics of community cohesion.

The cultural pattern of Camden's history resonates through its legacy of place names in the local landscape and the pervasive Macarthur presence. The original grid pattern of the village named Camden (after Colonial Secretary Lord Camden, Macarthur's early patron) include streets named John, Elizabeth and Edward (Macarthur), Oxley (named after John Oxley, early explorer, Camden land grantee and NSW Surveyor General), Mitchell (named after Surveyor General of Camden, Sir Thomas Mitchell), Murray (named after Macarthur's surveyor), Exeter (named after John Macarthur's home town in Devonshire, Broughton (named after the Bishop who laid the foundation stone of St John's Church), and parks named Macarthur Park and (Macarthur) Onslow

¹ Camden Area Family History Society Inc 2008 *Camden pioneer register: 1800-1920* Available at <https://nla.gov.au/nla-cat-vn4555808>

Park. Oxley Cottage at Elderslie, a typical workers cottage, thought to have been built as part of a row of similar cottages on the road into Camden near the Cowpasture Bridge, is home to Camden's tourist information. The Nepean River is named after Lord Evan Nepean, British Undersecretary for the Home Department who was involved in the despatch of the first fleet and administration of the NSW penal colony.

A complex in John Street is home to Camden Library (including its Camden Local Studies), Camden Historical Society (including its Research and Writers Group), Camden Area Family History Society and Camden Museum. The museum tells the story of the history of the Camden district through exhibited stories, collections and displays including a large collection of Aboriginal and European artefacts donated by families of the town and district, many of whom have lived in Camden for up to eight generations. Camden farming including dairying (early hand tools) and wine history (old wooden grape crusher and press) is represented (Wrigley J. D. 2007 pp. 8-9). On the 14 October 2022, Heritage NSW installed a Camden Red Cross Blue Plaque at the Camden Library to acknowledge and share the history of the vital role that Camden Red Cross wartime sewing circles played on the home front during First and Second World Wars. On 4 November 2023, a function was held at the Camden Museum to open an exhibition of and to honour the groundbreaking scientific and medical work into the bionic ear of Camden son, Professor Graeme Clark.

Camden is a heritage and tourist destination within easy reach of Sydney (for instance see Fitzsimons 2014; Willis 2008 (a), 2023(b) (c); SMH Travel 2004; Camden Council 2023 (a) (b)); .idcommunity n.d.). Camden Museum in John Street is the second most visited tourist destination after Mount Annan Botanical Gardens and its visitor book contains many names from overseas. The number of international visitors to Camden is poised to increase with the scheduled completion in 2026 of the nearby Nancy Bird Walton International Airport.

The town's cultural significance is evidenced through the collection and preservation of historical material by the Camden Museum, Camden Historical Society and Camden Family History Society. It is also evidenced by the considerable number of historical writings, studies and other documentation amassed about the town and including Camden History Notes, Camden Images and Camden Voices as included in the reference list of this study. For an additional list of newspaper and journal articles, books, theses and other studies and audio-visual documentation see Willis 2015 (b).

The heart of the original 1805 land grant is home to the descendants of John and Elizabeth Macarthur, including Camden Park House and gardens and remains an active farm with annual dairy production of over 2 million litres of milk and poultry production of around 450,000 chickens. Camden continues to exhibit characteristics of its colonial heritage as a privately founded English-style village on the estate of Camden Park, its farming economy, its rural landscape, its Britishness and imperial linkages, and many parallels with the closed estate villages of nineteenth-century England.

Australian and NSW Themes

- 3. Developing local, regional and national economies: Environment- cultural landscape*
- 4. Building settlements, towns and cities: Towns, suburbs and villages*
- 7. Governing: Government and administration*

Camden township has a strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (Criterion b)

Camden township meets this criterion of State significance because of its strong, special and enduring association with the lives and works of the pioneer Macarthur family and medical researcher and inventor, Professor Graeme Clark.

Macarthur family's importance in NSW History

From the earliest days of the colony, as covered in greater detail below under *Macarthur Family in NSW history 1790-1840*, the Macarthur family were prominent in NSW in pastoralism, politics, governing and in founding the wool, wine and horticultural industries.

The township, south-west of Sydney, is within traditional lands used as an important cultural meeting place, by the Dharawal, the Dharug, and the Gundungurra peoples. It was situated within fertile Cowpastures land, the first grant of which was made in 1805 to John Macarthur (1767-1834) on which John and Elizabeth Macarthur (nee Veale, 1766-1850) and their family founded Camden Park.

Sons, James (1798-1867) and William (1800-1882), began the foundation of Camden township on Camden Park in 1835. The Macarthurs are strongly and specially associated with the Camden township as its founders, benefactors and leaders.

The significance of the social, economic and political contributions of John and Elizabeth Macarthur and family to NSW and Australia is undoubted and well documented (for instance see ABC 2002; Atkinson 1988; Camden Park House n.d.(a)(b)(c); Conway 1967; Garran 1886; Heyden 1967; Hill 1974; NSW Department of Primary Industry n.d; Simpson 1986; Teale 1974; Willis 2006(a); 2015(a) pp. 24-31).

The life of John Macarthur is a particularly colourful part of the early colony history. The contribution of his wife Elizabeth to the agricultural development of Australia is well recognised. Sons, James and William, and granddaughter Elizabeth were also entrepreneurs who made very significant contributions to the wool industry, horticulture, wine industry and dairying.

Some notable illustrations of the family's significance include: in 1966 John Macarthur's image and the merino ram appeared on the first Australian \$2 note; in 1949 the Federal electoral Division of Macarthur, until recently, taking in Camden, was named in honour of John and Elizabeth Macarthur; in 1934 the centenary of John Macarthur's death was commemorated with a series of postage stamps.





Extract Sydney Morning Herald 12 October, 1934

John Macarthur is also a character in Eleanor Dark's semi-fictional Australian classic trilogy *The Timeless Land* (1941) and features in American writer Naomi Novik's fantasy novel *Tongues of Serpents* (2010).

Such has been the Macarthur's influence that what is today known as the Macarthur Region includes the local government areas of Camden, Campbelltown and Wollondilly, extending from the foothills of the Blue Mountains to the Southern Highlands.

Macarthur Family and Camden Park

John and Elizabeth and their two younger sons James and William built up Camden Park into a property which was a nationally acclaimed sheep station and an experimental farm that increased knowledge of farming in Australian conditions through its open inspection days (Camden Park House n.d. (a)). The Macarthurs are the acknowledged pioneers of the Australian wool industry, which sustained the economy of the colony of New South Wales for many years, and was a major component of the national export income for at least 150 years. They pursued innovative methods of sheep breeding and other farming techniques. All the prototype methods of sheep breeding, sheep washing, shearing, wool sorting and press baling were first established at Camden Park (Wrigley 2001). The line-bred descendants of the original Macarthur merino

sheep flock still exist in a flock maintained by NSW Agriculture on Heritage Listed Belgenny Farm (Belgenny Farm n.d. (h)), an original area of Camden Park.

Because of severe drought in the 1840s the merino flock at Camden Park was largely transferred to other family properties and ceased to run sheep in the 1850s. At William Macarthur's request, a small number went back to Camden Park in 1880. Camden Park is listed as a Reference Flock in the Australian Stud Merino Flock Register. To preserve and maintain the direct bloodline from Macarthur's Camden flock, a registered flock (number 3164) is run as a closed flock at Mount Bute, with no outside additions. A flock is also maintained by the Department of Primary Industries at Belgenny Farm at Camden Park (Collins n.d; Belgenny Farm n.d. (h)).

Wheat and other crops became main products of Camden Park estate, along with butter, cheese, wine and horticulture. In the early 1840s, large areas in Camden had been turned to wheat growing due to the high prices paid for the local flour which had a good reputation in the Sydney market, but the industry failed in the 1860s due to stem rust. At Camden Park wheat crops were affected between 1860 and 1869, but corn continued to be important. Thompson's Steam Flour Mills, founded in 1843, were impacted by the stem rust and were later turned into woollen mills in 1885 (Camden News 1939).

Camden Park's first commercial dairy was established in 1840 with butter and cheese being sold in the Sydney market. Later from the 1880s, James' daughter Elizabeth was to revolutionise dairying as a major industry at Camden Park and in Camden.

William Macarthur was a botanist and President of the Agricultural Society of New South Wales from 1868 to 1871 (Royal Agricultural Society of NSW 2023). He made a significant contribution to Australian horticulture with several publications and breeding the first Australian cultivar of the camellia ('*Aspasia macarthur*'). In the early 1840s he created a commercial nursery, importing growing and distributing various plants, including many fruit trees, vegetables and flowers, with an annual catalogue being published from 1843. From the late 1840s William constructed propagation houses to improve efficiency and increase the variety of his plant breeding operations. By the 1850s, Camden Park was likely the most important plant nursery in the Australian colonies. (Camden Park House n.d.(f), (g))

John Macarthur, who had planted a small vineyard at Parramatta at his Elizabeth Farm in 1794, continued with the propagation of a range of vine cuttings at Camden Park that he had brought from Europe in 1817. William carried on the legacy developing a commercial vineyard at Camden Park. He was President of the New South Wales Vineyard Association and published information on vineyard management and wine making. By 1845 the vineyard and winery were producing large quantities of wine for the national and international market. Camden Park played a vital role in the fledgling wine industry through its distribution of vine cuttings throughout NSW and the Barossa Valley and by 1853 listed some 33 grape varieties for sale. Wine production ceased in the 1880s at Camden Park due to the vine insect *Phylloxera*. By then, William Macarthur, himself an award-winning vigneron, had supplied cuttings and advice to wine makers in the Hunter Valley, South Australia and Victoria making Camden Park instrumental in

founding the Australian viticultural industry. (NSW Parliament n.d. (e); ISFAR n.d.); Teale 1974).

The strong and special association with the Macarthur family is fundamental to the town's cultural identity and sense of place, as illustrated by the sign, "Birthplace of the Nation's Wealth", at the town's entry over the Cowpastures Bridge.

Camden Township's foundation on Camden Park

, is shown in Atkinson (1988 pp 44-45).

Upon arrival of Europeans, a rural hegemony of self-styled large gentry estates, using convict labour, grew around the Nepean River; most economically prominent was Camden Park (1805, Macarthur) and others included Kirkham (1815, Oxley), Macquarie Grove (1812, Hassall), Wivenhoe (1812, Cowper), Elderslie (1816, Oxley), Glenlee (1818, Howe) and Brownlow Hill (1827, Macleay) (Willis 2015(a) p.7; Willis 2013(c); Burnett 2015; Burnett et al 2013).

Prior to the town's foundation, John was appointed to the first Legislative Council in 1825 but was removed in 1832 being 'pronounced a lunatic' (NSW Parliament n.d (d)).

In December 1830 as settlement continued along the Great South Road, Governor Darling was petitioned to establish a town in the "*vicinity of the Cowpastures Bridge on the banks of the Nepean, a central situation in the most populous parts of these districts and abundantly supplied with water*" (Wotherspoon 2011). In particular they petitioned for the establishment of a police station, court house and gaol near the bridge as the Great South Road needed policing. Governor Darling agreed, proposing a small town which he intended to replace Campbell Town (1820) as the administrative centre to provide order over the new settlements.

The Surveyor-General, Sir Thomas Mitchell, instead suggested the western bank at the edge of Camden Park as most suitable, and that John Macarthur be asked to surrender some of his land for such a purpose.

John Macarthur declined stating the formation of a town would "*greatly endanger the security of the whole establishment on that estate*" (Wrigley 2001). Campbell Town (now Campbelltown) remained the centre for law and justice in the south. Some publicans and shopkeepers in Campbell Town and Picton, who distrusted the energy and influence of the Macarthurs and feared a loss of custom, opposed the idea of a town on Camden Park.

Macarthur's sons, James and William who were politically active and modern thinkers were supportive of a village, believing that it would bring more order rather than less.

In 1835, the year following their father's death, James and William began to prepare its foundations, clearing 20 acres of Camden Park and establishing a relationship with the town that is still intact today.

The two brothers, described as earnest, high-minded men set up a subscription fund for a church, *"the situation of which will be highly picturesque and commanding"*, to ensure its moral foundation. James in particular believed that faith grew from mutual dependence, *"the spirit that would do unto others as it would they should do unto it (sic)"* and that the Church should grow from the land through the joint action of people as a focus and symbol (Atkinson 1988 p.35). The brothers also planned for a *"first rate commodious hotel"* which became the Camden Inn (1841) in Argyle Street, well placed for travellers of the Great South Road (Wrigley 2001).

In 1836, the brothers and Surveyor General Sir Thomas Mitchell designed the English-style village of Camden with St John's Anglican Church, visible from Camden Park, to be its aesthetic, social and spiritual focus. Mitchell preferred a town to have a number of features, axes, squares and meeting places, each with a purpose; and to use the topography of hills and valleys to emphasise a town's design. Camden was to be an example: two main streets were to cross each other, one being the highway for commerce and the other a vista leading to St John's Church as a focus for the village and echoing James Macarthur's enthusiasms. As well as St John's Church two allotments of an acre each were set aside for worship within the village which the Macarthurs intended to offer at nominal cost for the building of Catholic and Presbyterian Churches.

The foundation stone of St John's Church was laid by Bishop Broughton on 3 November 1840. The name of the township, surveyed in 1836, reflects its foundation on Camden Park, named after Colonial Secretary Lord Camden, Macarthur's early patron. Lord Camden, despite Colony's governor decreeing that the cattle of the fertile Cowpastures west of the Nepean River must be secured as a food source, sanctioned the first grant in the Cowpastures to John Macarthur in 1805.

The Macarthur brothers organised land sales through Sydney auctioneer Samuel Lyons in 1841. Advertisements for the land stated that allotments had been cleared and stumped and that the village already had a number of cottages, occupied by a cooper, wheelwright, master builder and brick maker as well as a post office, inn and partly completed church (Willis 2015 (a) p.34). A map of the early Camden village, identical today

Macarthur family and the town's early development

By the early 1840s Camden was the district policing and postal centre. As well as travellers of the Great South Road the Camden township would service Camden Park, small settlers and the other early-established large rural estates around the Nepean River.

The Camden Village was culturally central not only to the Macarthurs of *Camden Park* but also provided a central focus for the surrounding rural hegemony of landed estates, wealth based on convict labour, education and political influence (Atkinson 1988; Willis 2006 (a)). The early European social structure of the district had four tiers, self-styled gentry, overseers, convicts and Aboriginal people. The gentry took on the outward signs of the British ruling elite, often creating networks that functioned on a Camden-Sydney-London basis, and developed a social dominance that persisted for over 100 years. Despite the passing of more than a century it was established by

a sociological study in 1952 that a five-tier social structure then existed in Camden which had its origins in the colonial period and the Cowpasture patriarchs (Willis 2022 (a)).

The Macarthurs, held resilient economic power, social authority and political influence in Camden and NSW. By the 1840s, the Macarthur family had extensive pastoral interests that stretched throughout the colony, as well as family members to act as their agents in London, and members of the family in New South Wales Legislative Council.

Before the 1840s NSW had faced to the outside world, with the settlers relying in turn on Sydney. But in the 1840s capital began to flow the other way and into Camden. Its growth was seen as a vital change in the colonial countryside and its ties with Sydney.

Through the Camden village the Macarthurs exercised British Victorian philanthropy and set the moral tone.

James and William were concerned that their community should be educated. In 1844 the school, that had been running at Camden Park since 1838, was moved to the village and later merged with a smaller Catholic school.

Although the Macarthurs granted village land to each of the major denominations for churches, the early Protestant foundation of St John's, endowed by the Macarthurs and supported by the generosity of the Macarthur family, reinforced the family's social and moral standing. St John's church became the moral heart of the village and was symbolic of the social authority of the local colonial gentry led by the Macarthurs. In May 1844 the Macarthur brothers provided land to the Catholic Church at the corner of John and Mitchell Streets for St Paul's Church which was opened in 1859 by Archbishop Bede Polding of Sydney.

The influx of settler families between 1830 and 1860 helped shape the economic and social fabric of the area (Sidman 1939; Atkinson 1988) and many immigrant families who had first settled as tenant farmers started businesses in the village. The business enterprises of the Macarthur family contributed to the wealth of many early and later residents of Camden and were the reason the ancestors of many present-day Camden families came to live in Camden.

The village introduced another layer of urban based *petite bourgeoisie*, made up of shopkeepers and tradesmen, into the social hierarchy of the district (Willis 2006 (a)).

Edward Macarthur (1789-1872)

Edward, the eldest son of John and Elizabeth Macarthur, who made his career in the defence forces, first championed immigration. A strong advocate, he wrote two books on the subject in the 1840s (Hill 1974). Early immigration of skilled workers to support the agricultural endeavours on Camden Park, organised through Edward, including Australia's first skilled wool-sorter from Silesia, shepherds from Scotland, German vinedressers, vigneronns from Nassau and dairymen from Dorset contributed to the economic prosperity of the town.

James Macarthur (1798-1867)

James Macarthur, as well as a pastoralist, was a Justice of the Peace and represented Camden in the NSW Parliament. He served in the Legislative Council between 1839 and 1843 and represented Camden between 1848 and 1856 and again from 1866 until his death in 1867. In 1859 he refused a knighthood. He was also a member of the Legislative Assembly between 1856 and 1859. He granted a life appointment to the Legislative Council on 24 July 1866. (NSW Parliament n.d (b)).

James Macarthur sponsored the Camden School of Arts (1865), which was also used for Camden Municipal Council meetings from 1889 and the Agricultural, Horticultural and Industrial (A. H. and I.) Society (now the Camden Show Society).

William Macarthur (1800-1882)

William Macarthur, knighted in 1856, as well as a pastoralist was also a horticulturist, a skilled plant breeder who imported stock for planting on the estate. By 1840 he had established a commercial plant nursery at Camden Park and from 1843 published an annual catalogue of their plants. In July 1840 he assisted organisation of an association to promote assisted immigration. He fostered winemaking and brought out several families of German vigneronns. By 1849 the twenty-five-acre vineyard at Camden was producing over 16,000 gallons of wines and brandies. William was President of the Agricultural Society of New South Wales from 1868 to 1871 (Royal Agricultural Society of NSW 2023).

The Macarthurs in many cases replicated in the Camden township the unique plantings established at Camden Park, which included both newly discovered native trees as well as introduced species.

William was appointed as a magistrate to the Camden bench in 1825. He also sat in the NSW Legislative Council from 1849-1855 and was life appointed to the Legislative Council in 1864 (NSW Parliament n.d (e)).

After James' death in 1867 the management of the Camden Park estates fell solely to William until his death in 1882.

Elizabeth Macarthur Onslow (1840-1911)

In January 1867, Elizabeth, the only child of James, married Arthur Onslow (1833-1882), a navy captain.

Onslow was a politician who represented Camden as an independent in the NSW Legislative Assembly from 1869 to 1880 and a member of the Legislative Council from 1880 until his death (NSW Parliament n.d. (a)).

In 1882, Sir William and Mrs Elizabeth Macarthur Onslow dedicated 10 acres of land for Onslow Park as a place of recreation to the Camden community, which is also used for the Camden Show (Willis 2021(a), 2023 (a)).

Upon William's death in 1882 the Camden Park estate passed to Elizabeth.

In 1883 Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow granted land on the opposite corner of John and Mitchell Streets to the Wesleyan Methodists for a more substantial church building than the one they had been using in Elizabeth Street since 1861. This new church opened its doors in 1888.

In 1887 Elizabeth, for the education of her children, and accompanied by family relative Astley Onslow Thompson (1865- 1915) travelled to England. From here Elizabeth studied innovations in British dairying methods and the landlord-tenancy system in Europe, returning to Camden in 1890 (Belgenny Farm n.d.(e)).

In 1892 Elizabeth was granted by Royal Licence the right for her and her issue to use the surname Macarthur-Onslow, in order to retain the family name of Macarthur for future generations. In August 1899 Elizabeth registered the estate as a private company, Camden Park Estate Pty Ltd, with Elizabeth as managing director and her surviving children as shareholders and directors. (Camden Park House n.d. (c))

In the 1890s Elizabeth, with Astley as manager, established innovative and model dairying which included share-farming with twelve co-operative farms and forty leased farms, a network of creameries, butter production and the sale of whole milk to the Sydney market. The prosperity of Camden Park and the Camden township was ensured for the next 50 years through the dairy industry and its innovations. Liquid milk was processed at Camden and Menangle and transported to the Sydney market by rail.

In 1895 Camden Park Estate drew up plans for a factory to process bacon, cream and butter fronting onto Elizabeth Street and adjoining Camden Station terminus in Edward Street, with a loading dock for ease of handling and despatch of produce. All of Camden Park's cream and also other local cream was processed here. Butter was marketed under the "Laurel" brand and was regarded as premium quality in Australia and Britain. Water was pumped for the refrigeration works from the Nepean River across farmland to Edward Street. A number of townspeople approached Camden Park Estate requesting access to electricity from the new

facility for about 200 residences and businesses, but this did not ultimately eventuate. In 1896 the *Camden Refrigerating, Butter Making and Bacon Curing Works*, described at the time as having the most modern equipped factory in Australasia became operational. It ceased operation due to damage caused by the highest recorded flood of 1898. (Matterson 2022)

In 1920 the Macarthur family set up the Camden Vale Milk Company, a milk processing and distribution company, with the aim of distributing whole milk into and competing in the Sydney market. Elizabeth's youngest son Francis Arthur, known as Arthur (1879–1938) was appointed as managing director.

Between 1920 and 1922 Camden Vale Milk, which became a cooperative in 1921, had 162 milk suppliers and 289 cream suppliers. The company became a co-operative of suppliers in 1921. (Belgenny Farm n.d. (a, b, c); Willis 2021(b)).

In 1924 Camden Park's dairy herds were certified as tuberculosis-free, the first in New South Wales. Milk now came in the form of 'raw', warm straight from the cow and 'cold from factories where it was pasteurised, bottled and chilled. Camden area produced both types railing raw milk to goods yards at Darling Harbour, and also selling bottled milk under its own Camden Vale label from 1926.

In 1926 the foundation stone of the Camden Vale Milk Company depot and processing plant was laid in Edward Street, Camden, by the wife of Francis Arthur, the company's Managing Director and Mayor of Camden.

Camden Vale Milk Cooperative merged with Dairy Farmer's Cooperative Milk Company in 1929, and continued to use the Camden Vale brand, with milk being delivered throughout Sydney and elsewhere by milkmen in vans advertising *Camden Vale Bottled Milk* (Wheeler 2016).

The Macarthur family followed the latest scientific methods of pasture management, herd breeding and TB testing, and milk pasteurisation. Camden Vale Bottled Milk with the Golden Cap was at a premium in Sydney, and won many prizes at the Camden Show, Maitland Show and Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Milk was delivered to the factory on a daily basis by horse and cart, even up to the 1940s, until superseded by truck deliveries. (Willis 2015(a) pp.88-89; 2008 (b)).



Milk Factory corner Edward and Argyle Streets Camden c 1930
Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden



Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

The heritage listed factory, regarded as the most scientifically advanced for its time, and its rail siding are still located on the corner of Edward and Argyle Streets.

In 1952 Camden Park installed an automated rotolactor, a major innovation and by was the largest dairy in Australia in 1965. Within the district the historic importance of the dairy industry is evidenced by the operation, since 1959, of The Dairy Research Foundation, and its annual dairy research symposium at the University of Sydney's Camden campus.

In 1905 Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow gifted six acres in central Camden for Macarthur Park. Two palm trees planted at its official opening on 10th October 1906, at which Elizabeth officiated, can be seen on either side of its main entrance in Menangle Road (Camden Council n.d. (f)). The deed of gift required the best English practices and retention of native timbers. Macarthur Park was traditionally designed for promenading and display of gentility. At Onslow Park the lower classes could aspire to the gentlemanly conduct of the gentry, with healthy games from the "old country", such as cricket, that brought out the best in competitors. (Willis 2006 (a)).

In 1911, Elizabeth Macarthur Onslow unexpectedly suffered a fatal stroke in London (Camden News 1911). Her contribution of the Park to the people was honoured with the construction of picturesque "shelter" opened in 1913, funded by public subscriptions (Monument Australia n.d.(b)). It was used as an observation post by the local observer Corps during World War 11 (Camden Council n.d. (c)).

Elizabeth was a philanthropist and patron of a number of voluntary organisations including the Camden School of Arts and the Camden Agricultural, Horticultural and Industrial Society. The first Camden Show was held in 1886, and Elizabeth's relative and manager of Camden Park, Astley Onslow-Thompson, was President of the Camden Show from 1908 to 1915.

Elizabeth's children continued the Macarthur family traditions of political involvement and influence in NSW as well as their agricultural work on Camden Park and direct involvement in the town. Her sons also served with distinction in Australia's defence force.

James William Macarthur-Onslow (1867- 1946)

Elizabeth's son, James William Macarthur-Onslow (1867- 1946) was for many years chairman of directors of Camden Park Estate Pty Ltd, contributing to the dairy industry through the breeding and showing of dairy cattle.

James was President of the Camden Show Society from 1915 to 1945.

In 1892 James was commissioned captain of Camden Squadron of NSW Mounted Rifles. The Agricultural Horticultural and Hall, home of the Camden Show, was originally built as a drill hall for James and the Camden Mounted Rifle Troup in 1894.

Having seen active service in India and in South Africa, for which he received Queen's medal with four clasps, he retired in 1924 from military service with the rank of Major-General. From

1902 to 1909 James was A.D.C. to the Governor-General, from 1907 to 1933 served the people of NSW, representing eastern Sydney seats from 1907 to 1920 and from 1922 was a member of the NSW Legislative Council (NSW Parliament n.d.(c)).

In 1897 James married Enid (1868-1952), granddaughter of Hannibal Hawkins (1788-1861), John Macarthur's nephew and son-in-law of Philip Gidley King, NSW governor from 1800 - 1806.

On James' death in 1946 Camden Park passed to their elder daughter and Elizabeth's granddaughter, Lady Helen Maud (1899-1967), who in 1919 had married Major General Sir Reginald Stanham.

George Macarthur Onslow (1875- 1931)

Elizabeth's son, George (1875- 1931) was also commissioned in the New South Wales Mounted Rifles, and saw active service in Gallipoli and Sinai Palestine campaigns. In 1902 from Camden, he initiated and was President of the People's Reform League to reduce Federal and State government waste and promote construction and management of local government works, for which support for its political platform was gained in some of the state's country areas.

As commanding officer of 7th Light Horse Regiment at Gallipoli, he organised the famous cricket match played two days before mass evacuation of Anzac Cove. He was A.D.C to the Governor General from 1920 to 1923. Reaching the rank of Brigadier General, he was a recipient of Distinguished Service Order and appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George.

A monument to his bravery and contribution was unveiled at St John's Anglican Church Camden on 20 March 1932.

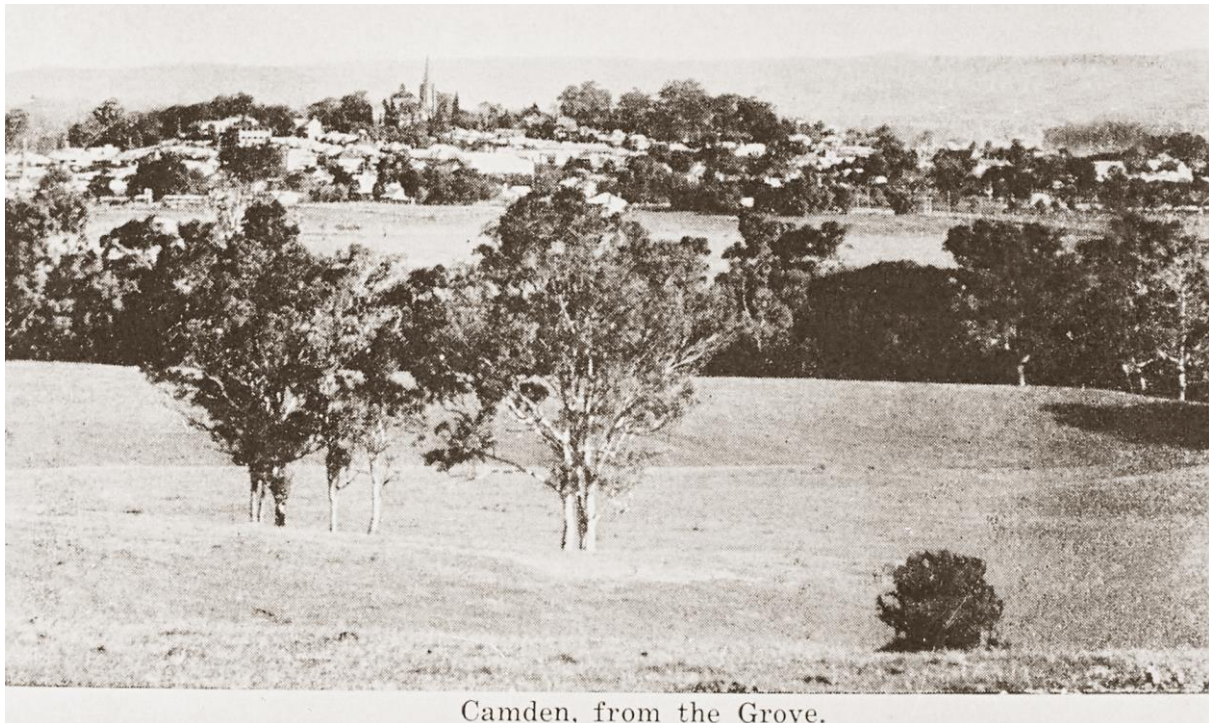
In addition to his military service, George was general manager and a director of Camden Park Estate Pty Ltd.

He took a close interest in local affairs, being a councillor of the Wollondilly Shire, alderman of Camden Council and three times mayor of Camden. He served on the Camden Show Society's Committee from 1896 and in 1933 memorial gates were added to the show grounds in his honour (Monument Australia n.d.(a))

Francis Arthur Macarthur Onslow (1879 -1938)

Elizabeth's son, Francis Arthur was also commissioned in the New South Wales Mounted Rifles and a recipient of the Queen's medal with five clasps for his active service in the South African War.

He purchased Macquarie Grove property including Hassall's cottage (1812) and Macquarie Grove House in 1916, which was used as a sheep farm and as part of the Camden Park Dairy cooperative. Macquarie Grove House overlooks the Nepean River towards the township and is of Gothic mid-Victorian architectural style likely built at a similar time as buildings of comparable style within the town.



Camden, from the Grove.

Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

Francis Arthur was actively involved with Camden Park dairying as a director of Camden Park Estate Pty Ltd and Camden Vale Milk Company.

He was Camden Mayor from 1925 to 1928.

Edward Macarthur-Onslow (1909-1980)

Francis Arthur's son Edward, Elizabeth's grandson, converted part of the Macquarie Grove into a private aerodrome and established the Macquarie Grove Flying School in 1937.

Edward was an innovative farmer and Assistant Manager of Camden Park Estate in the 1930s (Belgenny Farm and Annette Macarthur Onslow 2017). He was responsible for construction of a milk bar, the Camden Vale Inn, just outside the main township in the early 1930s.

In 1940 the Government purchased 468 acres of Macquarie Grove as an aviation base for wartime training. Camden airfield was home to Nos. 4, 15, 21, 32 and 78 RAAF Squadrons at various stages during the war. The family retained 15 acres including Hassall's cottage where Edward's family lived with their small plane in a hangar located away from the newly built RAAF hangars and hut accommodation. Macquarie Grove House was used as an officers' mess. The RAAF remained on the property for some time after the war and it was subsequently redeveloped as Camden Airport.

Edward was President of the Camden Show from 1945 to 1949.

He was responsible for bringing the innovative rotolactor, decades ahead of its time, into Australia in 1952.

Edward saw service during World War II in North Africa and New Guinea, attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order in 1944.

After the war Edward leased land at Macquarie Grove to re-open his flying school and became Managing Director of Camden Park Estate, focussing on its dairying enterprise.

In 1987, the Macarthur-Onslow family was able to restore their ownership of Macquarie Grove House, most recently home of Edward's daughter, Phoebe Macarthur-Onslow Atkinson (1939-2018), charity worker, aviatrix and model. Hassall Cottage is home to Edward's daughter, Annette Macarthur-Onslow, illustrator, author and family historian.

(Rosa) Sibella Macarthur Onslow (1871-1943)

Elizabeth's daughter, Sibella, who never married, was philanthropist devoting her life to humanitarian issues and playing a powerful role as a leading charity and church worker in what was a structured and closely controlled community in Camden. Good works in Camden were encouraged not only by Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow from the 1880s but Sibella and daughter-in-law Enid (1867-1952), wife of eldest son James. Through their independent means the women were able to tread different paths and so help define the roles of women in the town. They dominated the town socially, culturally and economically and their moral authority and social influence were absolute (Willis 2006 (a)).

They championed women's volunteer work which included home front patriotic fundraising, sending soldiers' comforts abroad, and creating the St John's Mothers' Union which was a precursor to the Camden Red Cross branch established in 1914 (Willis 2014(a)). Sibella taught once a week at the Camden school and organized relief hospitals during the 1919 influenza epidemic. Social events included hosting visits; for example, a 1917 visit of French troops to Camden became a large social event, recorded in a series of photographs, with many people from the area participating and included a lunch held behind the CBC (now NAB) Bank in the town. (Willis 2013 (b)).

In 1914 Sibella joined the central executive of the New South Wales division of the *British Red Cross Society* and on 14 August 1914, in the week following the outbreak of World War I, the *Camden Red Cross* was founded. She was involved with the Red Cross from its inception in Australia, including as an executive member of the Central Executive in Sydney and in Menangle and Camden. Sibella was Secretary and President from 1927 of the Camden Red Cross until her death in 1943.

The contribution of Camden's Red Cross sewing circles to the first and second world war efforts has been commemorated by a NSW Blue Plaque located at Camden Library in John Street.

With her brother George, Sibella helped found the People's Reform League of New South Wales, to raise the moral standard in public life and importantly rallied women to exercise their votes. Sibella also belonged to the Ladies' Home Mission Union, the Australian Board of Missions and chaired its Sydney Diocesan Women's Auxiliary, was a founder and deputy president in 1924-43 of the Victoria League in New South Wales, president of the Queen's Club, Sydney, in 1920 and 1922-25. She was active in the Bush Book Club of New South Wales and the National Council of Women of New South Wales, representing the latter at the 1927 biennial conference of the International Council of Women in Geneva.

In 1911, her mother, Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow, bequeathed Camden Park to Sibella for life (instead of to her older brother James (1867-1946)), due to her capabilities.

Sibella combined patriotic good works and fundraising with social activities within a conservative village, which strongly reinforced its social order and further contributed to the renowned community cohesiveness and number of community groups existing in Camden today.

In 1930 Sibella was honoured by King George V as Companion of the British Empire for her services to country and community. She was awarded the Jubilee Medal in 1935.

In 1943, her funeral service was held in St John's Church Camden and a week later a memorial service was conducted by the Archbishop of Sydney in St Andrew's Cathedral (Simpson 1986).

A local and national mythology and romantic rural conception about Camden was evolving, reinforced by community celebrations and many publications including Sibella Macarthur-Onslow's *Some Early Records of The Macarthurs of Camden*. (Willis 2012 (b); Macarthur-Onslow 1914).

(Richard) Quentin Macarthur Stanham (1921-2008)

With the passing in 1946 of James William, eldest son of Elizabeth Macarthur Onslow, the estate passed to his eldest daughter Lady Helen Maud (1899-1967). In 1947 Lady Helen with her husband Major General Sir Reginald Stanham, son (Richard) Quentin (1921-2008) and his wife took up residence of Camden Park and quickly also became active in the Camden community.

Quentin had been a Captain in the British Army during World War II, participating in allied landings in Sicily and Italy and later rose to the rank of Brigadier in the Australian Army Reserve. The family were prominent members of the community being patrons of a number of local organisations and making the house and gardens available to charities and fund-raising organisations. Quentin is credited with retaining Camden Park in the family's hands despite outside pressures, and further developing commercial rural activities on Camden Park including dairying and poultry, as well as promoting its use for film and television (Camden Park House n.d.(e)).

John Gregory Macarthur-Stanham (1960-)

Quentin's son, John and his wife Edwina, continue the conservation of the historic house and gardens and improving the sustainability of Camden Park agriculture. John's many business interests include time on the Board of Dairy Farmers' Milk Co-Operative and being the first chairman of the NSW Local Land Services. They open the ancestral home to visitors one weekend every year. (Camden Park House n.d. (d)).

Macarthur Family comparison to other persons of importance in NSW History

No other pioneering family was as prominent as the Macarthurs or had such a profound influence on a township. Information provided by the Australian Government (2015) and the State Library of NSW (2013 (a), (b)) indicates that the earliest farmers of undoubted significance in NSW as well as Macarthur, include James Ruse (1759-1837), George Wyndham (1801-1870) and Alexander Berry (1781-1873).

Former convict James Ruse (1759-1837) produced the first successful wheat harvest in NSW in 1789. By 1791 he had proved that it was possible to support both himself and his wife on a small holding, which he named Experiment Farm, and he was rewarded by Governor Phillip with the title to his 30 acres of land, the first grant issued in New South Wales. The success of the Ruse experiment encouraged Governor Phillip to grant land, livestock, agricultural tools, seed and assigned convict workers to settlers and emancipists willing to farm. By the end of 1791, there were over 200 acres in cultivation at the Government Farm, Rose Hill. In January 1794 Ruse became one of the twenty-two settlers who opened the Hawkesbury River area to agriculture. Unfortunately, he did not prosper. In 1825 he was recorded as owning only ten acres of land in the Windsor district (and twelve hogs) and by 1828 he was working as an overseer at Lower Minto. (Fletcher 1967; State Library of NSW 2013 (b)).

George Wyndham with his wife Margaret arrived in NSW in 1827 and settled at Branxton in the Hunter Valley region. On his property 'Dalwood', as well as grazing stock, Wyndham experimented with a variety of crops including maize, wheat, tobacco, fruit and vines, and systematically trialled over 70 different varieties of grapes. Wyndham was a pioneer of the wine industry in Australia and Dalwood wines were internationally acclaimed, receiving awards at local and international exhibitions, including the Paris International Exhibition of 1867. His son John Wyndham eventually took over management of the property which became one of Australia's leading wine producers. These pioneering efforts eventually saw the Hunter region become famous for its wine production (State Library of NSW 2013 (b)).

Neither Ruse nor Wyndham have particular social, economic and cultural connections to a township and their economic contributions to the wealth of NSW and Australia are comparably much less significant than that of the Macarthur dynasty.

On the other hand, Alexander Berry and his business partner Edward Wollstonecraft, who set up the Coolangatta Estate in the Shoalhaven region in the 1820s, had strong connections to the present-day town of Berry. Both Berry and Camden were centred on large gentry estates with similar social structures of gentry and social layers below; both are dairy towns with a similar timeline for this industry and of similar size and morphology until the 1950/60s. Their street layouts today are relatively intact with historic plantings creating English village ambience. Both towns have similar types of buildings and both towns are supported through community organisations (such as an agricultural show society, Red Cross, CWA, Hospital Auxiliary). However, Berry (surveyed 1882) is 142 kilometres south of Sydney with a population of less than 2000.

In February 1822 Berry and Wollstonecraft (who mainly looked after their business interests in Sydney) jointly applied for a grant under Governor Sir Thomas Brisbane, of 10,000 acres located on the north side of Shoalhaven, though the deed was not issued until 1830. They pioneered European settlement in the Shoalhaven region, with June 1822 recognized as the time of first European settlement on the South Coast of NSW, although cedar getters had been in the area for some time previously.

In July 1822, with an allocation of 100 convicts Berry began to establish what he called "Cullengetty Farm", after the indigenous name for the mountain at the foot of which he made his headquarters. Berry began in 1825 as a private town named Broughton Creek within the granted estate which later became known as "Coolangatta". Its first settlers were seven free sawyers and soon after a tannery began operation. On Wollstonecraft's death in 1832, his share of property passed to Alexander Berry. By 1840 subsequent purchases of land had increased the size of the estate to around 32,000 acres, and by 1863 to more than 40,000 acres.

In the 1840s a saw mill powered by a water wheel started. Coolangatta quickly developed into a self-supporting village of mills, workshops, tradesmen and artisans. Coolangatta exported thoroughbred horses to India, cedar to Europe and cattle, tobacco, cheese and wheat to Sydney. The greater part of the land was undeveloped and most of the work force was convict. However, as with many other estate owners involved in colonial politics, all was not peaceful with Berry. He was publicly accused of negligence in his care of convict servants and Berry and Wollstonecraft were said to have engineered a government tax on imported tobacco for their own benefit and the tax on cedar cut on crown land to give a virtual monopoly. By 1846, Berry wrote that he had lost interest in the estate and this feeling grew as labour became scarcer after transportation ceased in 1840 and the discovery of gold in the 1850s. (Navin Officer and AECOM 2010).

Leases of the Coolangatta property were being granted to tenant farmers by the 1850s, and when convict labour ceased Chinese labourers and German families hired in Hamburg were used. Leasing continued and by 1863 Berry had almost 300 tenants, who occupied about one sixth of Coolangatta.

An inaugural church service was held in 1859 and by 1866 a substantial town had grown on the either side of Broughton Creek with a population of approximately 300. On one side a Post Office, school, tannery and store were established and on the other side of the creek an Inn was opened. The area was proclaimed a municipality around 1868, by which time Broughton Creek also contained an inn, store, school and tannery as well as 300 residents. In 1873 Alexander Berry died and his brother David (1795-1889) encouraged the growth of the town by donating land to four religious denominations to build churches, and establishing an Agricultural Showground. A survey was conducted in 1882, with the first town lot being sold in 1883. A rail connection was made in 1893 and the Berry milk factory, described at the time as the 'largest and most complete in the colony', opened two years later.

The name of the town was changed from Broughton Creek to Berry in 1889, following the death of David Berry, to honour the Berry family. Bequests by David Berry to the University of St.

Andrews (Scotland) and to the endowment of a hospital at Berry, made it necessary for the Trustees to sell off the estate, with most sold by 1912. The local public hospital (a rehabilitation hospital and palliative care hospice) is named the David Berry Hospital.

The estate had passed to the Hay family (cousins of the Berry's) where it remained until the late 1940's. During this time, Coolangatta Estate had fallen into a state of neglect and disrepair and centuries of history looked certain to be lost. The Berry homestead was severely damaged by fire in 1946 and only one wing remains today. It is now part of Coolangatta Historic Village, and is a winery and retreat, which contains a number of 19th century, convict-built workshops and cottages and historic outbuildings built between the 1820s and 1840s.

The area remained an important centre for dairy cattle breeding and butter making until well into the 20th century (State Library of NSW 2013 (a)). The town continued to grow and flourish as a service centre mainly for saw milling and the surrounding dairying district. The former ES&A Bank building (1884) became the Berry Museum in 1975.

Comparatively the Berry family's pioneering contribution is significant, but not as great as that of the Macarthurs to experimental farming, the Australian wool industry and the Australian economy. The family's social interaction with the township of Berry would also seem to be less intense than the moral and social leadership of the Macarthurs, who unlike the Berry family have retained their family home through the generations and are still visibly connected to the township of Camden.

Macarthur family in NSW history (1790- 1840)

The environment of the Nepean River, its fertile floodplains and open grasslands, attracted cattle that had escaped from the fledgling settlement at Sydney Cove in 1788. The physical environment shaped early expansion. The cattle had sought out an enduring food source and indicated to the colony that it could become self-sufficient in animal stock. Pioneers saw the potential of extensive farming, which led to the formation of large estates and an English styled hegemony of self-styled gentry farmers in the Camden area, led by the Macarthur family.

John Macarthur, a lieutenant in the newly formed New South Wales Corps, and his wife Elizabeth and son Edward (1789-1872) arrived on the second fleet to Botany Bay on 28th June 1790. In 1793 he received a land grant at Parramatta and became the first in the colony to clear and cultivate virgin land. By 1794 Macarthur, with ready access to convict labour, had 100 acres under cultivation at what he called Elizabeth Farm, at Parramatta. There he continued to experiment in sheep breeding.

As quoted from Macarthur's evidence at an enquiry headed by Commissioner Bigge into the state of NSW under Governor Macquarie in 1820:

"In the year 1794, I purchased from an officer Sixty Bengal Ewes and Lambs, which had been imported from Calcutta and very soon after I procured from the Captain of a Transport from

Ireland, two Irish Ewes and a young Ram. ...By crossing the two Breeds I had the satisfaction to see the lambs of the Indian Ewes bear a mingled fleece of hair and wool—this circumstance originated the idea of producing fine wool in New South Wales.” (Macarthur Onslow, Sibella 1914).

Macarthur arranged for sheep to be transported from the Cape of Good Hope and purchased Four Ewes and Two Rams when the flock arrived. He states “*the remainder were distributed amongst different individuals who did not take the necessary precautions to preserve the breed pure and they soon disappeared—Mine were carefully guarded against an impure mixture, and increased in number and improved in the quality of their wool*” (Macarthur Onslow, Sibella 1914).

By May 1795 Macarthur was promoted to Captain. However, he came into conflict with Governor John Hunter and his successor Governor Philip Gidley King and in November 1801 was dispatched to England to face court martial reaching England in December 1802 after a circuitous voyage. There appears to be no record of John Macarthur personally visiting the Cowpastures prior to 1801, but the finding of the cattle in 1795 was a major event in the colony.

It was evident that the Cowpastures was the best land yet found in the colony, and none was more aware of this than Macarthur (Bickel, 1991 p. 97). In 1801 John Macarthur was involved in a duel with his commanding officer and was dispatched to England to face court martial, but the army concluded it was impossible to investigate Macarthur's case. At the time Macarthur left New South Wales he was the largest sheep farmer in the colony and had produced a merino sheep with wool the equal of any Spanish wool. Although Macarthur himself did not return until 1805, by 1803 the Macarthurs' flock numbered over 4000 almost-pure merinos.

Macarthur carried with him samples of fine wool from his flock in Parramatta and used the opportunity in London to promote his capacity to produce wool in the colony.

Governor King had previously sent colonial fleeces to Sir Joseph Banks, wealthy naturalist who had accompanied Captain Cook on his first voyage to New South Wales and adviser to the British government on Australian matters, who had found the samples promising.

In July 1803, Macarthur was approached by two clothiers, representatives overseeing a parliamentary bill about their industry, who had seen Macarthur's samples which they declared to be equal to the best from Spain. Within a week Macarthur had composed a *Statement of the Improvement and Progress of the Breed of Fine Woolled Sheep in New South Wales*. Supported by a memorial from the clothiers he canvassed support for colonial wool production, under his personal supervision, which he maintained could free the British market from dependence on Spain. Sir Joseph Banks was cautious and increasingly sceptical. John Macarthur was able to persuade the Board of Trade and Lord Camden, who was Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, that fine woolled sheep would do well in the new country. In 1804 Macarthur was able to purchase several rare Spanish merino sheep from the Royal flocks of George III at a sale at Kew:

“Thus encouraged I purchased Nine Rams and a Ewe from the Royal Flock at Kew, and returned to this country determined to devote my attention to the improvement of the Wool of my flocks.... The Captain's object being to take the sheep which he was then purchasing to New South Wales in about three weeks' time to add to the flock which he is raising near Botany Bay with a degree of success which promises to be of the greatest National importance” (Macarthur Onslow, Sibella 1914).

At the sale, Sir Joseph Banks, who had not previously supported Macarthur, offered to promote and patronize the introduction of the merino sheep into Australia, which Macarthur recklessly declined. Sir Joseph retaliated. As the sheep were about to be embarked on the *Argo*, a ship in which Macarthur had invested and on which he appropriately placed a Golden Fleece as figure head, the morning papers reported that it was illegal, based on an old Act of Parliament, to export sheep from England. Lord Camden organised a Treasury Warrant and the sheep were put on board. Sir Joseph more successfully argued against a later doubling of Macarthur's land grant, a decision that was not overturned in Macarthur's favour until the early 1820s.

In June 1805, although Governor King was concerned to keep the wild cattle of the Cowpastures undisturbed by farming, Macarthur returned to New South Wales in triumph with an order from Lord Camden that he be granted 5000 acres at a location of his own choosing to develop the wool industry. Macarthur coveted the Cowpastures land, but Governor King would only allow a provisional lease whilst the case to keep the Cowpastures from settlement was argued. In October 1805 the land, to become known as Camden Park was surveyed and King gave Macarthur permission to take his stock beyond the Nepean River.

Macarthur bought flocks of merinos in various locations which meant that the bloodline and health of the Macarthur sheep were strengthened and therefore the quality of their wool improved over time. Many said of Macarthur "his wits were a-wool gathering" because the merino blood would reduce the weight of the carcase and the merino were less prolific breeders than the Cape sheep. *“But he had determined to adopt New South Wales as his country and therefore persevered in his efforts to produce in it a great article of export, without which he knew it must continue for years obscure and despised—a mere penal settlement”* (Macarthur Onslow, Sibella 1914).

In 1807, the Macarthurs sent their first bale of wool to England. Due to the Napoleonic Wars (1803 to 1815), the demand for wool was high and the Macarthurs' high-quality wool was bought at a premium price. The family quickly became the wealthiest in New South Wales.

In 1806 William Bligh (1754 -1817), a protégé of Banks, was made Governor of NSW. Bligh came into conflict almost immediately with John Macarthur over his provisional land grant in the Cowpastures and threatened to remove him from the prime land. They continued to clash until Bligh in 1808 committed Macarthur for trial over an incident involving one of Macarthur's trading ships. The commander of the NSW Corps, Major George Johnston (1764-1823), ordered Macarthur's release. Working closely with Macarthur, he deposed Bligh on 26 January 1808, 20 years to the day after Arthur Phillip had founded European settlement. A complex barter system had developed due to the shortage of notes and coins. This system was controlled by those who had access to goods such as food, clothing and alcohol, most popularly rum. The NSW Corps was heavily involved in the system and became known in the 1790s as the Rum Corps. Although the

removal of Bligh became known as the Rum Rebellion it had less to do with the rum trade and more to do with a battle for power between the military, civil elites and the Governor. Immediately after the 1808 rebellion, Macarthur dispatched his eldest son Edward to London to convey Macarthur's version of the events. The specially created post of Colonial Secretary was bestowed on Macarthur who administered the colony for a short time until the arrival, at the end of July 1808, of Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Foveaux (1767-1846), who found Johnston in command and Bligh under arrest.

Macarthur was exiled to England, where his youngest sons were in public schools, from 1809 until Lord Camden granted him unconditional return to NSW in 1817. Before he left England, he asked his son John (1794-1831) to make his wool known to government officials (Garrahan and White 1985). Through lobbying Macarthur had earlier gained the right to return to Sydney, but would not accept the conditions imposed: that he admit his wrongdoing and promise his good behaviour.

The Macarthurs were the first (in 1805) to farm beyond the Nepean River, thus opening the area west of the river to settlement (Atkinson, 1988 p. 10), but other settlement was initially still prohibited. It was the eastern side of the Nepean River that was next settled under Lachlan Macquarie, the fifth Governor of NSW, who assumed office at the beginning of 1810. A rural hegemony of self-styled large gentry estates, using convict labour, grew around the Nepean River including *Kirkham* (1810, Oxley), *Macquarie Grove* (1812, Hassall), *Wivenhoe* (1812, Cowper), *Elderslie* (1816, Oxley), *Brownlow Hill* (1827, Macleay), *Glenlee* (1818, Howe), as well as the earliest *Camden Park* (1805, Macarthur) (Willis 2015(a) p.7). A cultural landscape was created by these early European settlers that followed the ordered patterns of their ancestral homes. The names of these large estates are attached to areas and properties around Camden to this day. The landed gentry sought hilltop locations and employed Loudon landscape principles that have produced a lasting picturesque English quality to the surrounds of the township.

During his exile Macarthur toured Europe with his sons, looking at vineyards and the production of olive oil and accumulating vines and expertise. In NSW Elizabeth managed the flocks and breeding programs for eight critical years. She established the reputation of NSW as a centre for wool growing and her agricultural ability is recognised in the naming of the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute, the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Centre of Excellence for Animal and Plant Health located on land granted to Macarthur. By the time Governor Macquarie made his second visit to Camden Park in 1815, Elizabeth Macarthur was able to show him at least one substantial building on the property, probably for securing the wool. The estate now carried 4500 sheep and several hundred cattle (Atkinson, 1988 p 16).

Macarthur brought back to Australia hundreds of vine cuttings which were planted at Camden Park in 1817. By 1820 they had established a commercial vineyard at Camden and were the first to commercially produce wine in the colony. The Macarthurs also built Camden Park into a great experimental farm that found innovative solutions to farming in a different hemisphere and climate, looked to by other colonial farmers.

By 1818 he was gloomy about his prospects in writing to Davidson: My feeble attempt to introduce Merino Sheep still creeps on almost unheeded ... altho' mine is the only flock from

which they can be had pure, I do not sell half a score a year (Garrahan and White 1985). Nevertheless, Macarthur planned to use sheep farming as a means to obtain land.

In 1822, John Macarthur was awarded two gold medals by the Society for the Arts in London for the quality of his wool exports and in 1824 another medal was awarded for importing the largest quantity of fine wool. Macarthur successfully pressed his claim, confirmed in 1822, to the supplementary 5000 acres in the Cowpastures that he had been promised in 1804 by Lord Camden but deprived of through Sir Joseph Banks. By 1830 the Camden Park estate, incorporating over 60,000 acres acquired by grant and purchase, was “*the first agricultural establishment in the Colony*” (Steven 1967).

In 1824 John Macarthur was instrumental in setting up a chartered company to organize the production of Australian wool, something he had sought since 1804. The Australian Agricultural Company (AACo) was founded under a British Act of Parliament with capital of one million pounds, a land grant of one million acres at Port Stephens, and harbour rights at Newcastle. Although the venture was well subscribed in London it was regarded in the colony as a naked Macarthur family contrivance for their aggrandizement (Steven 1967). Today, having been established in 1824, this company is the oldest continuously operating company in Australia (AACo 2021). Disagreements seemed to be usual with any involvement by John Macarthur in public ventures, such as the Agricultural Society, the Bank of Australia and the Australian and Sydney colleges. He was nevertheless appointed to the reformed Legislative Council in 1829 (and remained until 1832 when he was removed as mentally deranged). The legacy and reputation of John Macarthur's practical achievements in founding the Australian wool industry are largely due to persistence and loyalty of his sons and his wife Elizabeth (Steven 1967).

In 1827, a bale of Macarthur wool sold for a world record price, which remained the world record until 1949.

In addition to sheep and wine, John Macarthur began Australia's dairy industry in Camden. The first mention of dairying on Camden Park estate was in 1826, when John Macarthur trained 14 female convicts as dairymaids. By 1829, Camden Park dairy products were being sent to Sydney by fast horse and cart. John and Elizabeth Macarthur and their sons continued developing convict-built Belgenny (a corruption of the Aboriginal name of Benkennie) Farm. The farm buildings of Camden Park as preserved at Belgenny Farm, are State Heritage listed. and have been described as “*Australia's most important collection of farm buildings*” (Gregory and Turner 1992 p.44).

The formation of the large estates around Camden, which became predominantly self-sufficient, was possible because of a ready supply of convicts. Convicts were accommodated, put to work and eventually emancipated into the wider colonial community. With transportation to NSW ceasing in 1840, the economic model of the large estates needed to sustainably transition into a broader economy.

The Macarthur family successfully transitioned from convict labour and into the national and international economy.

Australian and NSW Themes

- 2. Peopling Australia: Migration*
- 3. Developing local, regional and national economies: Agriculture; Commerce; Environment-cultural landscape; Industry; Pastoralism; Technology*
- 4. Building settlements, town and cities: Towns, suburbs and villages; Land tenure*
- 6. Educating: Education*
- 7. Governing: Government and administration*
- 8. Developing Australia's cultural life: Creative endeavour; Religion; Social Institutions;*
- 9. Marking the phases of life: Persons*

Professor Graeme Clark A. C.

Professor Graeme Clark was born in 1935 in the front room of a John Street cottage and grew up within the town. Professor Clark's research and discoveries into the cochlear implant or bionic ear, the first effective sensory interface with the brain, has brought hearing and speech understanding to severely deaf people and spoken language to children born deaf across more than 100 countries.

Young Graeme attended Camden public school on the corner of John and Mitchell Streets until attending The Scots College as a boarder, as Camden did not have a high school until 1956. His father, who suffered from deafness, was a pharmacist in the main street. Graeme was encouraged to help in the pharmacy where he played with chemicals and was known as the Bunsen burner boy. He observed at close hand the difficulties his father had in communicating with customers and would step in to save embarrassment when his father had to ask customers to speak up. When asked what he wanted to do when he grew up, he would always reply "I want to fix ears".

A Graeme Clark exhibition, including a cochlear model donated by Cochlear Ltd, was formally opened by MP for Camden, Sally Quinnell at a function at Camden Museum on 4 November 2023. The function was attended by Professor Clark himself as well as the President of Cochlear Ltd and Principal of the Scots College, all of whom addressed the gathering.

When Clark, regarded as a Camden son, began his research in 1967 there was opposition from the scientific community which considered his aims unfeasible and funding was very limited. He was only able to continue the research through philanthropy and television telethons.

Development of a hearing device was extremely challenging, so Clark who specialised in neurosurgery and otolaryngology, also trained as an auditory neurophysiologist and in speech science. By integrating many fields of medicine and science he pursued his research, particularly in how best to achieve speech understanding in children who had been born deaf. A cochlear shaped device was discovered to be the most promising in transmitting speech frequencies.

The seminal question of whether speech information could be transmitted to provide speech understanding could only be tested on people. Clark operated on the first patients and led the research to find a coding strategy that could be understood as speech. A major break-through came in 1978 when a patient first heard speech and the artificial sensory stimulus interface was proven.

Clark then determinedly sought government funding for the invention's research and development, and took full responsibility as lead surgeon and head of clinical studies for any problems in working with patients.

In 1990 the implant was the first in the world to receive regulatory approval as safe and effective for regular clinical use in children.

In pursuing his childhood ambition to fix ears, Clark also worked closely with industry to ensure its viability in the market so that it could reach as many people as possible and particularly

children who had been born deaf. To further this work, he organised world congresses and workshops to train others in the use of the implant.

Professor Clark helped establish the new field of medical bionics and is the recipient of numerous academic awards and honorary doctorates. He is currently Laureate Professor at the University of Melbourne and his groundbreaking multi-disciplinary approach and goals are continued and supported through the Graeme Clark Institute for Biomedical Engineering. He continues to seek improvements of the cochlear implant through integration of other research advances and technology such as nanobiotechnology. In May 2023 he was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, the highest distinction the College bestows for outstanding clinical achievements and to humanitarians such as Nelson Mandela and Mother Teresa. Also in May 2023, he received a prestigious award from Rehabilitation International, a global disability advocacy group, for his work which has transformed the lives of so many worldwide. In October 2023, his research into treating hearing loss in children was presented at the IX International Symposium on Childhood Deafness.

According to Graeme Clark himself, Camden being a country town with its rich social fabric had a big effect on his life. It played a vital role in shaping his character and Camden's close and familiar networks grounded and supported him through scepticism about his work. The Clark family has deep roots in Camden. The Camden networks, and the skills he learned through his and his family's participation in community organisations such as the Camden Rotary Club were useful in fundraising for research. Graeme was enthusiastic about creating an exhibition of his work as part of Camden history and as a way of paying his respects to his ancestors and the town and community that shaped his life values, worldview and importantly his work.

There is no comparison to be made with Professor Graeme Clark, a true pioneer who pursued an objective that the science community thought impossible. Camden as his home town has a strong and special association with his life and work which is of immense importance in the history of NSW and the world.

Australian and NSW Themes

3. Developing local, regional and national economies: Health; Industry; Science; Technology

6. Educating: Education

9. Marking the phases of life: Persons

Assessment of integrity of Camden township to convey significant associations

Today the original Camden town sits at the rural-urban fringe of the Sydney metropolitan area, and although a tiny area is under development pressure.

The community has a vested and active interest in retaining the strong and special association between Camden Park and the town. The legend of the Macarthurs and their agricultural legacy is fundamental to the town's cultural identity and sense of place.

The predominance of a single family, the Macarthurs, from early settlement as experimental farmers, majority landowners, town planners and social and political leaders and their continued influence in the town of Camden, is rare in Australian history. Camden Park is likely the oldest property in the nation to continue, in an unbroken line, to be home to descendants of its pioneering founders. The Macarthur dynasty continues and plans to keep Camden Park, its ancestral home, already passed down over seven generations, in the family for generations to come (ABC 2002).

The identity of the township is historically and inextricably linked to its founders who were social and economic leaders of the township for over 150 years.

A Camden Park Preservation Committee and Camden Park Nursery Group of volunteer gardeners helps with projects needed to conserve the property. Volunteers assist on open days. The archives group has been important in researching the story of Camden Park, and the 2012 website *Hortus Camdenensis* carried on the work of William Macarthur in cataloguing plants grown at Camden Park between 1820 and 1861.

The Macarthur connection to the town is consciously felt, which on a visual-level centres around the village profile, with St John's spire invitingly visible above surrounding farmlands, and from all directions including from Camden Park. Within and overlooking the Camden township on St John's Hill, the St John's Anglican Church Precinct including the church, rectory, cemetery, two parish halls and grounds, is subject to a Conservation Management Plan and is state heritage listed.

St John's Church is one of the earliest of the churches built following the Church Act of 1836, and the most archaeologically correct Gothic style in NSW (Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners 2004, p. 43). The village profile that it creates and its focus within the town contribute greatly to Camden's cultural identity and unique sense of place.

Within the original township, which is in its entirety a locally listed heritage precinct, there is a long list of locally listed heritage buildings and spaces including the town farm and another that is listed as state significant: Nant Gwylan and Garden (SHR 00243) in Exeter Street.

As deliberately designed by the Macarthur brothers, Camden township's human scale, original grid pattern of streets and old country village ambience remains intact, still providing a mix of commercial, educational, religious, residential and industrial uses, as it has since its foundation. Importantly, the Macarthur family in many cases replicated in the Camden township the unique plantings established at Camden Park, which included both newly discovered native trees as well as introduced species. Systematic historic plantings in the town remain and endow a distinctive

character complementing its 19th Century townscape. The character is emphasised by gardenesque vegetation patterns promoted by the influential horticultural journalist John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) evident in the surrounding landscape and hilltop colonial estates (Cuneo 2016; Willis 2015(a)).

Camden's grid pattern of streets remains as originally designed for the Macarthurs and contains a mix of commercial, educational, religious, residential and industrial uses, as it did in the 1840s. The original town grid includes streets named John, Elizabeth and Edward (Macarthur), Broughton (named after the Bishop who laid the foundation stone of St John's Church), Mitchell (after Surveyor General Sir Thomas Mitchell) and parks named Macarthur Park and (Macarthur) Onslow Park. The ridge on the southern side of the town is topped by Menangle Road, the original road via the gatehouse (now located on the Old Hume Highway) between Camden Park House on Macarthur's property and St John's Church and the town.

The Macarthur family sponsored and/or assisted in establishing its very fabric including its churches, schools and other local institutions. Land and buildings in the town were gifted or sponsored by the Macarthurs including St John's Anglican Church Precinct (Church (1849) and Rectory (1859)), Onslow Park (1882), Macarthur Park (1905), Camden Court House (1857), Dr Crookston's House (1880) built for one of their overseers, Camden Agricultural Hall (1894), originally a drill hall and a substantial late Victorian semi-detached dwelling (1897) in Hill Street, originally for Officer accommodation, both built for Major James William Macarthur-Onslow (1867-1946), Captain Camden Squadron of NSW Mounted Rifles. The Macarthur family is memorialised through its donation of a clock and bells to St John's Church in 1897.

The cultural history of the Macarthur family in the Camden township is also evidenced through the adoption of the Macarthur name by businesses and all types of organisations.

The legend of the Macarthurs and their agricultural legacy continues to have a strong and special association with Camden township. In 2015, the 129th Camden Show paid tribute to Camden's legacy as the birthplace for the wool industry in Australia with a "running of the sheep" event, including 250 sheep being herded by stockmen and sheep dogs through Camden's streets into Onslow Park, the Showground (Crawford 2015). In 1960 the township of Camden celebrated the legacy of John Macarthur with the 4-day Festival of the Golden Fleece and the 150th anniversary of wool production in Australia. Merino sheep still thrive in Australia, now numbering on average over 100 million.

The heritage of the dairy industry within Camden town itself. The Town Farm in Exeter Street was previously a dairy farm and is locally heritage listed (Camden Town Farm n.d.). Camden Park's dairy interests were the life blood for the district and centred on the Camden Vale Milk processing plant, depot and railway siding in Edward Street (Willis 2015(a)), which is locally heritage listed.

In 1984 the NSW Department of Primary Industries purchased 1600 hectares of the original land granted to Macarthur in 1805 to establish the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute and the

Belgenny Farm Agricultural Heritage Centre Trust which contains more than 15 original buildings, the earliest and most historic colonial farm buildings in Australia. Descendants of the Macarthurs' original Spanish Merino flock graze the land. EMAI was opened in 1990 and continues to explore innovative agriculture in the tradition of the Macarthurs.

The central heart of the Camden Park land, around 1000 acres including Camden Park House and gardens which was at the heart of the original 1805 land grant remain with the descendants of John and Elizabeth Macarthur.

In 1886 Andrew Garran's successful *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* portrayed Camden, in an engraving, as an idyllic English village surrounded by an ordered farming landscape, accompanied by an account of the exploits of John Macarthur and the foundation of the colonial wool industry (Garran 1886). Today the Arcadian nature of Camden township, as envisioned and planned by the Macarthur brothers, is expressed in official Council policy, literature, publications, tourist and business promotions, websites, artwork, music and museum displays. The dust jacket of Atkinson (1988) uses a romantic watercolour (1850s) attributed to James Macarthur's wife, Emily (nee Stone, 1806-1880), similar to the engraving of Camden in Garran (1886), of an idyllic scene with the Nepean River flowing through a vista looking "across Camden Park to the north-west, with St John's Church and the distant Blue Mountains closing the view" (Willis 2022(a)).

In 1996 the Honourable Justice M L Pearlman AM, stated in a judgement refusing a large development proposal in the town "It is abundantly clear that the Camden Township represents a particularly significant and sensitive heritage site in which conservation, involving reuse of buildings or land, must necessarily be approached with considerable care."

Social networking has continued and remains as a dominant characteristic of Camden, made durable by the cultural aspects and functions of buildings instigated by the Macarthurs and located within the original grid pattern of the 1840s town. Many families have lived and worked for generations in the Camden district, with the old town as their cultural and social hub. Many are affiliated in some way to the Macarthur family through early immigration as skilled workers and employment in the wool, wine, horticulture and dairying industries in which Macarthurs were innovators and leaders. The Macarthurs, through their moral leadership and involvement in State and Local politics and community organisations, founded a culture of community participation. This culture has been reinforced and continued through to contemporary times by activities organised by over 250 community organisations as well as community involvement in schools, churches, the town farm, farmers market, equestrian centre, the sale yards in Edward Street and the Camden Show.

For a comprehensive bibliography of writings on Camden's identity, the community's sense of place and its rural and social connectedness see *Camden Bibliography a Biography of a Country Town* as compiled by Willis (2015(b)). The extensiveness of writings on Camden indicates its uniqueness and importance to the community and to the early history of NSW and Australia. The literature also underscores that the Camden aesthetic and the integrity of the community's sense of place is of demonstrably high social significance to the present population of Camden, and

strongly associated with Camden's founders, the Macarthur family (for instance see Willis 2005; 2006; 2012 (b); 2012(c); 2013 (a); 2014 (a); 2015 (a)).

The Macarthur family is important in NSW and national history. The foundation of the Camden township by the Macarthurs and the family's continued association to this day with the town, is widely understood by the community to be of high importance in its history and economic, social and cultural development.

Strong cultural and historic associations with the Macarthur family remain to this day in the Camden township, which presents tangible evidence of the Macarthur legacy in its landscape positioning, street pattern, organisations, historic plantings, open spaces, and buildings.

The strong and significant association is evident in the legacy of place names of the town and district. The original grid pattern of the village named Camden (after Colonial Secretary Lord Camden, Macarthur's early patron) include streets named John, Elizabeth and Edward (Macarthur), Mitchell (named after Surveyor-General, Major Thomas Mitchell who together with the Macarthur brothers designed the town), Broughton (named after the Bishop who laid the foundation stone of St John's Church, the Macarthurs' symbolic project around which the town was laid out) and parks named Macarthur Park and (Macarthur) Onslow Park. The Australian Electoral Commission (2016) profiles the Federal electorate of Macarthur as named after Elizabeth Macarthur (1766–1850) and Captain John Macarthur (1767–1834), early settlers and founders of the Australian merino wool industry. The Macarthur name is immediately identified with the district and is pervasively used by businesses, schools and government and community organisations.

Camden is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (Criterion c)

The exceptional significance of Camden's natural and cultural landscape has been well documented and importantly, this unique and evocative landscape character exists to the present day. This 'uniqueness' is derived from the topographical features of the town site in a symbolic as well as a practical way. Camden, as described by Atkinson (1988), presents an unambiguous, eternal myth-like character. Camden demonstrates aesthetic characteristics of creative and technical achievement, as the Macarthur family and Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell deliberately devised the Camden township to be a visual centre for the region. Today it still serves that function.

The historic town of Camden is the cultural heart of a region, with a unique place in Australia's history. The vistas of Camden from the floodplain and intact material fabric of the country town are the basis of the rural narrative behind Camden community's identity and sense of place (Willis 2012 (b)). This rural landscape quality is based on an integrated and balanced mixture of remnant native vegetation and historic rural plantings (Landarc 1993). In a similar manner to the built heritage of Camden, the historic plantings and landscape are inextricably linked to the agricultural and horticultural pioneering Macarthur family. The significant role the Macarthurs played in the agricultural and economic development of the NSW colony came at a time of consolidation from penal settlement to a free society.

Camden's enduring reputation as a place of high aesthetic value can be traced all the way back to its earliest discovery by Europeans. Initial European focus in the Camden area concerned the cattle lost from Farm Cove soon after the First Fleet's arrival in 1788. In 1795 conflicting rumours about the existence of a herd of wild cattle reached Governor John Hunter, who despatched a party under Henry Hacking to investigate. The subsequent report so impressed the Governor that, with a small party, he travelled to see the cattle and country for himself. On crossing the Nepean River at a spot near where the Cowpasture Bridge into Camden township now stands, he found an impressive herd descended from the cattle that had arrived with the First Fleet. Hunter returned the following year and named the district he could see from a high point the Cow-pasture Plain (which he mapped, dated 20th August, 1796) (Wrigley 1980).

An early accounting states: *"The country where they were found grazing was remarkably pleasant to the eye: everywhere the foot trod on thick and luxuriant grass; the trees were thinly featured, and free from underwood, except in particular spots; several beautiful flats presented large ponds, covered with ducks and black swan, the margins of which were fringed with shrubs of the most delightful tints, and the ground rose from these levels into hills of easy descent"* (Collins et al 1889 pp. 310-311).

The Camden area is blessed with a natural backdrop of forested blue hills, the same landscape in which aboriginal people lived for thousands of years, and through which explorers such as Sturt, Throsby, Oxley and Hume and Hovell travelled in opening up the south-west to European farming practices and settlement. There is general community and developer agreement on the need to

conserve the heritage landscape and scenic hills of the Camden Valley (Wrigley J. D. 2007 pp. 38-39).

The high visual and aesthetic landscape quality of Camden is the result of a unique combination of natural and cultural heritage. In 2004 Camden's history and its heritage status was officially researched and acknowledged in the Camden Draft Heritage Plan, which recommended the adoption of the Camden Township Conservation Area encompassing its original intact 1836 street plan. It was noted that the historical development of the town is evident in its colonial buildings, its mix of residential, commercial, retail and industrial activities, the rural properties on the town's edge and Nepean River floodplain wrapping around three sides. The research identified a number of special qualities including its reputation as one of the very few original Cumberland Plain country towns still intact; the town's association with the Macarthur family; the layout of the town that still reflects its original purpose; the arrangement of the town which took advantage of the views and vistas of St John's Church on the hill; the area's large early colonial landed estates and the town's early farming and settlement history.

The human-scale of the town, combined with its visually detached built forms screened by exotic and native vegetation, with the focus of St John's Church and its spire rising clearly visible from the verdant floodplain of the Nepean, presents an inviting profile of rare character in Australia. An important theme in the development of the Camden aesthetic is the romanticism associated with the colonial landscapes created by the Cowpasture patriarchs and their properties (Willis 2015(e)). The township's idyllic quality is emphasised by the surrounding landscapes and hill tops influenced by Loudon's Gardenesque principles set within the historic pattern of the colonial estates of Camden's "gentry". (Cuneo 2016; Willis 2015(a)).

James (1798-1867) and William (1800-1882) Macarthur were educated high-minded men who unambiguously envisioned their village as the area's social and moral centre. They showed a sophisticated sensibility and an advanced opinion of the value of native flora, especially species resembling English oaks and familiar trees 'of home.' They understood landscape design, the distant vistas and lines of sight that could be created by selective clearing and tree planting and the symbolism of clear lines of viewing to St John's Church. The Macarthur brothers created a two-way vista between Camden Park mansion and St John's Church, a vista to their church from the family burial ground at Belgenny Farm and other vistas through the landscape to the spire of St. John's in Camden township which was frequented by the family, and other man-made and natural prominences. Selective removal and importantly retention of such native vegetation as local apple oaks or apple gums (*Angophora floribunda* & *A. subvelutina*), Forest Red Gums (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) and narrow leaved ironbarks (*E. crebra*) to frame vistas are apparent today and contribute to the Arcadian reputation of the area and the township.

Sir William Macarthur, who had a 30-year correspondence with James Veitch and Sons Royal Exotic Nursery in London, was renowned as having the best collection of plants in NSW and sought the latest plant discoveries from all around the world. As well as introducing new plants into cultivation, the Macarthurs had a highly developed sense of landscape aesthetic as they established the extensive Camden Park estate, and borrowed heavily on the traditions of the English Landscape School and Romanticism. Using an Arcadian landscape style, the Macarthurs

sought to create pastoral and parkland harmony, ultimately creating a local expression of an 'antipodean paradise' in the new colony (Cuneo 2016).

Historic plantings in the town remain and contribute to its 19th Century townscape. Camden Municipal Council contributed by planting Pepper Trees in Elizabeth and Mitchell Streets in 1897 for Arbour Day and in 1898 undertook street planting of 150 trees. School students were also routinely involved in tree plantings in the 1890s to celebrate Arbour Day.

Importantly, the unique plantings established at Camden Park (which included both newly discovered native trees as well as introduced species) were in many cases replicated in the Camden township and still exist. Fine examples of the Macarthur influence include the St John's Church precinct and Macarthur Park (Cuneo 2016).

St John's Church precinct

The church, "the situation of which will be highly picturesque and commanding", was planned from the beginning in 1835 by the Macarthur brothers to dominate the town's skyline as an important psychological and spiritual focus for the community. The original track connecting Camden Park House and the town led to St John's Hill. The Macarthur family ruled over Camden for over 150 years and the church was central to their moral view of the world. This was particularly so when power and absolute social authority rested with Elizabeth (1840-1911), who donated its clock and bells in 1897 and Sibella Macarthur Onslow (1871–1943).

Within and overlooking the Camden township on St John's Hill, the St John's Anglican Church Precinct including the church, rectory, cemetery, two parish halls and grounds, is subject to a Conservation Management Plan. The St John's Anglican Church Precinct, within the town's conservation area, was state listed in 2018. The church has been described as perhaps the finest single example of early Gothic Revival architecture in Australia.

The NSW Land and Environment Court (April 1996) ruled in favour of Council against a development application by Gledhill Constructions for an aged persons' home in the vicinity of St John's Church. The Honourable Justice M L Pearlman AM, stated "*It is abundantly clear that the Camden Township represents a particularly significant and sensitive heritage site in which conservation, involving reuse of buildings or land, must necessarily be approached with considerable care.*" Similarly in 2006 an independent heritage assessment by Clive Lucas Stapleton led to the defeat of an attempt by Council to locate a decked car park in the vicinity of St John's.

The outstanding and highly evocative landscape around St John's Church, is comprised of native trees such as Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*), Bottle Tree (*Brachychiton rupestris*) and exotic trees such as Funeral Cypress (*Cupressus funebris*), Chinese Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*) and Pencil Pine (*Cupressus sempervirens*). The hilltop location of St John's, with commanding views across the Nepean River, also includes remnant trees such as Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*)

and Grey Box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) from the original native forest, the Cumberland Plain woodland (Cuneo 2016).

Macarthur Park

This important integration with remnant native forest trees and historic plantings is also the dominant theme at Macarthur Park. The park, originally 6 acres along the dirt track (now Menangle Road) winding out to Camden Park, was gifted on 8 June 1905 by Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow, granddaughter of John Macarthur, to the people of Camden for all time. The park is named in honour of James Macarthur, the donor's father.

The 'deed of gift' specifically recognises and preserves the large remnant Cumberland Plain trees, the Narrow-leaved Ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*), many of which are over 200 years old. Macarthur Park is an excellent example of the 'Gardenesque' landscape style which was popular in the mid to late 19th century: this style involved using trees of unusual texture and shape, rockeries, ferneries and colour bedding displays. There are many towns in NSW which have parks laid out in the Gardenesque style, but few can lay claim to containing plantings of rare and unique trees which have direct links to the historic pioneering family responsible for settlement in the district. For example, the Chilean Wine Palms (*Jubaea chilensis*) at the park entrance (which originated from Camden Park) provide a visual identity as well as a historic connection with the Macarthur family and the early development of the colony, underpinning the state significance of Camden's landscape heritage (Cuneo 2016).

Its original fence, the tender for which called for it to be 'sheep proof', is still standing. The four wooden gates are as first constructed, with any repairs being made with original materials. From the park are glorious views of the district to the Razorback Range, Mount Hunter and the Blue Mountains. Adding to its historic landscape further tree planting took place in 1910, the same year that town water was laid on. In 1912, one hundred trees were planted and after the World War I, palm trees were planted on the southern end of a war memorial by local returned soldiers. (Camden Council n.d. (f)).

Public subscriptions raised to honour Elizabeth Macarthur Onslow, who died in 1911, provided a substantial shelter room for the park often used for performances by the town band. During World War II the room was used as an observation post. Later projects include the Pergola and Wisteria Walk completed in July 1983, which used sandstone saved from several old kerbed Camden streets and the Rose Garden, off the Park Street entrance, completed in 1984. (Camden Council n.d (f)).

The Nepean River Corridor

The location of the Camden township is defined by the Nepean River. The river's surrounding floodplain creates a sense of rural openness that distinctly separates the township from nearby suburbs of Sydney. Developers have capitalised on this distinction in South Camden, the only area outside the floodplain, promoting Camden's ruralness in contrast to the metropolitan as a positive difference for newcomers to the area (Willis 2012 (b), (c); 2013 (a)).

The original river flat eucalypt forest adjacent to the township was heavily cleared in the early days of settlement to take advantage of the deep and fertile soils. Following the establishment of agriculture many environmental weeds, (which largely originated from Camden Park), such as Honey Locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), Privet (*Ligustrum* spp.) and African olive (*Olea europaea* ssp. *cuspidata*), became widespread on the river corridor choking the remnants of the original native forest. (Cuneo 2016).

Adjacent to the Camden township is the highly significant Kings Bush, now classified as Eucalypt River Flat Forest, which is state listed as an endangered ecological community. This bushland is a rare intact example of this endangered vegetation on the large open floodplain, which has been successfully regenerated through woody weed removal over the past two decades. This forest forms part of the Nepean River cycleway, and truly is a 'window on the past' which features large old growth trees such as Blue box (*Eucalyptus baueriana*), Broad leaf apple (*Angophora subvelutina*) and several large specimens of the rare Camden White Gum (*Eucalyptus benthamii*) which is restricted in NSW to the Hawkesbury Nepean floodplain. (Cuneo 2016).

This highly diverse river flat forest was originally part of the St John's Church estate, and intergrades into Cumberland Plain Woodland (critically endangered ecological community) with increasing elevation towards St John's Church and Macarthur Park (Cuneo 2016).

Built Fabric

The built heritage of the township, which is well documented (for instance see Leary 1972; Wrigley J.D. 1983; Camden Council 2023(a); Willis 2015(a)), includes a varied range of architectural styles and reflects the town's evolution from the early days of European settlement through to the modern era.

Within the town centre, which is in its entirety a locally listed heritage precinct, there are an extensive number of locally listed heritage buildings and two properties are listed as state significant: St John's Anglican Church Precinct in Menangle Road and Nant Gwylan and Garden in Exeter Street. Camden Post Office in Argyle Street is on the Commonwealth Heritage Register.

The conservation area, which stretches beyond the original grid along Menangle Road and Alpha Road, presents an array of architectural styles through to the mid twentieth century, including art deco buildings, many Victorian and Edwardian cottages, Californian bungalows and fibro cottages built during the post World War II housing boom when there was a shortage of traditional building

materials. Camden retains a richness of colonial buildings, within the original street pattern designed by Mitchell and the Macarthur brothers, including St John's Church (c1840), St John's Rectory (1859), Dr Crookston's House (c1860), John Street cottages (late nineteenth century), Nepean House (1857), Mitchell House (c1880), Taplin's Cottage (1842), Camden Cottage (c1840), St Pauls Church (c1859), Court House (1857), Reeves House (1889), Police Barracks (1878), Macaria (c1850), NAB Bank (1877), Edithville (c1898), Whitemans (c1878), Camden A.H. and I. Hall (1894), Crown Hotel (c1898), Plough and Harrow Inn (c1885) Wesleyan Parsonage (1880) and Bank of NSW (1865).

The town's layout remains as originally surveyed by the Surveyor General, Major Thomas Mitchell. Its grid pattern of streets remains as originally designed and contains a mix of commercial, educational, religious, residential and industrial uses, as it did in the 1840s.

Before 1828 there were no rules of town design. Governor Darling created a Board of Enquiry in 1828, assisted by Mitchell, to set out regulations published in the Sydney Gazette on 30 May 1829. Camden was designed according to the new rules that main streets were to be 100 feet wide, including 10 feet each side for footpaths and minor streets were to be 84 feet wide including 9 feet each side for footpaths. Darling, having experienced the wide-spaced European areas of India, argued that wide thoroughfares admitted air to alleviate high temperatures. Those early town planning decisions are appreciated and apparent today in Camden's open and leafy streetscapes. Mitchell preferred town designs that incorporated squares and meeting places and took advantage of topographical features to create vistas. John Street was designed to lead the eye up to St John's Church, a scenic vista which is a feature of the town.

Rural Fabric

Camden's rural past is evidenced within or at the very edge of the 1836 street plan. Camden is unusual in the abruptness with which it opens into farmland, now community spaces, at the end of Mitchell Street and along Exeter Streets with Onslow Park (Camden Show Ground), the Bicentennial Park (an old dairy farm) and equestrian centre and the Camden Town Farm (another old dairy farm). Macarthurs' old Camden Vale milk factory is on the corner of Argyle and Edward Streets, and the Camden saleyards and farming supply outlets (both still operational today) are in Edward Street.

The Bicentennial Park and equestrian centre of around 200 acres, with Matahill Creek running through the centre, some acres of natural wetland, and two and a half kilometres long RSL memorial walking path, is located at the end of Argyle St with a main vehicle entrance off Exeter Street, both streets as originally laid out. (Camden Council n.d (a)).

Another major notable rural feature is the Camden Town Farm, a working dairy bequeathed in 2000 to the local community, by Llewella Davies, a beloved Camden identity who, accompanied by her dog Tess, contributed greatly to the community life of the town throughout her long life (Camden Council n.d. (d), (e)). Her final act of generosity and community spirit and one that makes a lasting contribution was her bequest to Camden Council of her family's dairy farm. The Davies' estate was divided into two parts. The original brick federation style family home built in

1910 called Nant Gwylan, with its extensive original heritage-significant garden, remains in private hands. Opposite the house in Exeter Street, the remainder of the estate, the 55-hectare dairy farm, was bequeathed to the community. The land is representative of both Camden's dairy heritage, and also of Camden's heritage character as a town immediately surrounded by agricultural land.

The Town Farm remains a working farm, grazing dairy and beef cattle and growing lucerne using sustainable farming practices by a volunteer committee. Various activities take place including produce markets, a community garden and events including Harmony Day, fishing competitions, open days and so on. The original slab hut and surrounding buildings attract artists and photographers, particularly for wedding and promotional photos. (Camden Town Farm n.d.; Camden Council n.d. (d))

As Camden's Town Farm it facilitates inclusive communal activities. It is a hub of activity every Saturday with the Camden Fresh Produce Markets, which sell only produce grown or produced in the Macarthur and Sydney Basin and are the only genuine farmers markets in NSW operating from a town farm (Camden Fresh Produce Markets n. d.). The entrance to the Town Farm remains in its original location in Exeter Street, a street in the original grid pattern of Macarthur and Mitchell as Surveyor General.

The Camden Show, which uses the motto "Still a Country Show" attracts approximately 40,000 attendees, and has been held every year since 1886. In the early 1860's James Macarthur formed a Farmer's Club which acted as a catalyst for the Show movement. In 1882 the Picton and Camden Agricultural Society decided to hold alternate Picton and Camden Shows. By 1885 the Camden Agricultural, Horticultural and Industrial Society was formed with the intention of advancing and developing the Camden District. (Nixon 1986)

The Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) is the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Centre of Excellence for Animal and Plant Health and Camden Park Environmental Educational Centre is part of the NSW Department of Education and Communities network. These facilities are situated on 1600ha of grazing property on original Macarthur lands and include the original residence, farm buildings and cemetery of John and Elizabeth Macarthur (Belgenny Farm), as well as many other historically significant heritage sites. The Faculties at Sydney University Camden campus maintain strong linkages with nearby EMAI. Help from the Australian Dairy Produce Board, the Australian Meat Board, and the Commonwealth Interdepartmental Committee on Wool Research enabled the purchase of two premier dairy farms in 1954. It continues today with additional acquisition of farms to make up the University's Rural Veterinary Clinic and Cobbitty Animal Research Property.

William Inglis established the firm of Wm. Inglis and Sons Stock Auctioneers in Sydney and in 1867 began conducting weekly stock markets in Camden, initially behind the Plough and Harrow Inn in Argyle Street. Having maintained a long-standing presence in the Camden Area, a branch of the firm was fully established in the 1930's. Sales are held every Tuesday and Wednesday in Edward Street. Livestock include beef and dairy cattle, horses, pigs, calves, sheep and goats. Camden is the largest stock selling centre within 100kms of Sydney.

Descendants of the first William "Dick" Inglis and his sons, continued to operate the firm of Wm. Inglis and Sons from premises in Edward Street Camden until another family company Jim Hindmarsh and Co recently took it over. Livestock sales continue and cattle continue to be heard for kilometres on sale days. The Inglis family has been and continues to be a presence in the community of Camden, including a strong involvement in the Camden Show.

Notable agrarian features within the township also include commercial outlets of farm machinery, fodder and farm supplies, irrigation equipment

Sense of Place

The picturesque rural landscapes that surround Camden tell the story of Australia's farming heritage. Many of the grand houses of the colonial estates that looked to Camden town as the area's social, cultural and economic centre sit within this rural landscape, such as Camden Park (1835), Brownlow Hill (1828), Denbigh (1822), Camelot (1888), Studley Park (c1870s), Wivenhoe (c1837) and Kirkham Stables (1816).

Braidwood, 285 kms from Sydney, has also importantly retained its historical relationship with its rural surroundings, including 'Jillamatong', the brooding hill adjacent to the town, and it is state-listed.

Camden continues to have a reputation as a picturesque historic and rural town, with high tourist potential being less than 70 kms from Sydney and close to the new airport at Badger's Creek. Heritage tourism is important to Camden's economy and promotions draw on the historic nature of central Camden, especially St John's Church, and the vistas of the floodplain (Willis 2023 (b)).

The successful Picturesque Atlas of Australasia (Garraan 1886) portrayed Camden as an idyllic English village surrounded by an ordered farming landscape, and this local and national narrative was further advanced by Sibella Macarthur Onslow (1914) in *Some Early Records of The Macarthurs of Camden*. The earliest accounts of Camden village, its planning, establishment and development are carried in the Sydney newspapers, particularly *The Sydney Morning Herald*. As early as the 1880s reminiscences were being published of the pioneering days of the early colonial period. Later there was William Hardy Wilson's *The Cow Pasture Road* (1920) and Ure Smith's water colours and etchings in his *Old Colonial By Ways* (1928). Whimsical descriptions of Camden's Englishness were published in Eldrid Dyer's *Camden, The Charm of an Old Town* (1926) and articles in *The Sydney Morning Herald* like *The Beauty of Age* (1934). The journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society published articles on the Camden District. The first appeared in 1928 on the Cowpastures, Cawdor and Cobbitty: these were followed by the Burraborang Valley (1934), Camden (1935), Narellan (1936), and the Cowpastures again in 1939 (Willis 2015 (e)).

The community emphasises the Arcadian nature of Camden through various means such as the heritage walking tour, histories of Camden published by the Camden Historical Society, and a hand-made quilt hanging in the Camden Library celebrating the Cowpastures Bicentenary (1995)

made by members of Camden Country Quilters. Local businesses use the rural imagery and aesthetic in packaging and advertising. Camden Library also reflects the value placed on the inherent aesthetic of Camden with an on-line data base of Camden Images. Camden Council also promotes the rural idyll with its plans and strategies referring Camden's unique and rural heritage. (Camden Library n.d. (b); Willis 2015 (e); Willis 2022 (b)).

Camden Council (n.d. (c)) recognises the value of the picturesque and historic quality of Camden for filming and still photography. Camden and its surrounds have been used in well-known films such as *Smiley* (1956), *My Brilliant Career* (1979), *X-Men Origins Wolverine* (2009), *The Sapphires* (2011), *A Place to Call to Home series* (from 2012), *Unbroken* (2014) and *The Daughter* (2015).

Community consciousness of the Camden aesthetic and sense of place was elevated after 1973 with the release of the 'Three Cities Plan'. Camden's rurality, centred around St John's Church, became iconic in the minds of the community, flowing into official council policy, literature, publications, tourist and business promotions, websites, artwork, music and museum displays (Willis 2015 (e)). Slogans became reflective of the community's strong association with its colonial and rural history, with Camden Residents' Action Group adopting "Camden, Still a Country Town" and the Camden Show Society, "Still a Country Show". Camden Museum, with its artefacts, archives and displays, has become one of the most important local sites for the representation of Camden's rurality and currently attracts around 6000 visitors a year. The national bicentennial celebrations in 1988 raised awareness, as did the publication in the same year of Alan Atkinson's *Camden, Farm and Village Life in Early New South Wales* (1988). The dust jacket of Atkinson (1988) uses a romantic watercolour (1850s) attributed to Emily Macarthur, similar to the engraving of Camden in Garran (1886), of an idyllic scene with the Nepean River flowing through a vista looking "across Camden Park to the north-west, with St John's Church and the distant Blue Mountains closing the view" (Willis 2012 (b)).

Camden, an aesthetic asset

The Camden aesthetic is fundamental to Camden's country town identity and sense of place. Camden's renowned social cohesiveness and feeling of community is associated with and strengthened through a common appreciation of the town's comparatively long history, equally long social links with its founding Macarthur family and its farming heritage. The old town, with its village profile rising above the surrounding floodplain and farmlands, is an important symbol of a deep and long-standing community connectedness to the area.

An important theme in the development of the Camden aesthetic is based on romanticism associated with the colonial landscapes created by the Cowpasture patriarchs and their properties (Willis 2015(e)). The township's idyllic quality is emphasised by the surrounding landscapes and hill-tops influenced by Loudon's Gardenesque principles set within the historic pattern of the colonial estates of Camden's "gentry" (Cuneo 2016; Willis 2015(a)).

Its historical aesthetic significance is associated with the topographical features of the town site in a symbolic as well as a practical way and Camden, as described by Atkinson (1988), presents an unambiguous, eternal myth-like character. James in particular believed that faith grew from mutual dependence, "*the spirit that would do unto others as it would they should do unto it (sic)*" and that the Church should grow from the land through the joint action of people as a focus and symbol (Atkinson 1988 p.35). The delay through their father refusing to build a town on Camden Park gave James and William Macarthur more time to develop their ideas about how the community should grow (Atkinson 1988 p.35)

Importantly, the Macarthur family in many cases replicated in the Camden township the unique plantings established at Camden Park, which included both newly discovered native trees as well as introduced species. Camden Municipal Council also contributed by planting Pepper Trees in Elizabeth and Mitchell Streets in 1897 for Arbour Day and in 1898 undertook street planting of 150 trees. School students were also routinely involved in tree plantings in the 1890s to celebrate Arbour Day. Systematic historic plantings in the town remain and endow the township with a distinctive character which emphasises its 19th Century townscape.

Atkinson (1988 p. 26-27) writes about the beauty of the landscape: "*From the earliest years white men wrote about the Camden landscape almost as a work of art, well defined, vivid and various, satisfying all the aesthetic notions of the day...Camden was a prize, a landfall in the inland ocean of New South Wales, which was otherwise vast, formless and overwhelming ...there was something familiar and accessible about the shape of the place*"

By the late nineteenth century, the unique Arcadian nature of Camden as an English-style village surrounded by farmland with prominent vistas of the spire of St John's Church was inspiring reminiscences of its progress and history. These were published in the *Camden Times*, *Camden News*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Town and Country Journal* and in Samuel Hassall's *In Old Australia* (1902) as well as the unpublished reminiscences of Camden businessman Samuel Thompson (1905). In 1883 Martin, the Camden Clerk of Petty Sessions made the point in his (*Camden Times*) reminiscences that the history of several English counties had been written and that a similar venture was worthwhile for the Camden district. (Willis 2015(e); Johnson 2012 et al). Andrew Garran's successful *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* portrayed Camden, in an engraving, as an idyllic English village surrounded by an ordered farming landscape, accompanied by an account of the exploits of John Macarthur and the foundation of the colonial wool industry (Garran 1886). A local and national mythology and romantic rural conception about Camden was evolving, reinforced by community celebrations and many publications including Sibella Macarthur-Onslow's *Some Early Records of the Macarthurs of Camden*. (Willis 2015(a); Willis 2012 (b); Macarthur-Onslow 1914).



A Camden vista. Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden

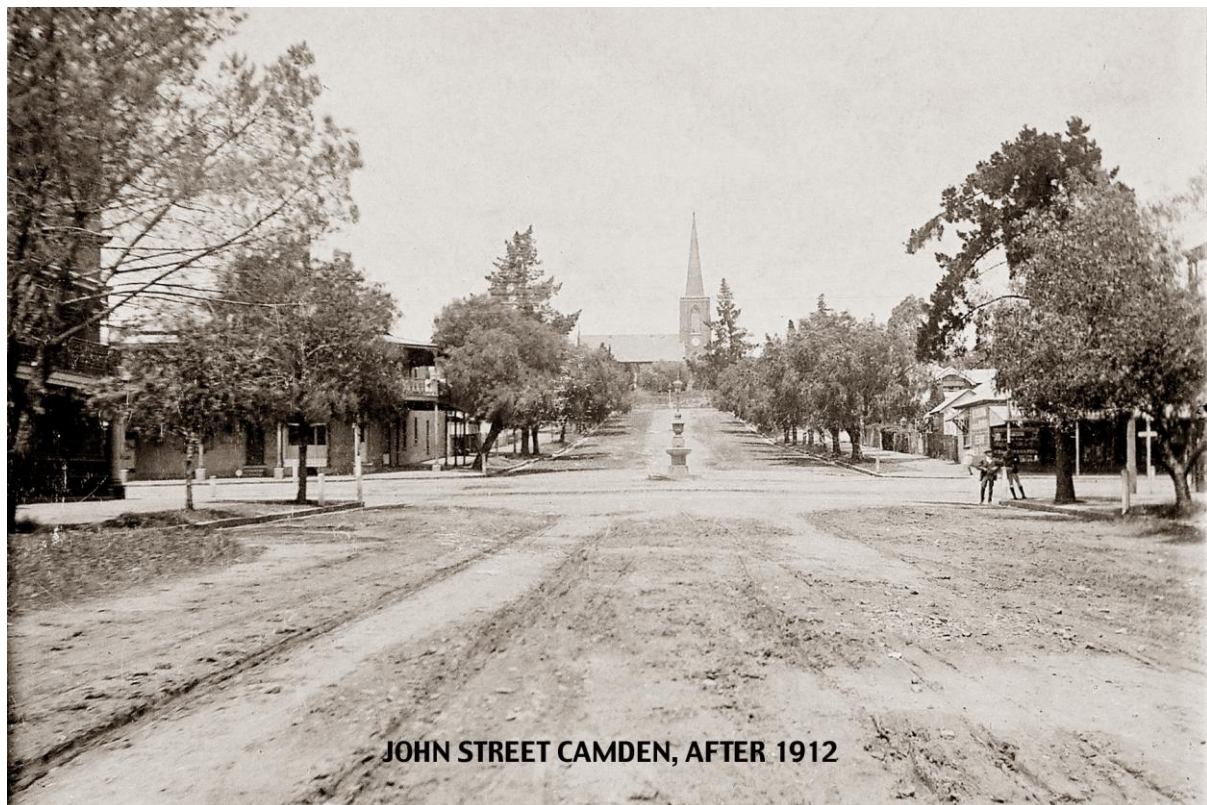
The township is prominent through its juxtaposition with the surrounding floodplain, presenting an Arcadian profile with its small-scale character emphasised by the landmark spire of St John's, which dominates the landscape for miles around. St John's Church is the first "archaeologically correct" Gothic Revival church built in Australia and with its tower and spire, is a major edifice in the history of Australian architecture and a landscape monument in the rural lands. The design is probably the cumulative work of Mortimer William Lewis, John Cunningham and Edmund T Blacket (NSW Heritage n.d. (b)). It is constructed in rich-toned red brick with curvilinear window tracery and stained glass. Its organ, located high up on the west gallery, framed by the tower arch, with an interesting Gothic case was built in 1861 by T.P. Bates, of Ludgate Hill, London. ([The] Organ Music Society of Sydney n.d.).

Willis (2008 (b)) writes of the town

"The ridge on the southern side of the commercial precinct is topped by Menangle Road, which used to make its way out of town to Camden Park House, past the gatehouse (now located on the Old Hume Highway). Apart from St John's church (1840), the Menangle Road precinct has the rectory (1859) and a number of charming Federation and Californian bungalows, which were the homes of the Camden elite. The precinct is also the location of Macarthur Park (1905) which was dedicated to the townsfolk by Elizabeth Macarthur Onslow and contains the town's World War Memorial (donated by the Macarthur family). Macarthur Park is a fine example of an urban Victorian park and has a number of significant trees.

The historic precinct of John Street runs north–south downhill to the floodplain from the commanding position of St John's church at the top of the ridge. Lower John Street is the location of the Italianate house Macaria (c1842), St Paul's Catholic Church and the government buildings

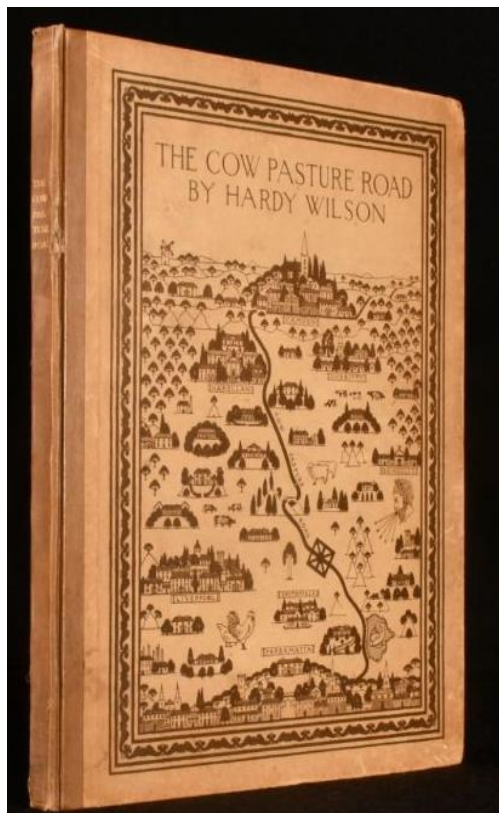
associated with the Camden police barracks (1878) and courthouse, (1857) and Camden Primary School. This area also contains the oldest surviving Georgian cottage in the town area, Bransby's Cottage (1842) in Mitchell Street. There is also the Camden Museum which is part of the recently redeveloped Camden Library and museum complex. These buildings are an excellent example of adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and at the same time illustrate the stages of the town's progress and development. The northern side of the complex was originally the Camden Temperance Hall (1867) and served as Camden Fire Station (1916–1993). The southern side of the complex was the School of Arts (1866), which served as the Camden Town Hall, while the rear of the building was occupied by Camden Municipal Council until it built a new office complex behind Macaria on the opposite side of John Street. The library was located in Macaria from 1967 until 1982, when it moved into the current building."



Upper John Street looking south towards St John's Church
Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden



Lower John Street looking north to what is now the Town Farm in Exeter Street
Photo courtesy of Camden Photo Centre, Argyle St Camden



The twenties and thirties were decades of renewed interest in colonial architecture forms, led by Hardy Wilson, who had studied the old buildings in the Camden district. He published a romantic fantasy, 'The Cow Pasture Road, in 1920 based on a journey to Camden with the cover showing the town and St John's steeple (Wilson 1920).

The Camden aesthetic is fundamental to Camden's identity and sense of place. Camden's renowned social cohesiveness and feeling of community is associated with and strengthened through a common appreciation of the town's comparatively long history, equally long social links with its founding Macarthur family and its farming heritage. The old town, with its village profile rising above the surrounding floodplain and farmlands, is an important symbol of a deep and long-standing community connectedness to the area.

Camden has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW for social, cultural or spiritual reasons (Criterion d)

Camden township meets this criterion of State significance because its long and unique history has resulted in a special and strong association with the wider Camden community, past and present.

Camden's strong association with the Macarthur family and its agricultural heritage has contributed to a distinct community culture. The Macarthurs dominated the area through entrepreneurial farming and culturally through the town, which was designed to combine aesthetics and symbolism, especially with St John's Church as the visual centre of the region. The Camden village provided a social and political focus for the Macarthur's to benevolently influence the morality and culture of the area's community.

From the private town's beginnings, the Macarthurs, as leaders in the Camden district and NSW, shaped a community reflecting many of the social and cultural ideals current at the time, including local self-sufficiency and community engagement. These ideals have travelled down through the generations to be still evident in the culture of the community today.

Social networks were important in everyday life and St John's church became the town's moral heart and was symbolic of the social authority of the local colonial gentry, particularly the Macarthurs, whose interest and benevolence in the community reinforced the family's social and moral standing (Willis 2013(a)).

Community organisations flourished, usually led by the Macarthurs or other landed "gentry" which informally reinforced their political power (Willis 2006 (a)).

From the beginning the role of women has been central to the Macarthur story and from farm management they extended their skills to charitable and social development and provided leadership to Camden women to take up opportunities beyond rural life. Good works were particularly encouraged by Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow from the 1880s and also her daughter Sibella (1871-1943) and daughter-in-law Enid (1867-1952). The Macarthur women dominated the town socially, culturally and economically and moulded the attitudes and activities of Camden's women (Willis 2006 (a)).

Good works and fundraising combined with social activities strongly reinforced Camden's social organisations.

Sibella, for instance, devoted her life to humanitarian issues and played a powerful role in what was a structured and closely controlled community in Camden. Sibella was involved with the Red Cross from its inception in Australia in 1914, including as an executive member of the Central Executive in Sydney and in Menangle and Camden of which she was Secretary or President until her death in 1943. The Camden branch was the first Branch in NSW outside Sydney and largest in NSW in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Red Cross branch network provided opportunities for women to do good works and make a societal difference beyond their normal duties, and her

legacy continues today with prominent Camden women involved with the Red Cross. (Willis 2014 (a); 2019 (c), (d)).

Not only the Macarthur women led the way. For instance, Miss Llewella Davies (1901-2000), who gifted her dairy farm, now known as the Camden Town Farm, to the people of Camden, was a tireless volunteer and was involved in numerous Camden organisations over the many decades of her life. She was part of the Camden Voluntary Aid Detachment in World War II and was Red Cross Treasurer for many years from 1961, taking over the role from her mother. Llewella was awarded the Medal in the Order of Australia in 1981. In 1992 she was presented with the keys to and freedom of Camden town (Wrigley, J. E. 2016).

The town takes pride in the Macarthur legacy of social contribution, especially in charitable works, with a 2008 estimate of over 250 voluntary organisations in the Camden district. (Willis 2008 (b))

As employers, the Macarthurs successfully transitioned from using convict labour to free settler and immigrant labour; and were acknowledged as good employers who inspired workers, including their Aboriginal workers, to stay long term.

Early European settlement in the Camden area with the Camden township at its heart from 1840, created a unique connection between farm and town. As well as Camden Park many colonial estates sit within the township's rural surrounds including the grand houses and landscapes of Brownlow Hill (1828), Denbigh (1822), Camelot (1888), Studley Park (c1870s), Wivenhoe (c1837) and Kirkham Stables (1816). Other important colonial families on landed estates looked to Camden town as the area's social, cultural and economic centre and they and their workers maintained a significant existence in the area over a long period.

Many families, whether still living in Camden or not, can trace connections to Camden through the colonial estates within the township's rural surrounds.

As employers, the Macarthurs successfully transitioned from using convict labour to free settler and immigrant labour; and were acknowledged as good employers who inspired workers, including their Aboriginal workers, to stay long term. James and William Macarthur brought skilled workers from Britain and Europe into Camden through migration championed by the eldest son Edward Macarthur in London. James and William also sponsored immigrant workers for nearby Brownlow Hill established by Alexander Macleay (1767-1848), first Colonial Secretary of NSW and his sons (Burnett 2015).

Immigrants brought their expertise and knowledge in farming, viticulture, and other pursuits, contributing to the development of the area's agriculture and Camden township. Many immigrant families who began on the landed estates as tenant farmers played a significant role in shaping the agricultural practices and industries in the region, and some started businesses in the village. Many of those families remain in the community or can trace their history to the area and town.

Other families came to take advantage of the economic opportunities of the town. The Whiteman family for instance started a farm produce store in 1878 which would become Camden's iconic general store and which passed through four Whiteman generations and employed many Camden residents until closing in 2000 after 122 years of continuous operation. The building is still known as "Whitemans".

As well as a place of shopping, education and worship Camden has served as an agricultural hub for farmers with farming families bringing milk for processing from the 1890s to the Camden Vale Milk Depot and livestock for sale from the 1880s to date.

Camden township has been the social, cultural and spiritual hub of the area over generations, and all quests to trace family connections are made easier by community archivists and researchers. The town's strong association with its present and past residents is evidenced by records held by the Camden Library, including Camden Voices and Camden Images (Camden Library n.d. (a), (b)). Camden Museum and Camden Area Family and History Society also provide resources for tracing family connections in Camden. Families with connections to Camden are often concerned to trace their early connections to the landed estates, and research has been undertaken to record the workers on Camden Park and Brownlow Hill. (Burnett et al 2013, Burnett 2015).

Children educated in the two primary schools and high school (1956 -2001) within Camden township develop a strong association with the town for social, cultural, and sometimes spiritual reasons. The education system plays a vital role in connection to the local community and exposure to local culture and identity. Children often form friendships and social networks with their peers, teachers, and other members of the community. School events, extracurricular activities, and community programs often bring students and families together, fostering a strong sense of community and belonging.

Generational families and their individual members have strong historical and emotional connections with Camden township. Many families mark life events and have special memories of weddings, funerals and baptisms taking place in the town's churches, St John's, St Paul's and the Uniting Church.

St John's Anglican Church Precinct, designed by the Macarthur brothers to be the aesthetic and spiritual focus of the town, in particular has provided a sense of community and belonging, fostering social connections and support networks among its congregation members. Culturally, St John's Anglican Church represents the early colonial heritage of Camden and its ties to the Anglican tradition. The architectural style of the church reflects the historical period in which it was built and serves as a highly visible reminder of the town's early cultural development.

The current Camden community also sees the township as the social and cultural hub, a place of community functions and recreation and the jewel in the crown of the area with its leafy, wide streets, open spaces and country town feel. Networks and community organisations have always been a feature of everyday life creating a community of renowned cohesive spirit and shared memories that strongly identifies with the town.

Connectedness, sense of place and the value that the community place on the township and surrounds are evidenced by the many photos and reminiscences that are shared within the community on social media (Flickr; You know you're from Camden if...) as well as Camden's local paper, the District Reporter, providing history notes through its "Back Then" series and Camden Library providing an ongoing, on-line archival record of Camden voices and images.

The township holds strong and special associations for the its community and the many families with current and historic connections to it.

Camden has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (Criterion e)

Camden township is an important benchmark site because it is the only extant town of private origin in NSW, and possibly Australia. Camden is a town that has importantly retained its colonial form and presents a culture of long-lived connections that today remains influenced by its patriarchal past and pastoral and agricultural origins. The founding Macarthurs influenced the town in ways that have the potential to contribute to an understanding, not available elsewhere, of human adaptation to new opportunities in a different land and climactic conditions and of how the indelibility of 'home' led the quest to recreate familiarity.

The wealth of writings about Camden's place in colonial history and Camden's current active community of researchers has produced an ever-expanding archive of material that can be mined to assist in answering research questions about Camden, NSW and Australian history. The Camden Library and Museum Complex hosts the Camden Historical Society, which produces many research publications as well as the Camden Historical Society Journal and the Camden Area Family History Society. The two Societies, although separate bodies have a mutual working relationship with each other and both have a working partnership with Camden Library, which facilitates research output. Archives of newspaper clippings, letters, file notes, reminiscences, memorabilia, photographs, maps, oral histories and so on maintained by Camden Museum provide a rich source of material that facilitates the research work and can be invaluable in helping to answer questions about how our cultural heritage evolved and is evolving.

As it exists today Camden is significant because of its ability to demonstrate a way of life, community functions, customs dating back to its origins on Camden Park and extant agricultural features and processes of particular interest.

Also, archaeologically Camden is significant for several reasons. Camden is located near a natural crossing point of the Nepean River which curves around three sides of a very fertile area and on traditional land of fire-stick pasture and Cumberland woodland that was an important source of food and cultural congregation for Aboriginal peoples. It is situated on part of what the Dharawal called Yandel'ora, meaning land of peace between peoples, an important cultural area for Aboriginal nations to meet, make laws, settle disputes, arrange marriages, feast, celebrate, perform religious observances and trade the local valuable white pipe clay. Camden's fertile location drew the escaped cattle of the first fleet into what was to become the Cowpastures, and also became the entry point into the first grants of Cowpasture land west of the Nepean in 1805, and later into the inland towards Melbourne.

Activity of Aboriginal peoples and Europeans where Camden is located has been longer and more intense than many places. Camden, given its history contains remnants of the past. Aboriginal artefacts found near the Nepean River, housed in the Camden Museum indicate that Camden town would also contain artefacts. Material evidence of former buildings, structures and works such as the Woollen Mill adapted in 1885 from a flour mill, Camden Park Estate's Butter and Bacon Factory, Henry Thompson's first flour mill in Camden powered by water and supplemented with a steam driven mill in the 1850s, brick works for St John's Church and early

windmills almost certainly underlie Camden as it stands today. These archaeological remnants provide evidence of prior occupations and add to an understanding of the history and way of life of the colony.

Camden, given its location on the Nepean River and its early economic and social contribution in NSW, has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of cultural or natural history

Camden possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (Criterion f)

Camden, situated by the Nepean River on the Cumberland Plain, has a unique place in the history of the colony of NSW and an important role in the foundational story of colonisation and development of Australia. Consequently, the 1840 town possesses uncommon, rare and endangered aspects of NSW's cultural and natural history.

Camden and early town establishment in NSW (and Australia)

The European pattern of settlement and establishment of the oldest towns in New South Wales firstly followed the penal requirements of the colony and its quest for self-sufficiency. The names of extant towns, other than Camden, found to be recorded in 1849 (Proudfoot 1996) are italicised.

Coastal areas to the north and south of Sydney town were often first accessed and settled by cedar-getters, who both harvested valuable timber and made cleared land available for agriculture. In 1797 easily extractable coal was discovered at the mouth of the Hunter (or Coal) River. An outpost settlement was established at *Newcastle* to relocate insurgent Irish convicts and mine coal to assist in financing the colony. The first coal shipment left Newcastle port in 1799.

Exploration for suitable farmland to supply food to Sydney Town began as early as 1789. Up to the time of Governor Darling (1825-1831) food production in the colony was uncertain, and the Government bestowed farm land and convict workers to settlers and officers to relieve the situation. The rich alluvial soils of the Cumberland Plain along the Hawkesbury and Nepean Rivers attracted agriculture due to the barrier of the Blue Mountains, nearness to the main colony and relative ease of land and water transport. European settlement of the Hawkesbury area which was to provide much of the food for the colony and allow fresh produce to be shipped down the Hawkesbury River to Sydney town commenced in 1794 when the first 30-acre land grants were made to 22 settlers.

By 1794 John Macarthur, an officer in the New South Wales Corps was experimenting in sheep breeding, and with ready access to convict labour, had 100 acres under cultivation on his land grant at the upper reaches of the Parramatta River.

The question of prior 'ownership' by Aboriginal people was not seen as any impediment with the territory deemed to be 'terra nullius' and the Crown deemed to be its owner, holding it in trust for immigrant settlers.

During the first few decades of the British penal and military period precedence was given to the functional and practical requirements of colonisation of the distant new territory. Little attention was paid to town planning principles such as the civic benefits of public buildings, roads, and services and town aesthetics. Few towns were planned and laid out before 1830.

In November, 1810, following serious flooding the previous year Governor Macquarie set out to inspect the outer western Sydney districts, following the Hawkesbury and Nepean Rivers. He designated and named five settlements, Castlereagh, Pitt Town, *Richmond*, Wilberforce and Windsor, to be established on higher ground which would become known as the Macquarie Towns. In 1810 Governor Macquarie also confirmed a 300-acre grant in the Mulgoa Valley to the son of William Cox who was to become responsible for building the first road across the Blue Mountains in 1815.

On 31st May 1813, Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and a young William Wentworth, who went on to become an author, barrister and statesman, successfully reached the top of Mount Blaxland in the Blue Mountains, "*from whence they descried all around, forest or grass land, sufficient in extent in their opinion, to support the stock of the colony for the next thirty years*" (Blaxland, 1813). Later in 1813 surveyor and explorer George Evans (1780–1852) was instructed by Governor Macquarie to confirm the path through the Blue Mountains that Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth had cut and extend those discoveries into the NSW interior. Evans discovered the Macquarie and Lachlan Rivers which fuelled speculation about an inland sea or larger river to the ocean and motivated further exploration.

By January 1815, William Cox and his team had built a road across the mountains to the Bathurst Plains, which allowed settlers to access land west of the mountains for farming. Australia's first inland town of *Bathurst* on the banks of the Macquarie River was proclaimed on 7 May 1815.

In 1817 Surveyor General John Oxley reported that all good land on the Cumberland Plain had been taken up. The Bathurst Plains had been discovered in 1813, and the Goulburn Plains by 1820, which became the starting-points of expeditions further afield. The Liverpool Plains were discovered by 1818 but were difficult to access. Grass was pursued beyond the Cowpastures with Charles Throsby finding a way for cattle to the Illawarra region in 1818 and John Oxley grazing sheep as far as the banks of the Wingecarribee River by 1819. Also, in 1819 John Howe founded a sheep route along what is now the Bulga Road to good grazing in the Hunter region. Wide areas of grazing were now available to the colony. (Jeans 1972). Another key factor in the expansion beyond the Cumberland Plain was the settlement of *Newcastle* (1804) and the opening up of the Hunter Valley after the completion of a convict- built road from *Windsor* (1796/1810) to a point near the present town of *Singleton* (1820s) in 1823. On the Hunter River, the site of the town of *Morpeth* founded in 1827, was an important river port from the 1820s frequented by

settlers, merchants, timber getters and farmers, and was instrumental in opening up the Hunter Valley.

By the end of the 1820s NSW was expanding to the Hunter Valley in the north-west and beyond into the Liverpool Plains, to the Illawarra in the south, to Wellington in the west and as far as the Murrumbidgee further inland. In 1829, intending to halt the spread of the colony too far from Sydney, Governor Darling reviewed the office of the new Surveyor-General, Thomas Mitchell and extended and defined the limits of location of NSW settlement. The limits were defined to encompass Nineteen Counties and when the granting of free land ceased in 1831, land was made available for sale.

The establishment of the National Trigonometrical Survey by the British Board of Ordinance in the late 18th century led to improvement in surveying methods which was paralleled by advances in navigation at sea, with Captain James Cook testing astronomers' calculations in the Pacific. Map making reflecting the English Survey became part of military campaigns abroad, but the new lands could be vast. (Proudfoot 1996). The area covered by the limit extended in the south to Batemans Bay (cedar-getters were in the district as early as the 1820s) in the north to *Kempsey* and to the Wellington area in the West. At Kempsey Enoch Rudder purchased land in 1836 and had riverside blocks surveyed for a private town but the collapse of red cedar prices in the early 1840s nearly led to its failure; in 1854 a government town was surveyed at West Kempsey and Rudder's town became known as East Kempsey. About 3 km south from where Wellington (1846) now stands a convict settlement was established in 1823, the only settlement beyond Bathurst. It was abandoned in 1830.

A report to the House of Commons in London in 1823 mentions the NSW towns of *Parramatta*, *Windsor*, *Wilberforce* and *Liverpool*; and the villages of *Richmond*, *Castlereagh* and *Campbell Town* in the county of Cumberland bounded mainly by the Hawkesbury and Nepean Rivers (and the Cowpastures) and *Bathurst* in the county of Westmorland to the west of the Blue Mountains (Bigge 1823).

With wool reaching record prices in Europe, especially during the Napoleonic Wars from 1803 to 1815, the export of fine wool was highly profitable. In 1824, the Australian Agricultural Company (AACo), in which John Macarthur was a founding investor, was established through an Act of the British Parliament, to select and lease one million acres in NSW, including mineral rights, for agricultural development. The area selected ran from Port Stephens to the Manning River. Cheap labour was sourced through convicts, Aboriginal workers and indentured labourers. In 1828, the company received a grant of 2,000 acres of coal land in the centre of Newcastle. In 1830 the government handed over its Newcastle coal mines to the company and coal mining became its most profitable activity for the rest of the century. In 1831 the company opened Australia's first railway. In 1833 the company selected better inland grazing land in exchange for an equivalent area at Port Stephens and received further land grants at Newcastle with a monopoly on exporting coal. Storehouses and much of the convict labour force were located at Stroud, north of *Newcastle* which was a self-contained company village by 1832 and the headquarters of the company by 1850. Also in the 1830s, on the southwest bank of the Peel River,

a company town developed at the present site of West Tamworth. Tamworth, as a public town located on the opposite side of the river was gazetted in 1850 (Carey 2006).

The government town of Goulburn was originally surveyed in 1828 and moved to the present site of the inland city in 1833. Other early towns were Yass (1837), a rest stop for travellers en route from Sydney to Melbourne and Gundagai (1840) the appointed crossing of the Murrumbidgee River, both servicing prime agricultural regions. Armidale (1839) was established to provide a market and administration for the region's farms, and grew rapidly after the discovery of gold in the area in the 1850s.

Many other regional areas across NSW were later established or grew through mining for instance *Wollongong* (1834) in the south, Lithgow (1869, first industrial town) and *Orange* (1829) on the western edge of the Blue Mountains, Gunnedah on the Liverpool Plains, and Muswellbrook and Cessnock in the Hunter Valley. *Singleton* in the Hunter Valley, for example, was first settled in the 1820s, but grew when the first mine opened in 1860, ultimately becoming its biggest service town.

Living and working beyond the limits of location was trespassing or "squatting" on the King's land. Despite the uncertainty of land tenure, squatters ran large numbers of sheep and cattle beyond the boundaries. An economic base and administrative framework for NSW was established by the late 1830s.

By about 1835 British prisons were no longer able to supply enough convicts to meet the needs of the growing wool industry. Transportation to NSW came to an end in 1840. From 1836 legislation was passed to legalise squatting with grazing rights or leases. Also, in 1836 a new colony of South Australia was established as separate from NSW. By 1850 Australia had become the world's chief exporter of wool, mainly produced on large 'runs.'

In that year NSW (as it was then drawn up) had less than 200,000 people, a third of them within a day's ride of Sydney, the rest scattered along the coast and through the pastoral districts from the Port Phillip District in the south to Moreton Bay in the north. Economic wealth was generated from the inland by the 1820s, initially from pastoralism and, following the gold rushes of the 1850s, mining, which brought a rapid influx of migrants to the colony.

In 1829 Governor Darling in the interests of potential town dwellers set out the first comprehensive set of Town Planning Regulations in the colony. Although public uses could be identified in towns of Macquarie's time such as *Windsor* (1796/1810), *Richmond* (1810), *Liverpool* (1810/1819) and *Bathurst* (1815/1833), the Darling Regulations, modelled on a basic grid form, required sites to be specifically marked out for public and civic purposes. Existing towns were classified according to a hierarchy: the sea ports included Sydney, *Newcastle* (1804) and *Port Macquarie* (1824/1831); towns at the head of river navigation included *Parramatta* (1790), *Liverpool* (1810/1819), and *Maitland* (1827); towns without the advantage of a stream of fresh water included *Campbell Town* (1820), *Castlereagh* (1810), *Pitt Town* (1810), and *Wilberforce* (1810).

Camden, a rare early planned town

Despite the gold rush and the advent of railways in NSW history Camden retained its village form and country town culture.

Camden was planned to Darling's 1829 regulations in 1836, with two main streets crossing near the centre of a rectangle, one being Argyle Street for commerce and the other, John Street providing a vista leading to the proposed St John's Church, which was to crown the hilltop. Historian Helen Proudfoot (Travis Partners, 1990, para. 2.1) notes that within its ten small blocks Camden exhibits a range of town development with key groupings of civic buildings; churches, courthouse, schools, banks, substantial residences and smaller houses and commercial buildings that are a visual and environmental asset.

The official town-planning regulations had nineteen articles, including that *"each Allotment will consist, as nearly as the nature of the ground and other accidental circumstances will permit, of Half an Acre of Land, to be one chain wide and 5 chains deep"*, a depth apparently needed for stock. Towns were to be rectangular in shape with streets intersecting at right angles. The width of main streets was to be 100 feet with an 80-foot (24.38 m) carriageway and 10 feet (3.05 m) for footpaths on each side; secondary streets were to be 84 feet wide, with 66 feet of carriageway, with building lines in all streets 14 feet from allotment frontages, although open verandas were allowed to project beyond this line. The forerunner of the more regular system of town planning was *Campbell Town*, the last of the towns that was designated by Macquarie in 1820. The first measured plan of *Campbell Town* was drawn in 1828, although allotments (of free grants promised in 1827) were not available to settlers until 1831. (Proudfoot 1996).

Camden is one of few Australian towns planned in the pre-gold-rush period which survives in its original layout. The court house, police barracks, post office and school (an acre was given by the Macarthurs in 1849) were to be located in John Street. An inn was sponsored in Argyle Street for travellers and as a meeting place for its male inhabitants. No provision was made for hotels on the St John's Church side of Argyle Street, and there are none today. The Macarthurs encouraged the establishment of other churches by providing two one acre lots for the Catholic and Presbyterian churches at a nominal cost. Planning included the use of adjacent open space for social and cultural activities.

Gold was discovered in 1851 near *Bathurst* by Edward Hargraves (coincident with implementation of colonial self-government in New South Wales). Soon after in 1851 gold was also discovered at Ballarat and Bendigo. An influx of immigrants in the gold rushes of the 1850s influenced the pattern of settlement and development of towns in New South Wales, but not as radically as in Victoria which had the richest gold fields. NSW remained more conservative, still dominated politically by the squatter class and their connections in the Sydney business community. Victoria was separated from NSW on 1 July 1851. Queensland was separated from New South Wales on 10 December 1859 (coincidentally shortly after the discovery of gold near Rockhampton in 1858). In 1851 (excluding Victoria) the population of NSW was recorded as 197,265 and in 1861 as 357,362 with another 34,367 recorded in Queensland (ABS 2006).

During the 1850s the population of NSW roughly doubled and gold mining towns grew quickly at Sofala, Hill End, Ophir, Forbes and Lambing Flat. Most migrants were English, Irish and Chinese. From the late 1850s railways began to provide an efficient means of land transport and inland settlements could expand their economies beyond high value-for-weight products like wool. Towns were shaped depending on whether the railway bypassed them or linked them with the wider world, although generally, only larger towns, such as *Goulburn*, *Bathurst*, *Dubbo* and *Tamworth*, experienced a significant longer-term boost to their economies.

By 1861 people began to filter back from the gold fields into towns looking for work and places to live. In 1861, the NSW Crown Land Acts (also known as the Robertson Land Acts and Selection Acts), similar to those enacted in the United States and Canada, were introduced to free up land for an increasing population, allow those with limited means to acquire land, encourage closer settlement, encourage cropping, raise revenues and break the squatters' domination of land tenure.

The Land acts also had the effect of accelerating the dispossession of indigenous Australians.

The limits of location of the Nineteen Counties were made redundant. Unsurveyed crown land could be selected and lots bought freehold if the purchaser agreed to effect improvements and live on the land. Conflict of interest between squatters and selectors saw corruption of the tenure system through commissioning of selections, which would be passed to squatters, particularly of land with access to water needed to maintain the viability of their pastoral runs. By 1890, 37 million acres had been transferred by selection with over half owned by 677 people and only 330,000 acres were being used to grow wheat.

Throughout the history of NSW Camden has retained its original village form, nestled within the Nepean River floodplain and farmlands. View Street importantly demonstrates the early development of residential housing in the town with original small, single storey cottages, on narrow lots located close to the street and each other, with small front gardens and picket fences. Camden in the post-war period experienced economic stimulus from Burratorang Valley coal mining, which put pressure on housing and additional housing was constructed, within what was to become in 2010 (local) Conservation area, in Edward Street and Alpha Road and Chellaston and Little Streets on its edges. By 1960 there were 150 mineworkers living in the town, but the distance from the mines themselves preserved the town's rural and historic character (Willis 2015(a)).

Camden, an extant rare private town

As the farming and pastoral estates grew, from the late 1830s at least until the gold rush era, local authority and local community came to be of unprecedented importance in NSW (Atkinson 1988 p. xi). Between 1829 and 1842 the colonial government planned 53 official new towns and villages to service the spread of settlement in the counties of NSW. In the 1830s and 1840s private subdivisions of towns within settlers' estates were also put up for sale. Newly planned official towns were often adjacent to the private towns which were eventually subsumed, adopting the name of the official town, often with a directional prefix such as "east". Other private subdivisions, fuelled by hopes of continuing immigration and future prosperity were often only paper plans, or

had no allowances for public and civic uses and otherwise were short-lived due to the 1840's depression. An exception was *West Maitland*, a privately founded and unofficial town, which continued to thrive on the river trade between the Hunter Valley and Sydney, taking the growth away from the official *Maitland*, and becoming strong enough to attract a court house, churches, and other substantial buildings. (Proudfoot 1996 p. 169). Today it is part of greater Maitland.

The exceptional influence of the Macarthurs in founding Camden as a private town gave the planning process a degree of social sophistication rarely found in Australia.

Proudfoot (1996) researched the archival records and drew up a table of principal towns existing in 1849, an extract of which is included in the table below.

This table shows that Camden is the only surviving private town from that time. As can be seen in the table and as covered above, several extant towns of 1849 were founded before Camden in 1836 but none are private towns.

Proudfoot (1996 p.169) writes

"A good example of a well-planned unofficial town was Camden, over the Nepean River from the planned Narellan. The Macarthurs had the town laid out, and they were careful to include land designated for public use, like sites for churches, for a school, and even a court house. On the 23 July 1841 auctioneer Samuel Lyons sold off 44 half-acre allotments (0.20 ha) on their behalf. The town attracted a wheelwright, a cooper, and a stonemason, to begin with and the Macarthur's overseer.

Around the town were clearing leases of between 30 and 130 acres (12.14 and 52.61 ha) leased from Camden Park. The land was productive, and the settlers farmed them each year with a measure of success. The rhythm of the farming year was adapted to Australian conditions, and the district was prosperous. The town grew slowly as a self-contained urban unit related to the farming district.

This was the exception rather than the rule for these private towns in New South Wales. Most were short-lived subdivisions with no allowance for public land or for common urban uses in the plans. The expansion of the colony was fuelled by hopes for continuing immigration and future prosperity. The depression of the early forties signalled, however, that the little villages springing up, especially around the mother-city of the state, had little viability. These on the whole were embarked upon with only paper plans drawn up, and with no urban services of any kind provided. Unfortunately, speculation in unserviced urban land became a feature of Australian towns".

The town's proximity to the river and the flood plain was carefully ordered to provide access for transport, some protection from floods and a connection with the productive areas around the town. Camden town retains the original grid pattern marked out by the Macarthur brothers with the help of Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell in 1836. The foundation stone of St John's Church, consecrated in 1849, was laid by Bishop Broughton on 3 November 1840 and its earliest gravestone is dated 1843. The first church wardens were James and William Macarthur and George Macleay of Brownlow Hill. The church rectory was built in 1859.

The Macarthur brothers organised land sales through Sydney auctioneer Samuel Lyons in 1841. Advertisements for the land stated that allotments had been cleared and stumped and that the village already had a number of cottages, occupied by a cooper, wheelwright, master builder and brick maker as well as a post office, inn and partly completed church. (Willis 2015 (a)). On the 23 July 1841 the auctioneer sold off 44 half-acre allotments on their behalf. Surrounding the town were clearing leases of between 30 and 130 acres leased from Camden Park. As was already known from the story of the "Cowpastures" and the success of Camden Park, the land was productive, and the settlers adapted their farming rhythm to Australian conditions.

The original street plan is identical today. Its early buildings are largely preserved and mainly function as originally intended. Camden township presents a rare and possibly unique village setting given the history of its private town origins. The Macarthur family practiced British philanthropy and benevolently presided over Camden in the British tradition. In 1882 the Macarthur family gifted to the people of Camden 10 acres for Onslow Park, which is also used as the Camden Show Ground. In 1905 Mrs. Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow (1840-1911), daughter of James Macarthur, gifted six acres in central Camden for Macarthur Park.

The deed of gift required the best English practices and retention of native timbers. Macarthur Park was traditionally designed for promenading and display of gentility. At Onslow Park the lower classes could aspire to the gentlemanly conduct of the gentry, with healthy games such as cricket from the "old country" which brought out the best in competitors. (Willis 2006 (a)) Two palm trees planted at the official opening of Macarthur Park on 10th October 1906, at which Elizabeth officiated, can be seen on either side of its main entrance in Menangle Road.

The heart of the original 1805 land grant is still owned by descendants of John and Elizabeth Macarthur, including Camden Park House and gardens and remains an active farm with annual dairy production of over 2 million litres of milk and poultry production of around 450,000 chickens. The Macarthur family who founded and generously headed the Camden township for more than 150 years remain involved with the town and live to this day at Camden Park, the estate on which the private town of Camden was founded in 1836. The family opens its ancestral home, Camden Park House, designed by John Verge and built between 1831 and 1835, to the public on a weekend in September every year.

Principal Towns in 1849 of present-day NSW, Houses and Populations if known and relative location to Sydney (kms)

NSW town	Founded	Houses	Pop.	Location	Beginnings
Parramatta	1790	832	4,454	12 W	First farmland, on Parramatta River. (Now part of Sydney.)
Newcastle	1804	193	1, 471	202 N	Penal settlement. Deep-water port, abundant coal.
Liverpool	1810/1819	103	601	36 SW	Early planned settlement with easy connection to Sydney. (Now part of Sydney.)
Windsor	1796/1810	424	1, 679	62 W	Macquarie town, founded to service farms supplying food to Sydney
Richmond	1810	147	746	62 W	Macquarie town, founded to service farms supplying food to Sydney.
Bathurst	1815/1833	364	1,883	200 W	Macquarie proclaimed as town in 1815 in opening up of Bathurst Plains. Official town planned in 1833.
Kelso	1825	96	464	200 W	A small village serving settlers on the eastern bank of Macquarie River. (Now a suburb of Bathurst.)
Campbelltown	1820	104	541	61 SW	Early planned town and administrative centre, founded by Macquarie, to service small farms in area, town land released in 1831. (Now an outlying suburb connected by rail to Sydney.)
Singleton	1820s	127	565	197 NW	Hunter River punt service, began as a private town founded by Benjamin Singleton, bankrupted in 1842.
Morpeth	1827	154	635	168 NW	Hunter River port, point of trans-shipment onto smaller vessels upriver to West Maitland
West Maitland	1827	558	2,409	165 NW	Hunter River port for vessels with a shallow draft
East Maitland	1829	227	910	161 NW	Official government town
Port Macquarie	1824/1831	126	819	373 N	Penal settlement
Goulburn	1833	228	1, 171	195 SW	Administrative and trading centre for surrounding farms and a gateway located at the junction of roads heading south (Great South Road) and west from Sydney
Wollongong	1834	109	515	90 S	Town laid out on property owned by Charles Throsby-Smith, the nephew of Dr Charles Throsby who accessed grazing land from Southern Highlands in 1815. (Now a large city).
Orange	1829			260 W	Penal settlement (Blackmans Swamp). Surveyed, first legal grazing 1829, proclaimed a village 1846
Bungonia	1833			185 SW	A small village servicing large local properties and travellers on the original route of the Great South Rd
Appin	1834			75 SW	A small village servicing farms supplying food to the Sydney.
Camden	1836**			65 SW	A village planned by Macarthur family on Camden Park estate.
Berrima	1838			130 SW	Administrative centre and on easier route south from Mittagong found in 1829 by Mitchell
Braidwood	1839			285 S	Town servicing settlers who reached Braidwood area in 1824.

Source: adapted and extracted from Proudfoot 1996 and its Appendix IV (p 246) as compiled from William Henry Wells, A Geographical Dictionary the Australian Colonies. W.& T. Ford, Sydney, 1848, and Surveyor General. Select List of Maps and Plans. 1792-1886. Archives Office of NSW, Sydney, 1980.

** Private Town

A rare country town within easy reach of Sydney

Much of the Cumberland Plain is now suburbanised with the local government areas of Camden, Campbelltown, Wollondilly, Hawkesbury and Penrith retaining heritage towns with agricultural surrounds. The suburbanisation of western Sydney has left little remnant within easy distance of Australia's largest city to exemplify the colonial past and the agricultural way of life (Kass 2005 pp. 11, 32). One exception is *Camden* which is described as the best-preserved town on the Cumberland Plain (Willis 2008 (a)).

Camden is a heritage and tourist destination within easy reach of Sydney (for instance see Fitzsimons 2014; Willis 2008 (a); SMH Travel 2004; Camden Council 2023 (a)). Camden Museum in John Street is the second most visited tourist destination after Mount Annan Botanical Gardens and its visitor book contains many names from overseas.

Camden's rural past is evidenced within or at the very edge of its original and intact 1836 street plan. Camden is unusual in the abruptness with which it opens into farmland, now community spaces, at the end of Mitchell Street and along Exeter and Argyle Streets with Onslow Park (Camden Show Ground), the Bicentennial Park (an old dairy farm) and equestrian centre and the Camden Town Farm (another old dairy farm). Macarthurs' old Camden Vale milk factory is on the corner of Argyle and Edward Streets and the Camden saleyards and farming supply outlets are in Edward Street. The picturesque rural landscapes that surround Camden tell the story of Australia's farming heritage. Many of the grand houses of the colonial estates that looked to Camden town as the area's social, cultural and economic centre sit within this rural landscape, such as Camden Park (1835), Brownlow Hill (1828), Denbigh (1822), Camelot (1888), Studley Park (c1870s), Wivenhoe (c1837) and Kirkham Stables (1816).

The visitor from Sydney can take in Camden's rural past when they enter the northern approaches of the town along Camden Valley Way. The heritage of the dairy industry within Camden town itself is apparent in the Camden Vale Milk Depot (1926), built by the Macarthur family, to which farmers delivered their milk cans by horse and cart up until the 1940s, and its railway siding in Edward Street and the Town Farm, previously a dairy farm, in Exeter Street. The saleyards (1867) and the rural supplies stores in Edward Street are also indicative that Camden is still 'a working country town'. As the visitor proceeds through Camden's streets, apart from the busy hum of traffic, people and outdoor cafes, the casual observer would see little difference from 70 years ago.

Camden continues to have a reputation as a picturesque historic and rural town, with high tourist potential being so close to Sydney. Tourist promotions of Camden have drawn on the historic nature of central Camden, especially St John's Church, and the vistas of the floodplain in brochures, promotions and a recent webpage, which is part of heritage tourism (Willis 2012 (c)).

Rare and endangered extant vegetation

Adjacent to the Camden township is the highly significant Kings Bush, now classified as Eucalypt River Flat Forest which is state listed as an endangered ecological community. This bushland is a rare intact example of this endangered vegetation on the large open floodplain, which has been successfully regenerated through woody weed removal over the past two decades. This forest forms part of the Nepean River cycleway, and truly is a 'window on the past' which features large old growth trees such as Blue box (*Eucalyptus baueriana*), Broad leaf apple (*Angophora subvelutina*) and several large specimens of the rare Camden White Gum (*Eucalyptus benthamii*) which is restricted in NSW to the Hawkesbury Nepean floodplain. (Cuneo 2016).

This highly diverse river flat forest was originally part of the St John's Church estate, and intergrades into Cumberland Plain Woodland (critically endangered ecological community) with increasing elevation towards St John's Church and Macarthur Park (Cuneo 2016).

The rarity of these NSW vegetation types is recognised at the state level, and in the view of the NSW Scientific Committee both River Flat Eucalypt Forest and Cumberland Plain Woodland are 'likely to become extinct in nature in New South Wales unless the circumstances and factors threatening its survival or evolutionary development cease to operate'. There would be very few locations in NSW that have two good conditioned, listed endangered ecological communities in such close proximity to a central heritage precinct. (Cuneo 2016).

Camden today, an endangered town

The town of Camden is endangered, although it is a locally listed heritage conservation area. Developers argue that the LEP and DCP heritage provisions, including the height limit "constrain development".

The town was laid out with its current dimensions on the assumption that buildings would never go beyond a certain height, customary for the period. Height and distances were carefully balanced, and are integral to its heritage value. To introduce much higher buildings would seriously compromise, in an overall physical sense, the original harmony of the town within itself and within the surrounding landscape. It is to make do with bits, instead of trying to retain the whole, and so shows an ignorance as to what the whole really is. (Atkinson 2016).

The high visual and aesthetic landscape quality of Camden is the result of a unique combination of natural and cultural heritage. Despite this outstanding combination of native and introduced trees and linkage to early colonial development, critical elements of this landscape are poorly conserved and managed and continue to be lost. Additional protection to the township and landscape elements is now required in the form of state heritage listing. (Cuneo 2016).

Consultant Historian, Helen Proudfoot (Travis Partners, 1990) in her heritage analysis concludes ... "The problem now is to retain a very special quality which has gradually grown up in the town of Camden in the face of this external expansion. This quality is not simply made up from **individual 'historic' buildings. It has to do with the town as a whole**, with its first classical shape as an Australian town plan, with its sense of identity and its own local traditions, and with the scale of its building in relation to both its plan and the visual and topographical climax of St John's on the top of the hill."

Sitting at the rural-urban fringe of the Sydney metropolitan area, its heritage value has been under imminent threat several times, with the community rallying to save it.

Its targeting in 1973 as a growth area under the Macarthur Growth Centre Plan has seen the community fight to retain its heritage and tourism potential. Although the need to retain adequate access to rural areas for the people of Sydney was a major tenet of twentieth century town planning the attempt to isolate an area zoned as the "Green Belt" in the post-war County of Cumberland Plan failed against the suburban expansion of Sydney. The collapse of the green belt opened Camden and other rural towns to further landscape evolution through residential and industrial developments.

In 2004 a move by some Councillors sought to remove heritage controls over heritage listed buildings on the basis that they cost too much to preserve and that owners should have the option to build a new heritage style property in its place. They also resisted the listing of another 63 heritage properties. This led to a counter move and in January 2005 community groups supported a draft heritage report recommending the confirmation of 86 heritage items and the listing of 63 new items including the creation of two heritage conservation areas, Camden township and Struggle Town in Narellan. The Heritage Report was adopted by Council in December 2006. CRAG argued that significant economic benefits would likely flow from heritage conservation and that the appeal of Camden as a place to live and visit would be substantially enhanced by the heritage provisions in the draft Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP). Both instruments are currently in force, being legislated and adopted in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

In 2014 Camden Council made the decision to refashion Argyle Street, the main street and build a decked car park in Oxley Street. The community was advised accordingly in June and July 2014 in a flyer included in rate notices, a letter sent to selected addresses in the town and a media release. The decision was not supported by consultant's reports (Brown 2013; 2014). The car park study in particular referred heavily to the Clive Lucas Stapleton heritage report relating to the proposed decked car park of 2006 and the design principles it set out (Brown 2014). Arguably the principles cannot be incorporated into a functional decked car park in a heritage precinct. In April 2015, Camden Council published a new vision (dated December 2014) for the old town which is at variance to previous visions that were based on community consultation and input. (Camden Council 2015 (a)). Council flagged that it would be reviewing

the height and heritage provisions of the LEP (2010) and DCP (2011) as they constrain development.

The Chamber of Commerce opposed the Council's plans arguing that they would spoil the heritage amenity of the town which was now relied on by businesses as a competitive advantage and point of difference. General community outrage led to spontaneous groundswell of opposition (for instance see Elmerhebe 2015 (c); Kembry 2015; Stillitano 2015; Camden Community Alliance Inc n.d.) and intense media interest. The LEP height limit was not changed and a subsequent commissioned project (Camden Town Centre Urban Design Framework) was adopted into the DCP, which confirmed the heritage protections. However, development applications continue to seek variations to the LEP height limit with accompanying consultant reports that creatively reinterpret the DCP.

Camden, a litmus test

Camden, being so close to Sydney and so subject to pressures of current and future development within the region is an historical test case of planning values. The town presents a challenge to local and state governments of how much they respect our heritage, which has long term societal value and economic value in tourism, versus pressure from developers seeking short term gains. The present esteem in which Camden is held demands a careful balance between necessary development and the perpetuation of its unique and treasured historical character.

Camden is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural places (Criterion g)

Camden meets this criterion of State significance because it demonstrates principal characteristics of a class of cultural place, an early country town replicating European settlers' memories of "home". From a national historical point of view, the evolution of town planning in NSW and in Australia, Camden can be shown to demonstrate the principal characteristics of a country town that grew from a colonial private village containing the religious and civic services needed by the area's population including that of Camden Park.

Camden, a heritage country town

Camden was shaped from its inception by the Nepean River and its location on the Great South Road, which have contributed to its strong historical connections to early life in the colony. The planning, establishment and development of Camden village, were of special interest in the colony with accounts of its development carried in the Sydney newspapers, particularly *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

Camden's heritage resonates in its place names. The original grid pattern of the village named Camden (after Colonial Secretary Lord Camden, Macarthur's early patron) include streets named John, Elizabeth and Edward (Macarthur), Oxley (named after John Oxley, early explorer, Camden land grantee and NSW Surveyor General), Mitchell (named after Surveyor General, Major Thomas Mitchell), Broughton (named after the Bishop who laid the foundation stone of St John's Church) and parks named Macarthur Park and (Macarthur) Onslow Park. Oxley Cottage at Elderslie, a typical workers cottage, thought to have been built as part of a row of similar cottages on the road into Camden near the Cowpasture Bridge, is home to Camden's tourist information centre. The Nepean River is named after Lord Evan Nepean, British Undersecretary for the Home Department.

The natural feature of the Nepean River with its ready source of water, its floodplains and resultant fertile soil influenced Aboriginal culture and practises, early exploration and the pattern of later European settlement southwest of Sydney. For a long time, the Nepean River was a boundary dividing Cumberland, the heartland of the colony, from the "*scrub and raw enterprise on the other side*" (Atkinson, 1988 p. 34).

The Cowpastures became the transport hub of the district when the road network was largely set by the pattern of land grants. A cultural landscape following remembered patterns and a rural hegemony of self-styled large gentry estates, using convict labour, grew around the Nepean River. These included *Kirkham* (1810, Oxley), *Macquarie Grove* (1812, Hassall), *Wivenhoe* (1812, Cowper), *Elderslie* (1816, Oxley), *Brownlow Hill* (1827, Macleay), *Glenlee*

(1818, Howe), as well as the earliest on the other side of the Nepean River, *Camden Park* (1805, Macarthur) (Willis 2015(a)).

In 1826 the government cattle stations were closed and a bridge, designed by a convict named Wainwright, was erected over the Nepean River into the Cowpastures. The bridge became part of the Great South Road (explored by Hamilton Hume from 1814 on and which became the Hume Highway to Melbourne through the Camden township until a bypass was opened in 1973).

As early as December 1830 as settlement continued along the Great South Road and policing became a problem. Local residents petitioned Governor Darling for a town site in the "vicinity of the Cowpastures Bridge on the banks of the Nepean, a central situation in the most populous parts of these districts and abundantly supplied with water". The Governor agreed, proposing to replace *Campbell Town* (1820), which suffered from a lack of a good water supply, as the administrative centre for the newer settlements. The Surveyor-General, Major Thomas Mitchell, suggested the western bank at the edge of Camden Park as most suitable location and least likely to flood. John Macarthur declined to relinquish any land for such a purpose, stating the formation of a town would "greatly endanger the security of the whole establishment on that estate". But John Macarthur's sons, James and William, agreed that a town would be a source of order. They were heard to say in Sydney that they hoped their father would change his mind, but he did not and passed away in April 1834. The delay in founding Camden meant that *Campbell Town* (today Campbelltown) remained the centre for law and justice in the south, and that the Macarthur brothers, earnest and high-minded men, had time to reflect on their township and develop their ideas about the way their community should grow. (Atkinson 1988).

In 1835 James and William cleared 20 acres of Camden Park for the village and began a subscription fund for a church, "the situation of which will be highly picturesque and commanding", to ensure its moral foundation. The brothers, with the assistance of Surveyor-General Major Thomas Mitchell, prepared a street plan for the town which was surveyed in 1836 and named in honour of Lord Camden who, in 1805, had sanctioned the grant of 5000 acres to John Macarthur.

James and William also turned their minds to bringing in employees from England and Germany. In 1835 Governor Bourke instituted a subsidy system which allowed employers to settle free young families at small cost (transportation of convicts ceased in 1840). In England older brother Edward Macarthur, who made his career in the defence forces, enthusiastically sourced families, confident that he was helping to make a mutually beneficial society. Forty-one families, and a small number of single men were brought out between 1837 and 1839. Six of the families were vigneron from the Rhine Valley. Many of the immigrants knew each other as the Macarthurs considered that original bonds were important to "form a nucleus of a rural community". (Atkinson 1988 pp. 38-39). Edward Macarthur, a strong advocate of immigration wrote two books on the subject in the 1840s.

The general influx of settler families between 1830 and 1860 also helped shape the economic and social fabric of Camden (Sidman 1939; Atkinson 1988). Also, many immigrant families who had settled on surrounding estates as tenant farmers started businesses in the village. The village introduced another layer of urban based *petit bourgeoisie*, made up of shopkeepers and tradesmen, into the social hierarchy of the district (Willis 2006 (a)).

Camden in its early years was one of the most important commercial and administrative centres between Sydney and Goulburn on the Great South Road and was a transport node of a district which spread from Campbelltown to the lower Blue Mountains. The town's location brought international influences of modernism and consumerism, and the goods and services that supported them. Growth had not flourished in the existing earlier European settlements of Cawdor (1822), Narellan (1827), Cobbitty (1828) and Elderslie (1828) and Camden provided cultural and economic leadership as the district's major centre. Social networks and the interests of the landed gentry ordered daily life in the village. Camden Park remained the largest rural property in the district and the Macarthur family was dominant in both the village and the surrounding area until the 1950s.

Camden's growth depended on its position within the area of European settlement. Communications between Sydney and the north was by way of sea to Maitland, and the west by Cox's road over the Blue Mountains to *Bathurst*. To the south communication was to be by a main road which had yet to be fully surveyed because of indecision about its route, especially about if it should go by *Campbell Town*, planned by Oxley in 1820, which suffered from a lack of a good water supply. By 1840 the route of the Great South Road, part of which would become Argyle Street in the new village of Camden, had been set and a road built crossing Razorback Range to the north west of Campbell Town. Camden has always been located on or near the principal south-west exit route from Sydney to the interior.

Before the 1840s NSW had faced to the outside world, with the settlers relying in turn on Sydney. Camden's prosperity, particularly through the Macarthurs' wealth and their political and social connections with Sydney and London were important in changing the economic dynamic in NSW. In the 1840s capital began to flow the other way. Wool was a major export commodity and activities at Camden Park were also instrumental in founding the wine, horticultural and dairy industries.

Until the 1950s the Macarthur family clearly dominated Camden and the Camden township was the social and cultural hub of settlement in the Camden area, including smaller villages such as Yerranderie, Burragorang Valley, The Oaks, Oakdale, Elderslie and Narellan. Many large estates that the town serviced are listed on the State Heritage Register: Camden Park (SHR 00341), Camden Park Estate and Belgenny Farm (SHR 01697), Camelot (SHR 00385), Denbigh (SHR 01691), Gledswood (SHR 01692) Harrington Park ((SHR 01773), Brownlow Hill (SHR 01489), Kirkham stables and precinct (SHR 01411), Oran Park (SHR 01695), Orielton (SHR 01693), Studley Park (SHR 00389) and Macquarie Grove (SHR 00493).

Social networking, born of the Macarthur influence and the self-sufficiency required of a country town, has continued and remains as a dominant characteristic, made durable by the cultural aspects and functions of buildings located within the original grid pattern of the 1840s town. It has been reinforced through to contemporary times by activities of schools, churches, town farm, equestrian centre, sales at the cattle yards in Edward Street, the Camden Show in Onslow Park and other cultural activities organised by the many community organisations. Many families have lived for generations in the Camden district with Camden as their social hub.

Camden, an agricultural town

According to Atkinson (1988), the large landholders of Camden, the Camden "gentry" were leaders whose economic power and social authority would prove resilient.

Camden evolved as a farming town and the cultural hub of the landed estates and Camden district. By the late 1830s, as the village of Camden was being established on Camden Park, the Macarthur family had extensive pastoral interests that stretched throughout the colony, as well as family members to act as their agents in London, and members of the family in New South Wales Legislative Council.

The legend of the Macarthurs and their agricultural legacy continues to have a strong and special association with Camden township. This association with the Macarthur family is fundamental to the town's cultural identity and sense of place, as illustrated by the sign, "Birthplace of the Nation's Wealth", on entry into Camden over the Cowpastures Bridge. In 1960 the township of Camden celebrated the legacy of the John Macarthur with the 4-day Festival of the Golden Fleece and the 150th anniversary of wool production in Australia. In 2015, the 129th Camden Show paid tribute to the Camden's legacy as the birthplace for the wool industry in Australia with a "running of the sheep" event through Camden's streets into Onslow Park, the Showground (Crawford 2015). The cultural pattern of Camden's history and the pervasive Macarthur presence is also richly illustrated by a legacy of place names in the local landscape.

The heritage of the dairy industry within Camden town itself. The Town Farm in Exeter Street was previously a dairy farm and is locally heritage listed (Camden Town Farm n.d.). Camden Park's dairy interests were the life blood for the district and centred on the Camden Vale Milk processing plant, depot and railway siding in Edward Street (Willis 2015(a)), which is locally heritage listed.

Camden's country town characteristics today

The township has unusually retained its original principal characteristics of a country town and cultural hub, whilst integrating development through time. These principal characteristics include:

- rural setting and village profile;
- its original layout planned by James and William Macarthur and Surveyor General Sir Thomas Mitchell under Darling's 1829 regulations in the pre-gold-rush period;
- cultural legacy through historic place names. The original grid pattern of the village named Camden (after Colonial Secretary Lord Camden, Macarthur's early patron) include streets named John, Elizabeth and Edward (Macarthur), Oxley (named after John Oxley, early explorer, Camden land grantee and NSW Surveyor General), Mitchell (named after Surveyor General, Sir Thomas Mitchell), Broughton (named after the Bishop who laid the foundation stone of St John's Church) and parks named Macarthur Park and (Macarthur) Onslow Park;
- attributes of rural life including agricultural outlets, livestock sales yards, equestrian centre, a yearly Camden Show, produce markets, community gardens and town farm etc., despite being within close proximity of Australia's largest city;
- social cohesion and community organisations, an attribute of country towns and also a legacy of the philosophy of and connection to the pioneering Macarthur family who presided over Camden for much of its history and fostered a connected community through social organisations and good works;
- attributes of a country town as a social hub with two primary schools, an Art Gallery, Library, Museum, RSL Club, CWA, bowling and tennis clubs, several churches and community functions such as Anzac Day memorial services, Light Up Camden, Winterfest, Camden Show and concerts all taking advantage of its wide streets and open spaces;
- community identification as an agricultural town. Illustrations of this cultural characteristic include the sign, "Birthplace of the Nation's Wealth", on entry into Camden over the Cowpastures Bridge, a 4-day Festival of the Golden Fleece and the 150th anniversary of wool production in Australia in 1960 and sheep run through the main street in 2015 and the annual Camden show which uses the slogan "Still a Country Show".

Camden is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of an early Australian country town in NSW, particularly so given its proximity to Sydney and Badgery's Creek airport.

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Camden Council	<i>Unlock Camden</i> Available at: https://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/strategic-planning/heritage-planning/unlock-camden/	Camden Council	On line	2023 (b)
Camden Fresh Produce Markets	<i>Camden Fresh Produce Market</i> Available at: https://www.camdenproducemarket.com.au/	Camden Library	On line	n.d.
Camden Library	<i>Camden Voices</i> Available at: https://library.camden.nsw.gov.au/local-heritage/camden-stories/	Camden Council Library Service	Camden Library	n.d. (a)
Camden Library	<i>Camden Images</i> Available at: https://library.camden.nsw.gov.au/local-heritage/camden-images/	Camden Council Library Service	Camden Library	n.d. (b)

Camden News	<i>The late Mrs Macarthur Onslow</i> Available at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/136639794 Transcript available: Macarthur Onslow, Elizabeth (1840-1911) Available at: https://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/macarthuronslow-elizabeth-23098	Trove National Library of Australia National Centre of Biography Australian National University	On line On line	1911 August 10
Camden News	<i>Camden Agricultural, Horticultural & Industrial Society. 1885 - 1935.</i> Available at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/140594990	Trove National Library of Australia	On line	1936 April 2
Camden News	<i>Camden, 50 Years a Municipality</i> Available at: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/141151499	Trove National Library of Australia	On line	1939 April 20
Camden Park House	<i>John and Elizabeth Macarthur</i> Available at: https://www.camdenparkhouse.com.au/john-elizabeth-macarthur	Camden Park	On line	n.d (a)
Camden Park House	<i>James & William Macarthur</i> Available at: https://www.camdenparkhouse.com.au/james-macarthur https://www.camdenparkhouse.com.au/william-macarthur	Camden Park	On line	n.d (b)
Camden Park House	<i>Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow</i> Available at: https://www.camdenparkhouse.com.au/elizabeth-macarthur-onslow	Camden Park	On line	n.d (c)
Camden Park House	<i>Spring Open Weekend</i> Available at: https://www.camdenparkhouse.com.au/open-weekend-tours	Camden Park	On line	n.d (d)

Camden Park House	<i>Quentin Macarthur-Stanham (1921-2008)</i> Available at: https://www.camdenparkhouse.com.au/quentin-macarthur-stanham	Camden Park	On line	n.d.(e)
Camden Park House	<i>Horticulture</i> Available at: https://www.camdenparkhouse.com.au/horticulture	Camden Park	On line	n.d.(f)
Camden Park House	<i>The Garden</i> Available at: https://www.camdenparkhouse.com.au/the-garden	Camden Park	On line	n.d.(g)
Camden Public School	<i>History</i> Available at: https://camden-p.schools.nsw.gov.au/about-our-school/history.html	NSW Department of Education	On line	n.d.
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Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners Pty. Ltd	<i>St John's Anglican Church Precinct, Camden Conservation Management Plan</i> Available at: https://www.crag.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CMP-and-Addendum.pdf	St John's Camden	On line	2004
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Collins, M and S	<i>The Camden Flock</i> <i>A history of The Camden Flock—now registered as Mt Bute Camden Flock No. 3164 in the Australian Merino Flock Book Register</i> Available at: https://merinos.com.au/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/The_Camden_Flock_History.pdf	Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders	On line	n.d.

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Edds, Graham and Associates	<i>Hawkesbury City Council Slab Barn Study</i> Available at https://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/64808/SLAB-BARN-STUDY-All.pdf	Heritage NSW Hawkesbury City Council	On line	2010
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Elmerhebe, Tarik	<i>Bells installed at St Paul's Catholic Church, Camden</i> Available at: http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/macarthur/bells-installed-at-st-pauls-catholic-church-camden/news-story/f1275b83b8b730d03bac66642c06497e	Macarthur Chronicle Camden October 1, 2015	On line	2015(b)
Elmerhebe, Tarik	<i>Alliance rakes in support for Camden Council's plans to stop</i> Available at: https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/macarthur/alliance-rakes-in-support-for-camden-councils-plans-to-stop/news-story/dc9af423e1e3385564c84af02cc172e9	Macarthur Chronicle April 6, 2015	On line	2015(c)
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GSC (Greater Sydney Commission)	<i>Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015 No 57</i> Available at: https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/2016-07-08/act-2015-057#sec.9	NSW Government	On line	2015
GSC (Greater Sydney Commission)	<i>Draft South West District Plan</i> Available at: https://www.wollondilly.nsw.gov.au/assets/Documents/Planning-and-Development/Growth/Greater-Sydney-Region-Plan/Full-Draft-District-Plan.pdf	NSW Government	On line	2016 November

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Macarthur Family	<p><i>Letters of John Macarthur to his sons 1815–32, Macarthur Papers 1789-1936, vol 3.</i> Transcriptions available at https://fromthepage.com/statelibrarynsw/macarthur-papers-1789-1936/volume-03-letters-of-john-macarthur-to-his-sons-1815-1832/display/32833306</p>	State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.	On line	1815-1832
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NSW DPI Agriculture	<i>Belgenny Farm - Macquarie bicentennial</i> Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pAUrCnXrI8	NSW Government	On line	2010
NSW Health SW Sydney	<i>Camden 110 Year Anniversary Camden Hospital - a history</i> Available at: https://www.swslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/ccq/camden110/history.html https://www.swslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/ccq/camden110/	NSW Government	On line	2012
NSW Heritage	<i>Camden Park</i> Available at: https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=5045133	NSW Government	On line	n.d.(a)
NSW Heritage	<i>St John's Church Precinct</i> Available at: https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=5053423	NSW Government	On line	n.d.(b)
NSW Heritage	<i>Bull Cave, State Heritage Inventory</i> Available at: https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=5063573	NSW Government	On line	n. d. (c)

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NSW Heritage	<i>Heritage Information Series Assessing Historical Importance a Guide to State Heritage Register Criterion B</i> Available at: https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/assessing-historical-association-a-guide-to-state-heritage-register-criterion-b	NSW Government	On line	2006 (b)
NSW Heritage	<i>Camden Park Estate and Belgenny Farm</i> Available at: https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=5051536	NSW Heritage	On line	2006 (c)
NSW Heritage Council	<i>New South Wales Historical Themes</i> Available at: https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Heritage/new-south-wales-historical-themes.pdf	NSW Heritage	On line	2001 October 4
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NSW RMS	<i>Route Maps The Old Hume Highway Section 2 Carnes Hill to Bargo</i> Available at: https://oldhumehwy.transport.nsw.gov.au/old-hume-hwy-route-maps.html	NSW and Australian Governments	On line	2019 (b)
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Monument Australia	<i>Elizabeth Macarthur Onslow</i> Available at: https://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/people/community/display/20659-elizabeth-macarthur-onslow/photo/2	Monument Australia	On line	n.d.(b)
NSW Parliament	<i>Captain Arthur Alexander Walton ONSLOW, (Captain,R.N.) (1833 - 1882)</i> Available at: https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/formermembers/Pages/former-member-details.aspx?pk=665	NSW Government	On line	n.d. (a)
NSW Parliament	<i>Mr James MACARTHUR (1798 - 1867)</i> Available at: https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/formermembers/Pages/former-member-details.aspx?pk=268	NSW Government	On line	n.d. (b)

NSW Parliament	<i>Major-General James William MACARTHUR-ONSLOW (1867 - 1946)</i> Available at: https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/formermembers/Pages/former-member-details.aspx?pk=1190	NSW Government	On line	n.d.(c)
NSW Parliament	<i>Mr John Macarthur (1767-1834)</i> Available at: https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/formermembers/Pages/former-member-details.aspx?pk=206	NSW Government	On line	n.d. (d)
NSW Parliament	<i>Sir William MACARTHUR (1800 - 1882)</i> Available at: https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/formermembers/Pages/former-member-details.aspx?pk=282	NSW Government	On line	n.d. (e)
O'Leary, Stephen	<i>Professor Graeme Clark, otolaryngologist</i> Available at: https://www.science.org.au/learning/general-audience/history/interviews-australian-scientists/professor-graeme-clark	Australian Academy of Science	On line	2011
Organ Music Society of Sydney	<i>St John's Anglican Church, Camden</i> Available at: https://www.sydneyorgan.com/StJohnsCamden.html	The Organ Music Society of Sydney	On line	n.d.
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