

View of the State Coal Mine from the southwest. Image credit: Bede Wilson.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT

LITHGOW MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK

LITHGOW LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

AUGUST 2025

Report prepared by
OzArk Environment & Heritage
for Central Tablelands Mountain Bike Club.

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Acknowledgement

OzArk acknowledge the traditional custodians of the area on which this assessment took place and pay respect to their beliefs, cultural heritage, and continuing connection with the land. We also acknowledge and pay respect to the post-contact experiences of Aboriginal people with attachment to the area and to the Elders, past and present, as the next generation of role models and vessels for memories, traditions, culture and hopes of local Aboriginal people.

ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

DPHI	NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement. A required document for major projects documenting all potential impacts to the environment, including heritage, that may arise due to the development.
Heritage Act	<i>Heritage Act 1977</i> . Provides for the protection and conservation of historical places and objects or cultural heritage significance and the registration of such places and objects.
Heritage Council	The Heritage Council makes decisions about the care and protection of heritage places and items that have been identified as being significant to the people of NSW.
Heritage NSW	Government department tasked with ensuring compliance with the NPW Act. Heritage NSW is advised by the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee (ACHAC).
SHR	State Heritage Register. A heritage list of places in NSW that are protected by NSW legislation such as the Heritage Act.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OzArk Environment & Heritage (OzArk) has been engaged by Central Tablelands Mountain Bike Club (CTMBC, the proponent) to complete a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) for the proposed Lithgow Mountain Bike Park in the State Mine Gully Precinct (the project). The project is within the Lithgow City Council Local Government Area.

The study area for the assessment comprises a 10 metre (m) corridor within which the alignment of the proposed trails will be constructed through the State Mine Gully Precinct; the trail head, and a car parking area. The study area is approximately 22.5 hectares in area, although it is noted that the disturbance area will be smaller than this.

Sections of the study area are within the curtilage of State Mine Heritage Park, listed as item I127 on the Lithgow City Council Local Environmental Plan 2014. The State Mine Heritage Park is a locally significant heritage listing associated with the remaining buildings and workings of the State Coal Mine which operated from 1915 to 1964 and has been adaptively re-used as a popular museum and entertainment function space.

An inspection of the study area was completed by OzArk Project Archaeologist Harrison Rochford over three days from 17–19 July 2024. Four features of potential heritage significance were identified during the survey. Two of these sites: HS01: Steelworks Colliery features; and HS02: Dobbs Drift, have been assessed as having contributory local significance to the State Mine Heritage Park. The remaining two items: HS03: rock shelter with modern objects; and HS04: potential house ruins have been assessed as not meeting the criteria for local heritage significance.

The assessment has concluded that the project will have a negligible impact on the heritage values of the listed structures within the State Mine Heritage Park. Additionally, the project will have a negligible impact on HS01 and HS02 that have been assessed as having heritage values.

It is concluded that the project would lead to adaptive reuse and further positive engagement by the public with the State Mine Heritage Park.

The following recommendations are made to minimise the risk of impact to the heritage values of the State Mine Heritage Park and the items holding heritage values within the surrounding landscape:

1. All ground disturbing works for the trails must remain within the study area to minimise the risk of inadvertent harm to the key heritage fabric of the State Mine Heritage Park.
2. The construction of the trail head and car parking area within the heritage curtilage of the State Mine Heritage Park must remain within the assessed footprint.
3. The management measures provided in **Section 7** will be followed to avoid impact to HS01 and HS02.

4. It is assessed that there is a low potential for archaeological deposits or significant historic items within the study area. However, if during the construction of the project suspected significant historic items are encountered, the Unanticipated Finds Protocol provided as **Appendix 1** will be followed.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY	III
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	IV
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Brief description of the project	1
1.2 Assessment approach.....	1
1.3 Study area	2
1.4 Heritage items relevant to the project.....	5
1.4.1 State Mine Heritage Park.....	5
2 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS	8
2.1 Applicable Legislation	8
2.1.1 Heritage Act 1977	8
2.1.2 <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>	8
2.1.3 Lithgow City Council Local Environmental Plan 2014.....	8
2.1.4 Lithgow City Council Development Control Plan 2021	9
3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	10
3.1 Brief history of the State Coal Mine	10
3.2 Brief history of the study area	13
3.3 Local Context	15
3.3.1 State Mine Office	16
3.3.2 Poppet Head	18
3.3.3 Former Power House/Bath house	19
3.3.4 Powder magazines	21
3.3.5 Workshops and stores	21
4 STUDY AREA SURVEY	23
4.1 Survey summary	23
4.2 Recorded features.....	23
HS01: Steelworks Colliery features	24
HS02: Dobbs Drift	24
HS03: Rock shelter with modern objects.....	25
HS04: Potential house ruins	26
5 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT	28
5.1 Significance assessment – general principles.....	28
5.2 Statement of significance for the State Mine Heritage Park	29

5.3	Significance assessments for recorded features within the study area.....	30
5.4	Discussion	32
6	HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	33
6.1	Proposed works.....	33
6.2	Archaeological Assessment.....	33
6.3	Impact assessment	35
6.3.1	<i>Considerations for specific works</i>	35
6.3.2	<i>Change of use</i>	35
6.3.3	<i>New landscape features</i>	35
7	MANAGEMENT MEASURES	38
7.1	Track adjustments	38
7.2	Unanticipated finds protocol.....	39
8	SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	40
8.1	Summary	40
8.2	Recommendations	40
	References	41
	APPENDIX 1: HISTORIC HERITAGE: UNANTICIPATED FINDS PROTOCOL.....	42

FIGURES

Figure 1-1.	Map showing the location of the project.	1
Figure 1-2:	Aerial showing the study area.....	3
Figure 1-3:	Indicative trail cross-section (World Trail 2024).	4
Figure 1-4:	State Mine Heritage Park in relation to the proposed trail head, car park area and trails.	6
Figure 1-5:	Site plan of the State Mine Heritage Park.	7
Figure 3-1:	Historical images of the State Coal Mine (sourced from Lithgow State Mine Museum, individual image credit supplied where available).....	11
Figure 3-2:	Aerial of the State Coal Mine in 1970 in relation to the study area.....	12
Figure 3-3:	Detail of a Parish of Marrangaroo map from 1890 (source: Historical Land Records Viewer).	13
Figure 3-4:	Aerial of the study area in 1970.	14
Figure 3-6:	View towards the old bath house, poppet and State Mine's office building within the heritage curtilage.	15
Figure 3-7:	View towards the State Mine office building and the old horse paddock behind that is proposed to be used as a car parking area.....	17

Figure 3-8: CMP plan showing the location the horse paddock area designated for development.	17
Figure 3-9: Aerial image showing the location of the poppet, modern carriage building, and office building in relation to the old horse paddock (proposed car parking area).....	17
Figure 3-10: Views towards the restored 1923 poppet head.....	19
Figure 3-11: Old power house/bath house structure.....	20
Figure 3-12: Views towards the mine explosives magazines and explosion barrier.....	21
Figure 3-13: View towards the workshop and stores building.	22
Figure 4-1: Location of recorded features at the study area.....	23
Figure 4-2: Views of the HS01: Steelworks Colliery features.	24
Figure 4-3: View of HS02: the Dobbs Drift.	25
Figure 4-4: Views of HS03: rock shelter and surrounds.	26
Figure 4-5: Views of HS04: potential house ruins.....	27
Figure 6-1: Proposed car parking area and trail head facilities.	33
Figure 6-2: Aerial showing the State Coal Mine operations in the 1950s.....	34
Figure 7-1: The approximate track alignment at HS01, Steelworks colliery features (right).....	38

TABLES

Table 3-1: Databases searched.	15
Table 5-1: Assessment of heritage significance for recorded features within the study area.....	31

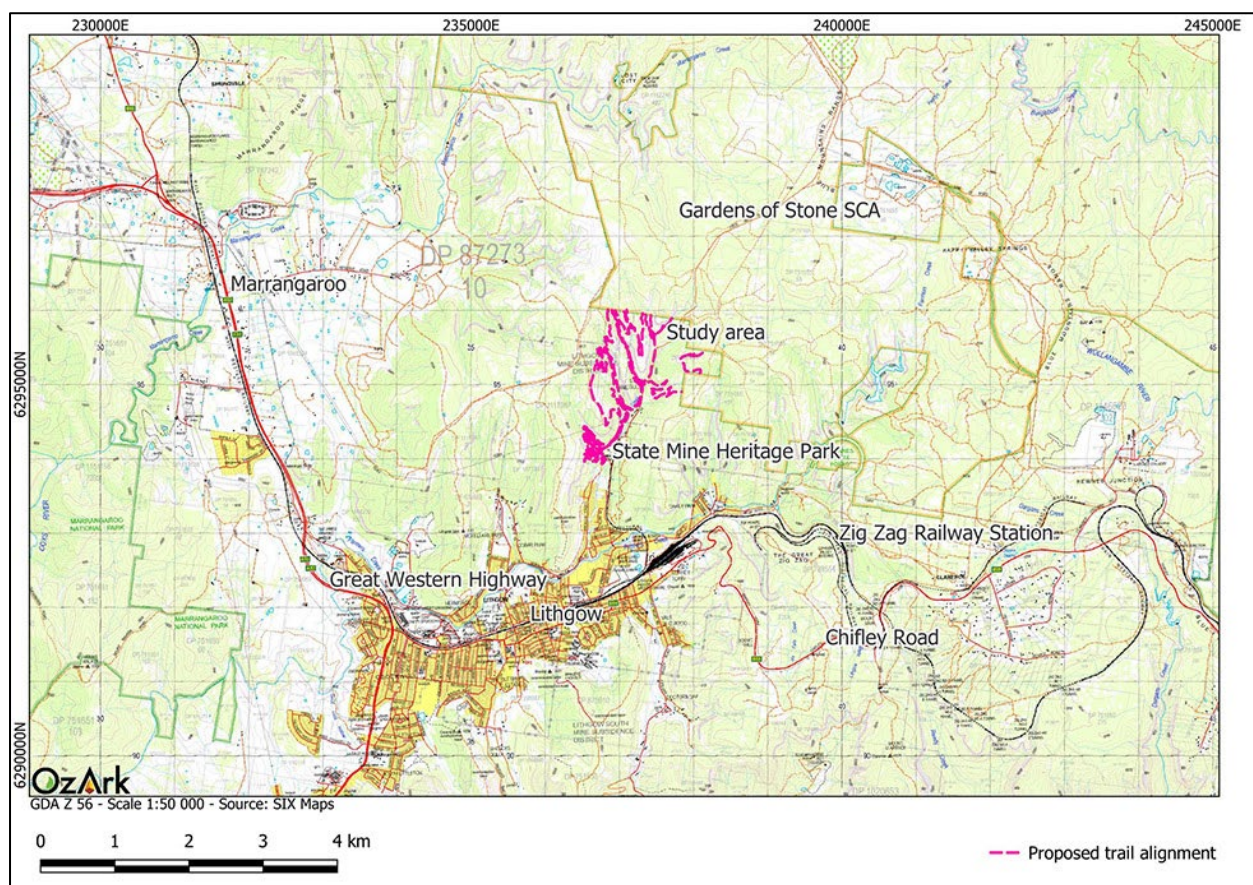
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

OzArk Environment & Heritage (OzArk) has been engaged by the Central Tablelands' Mountain Bike Club (CTMBC, the proponent) to complete a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) for the proposed Lithgow Mountain Bike Park within the State Mine Gully Precinct (the project). The project is within the Lithgow City Council Local Government Area (LGA) (**Figure 1-1**).

The SOHI is needed to assess potential impacts of the project on listed and potential heritage items.

Figure 1-1. Map showing the location of the project.



1.2 ASSESSMENT APPROACH

The SOHI will apply the *Guidelines for preparing a statement of heritage impact* (DPE 2023a). The International Council on Monuments and Sites' *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (Burra Charter), and the guide for *Assessing heritage significance. Guidelines for assessing places and objects against the Heritage Council of NSW criteria* (DPE 2023b).

1.3 STUDY AREA

The study area for the assessment comprises of the following components:

- A 10 metre (m) corridor within which the alignment of the proposed 24.54 kilometres (km) of trails will be constructed through the State Mine Gully Precinct
- A trail head
- A car parking and shuttle drop off area.

The study area is approximately 22.5 hectares (ha) in area, although it is noted that the actual disturbance area associated with the mountain bike trails, trail head, and parking, will be significantly smaller than this.

The study area is situated across multiple steep gullies that converge on State Mine Gully and State Mine Creek. State Mine Creek is the only named waterway within the study area. The northern sections of the study area are on the edge of the Newnes Plateau.

The landforms of the study area are mostly steep slopes with smaller sections of ridgeline and plateau. Vegetation within the study area is predominantly dense forest comprised of peppermint and ash trees, with smaller sections of less dense ash woodland and open heath vegetation on the upper ridges.

The study area is shown on **Figure 1-2** and an indicative cross section of a final trail is provided on **Figure 1-3** courtesy of the current trail design report (World Trail 2025).

An inspection of the study area (**Figure 1-2**) was completed by OzArk Project Archaeologist Harrison Rochford over three days from 17–19 July 2024.

Figure 1-2: Aerial showing the study area.

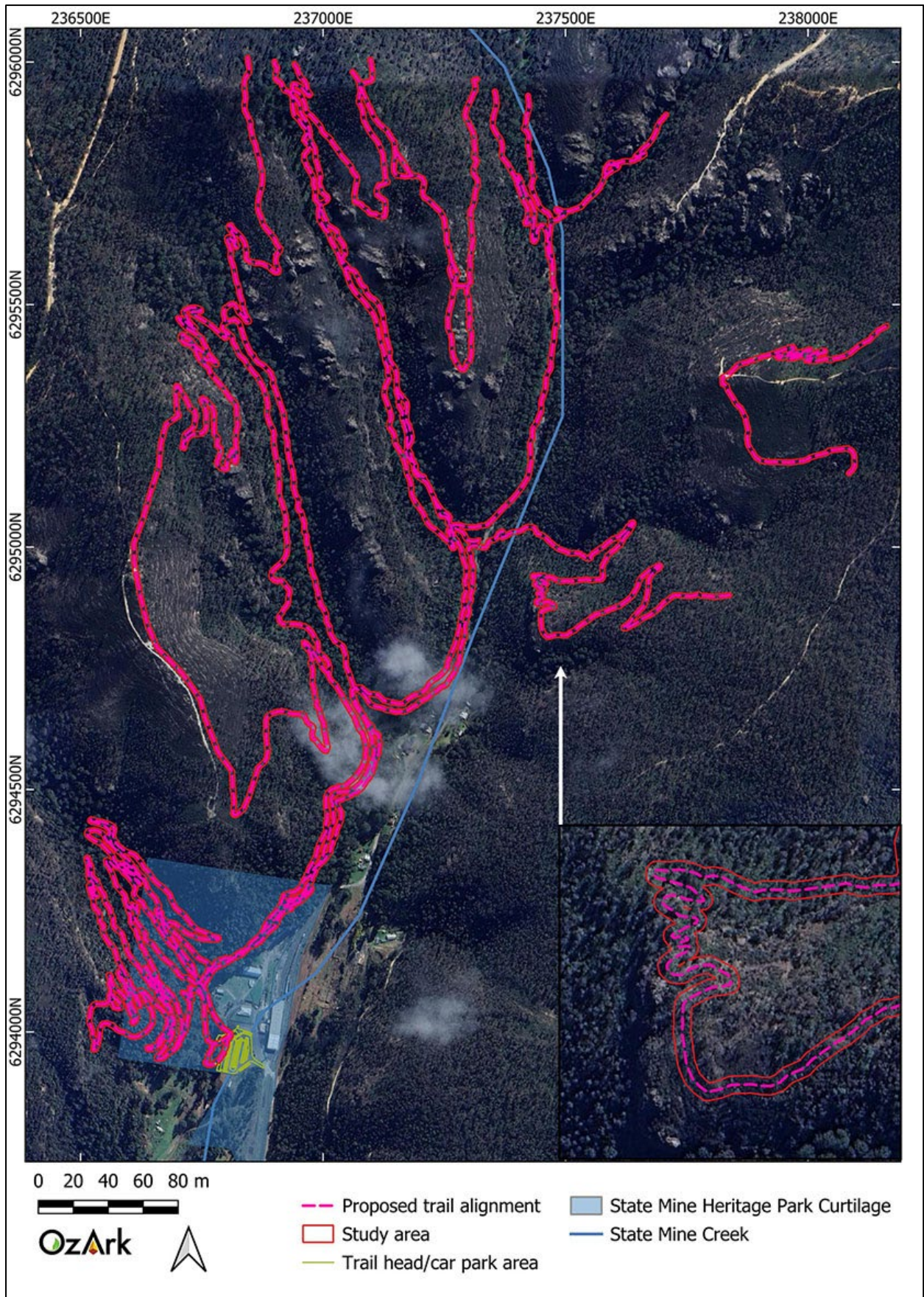
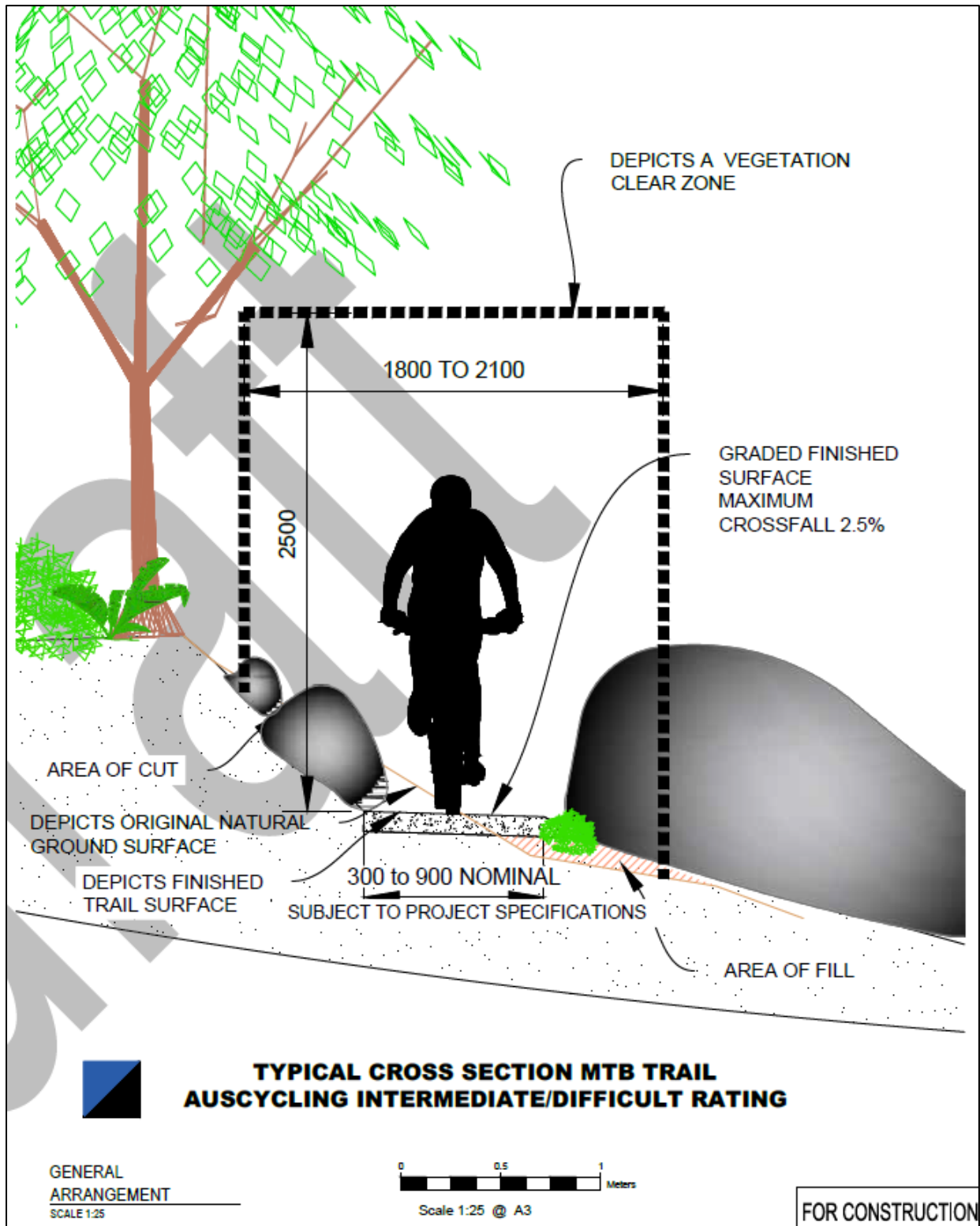


Figure 1-3: Indicative trail cross-section (World Trail 2024).



1.4 HERITAGE ITEMS RELEVANT TO THE PROJECT

Sections of the study area are within the curtilage of State Mine Heritage Park, listed as item I127 on the Lithgow City Council Local Environmental Plan 2014 (Lithgow LEP). The Lithgow LEP lists the curtilage of State Mine Heritage Park as Lot 1, DP242977, however, there appears to have been change in lot boundaries since the listing in 2014 and the heritage item currently aligns with Lots 10 and 11 DP1240259, as shown on the Lithgow LEP heritage maps. The curtilage of the item in relation to the study area and proposed trails are shown on **Figure 1-4**.

1.4.1 State Mine Heritage Park

The State Mine Heritage Park is the heritage listing associated with the remaining buildings and workings of the State Coal Mine, which operated from 1916 to 1964. The cataloguing, condition, analysis, and original management recommendations regarding the item are provided in Cremin's 1987 study of the site (Cremin 1987:141–142). More recent management measures are presented by Pratten and Irving in the *Lithgow State Coal Mine Conservation Plan* (1994). These are discussed in more detail in **Section 5**.

The mine buildings at State Mine Heritage Park have been adaptively re-used as an entertainment and function centre, and a mining and railway museum for Lithgow and surrounds, including exhibits on the Hartley Vale and Glen Davis oil-shale plants. The State Mine Heritage Park is operated by The City of Greater Lithgow Mining Museum Inc. (CGLMM). The key items at the site, as identified by the CGLMM and State Heritage Inventory (SHI) listing include the remaining buildings identified on **Figure 1-5**.

Figure 1-4: State Mine Heritage Park in relation to the proposed trail head, car park area and trails.

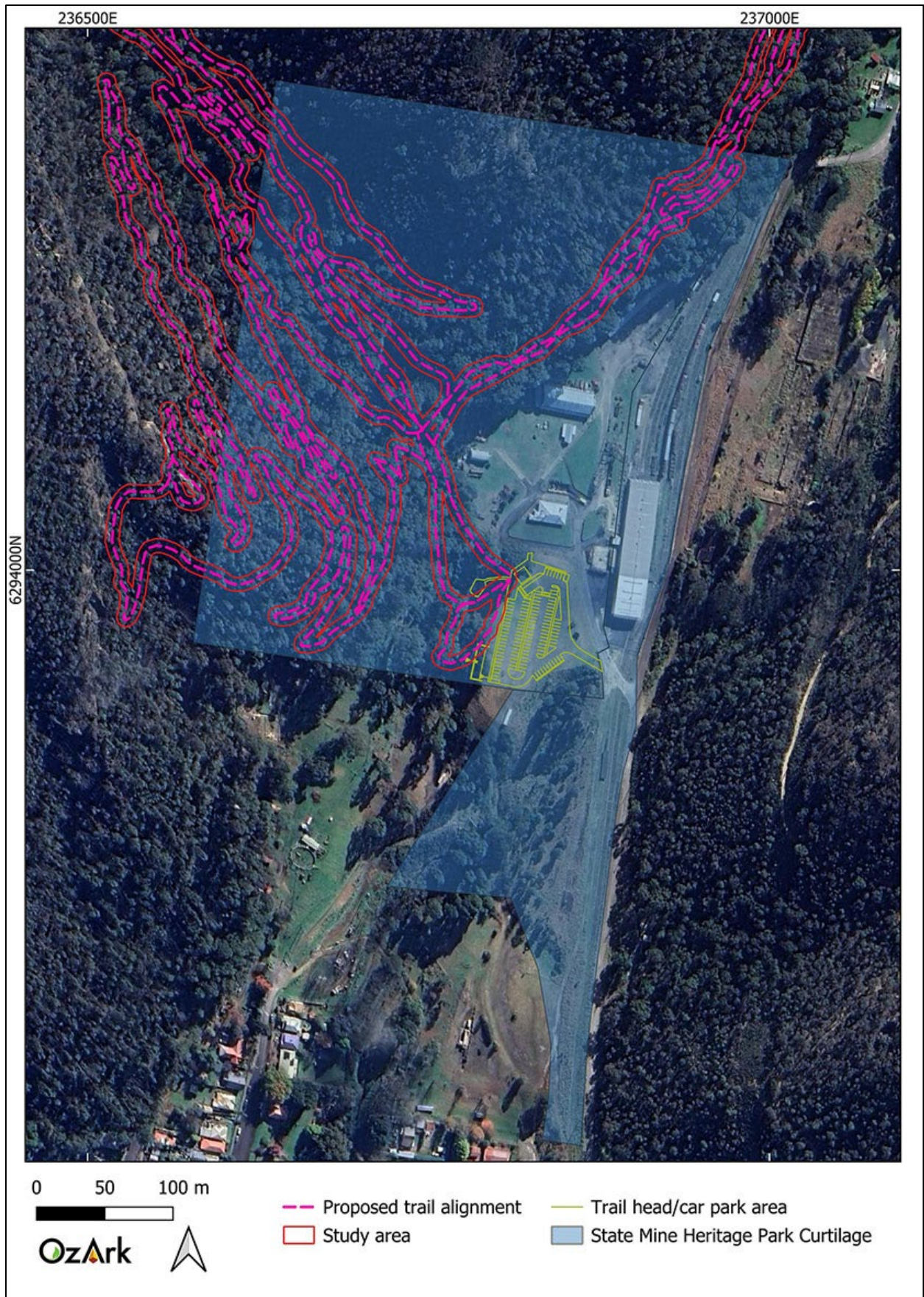
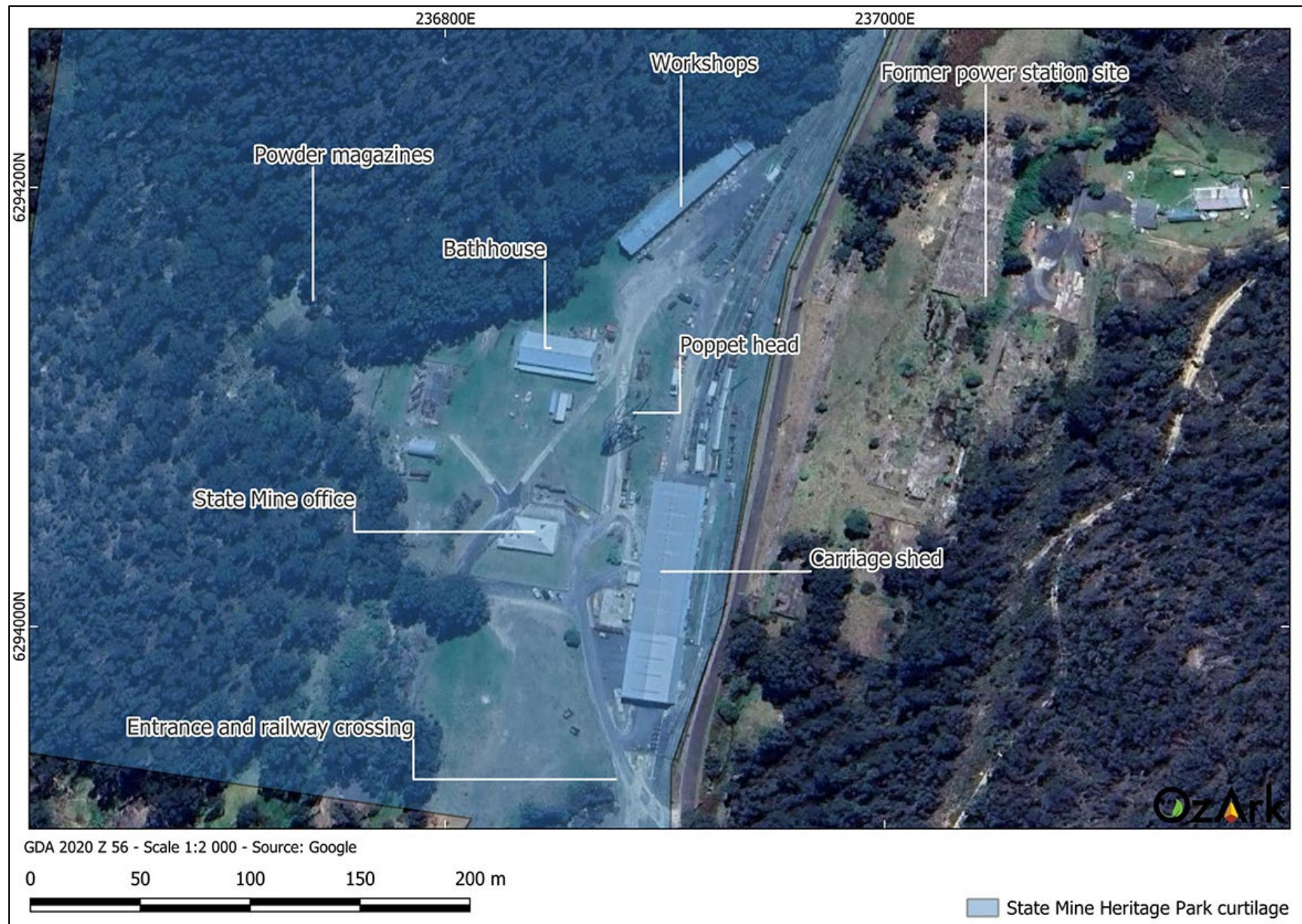


Figure 1-5: Site plan of the State Mine Heritage Park.



2 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

2.1 APPLICABLE LEGISLATION

2.1.1 Heritage Act 1977

The *Heritage Act 1977* (Heritage Act) is applicable to the current assessment. This Act established the Heritage Council of NSW (the Heritage Council). The Heritage Council's role is to advise the government on the protection of heritage assets, make listing recommendations to the Minister in relation to the SHR, and assess/approve/decline proposals involving modification to heritage items or places listed on the SHR. Most proposals involving modification are assessed under Section 60 of the Heritage Act.

Automatic protection is afforded to 'items' of state significance, where items mean a place, building, work, relic, moveable object, or precinct. 'Relics' are defined as 'any deposit or material evidence relating to the settlement of the area that comprised New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement, and which holds state or local significance'. Excavation of land on which it is known or where there is reasonable cause to suspect that 'items' will be exposed, moved, destroyed, discovered, or damaged is prohibited unless approved under an excavation permit.

Applicability to the project

Any historic relics or archaeological deposits of state heritage significance located in the study area are afforded legislative protection under the Heritage Act.

2.1.2 *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

The primary law regulating land use in NSW is the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). The Act is administered by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI). The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces is responsible for the Act.

The EP&A Act allows plans to be made to guide the process of development and to regulate competing land uses.

These are known as environmental planning instruments (EPIs).

The EP&A Act allows two types of EPIs to be made:

- LEPs
- State environment planning policies (SEPPs).

2.1.3 **Lithgow City Council Local Environmental Plan 2014**

All land, whether privately owned, leased, or publicly owned, is subject to the controls set out in the LEP. LEPs determine the form and location of new development and provide for the protection of open space and environmentally sensitive areas.

The heritage conservation objectives of the Lithgow LEP (2014) are as follows:

- (a) to conserve the environmental heritage of Lithgow,*
- (b) to conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings and views,*
- (c) to conserve archaeological sites,*
- (d) to conserve Aboriginal objects and Aboriginal places of heritage significance.*

2.1.4 Lithgow City Council Development Control Plan 2021

The Lithgow City Council Development Control Plan (DCP) complements the Lithgow LEP 2014. Chapter 4 (Heritage and Cultural Conservation) of the DCP lists the General Heritage Conservation objectives as the following:

- 1) To conserve the heritage significance of the built and natural environments of the Lithgow Local Government Area and ensure new development is sympathetic to the identified heritage values.*
- 2) To ensure the management of heritage is carried out in line with the Principles and Articles of the Burra Charter for the assessment of significance of heritage places and the traditions associated with them.*
- 3) To implement the objectives and controls contained within the Lithgow LEP and any other relevant heritage legislation.*
- 4) To provide planning and design guidelines for developments associated with heritage items or a heritage conservation area.*

Applicability to the project

The study area overlaps with the curtilage of the State Mine Heritage Park, listed as I127 on Schedule 5 of the Lithgow LEP 2014.

The Lithgow LEP 2014 and the DCP 2021 identify that a heritage management document should be prepared for proposals relating to land on which a heritage item is situated. This SOHI addresses the requirements of the Lithgow LEP 2014 and the DCP 2021 regarding heritage management documents.

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE STATE COAL MINE

The following summary is adapted from Cremin (1987:141–2), Patten and Irving (1994), and Christison (2015).

The State Coal Mine was the first colliery to be established in New South Wales (NSW) following the passing of the State Coal Mines Act in 1912 and was the first action by the government to operate a colliery in NSW since the transfer of the convict-worked mines at Newcastle to the Australian Agricultural Company in 1828. The first work at the State Coal Mine site was the construction of a railway siding, which commenced in 1916 after the site location was decided in August 1915.

In 1916 work began on clearing a site for the headworks of the Lithgow State Coal Mine at the head of Morts Gully. It was anticipated that sinking of an upcast shaft would commence in March 1917 and that a downcast shaft would be commenced soon after. Work commenced in July 1917 when construction ceased because of NSW Government budget cuts relating to war priorities. By this time the No. 1 (Upcast) Shaft had been sunk to a depth of 25.9 m and lined with bricks. Temporary headgear was erected over the downshaft and several buildings were constructed, including an office, storehouse, carpenters' and smiths' workshops, garage, workmen's bathroom, explosive magazine, flammable liquid magazine, and sanitary accommodation (Christison 2015:3).

The site remained idle for four years, yet construction of a railway branch line to the mine site was commenced in 1920. Mine development re-started in 1921 as a means of job creation following World War I and renewed development activity included the commencement of the No 2 (downcast) Shaft. As the mine workings extended to the north in 1929, the No.3 Shaft was sunk near the headwaters of Middle River.

During the 1940s and 1950s investments were made in the infrastructure of the mine to improve its efficiency and productivity. At this time high pressure steam was supplied from the neighbouring Lithgow Power Station to drive the mine's winding engines.

In 1948 the mine commenced development of a new drift entry, named Dobb's Drift. It was located 2 km north of the State Mine headworks, bringing the total daily output of 2,000 to 2,500 tons per day.

The State Coal Mine closed in 1964 due to flood risk to the underground workings from the Zig Zag and Oakey Park underground workings. **Figure 3-1** shows views of the State Coal Mine through the early 20th century. **Figure 3-2** provides a historic aerial of the mine approximately five years after its closure. When compared to **Figure 3-1** image 4, the rapid deconstruction of the

site in the late 1960s can be appreciated, although the power station (east of the State Coal Mine) remains.

Figure 3-1: Historical images of the State Coal Mine (sourced from Lithgow State Mine Museum, individual image credit supplied where available).

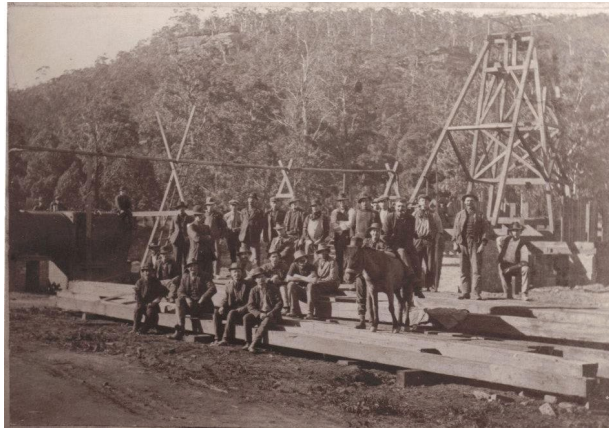
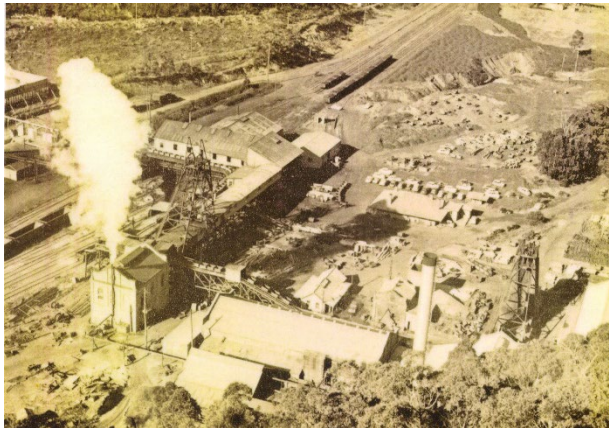

	
<p>1. Workers at the recently established main shaft of the State Coal Mine in 1917</p>	<p>2. View of the airlock structure at the main shaft in the 1940s (source: CFMEU archives).</p>
	
<p>3. Aerial image from the north showing the layout of the site in the 1950s.</p>	<p>4. View of the mine from the east in the 1960s prior to closure showing the maximum extent of the structures.</p>

Figure 3-2: Aerial of the State Coal Mine in 1970 in relation to the study area.

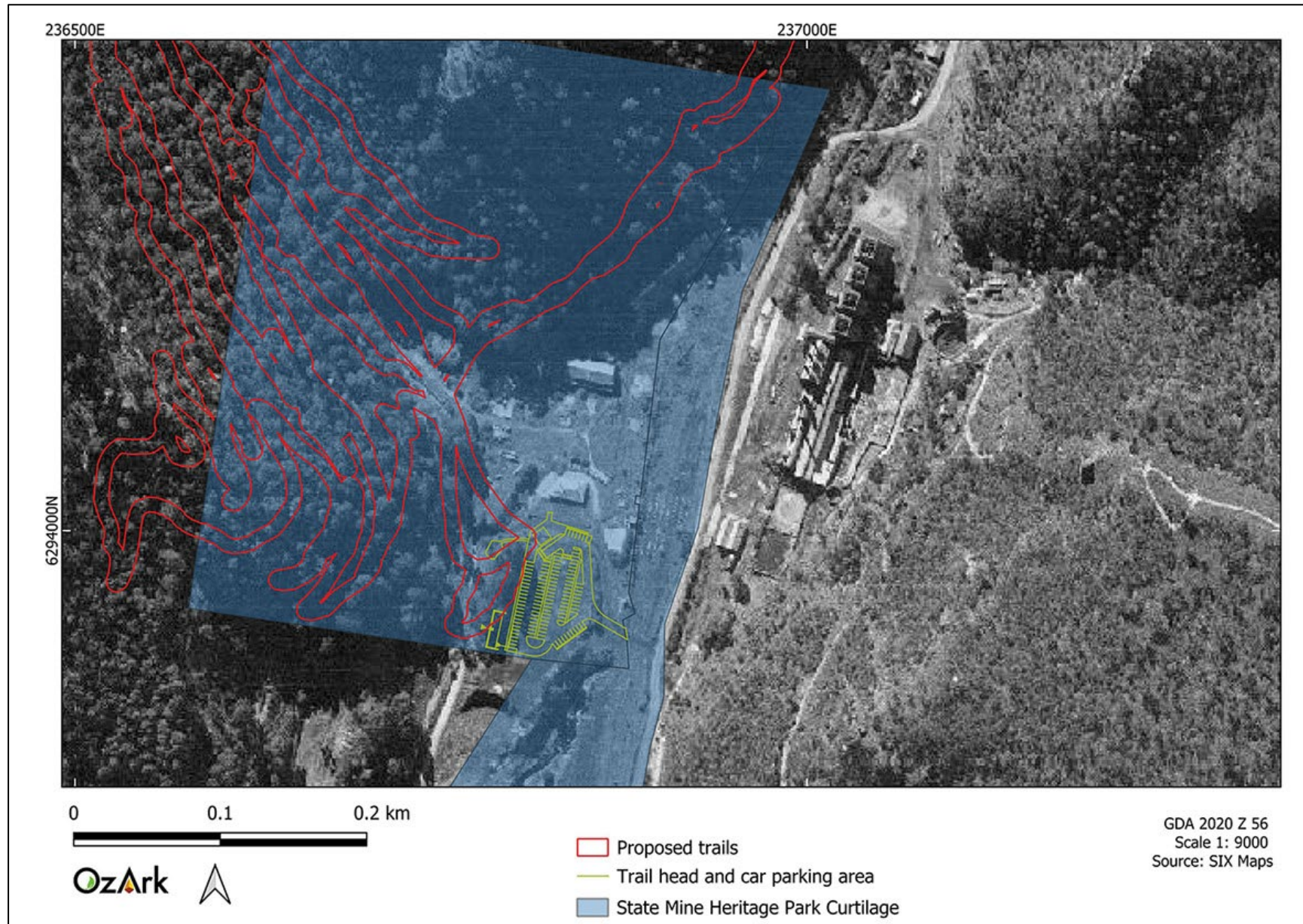
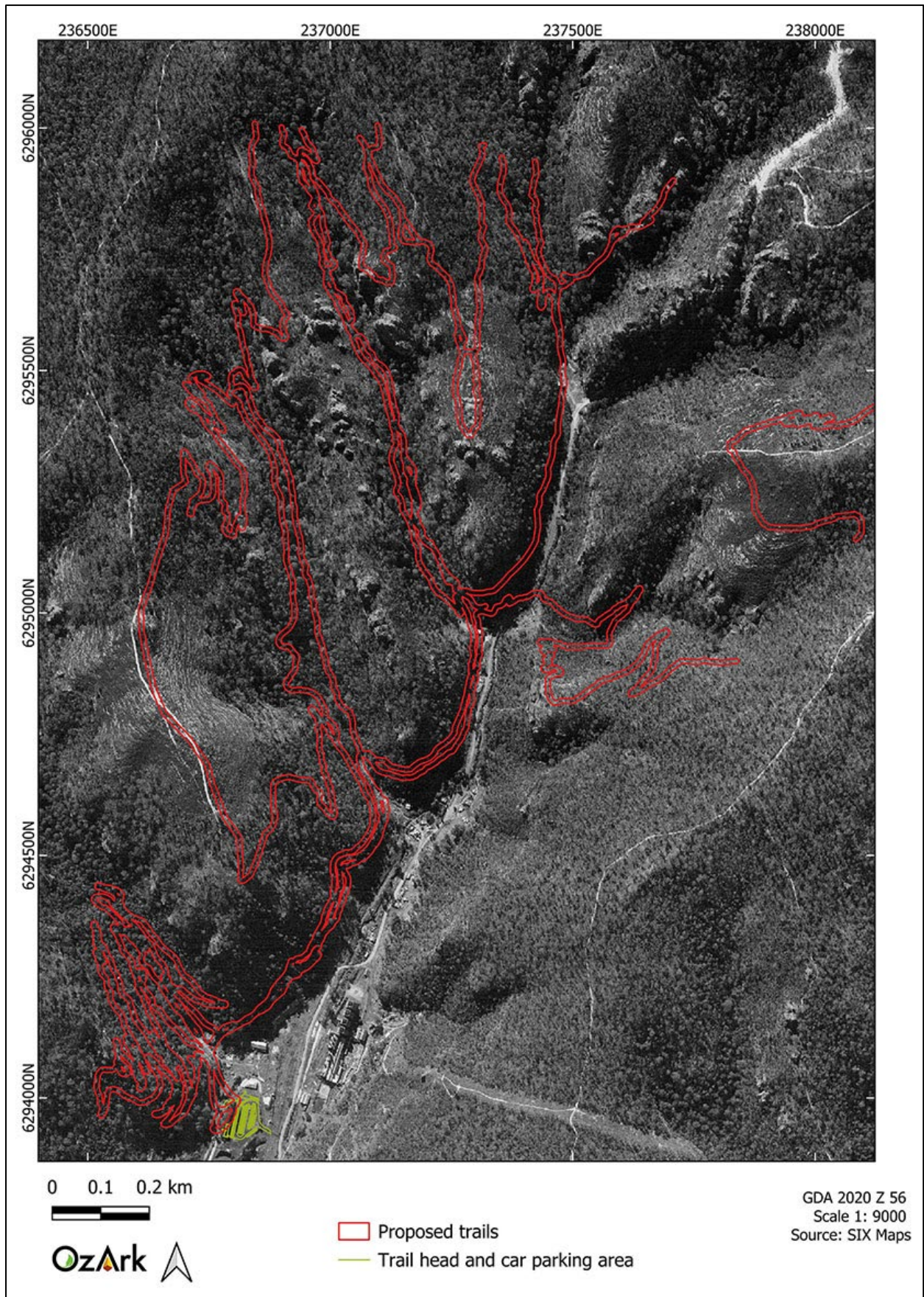


Figure 3-4: Aerial of the study area in 1970.



3.3 LOCAL CONTEXT

A desktop search was conducted on the following databases to identify any potential previously recorded heritage within the Project Area and its surrounds. The results of this search are summarised in **Table 3-1**.

Table 3-1: Databases searched.

Name of database searched	Date of search	Type of search	Comment
National and Commonwealth Heritage Lists	15 May 2025	Lithgow City Council LGA	No items are listed near the study area.
State Heritage Register	15 May 2025	Local and state heritage significance	No items are listed near the study area.
State Heritage Inventory (Local Environmental Plans/State agency registers)	15 May 2025	Lithgow LEP 2014	One item is listed within the study area: the State Mine Heritage Park LEP # 1127. The State

The LEP listed State Mine Heritage Pak (LEP #1127) includes the state mine office, poppet head, bath house, powder magazines, and workshops (**Figure 1-5, Figure 3-5**). Adjacent to the State Mine Heritage Park is the former Power Station site, which is not listed.

The surface structures of the mine currently occupy a comparatively small site within the larger park curtilage and many of the mine's earlier buildings have since been dismantled. All the remaining structures are in proximity to the study area and have the potential to be indirectly impacted by project. The listed items have been comprehensively assessed by Pratten and Irving in the *Lithgow State Coal Mine Conservation Plan* 1994 (CMP) and a brief overview of each is presented below.

Figure 3-5: View towards the old bath house, poppet and State Mine's office building within the heritage curtilage.



Source: Wedshed.com.au

3.3.1 State Mine Office

Pratten and Irving (1994:48) note that the office building has always been at this location, however, according to the 1926 plan of the surface structures, a building labelled 'temporary offices' preceded the present one. At that time a large, fenced horse paddock existed to the south of the offices (**Figure 3-8**). The 1943 plan shows the building substantially as it is now: a weatherboard building, labelled 'general offices', encircled by a verandah and having at the rear or west end an ambulance room (**Figure 3-6**). A 1961 map plan indicates the road encircling the office building and its lawn (**Figure 3-7**). The single-storey building has the scale and character of a residence, and it was evidently planned to be located on the same north–south axis as the power house/bath house. In plan, it is a simple rectangle with projecting rooms on the west. It is the only building to have a domestic character of the Federation period and was possibly built as a house on some other site in 1905–1910 and later removed and erected at the mine, although that possibility remains to be investigated (Pratten and Irving 1994:50).

Pratten and Irving's assessment of significance drew the following conclusions:

- *The office building is the only timber building remaining at the colliery site*
- *The building was in continuous use as mine offices*
- *As is the case with the other remaining buildings, its character is unusual in being akin to railway architecture rather than colliery architecture*
- *The low profile and roof line of building, together with the vertical emphases of its chimneys and its setting relative to the lawn areas, provides some aesthetic appeal.*

Figure 3-6: View towards the State Mine office building and the old horse paddock behind that is proposed to be used as a car parking area.



Source: Centralnswmuseums.com.au

The CMP identified that the area related to the original horse paddock held no visible remains and was suitable for new development or structures.

Figure 3-7: CMP plan showing the location the horse paddock area designated for development.

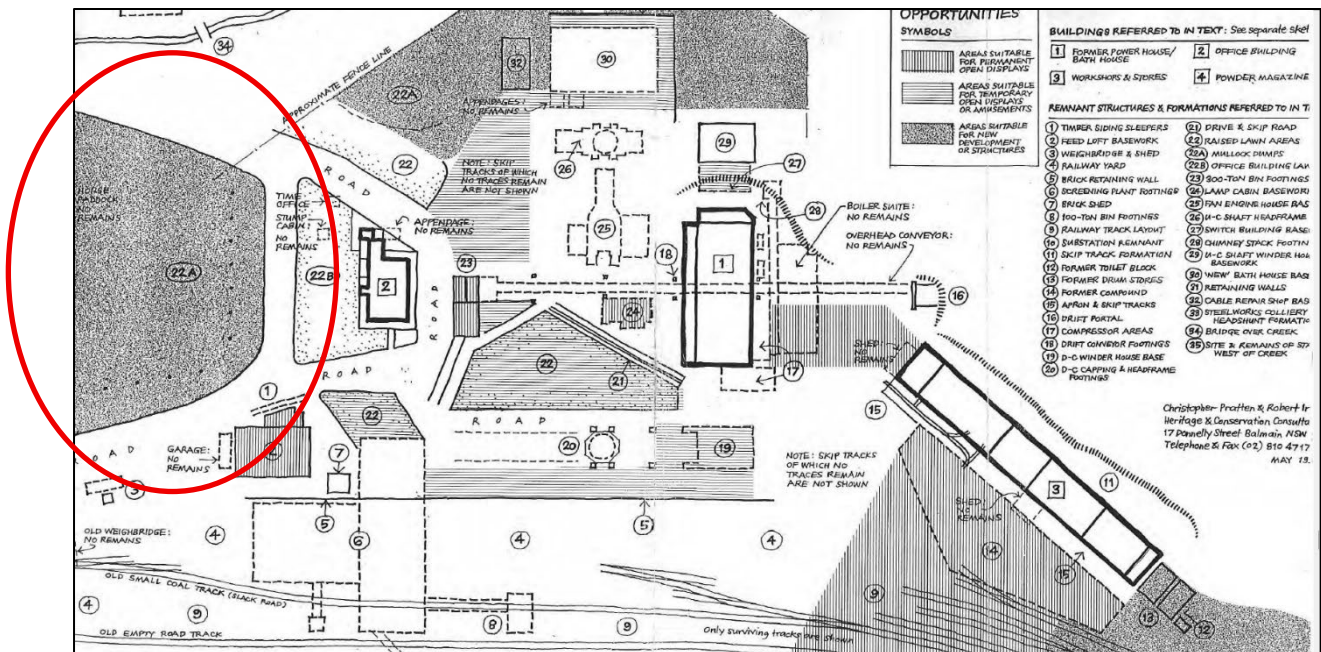


Figure 3-8: Aerial image showing the location of the poppet, modern carriage building, and office building in relation to the old horse paddock (proposed car parking area).



3.3.2 Poppet Head

In 1923, the temporary wooden upcast poppet head over No. 1. Shaft was replaced by the current lattice steel headframe, constructed at White Bay (**Figure 3-9**). It was erected over the wooden one to allow winding to be continued until the new frame was ready for work (Pratten and Irving 1994:11).

Figure 3-9: Views towards the restored 1923 poppet head.



3.3.3 Former Power House/Bath house



Pratten and Irving (1994:43) note that this building began its life as a simple rectangular power house and was converted into a bath house at some time prior to 1943 (**Figure 3-10**). The change in purpose required the addition of shower and toilet facilities built into appendages to the original building on the southern and western sides. The bath house has been sensitively restored and is currently being used as a museum and wedding and function venue.

Pratten and Irving's assessment of significance drew the following conclusions:

- *The surviving buildings at this colliery are distinctive in possessing a character more akin to railway architecture, in contrast to that evident at most other coal mine sites.*
- *This character reflects the fact that the buildings were designed and erected after the mine had been taken over by the Railway Commissioners at the end of 1920*
- *The former power house/bath house is a good example of this 'railway' character at this particular colliery*
- *It is an example of successful changed use, from power house to bath house*
- *It displays interesting architectural features and details, such as its comparatively low-profiled, linear form, its 'layered' arched windows and its unusual parapeted gables.*

- *The large, single-volume space, befitting both a power house and a colliery bath house, has intrinsic spatial interest which is enhanced by iron-framed, multi-paned arched windows and other large arched openings and the bayed open roof structure.*

Figure 3-10: Old power house/bath house structure.

	<p>1. Exterior of old power house/bath house structure.</p>
	<p>2. Interior of the old power house/bath house showing its current use as a function venue.</p>

Source: wedshed.com.au

3.3.4 Powder magazines

Pratten and Irving (1994:58) note that three explosives' magazines appear as additions to the site plan dated 1943, indicating that they were erected after that date. A 1991 drawing shows the present three buildings and labels them as 'powder, detonator, and cable magazines'. However, the architectural character of the structures suggests an earlier building date, possibly as early as the foundation of the colliery in 1917. The structures are comparatively small, the largest being about 6 m long and about 4 m wide. They have brick walls, semicircular vaulted brick roofs and timber floors (**Figure 3-11**). The vaults are of lesser thickness than the walls, so that an accidental explosion would generate more upwards blast than outwards blast, reducing potential damage. Each magazine has a door in the front end wall, fabricated of steel sheet, lined with plaster laid over birdwire, and hinged to swing outwards from steel jambs (Pratten and Irving 1994:59).

Pratten and Irving's assessment of significance drew the following conclusions:

- *This is a rare group of distinctive utilitarian colliery buildings.*

The explosion barrier is the burial place of pit horses killed in an underground fire in 1953. A monument has been erected at the site in memory of the horses.

The site is currently used for picnics and features numerous walking and cycling tracks.

Figure 3-11: Views towards the mine explosives magazines and explosion barrier.



3.3.5 Workshops and stores

Pratten and Irving (1994:43) note that the earliest available drawing of the mine shows this building substantially in its present form (**Figure 3-12**). It was labelled as 'Stores, carpenters, fitters, and blacksmiths shops'. Unlike the power house/bath house building, which is axially related to its neighbours, the workshop/store building is obliquely placed, along the contours of the site and at the foot of the western hill.

Pratten and Irving's assessment of significance drew the following conclusions:

- *This building, like the former power house/bath house building and the office building, is distinctive in possessing a character akin to railway architecture, in contrast to that evident at most other coal mine sites*
- *This character reflects the fact that the buildings were designed and erected after the mine had been taken over by the Railways Commissioners at the end of 1920*
- *Its location relative to the axially designed central mine buildings, i.e. along the contour of the site and against the bluff of the hill to the north-west, is an interesting response to the topography of the valley site*
- *Like the former power house/bath house, it displays interesting architectural features and details, such as its comparatively low-profiled, linear form, its iron-framed arched windows and its unusual parapeted gables*
- *The comparative intactness of the building, such as the timber and concrete floors, the corner fireplaces in some of the workshops, and the distinctive augmented kingpost roof trusses, impart the particular ability to evoke the nature and character of its history*
- *Many remnant details, such as the overhead power line shafting, the skip tracks in the flooring and the tuyere and piping of the blacksmith's workshop, have archaeological significance.*

Figure 3-12: View towards the workshop and stores building.



4 STUDY AREA SURVEY

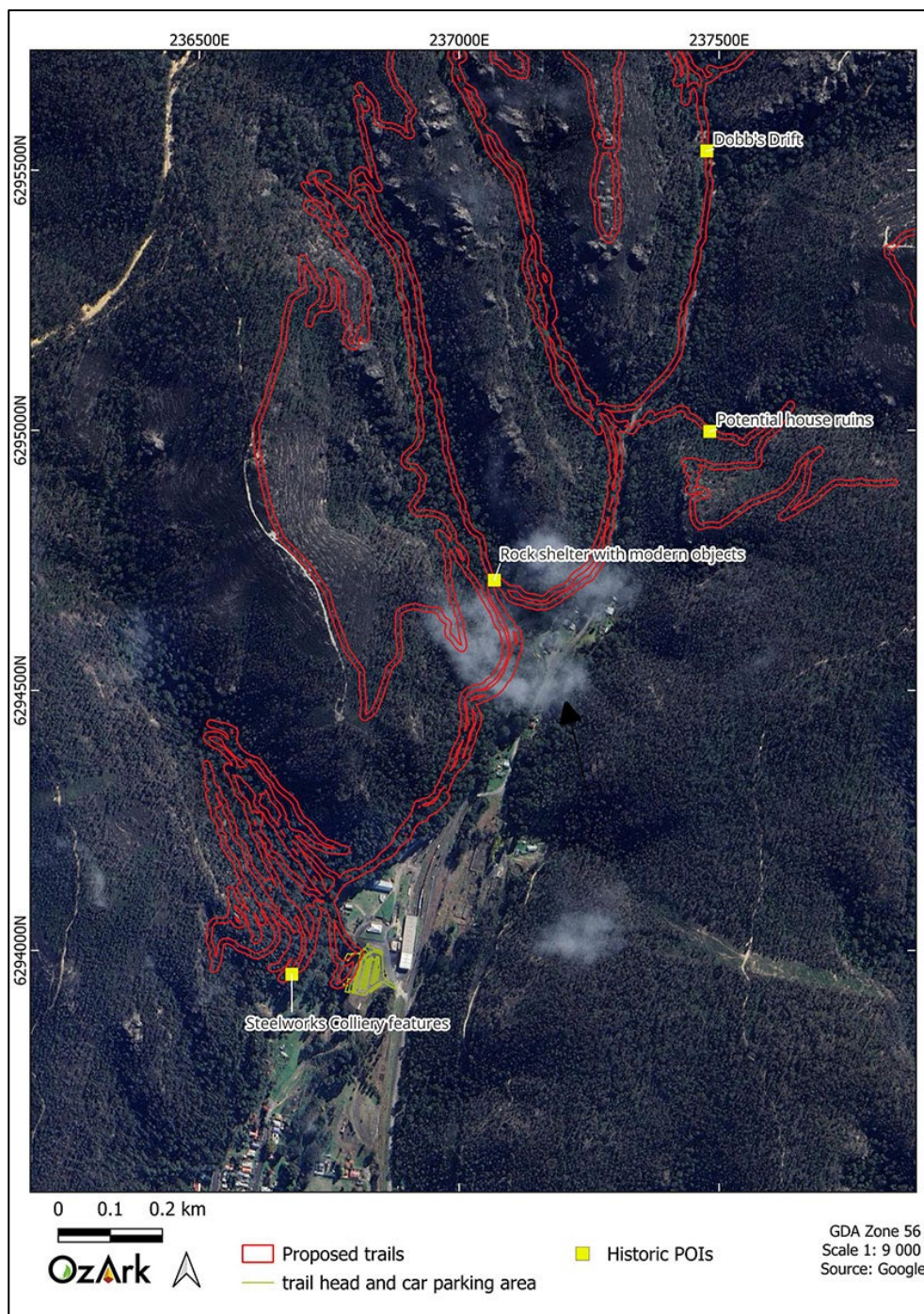
4.1 SURVEY SUMMARY

An inspection of the study area was completed by OzArk Project Archaeologist Harrison Rochford over three days from 17–19 July 2024.

4.2 RECORDED FEATURES

Four features of potential heritage significance were identified during the survey. The location of the items is shown on **Figure 4-1** and their details are provided below.

Figure 4-1: Location of recorded features at the study area.



HS01: Steelworks Colliery features

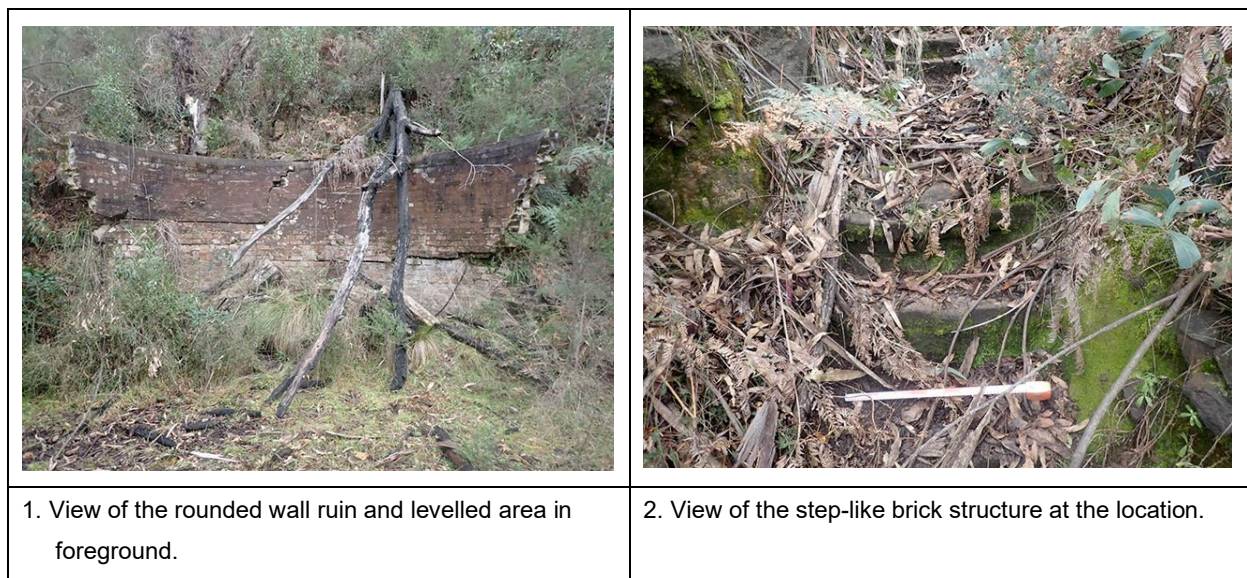
Site type: Industrial ruins

GPS coordinates: GDA 2020 MGA Zone 56 E 236678, N 6293953

Location of site: HS01 is located on a sloping landform approximately 143 m southwest of the trail head area (**Figure 4-1**).

Description of site: The recorded features are 20th century industrial ruins, comprising one remaining semi-circular structure wall (5 m in width x 2 m in height); steps with loose bricks; and remains of an iron sluice-like construction. Images of the features are shown on **Figure 4-2**. These features were recorded as belonging to the Steelworks Colliery 1922–1927 (Armstrong 1991:102). The Steelworks Colliery, owned by Hoskins Iron and Steel, and later by Australian Iron and Steel, overlooked the State Mine (Christison 2015:21). The items are within the curtilage of the State Mine Heritage Park.

Figure 4-2: Views of the HS01: Steelworks Colliery features.



HS02: Dobbs Drift

Site type: Industrial ruins

GPS coordinates: GDA 2020 MGA Zone 56 E 237476, N 6295537

Location of site: HS02 is located on approximately 1.68 km northeast of the trail head area, in the eastern section of the old mine complex (**Figure 4-1**).

Description of site: The item consists of a winding house, brick adit, and former bath house built in the late 1940s to support modernisation of the Lithgow State Coal Mine (**Figure 4-3**). The structures, which are located at a high point on the slope, are built on a concrete slab incorporated into the outcropping sandstone of the gully. The ruins are in good structural condition; however, they have been impacted by modern graffiti. Opposite this structure is the sealed entrance to a

drift opened towards the north-eastern section of the State Mine. Patten and Irving note that ‘an incline tunnel was driven into the eastern section of the mine in 1948-49. The prime objective of this exercise was to improve ventilation, but it was also to provide a second outlet for coal in the future. Initially known as Dobb’s Drift, the incline was taken in for a distance of over 2,300 feet and completed during 1952-53’ (1994:17).

The entry was named Dobb’s Drift after Jack Dobbs, a former State Mine Miner’s Federation Lodge Secretary. The original rope and skip haulage system, which was involved in numerous accidents, was replaced with a conveyor belt system in 1955/56 (Christison 2015:14).

Figure 4-3: View of HS02: the Dobbs Drift.



HS03: Rock shelter with modern objects

Site type: Rock shelter

GPS coordinates: GDA 2020 MGA Zone 56 E 237069, N 6294709

Location of site: HS03 is located approximately 756 m northeast of the trail head area (Figure 4-1).

Description of site: The recorded feature consists of a natural sandstone rock overhang that has been used for shelter in the modern period (Figure 4-4). A fireplace, desk, shelves, and a sink have been set up in the rock shelter, possibly accumulated over time, but mostly dateable to the late 20th century (e.g. the ceramic tile wood heater). The site is situated near a cleared, open area with concrete foundation remains that may be associated with a demolished building connected to the State Coal Mine.

Figure 4-4: Views of HS03: rock shelter and surrounds.

	
<p>1. View north to the opening of the rock shelter. The sink is visible at the rear of the shelter.</p>	<p>2. Interior of the rock shelter facing east. The fireplace is at the right of frame.</p>
	
<p>3. Desk topped by an MDF panel with mostly modern era tools and items.</p>	<p>4. View northeast showing concrete foundations located to the east of the rockshelter.</p>

HS04: Potential house ruins





Site type: Domestic ruins

GPS coordinates: GDA 2020 MGA Zone 56 E 237486, N 6294998

Location of site: HS04 is located approximately 1.2 km northeast of the trail head area (Figure 4-1).

Description of site: HS04 consists of an overgrown concrete slab with associated loose bricks and fibre cement panels (Figure 4-5). Broken glass and porcelain were also noted surrounding the concrete slab, perhaps suggesting a domestic, rather than industrial, background of the items. A historic aerial from 1970 does not show any structures at this location.

Figure 4-5: Views of HS04: potential house ruins.

	
<p>1. View showing the edge of the concrete pad.</p>	<p>2. A piece of galvanised iron guttering at the location.</p>
	
<p>3. A loose brick at the location.</p>	<p>4. A small sherd of blue and white porcelain.</p>

5 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

5.1 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT – GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The current assessment will evaluate the heritage significance of the recorded features within the study in accordance with the *Assessing heritage significance. Guidelines for assessing places and objects against the Heritage Council of NSW criteria* (DPE 2023b). A historic heritage site must satisfy at minimum one of the following criteria to be assessed as having heritage significance:

Criterion (a): *An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)*

Criterion (b): *An item 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 (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)*

Criterion (c): *An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area)*

Criterion (d): *An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons*

Criterion (e): *An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)*

Criterion (f): *An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)*

Criterion (g): *An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments (or a class of the local area’s cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments).*

Significance assessments are carried out on the basis that decisions about the future of heritage items must be informed by an understanding of these items’ heritage values. The *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter* (Burra Charter 2013) recognises four categories of heritage value: historic, aesthetic, scientific, and social significance.

Items are categorised as having local or state level, or no significance. The level of significance is assessed in accordance with the geographical extent of the item’s value. An item of state significance is one that is important to the people of NSW whilst an item of local significance is one that is principally important to the people of a specific LGA.

5.2 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE STATE MINE HERITAGE PARK

The State Heritage Inventory (SHI) provides a Statement of Significance for the State Mine Heritage Park and provides the following information:

Historic: As the only twentieth-century mine complex remaining relatively intact in the Western Coalfields, the State Mine reflects the dual significance of coal and rail in the prosperity of Lithgow.

Scientific: The Museum exhibits in the areas of rail, coal and oil-shale are highly important moveable heritage and the complex itself is instructive about a major early twentieth-century coal-mine.

Pratt and Irving provided additional assessment of the State Mine items in the CMP (1994), drawing the following conclusions:

- *The mine was the first colliery to be established in New South Wales following the passing of the State Coal Mines Act in 1912. (Historic; social -- rare; associative)*
- *The mine was the first action by the government to operate a colliery in New South Wales since the transfer of the convict-worked mines at Newcastle to the Australian Agricultural Company in 1828 (Historic; social -- rare; associative)*
- *The mine was the only colliery operated by the Railway Department in New South Wales (Historic; social -- rare; associative)*
- *The erection of the permanent mine buildings by the Railways Department has resulted in a number of the surviving buildings evidencing a particular architectural style (Historic; social; scientific; aesthetic -- rare; associative)*
- *In its heyday in the late 1920s the mine was the biggest employer on the Western Coalfield, and one of the largest in the state (Historic; social -- rare)*
- *In the years that it was managed by the Railways Department the mine frequently worked more days than most other collieries in NSW (Historic; social -- rare)*
- *The location of the mine headworks so far from the workable coal reserves demonstrates how a state-run enterprise can be saddled with economic inefficiency due to political interference or ineptitude (Historic; social; scientific -- rare; associative)*
- *The mine retains more extant structures than any other former mine site in the Lithgow Valley (Historic; scientific; aesthetic - rare; representative)*
- *The near-intact surviving suite of explosive magazine buildings is a rare example of distinctive structures which are often among the first to be demolished at redundant industrial sites (Scientific; aesthetic -- rare; representative)*
- *Many of the extant footings and formations at the site are capable of stabilisation and interpretation to demonstrate most of the various industrial processes associated with coal extraction and transport (Historic; social; scientific; aesthetic -- representative)*

- *The branch line connecting the mine site to the Lithgow Railway Yard is the only survivor of the many short branches that served industries and collieries in the Lithgow Valley (Historic; scientific; aesthetic -- rare; representative; associative)*
- *The Z26 class locomotive located at the mine is representative of a class of purpose-built mineral tank locomotives which worked the mine branches in the Lithgow Valley for many years (Historic; scientific; aesthetic -- rare; representative; associative)*
- *The proximity of the mine site to the extensive industrial archaeological remains of the old Lithgow Power Station demonstrates the close relationship that existed between the two industries during their lifetime (Historic; social; scientific; aesthetic -- rare; associative)*
- *The surviving formation of the Steelworks Colliery headshunt slightly west of the State Mine site demonstrates the close proximity of colliery headworks due to the physical constraints imposed by the topography.*

5.3 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENTS FOR RECORDED FEATURES WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

The four recorded features within the study area are assessed against the criteria for heritage significance in **Table 5-1**. The reasoning behind the assessments is discussed further in **Section 5.4**.

Table 5-1: Assessment of heritage significance for recorded features within the study area.

Criteria	Description	HS01: Steelworks colliery features	HS02: Dobb's Drift	HSA03: Rock Shelter	HS04: Potential house ruins
a	<i>An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)</i>	The item is within the curtilage of the State Mine Heritage Park. The item has contributory value as a remnant of mining activity across the landscape, not just within the central precinct. The item has contributory significance at the local level	The item is associated with the later stages of mining activity at the State Mine. The item has contributory value as a remnant of mining activity across the landscape, not just within the central precinct. The item has contributory significance at the local level	Does not meet this criterion	Does not meet this criterion
b	<i>An item 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 (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)</i>	The item is associated with the early miners of the Lithgow area and holds local historical association.	The item is associated with the early miners of the Lithgow area and holds local historical association.	Does not meet this criterion	Does not meet this criterion
c	<i>An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area)</i>	The item does not meet the threshold for aesthetic, creative or technical achievement.	The item does not meet the threshold for aesthetic, creative or technical achievement.	Does not meet this criterion	Does not meet this criterion
d	<i>An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons</i>	The item has no strong/special associations for a group of people in the local area.	The item is highly regarded by the local community and contributes to the sense of identity. The item provides a visual link between the past and present, particularly in relation to past mining accidents.	Does not meet this criterion.	Does not meet this criterion
e	<i>An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)</i>	While the item demonstrates facets of mining activities in the local area, it does not have broader research potential in relation to local or state history.	While the item demonstrates facets of mining activities in the local area, it does not have broader research potential in relation to local or state history.	Does not meet this criterion	Does not meet this criterion
f	<i>An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)</i>	The item does not represent a class or features that are endangered or uncommon in the state or local area.	The item does not represent a class or features that are endangered or uncommon in the state or local area.	Does not meet this criterion	Does not meet this criterion
g	<i>An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments (or a class of the local area's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments).</i>	The principal or defining characteristic of the items class are not effectively demonstrated in this example.	The principal or defining characteristic of the items class are not effectively demonstrated in this example.	Does not meet this criterion	Does not meet this criterion

5.4 DISCUSSION

The statement of significance completed for the State Mine Heritage Park (**Section 5.2**) identifies the historical values of the complex as associated with the coal mining and railway heritage of the Lithgow area. The scientific values of the moveable heritage held and informatively displayed at the State Mine Heritage Park is also a significant aspect of the item.

Of the four potential historic heritage items identified during the field survey, two are assessed as holding local heritage values.

HS01: Steelworks colliery features meets criterion (a) historical significance and (b) historical association. The item has a visual association with the main precinct of the site and is within the listed heritage curtilage of the State Mine Heritage Park.

HS02: Dobb's Drift meets criterion (a) historical significance, (b) historical association and (d) social significance, particularly in relation to past accidents associated with this item.

The other two items, HS03: Rock shelter with modern objects and HS04: Potential house ruins, are associated with domestic habitation within the landscape. It is unclear whether the rock shelter with modern objects was used for habitation in the early 20th century while mining was active in the area and there is no clear association of the item with the locally significant heritage values associated with mining and industry. The potential house or structure ruins is associated with domestic refuse (glass, porcelain, building materials) and unlikely to be connected to mining activities. The historical background of the study area indicates that these items are unlikely to be associated with locally significant heritage values.

6 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 PROPOSED WORKS

The proposed works will involve levelling, excavation, and applying rock treatments to the natural ground surface to form bike tracks. Bridges across streams and boggy areas will also be installed. Small trees and vegetation within the study area may be cleared.

It is proposed that a trail head and signage will be located south of the State Mine office building, servicing the southern end of the trail network (**Figure 6-1**). The trailhead facilities will be situated on top of a capped and re-vegetated chitter heap from the previous State Mine workings. Prior to being used as a chitter heap, the area was originally the horse paddock and has recently been used as a grassed car park. The proposed car parking area and shuttle pick up/drop off point will be developed in this area.

Figure 6-1: Proposed car parking area and trail head facilities.



6.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

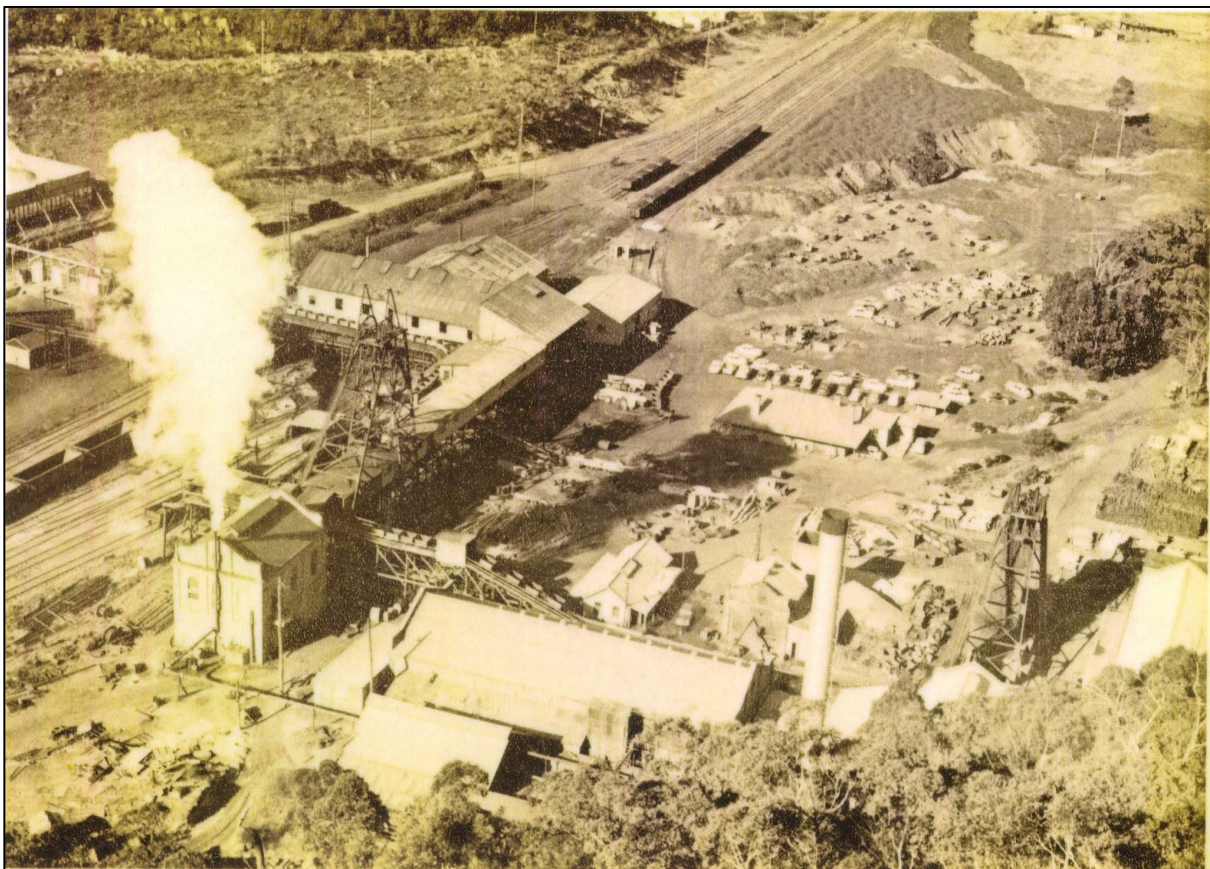
The assessment of the study area has not identified discrete locations where archaeological deposits of local (or state) heritage significance are likely. The nature of the operation and rapid dismantling of the State Coal Mine indicates that material related to the mine that would have heritage significance was removed from the site as early as 1970. Remaining foundation-level

items within the State Mine Heritage Park and the study area have been identified and assessed as having contributory significance to the heritage mining landscape (e.g. Steelworks Colliery feature [HS01] and Dobb's Drift [HS02]).

The open area proposed for the trailhead and carpark is located within an area historically used for a similar purpose. **Figure 6-2** shows the area being used as staging ground for mine carts and an overflow carpark. The absence of structures from this image suggests that the likelihood of significant archaeological deposits that could be impacted by the works is low.

Across the study area, the nature of the proposed works is unlikely to affect significant archaeological deposits due to the minimal scope of disturbance to the ground surface. Minor excavation, rock armoured and track formation along the 1 m track width are unlikely to encounter archaeological deposits and an unanticipated finds protocol is a suitable management strategy given the scale of the impacts and the potential heritage significance of any deposits that have not been identified by this assessment.

Figure 6-2: Aerial showing the State Coal Mine operations in the 1950s.



Source: Lithgow State Mine Museum

6.3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.3.1 Considerations for specific works

The SOHI guidelines (DPE 2023a) provide a standard set of questions regarding specific works relevant to heritage items. The questions and answers presented below address the requirements for Change of use, new landscape features (the trails) and works adjacent to a heritage item. The following only refer to the sections of the study area within or adjacent to the State Mine Heritage Park.

6.3.2 Change of use

Does the existing use contribute to the significance of the heritage items? Why is the change of use proposed?

Yes, the current use of the State Mine Heritage Park as a function venue and museum for the heritage industries of the local area is a contributory factor in the items local heritage significance. This function of the items will not be affected by the proposed change of use, which only refers to the addition of another form of tourism to the current use of the site through the establishment of a mountain bike track network in the landscape surrounding the heritage items.

Will the change of use have an impact on the significance of the heritage items?

No, the addition of the mountain bike track network to the landscape of the heritage items will not adversely affect the heritage fabric or recognised values. The informative museum elements of the State Mine Heritage Park will be unchanged and be presented to another audience of tourists accessing the site to use the mountain bike trails.

Will the change of use require changes to the fabric or significant elements? How does that impact significance of the heritage item?

No significant fabric or elements will be impacted by the project. In places, the proposed track alignment will run close to significant fabric at the site (i.e. the powder magazines) without the need for alteration to the items.

6.3.3 New landscape features

How has the impact on the heritage significance of the existing landscape been minimised?

The construction methods for the proposed trails have been developed to minimise impact on the landscape surrounding the heritage item. Clearing of vegetation and ground disturbance will be avoided where possible, resulting in the least possible change to the current environment surrounding the State Mine Heritage Park. It should be noted that although the area has appreciable natural aesthetic values, these elements are not components of the heritage significance of the State Mine Heritage Park.

Are works to the landscape or pathways necessary to comply with the access requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992?

No, this is not the purpose of the project.

Has evidence (archival or physical) of previous landscape work been investigated? Is the original landscape work being reinstated?

Archival material of the past layout of the State Coal Mine has been considered in the preparation of this assessment. The past mining landscape within the heritage item is not being reinstated and the area is being adaptively re-used.

Will any known or potential archaeological relics be affected by the landscape works? How will this be mitigated? Has advice been sought from a suitably qualified archaeologist?

The study area has been surveyed by an archaeologist and potential archaeological items have been recorded and assessed. If the proposed management measures proposed in **Section 7** are followed, no archaeological relics will be impacted by the project. If historical relics are uncovered during the construction of the project, the measures established in the Unanticipated Finds Protocol will be followed (**Appendix 1**).

Do the proposed works impact views to, from and within adjacent heritage items?

Yes, the project will impact the views within and from the State Mine Heritage Park. The addition of a network of trails through the surrounding bushland will not have a detrimental effect to the heritage values of the item, which are derived from its historical and scientific attributes. Views to and from the mine's office building and bath house will be impacted by the construction of the car parking area and trail head facilities, however the area is currently being used as an informal car parking area and was designated within the CMP as an area permissible for development (**Figure 3-7**).

6.3.3.1 Works adjacent to a heritage item or conservation area

Will the proposed works affect the heritage significance of the adjacent heritage items or the heritage conservation area?

No, the addition of a mountain bike trail network, trail head and car park will have negligible effect on the heritage values of the items within the State Mine Heritage Park. The heritage values of the State Mine Heritage Park are derived from its effective conservation of technological achievements of the local mining and railway industry and the historical role of the State Coal Mine itself. The heritage values will not be impacted by the adaptive re-use of the landscape within the curtilage of the item and the surrounding area.

Will the proposed works affect views to, and from, the heritage item? If yes, how will the impact be mitigated?

Yes, the project will impact the views within and from the State Mine Heritage Park. The addition of a network of trails through the surrounding bushland will not have a detrimental effect to the heritage values of the item, which are derived from its historical and scientific attributes. Views to and from the mine's office building and bath house will be impacted by the construction of the car parking area and trail head, however the area is currently being used as an informal car parking area and was designated within the CMP as an area permissible for development (**Figure 3-7**).

It is considered that the project will not have a detrimental effect to the heritage values of the item, which are derived from its historical and scientific attributes.

Although the impact of the project has not been assessed as significant, the minimal impact construction methodology for the trails will allow for the affected bushland to recover as much as possible and provide natural screening for the trails.

Will the proposed works impact on the integrity or the streetscape of the heritage conservation area?

The project is not within a heritage conservation area where the streetscape is a significant heritage consideration. However, the addition of the trail network and associated features will not interrupt the relationship of the key buildings within the State Mine Heritage Park.

7 MANAGEMENT MEASURES

7.1 TRACK ADJUSTMENTS

The recorded features within the study area are located within the footprint of the proposed trail alignment. However, this mapping is not accurate to closer than 3 m and the ground-truthing assessment of the trail alignments indicates that construction of the trails will not damage the fabric of these items. For example, the location of the trail near the Steelworks colliery features (HS01) will pass the items in front on previously disturbed, level land, rather than passing through the concrete structures as seen on **Figure 7-1**. Within the assessed 10 m wide corridor that comprises the study area, the trail alignment will be adjusted to retain the identified features within the landscape.

Avoidance of impact to all recorded features is feasible if the following measures are followed:

- Avoidance of impacts to the items will be achieved adopting a construction methodology that does not permit demolition of intact features. Intact brickwork or concrete slabs will not be disturbed
- Building up the track alignment using fill would be acceptable in these areas if track adjustment is not feasible due to, for example, slope pitch
- A 10 m buffer area on the recorded features will be supplied to the construction team to provide a location of the area in which additional caution must be taken.
- User guidelines provided at trail head advising riders to remain on established tracks and not interact with heritage items.

Figure 7-1: The approximate track alignment at HS01, Steelworks colliery features (right).



7.2 UNANTICIPATED FINDS PROTOCOL

The likelihood of archaeological deposits or items of heritage significance not identified by this assessment being present within the study area is low. Nevertheless, if items of potential heritage significance are identified during works, the steps outlined in the *Unanticipated Finds Protocol* (**Appendix 1**) should be followed.

8 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 SUMMARY

The project comprises the construction of a car park, trail head, and a mountain bike trail network within and surrounding the State Mine Heritage Park. The project will involve vegetation clearing and minor excavation to construct trails that will be approximately 1 m in width once completed, with some areas of discrete disturbance to install bridges or rock-armoured slopes. The introduction of these elements would be an appreciable change to the landscape surrounding the heritage item and along the trails within the curtilage of State Mine Heritage Park.

The mountain bike trails will not impact the significant fabric within the State Mine Heritage Park and the archaeological assessment indicates the likelihood of significant archaeological items being impacted is low. While views to and from the remaining structures of the State Mine Heritage Park, such as the State Mines office building and bathhouse, will be impacted by the proposed car park and trail head, the area designated for these elements has been previously disturbed by informal car parking and was designated for development in the CMP. It is assessed that the impact associated with the car park and trail head areas will be negligible. Therefore, the project will not affect the heritage values associated with the State Mine Heritage Park, which is an item already adaptively re-used for tourism, education, and entertainment purposes. From a heritage perspective, the addition a mountain bike trail network accessed from the State Mine Heritage Park and visible in the surrounding landscape is an acceptable adaptive re-use encouraging ongoing interaction with the site.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made to minimise the risk of impacts to the heritage significance of the State Mine Heritage Park:

1. All ground disturbing works for the trails must remain within the study area to minimise the risk of inadvertent harm to the key heritage fabric of the State Mine Heritage Park.
2. The construction of the trail head and car parking area within the heritage curtilage of the State Mine Heritage Park must remain within the assessed footprint.
3. The management measures provided in **Section 7** will be followed to avoid impact to HS01 and HS02.
4. It is assessed that there is a low potential for archaeological deposits or significant historic items within the study area. However, if during the construction of the project suspected significant historic items are encountered, the Unanticipated Finds Protocol provided as **Appendix 1** will be followed.

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APPENDIX 1: HISTORIC HERITAGE: UNANTICIPATED FINDS PROTOCOL

A historic artefact is anything which is the result of past activity not related to the Aboriginal occupation of the area. This includes pottery, wood, glass, and metal objects as well as the built remains of structures, sometimes heavily ruined.

Heritage significance of historic items is assessed by suitably qualified specialists who place the item or site in context and determine its role in aiding the community's understanding of the local area, or their wider role in being an exemplar of state or even national historic themes.

The following protocol should be followed if previously unrecorded or unanticipated historic objects are encountered:

1. All ground surface disturbance in the area of the finds should cease immediately, then:
 - a) The discoverer of the find(s) will notify machinery operators in the immediate vicinity of the find(s) so that work can be halted
 - b) The site supervisor will be informed of the find(s).
2. If finds are suspected to be human skeletal remains, then NSW Police must be contacted as a matter of priority.
3. If there is substantial doubt regarding the historic significance for the finds, then gain a qualified opinion from an archaeologist as soon as possible. This can circumvent proceeding further along the protocol for items which turn out not to be significant. If a quick opinion cannot be gained, or the identification is that the item is likely to be significant, then proceed to the next step.
4. Notify Heritage NSW as soon as practical on (131 555; info@environment.nsw.gov.au), providing any details of the historic find and its location.
5. If in the view of the heritage specialist or Heritage NSW that the finds appear not to be significant, work may recommence without further investigation. Keep a copy of all correspondence for future reference.
6. If in the view of the heritage specialist or Heritage NSW that the finds appear to be significant, facilitate the recording and assessment of the finds by a suitably qualified heritage specialist. Such a study should include the development of appropriate management strategies.
7. If the find(s) are determined to be significant historic items (i.e. of local or state significance), any re-commencement of ground surface disturbance may only resume following compliance with any legal requirements and gaining written approval from Heritage NSW.