

Statement of Heritage Impact For Bunnings Development Valley Drive Lithgow 2790



View over the site from the rear lane of Silcock Street, Lithgow (Ray Christison 10.9.2021)

Location:

Valley Drive
Lithgow NSW 2790
Lot 26 DP 1244997

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Plate 1.2: View east across the site towards Silcock Street. (Ray Christison 10.9.2021)

Plate 1.3: View south across the site from the eastern end of Valley Drive. The embankment below Silcock Street is on the left. (Ray Christison 10.9.2021)



1.1 Pottery Estate Precinct

The Pottery Estate Precinct covers an area formerly owned by the Lithgow Valley Colliery Company. Historically this precinct hosted a number of uses:

- Lithgow Valley Colliery 1872 to 1981
- Lithgow Pottery 1876 to 1945
- Lithgow Valley Colliery worker housing (Silcock Street)
- Lithgow Valley Colliery Quoits Field

The Pottery Estate Precinct is currently proposed for redevelopment with various uses approved in accordance with Lithgow City Development Control Plan 2021 Chapter 9: Locality Specific Projects “Pottery Estate” Precinct. This plan permits a number of uses in different parts of the precinct. These are:

- Environment
- Heritage
- Residential
- Business
- Open Space and Landscape

- Movement Network

The proposed Bunnings development is located within an area zoned for Business use.



Plate 1.4: The Lithgow Valley Colliery & Pottery site viewed from the west on about 1914-1915 with the colliery in the foreground. This photograph demonstrates the crowded nature of the precinct during Lithgow's industrial era. The proposed development will be on the far right. (Rodoni Collection, University of Newcastle Cultural Collections.)

Two sections of the Pottery Estate Precinct include places of cultural heritage significance. These are:

- NSW State Heritage Register SHR 5045511 Lithgow Valley Colliery & Pottery Site. The curtilage of this listing is shown in **Figure 1.3** below. The Statement of Significance for the Lithgow Valley Colliery & Pottery Site is as follows:

Lithgow Pottery and brickworks is of State heritage significance as an important producer of basic industrial products for wide-ranging markets over a period of 69 years and distinguished tableware for 20 years. The pottery founded by James Silcock in 1879 continued by other skilled potters and re-founded in 1905 by Arthur Brownfield, brought Staffordshire skills to create colonial wares capable of competing with British imports. However, it was not a financial success and the high collectability of Lithgow wares today gives the pottery a higher national profile than it enjoyed whilst operating. Industrial and agricultural pipes remained an economic strength of the Lithgow Valley Colliery Co. for more than thrice the life of the pottery. Despite strong competition from Sydney makers of ceramic pipes and from the Hoskins firm's iron pipes, Lithgow products were used in many important drainage and sewerage plants throughout New South Wales. The brick production was very large, up to 50,000 bricks a day after the Sercombe kiln was installed in 1901 and is reflected in many major public works in the state as well as private houses in Lithgow.

- The Pottery Estate Heritage Conservation Area covering Lithgow Valley Colliery cottages located at 1-36 Silcock Street, Lithgow. This area is shown in **Figure 1.2**. The key characteristics of the Silcock Street Lithgow (Pottery Estate) Conservation Area is as follows:
 1. Most of the houses are of the same or very similar design, with several being distinctly different. They clearly form a group and can be understood as a planned estate.
 2. Not every lot in the street was built upon when the estate was taken up and there are vacant blocks.
 3. The houses are the most accessible and tangible remains of a major Lithgow industry that has considerable historic interest and value. The houses are able to collectively demonstrate approaches to industry with the provision of good quality worker housing close to the workplace.
 4. The buildings and their setting display a consistency in design and detail seen through to fences and kerbing that is not often seen in such groups.
 5. It is also of interest that the estate is separated from other housing and continues to be surrounded by commercial and industrial development. The character of the estate, through its isolation, will remain and a key element of its future management is the design of infill housing on the vacant lots.¹

The proposed development is not located within the curtilage of either of these historical precincts.

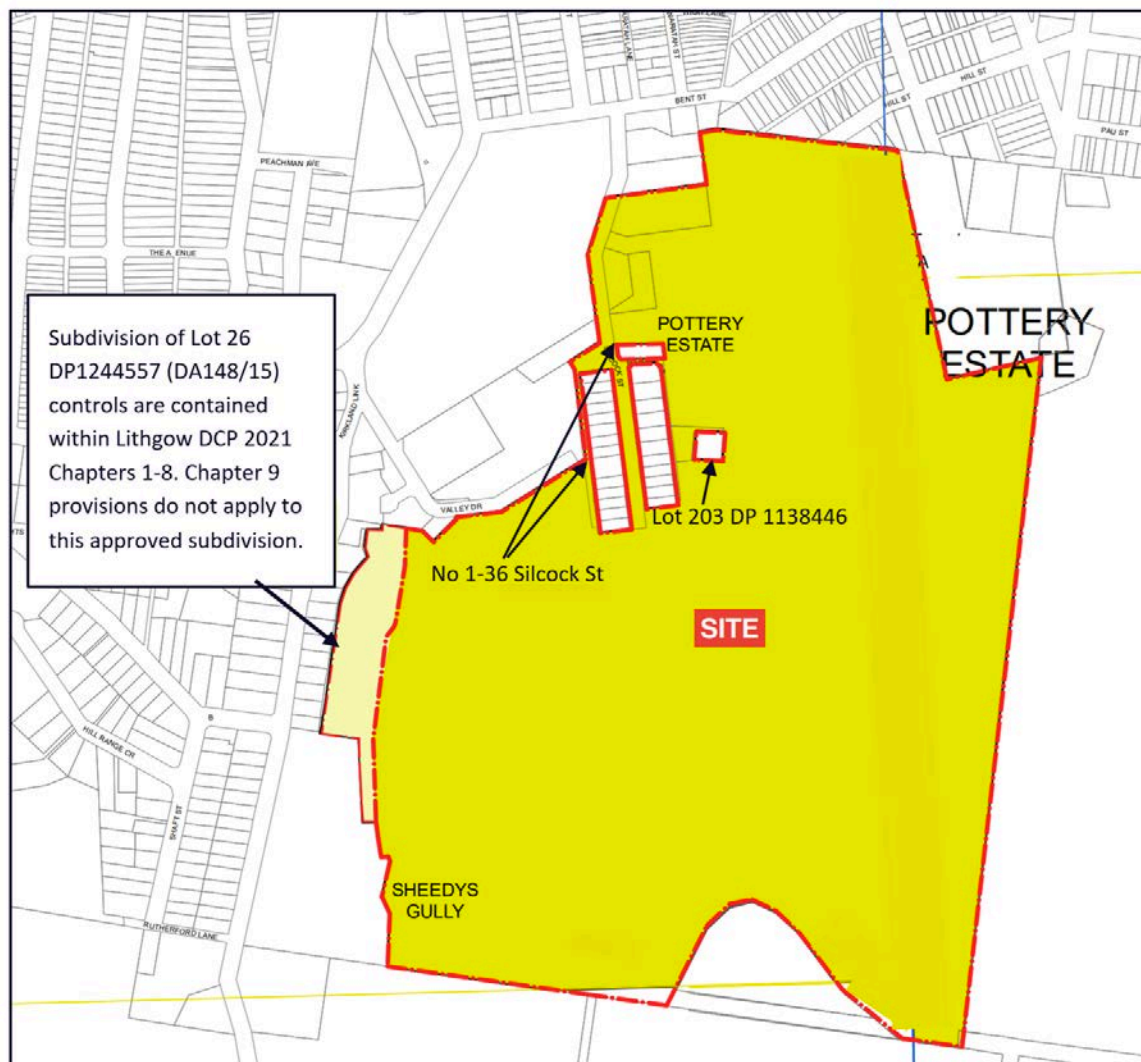


Figure 1.2: Plan of the Pottery Estate Precinct. (Source: LLEP2014)

¹ Paul Davies Pty Ltd, 2010, Draft Lithgow Heritage Development Control Plan. Silcock Street Lithgow (Pottery Estate) Conservation Area.

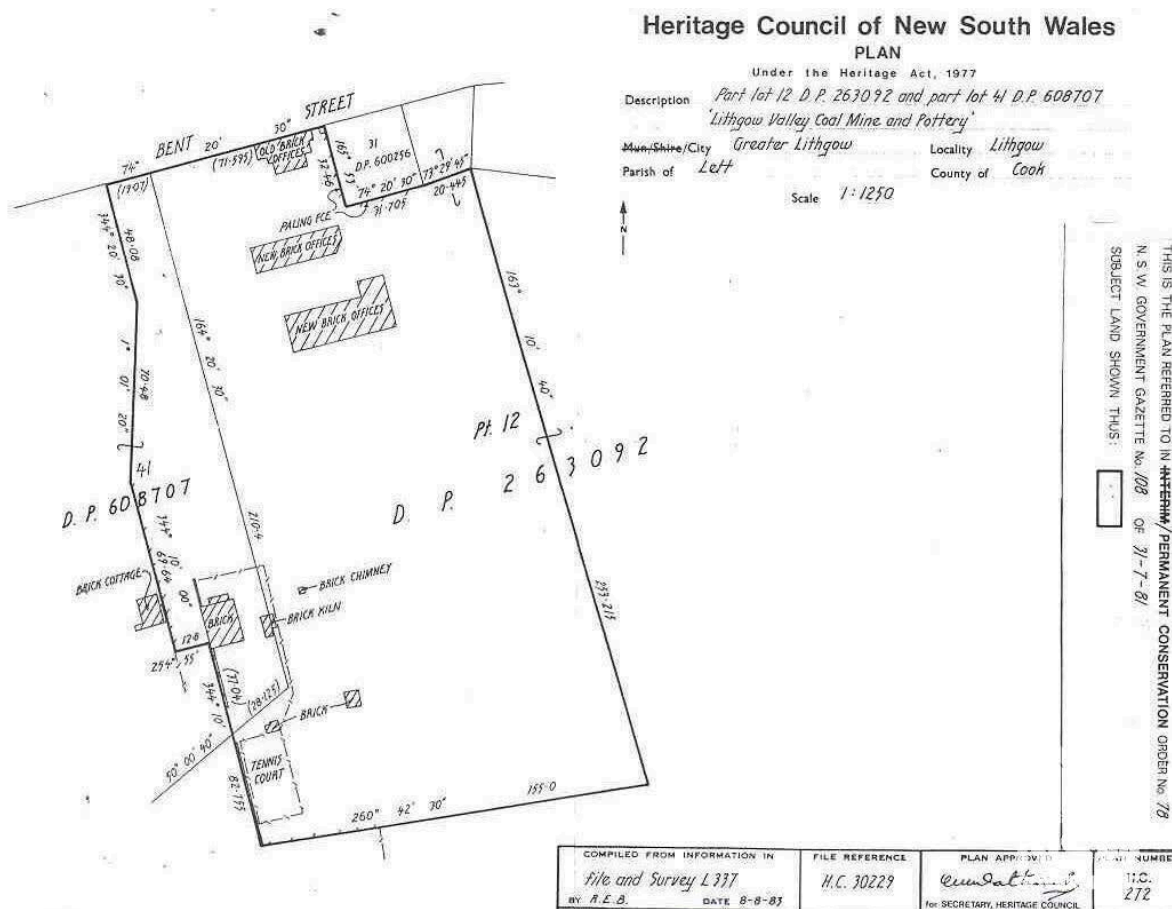


Figure 1.3: Lithgow Valley Colliery & Pottery Site NSW State Heritage Register curtilage.

1.2 Lithgow Valley Colliery Quoits Field

Near the western boundary of the proposed development the Lithgow Valley Colliery Quoits Field. This historic site comprising Lot 603 DP 1051775 has been listed as archaeological site A186 on the Lithgow LEP. It is a rare sit containing the archaeological remnants of a quoits field and associated landscaping. The cultural heritage significance of this place has been assessed as follows:

The Quoits field has potential State Heritage significance as the only known formal site of a pastime once common in rural and mining communities. The intact elements of the site have the potential to yield information relating to State, regional and local historical themes, including the development of Australia's cultural life.

Management recommendations associated with this place are as follows:

Archaeological recommendations:

- A. Notify the Planners about any process that will substantially alter the landscape, e.g. dam, road widening, altered agricultural practices, quarrying....or is potentially a threat to the archaeological site.
- B. Seek advice if any of the above threats are likely to occur in the vicinity of the item, and have the threat assessed. If a study is necessary it should be along Conservation Plan guidelines.
- C. Seek advice if any of the above threats are likely to occur in the vicinity of the item, and have the threat assessed
- D. Encourage active recording of information for cemeteries and isolated graves.

All sites: historical and archaeological sites
Keep buildings in good order

- A. Continue to maintain building in good order.
- B. Record, photograph, research any changes
- C. Continue to record and research this place's history.
- D. Ensure that any new owners are advised of the Cultural significance of the site
- E. Encourage collections of moveable heritage to stay together with the building or place
- F. Consider making available publicly interpretive information that will enable visitors to appreciate the site.
- G. With assistance from Council make available publicly interpretive information that will enable visitors to appreciate the sites.
- H. Draw up conservation plans or interim Management Plans

This site is outside the proposed development area, but adjacent to the project's western access roadway.

1.3 Potential impact on curtilage

The proposed development will not impact directly on either of the places of cultural heritage significance located nearby. This is, however, a potential for impact on the curtilage of both or either.

In defining curtilage, the following issues must be addressed:

- Historical allotments
- Design, style and taste
- Function, uses and interrelationships
- Visual links
- Scale
- Significant features
- Archaeological features

Each of these is discussed in relation to The Lithgow Valley Colliery & Pottery and the Silcock Street Heritage Conservation Area.

Historical allotments

Historically the Pottery Estate was part of a large swathe of land held by the Directors of the Lithgow Valley Colliery Company. This land comprised a number of large blocks of land located on the southern side of the Great Western Railway, and a smaller lot originally granted to Thomas Sheedy (or Shaddy. Irish settler Thomas Sheedy had commenced development of a coalmine on his property. Sheedy was born in Ireland in 1815 and migrated to New South Wales in 1840 with his wife Johanna (nee Carroll). On arrival in the colony he obtained employment as a coachman/gardener for Andrew Brown of Coorwull. Sheedy acquired Portion 65 of the Parish of Lett in the middle of the Lithgow Valley after spending some years on the New South Wales goldfields. Shaddy (or Sheedy's) block is the location of the former Lithgow Valley Colliery and adjacent Lithgow Pottery, and is now partly occupied by the Lithgow Valley Plaza shopping complex. This block has been subdivided a number of times and the former colliery site has been substantially redeveloped. The area located east and south of the former Lithgow Valley Colliery & Pottery site, has been proposed for further subdivision.

Surviving structures located in Silcock Street on Lot 6 DP 1005128 are the southern elements of the former Lithgow Pottery, the curtilage of which is defined by the boundaries of the State Heritage Register listing of the place. This is shown in **Figure 1.3**. The Silcock Street Heritage Conservation Area comprises a number of blocks defined by property fencing. Despite this the houses remained within the Lithgow Valley Colliery Company title with occupants paying ground rent as tenants at will.

The proposed development will have no significant impact on the historical allotments containing heritage items or places of high to moderate archaeological potential.

Design, style and taste

The surviving pottery structures and Silcock Street houses were elements of a large industrial complex, which had a fairly coherent style. The design of which the 19th century pottery and colliery buildings was, in all likelihood, influenced by Edward Gell, an regionally based architect who was a Director of the Lithgow Valley Colliery Company. Gell also lived close to the complex in the 1870s and 1880s as General Manager of all Lithgow Valley Colliery Company operations. The unity of the complex was also reinforced by the use of bricks made within the site. The clay used for these bricks gave them an unusual yellow-brown hue, which is quite distinctive, but also a marker of many historic buildings in the Lithgow Valley. This will be unaffected by the proposed development.

Function, uses and interrelationships

During the life of the Lithgow Valley Colliery Company the site of the proposed Bunnings development appears to have been largely unused and may have served as little more than a dumping ground for mine rubbish and waste. It has remained as open space to this day. Apart from a general association through ownership it appears to have had only a marginal functional relationship with other parts of the company holdings. The development of the site for commercial/retail purposes appears to be consistent with historical uses of the property.

Visual links

The site of the proposed development retains some visual links with the area occupied by the Lithgow Valley Colliery headworks. It also has a visual link to the Silcock Street houses.



Plate 1.5: View south along the western lane at the rear of the Silcock Street HCA. The development site is below the bank on the right. (Ray Christison 10.9.2021)



Plate 1.6: View southwest over the development site from the western side of the Silcock Street HCA showing the change in elevation between the two. (Ray Christison 10.9.2021)

The western lane running behind the Silcock Street houses is close to the boundary between this precinct and the development site. Impacts on visual links between this area and the development are mitigated by a number of factors:

- The difference in elevation between the two sites and proposed placement of the retail building close to the embankment. Very little of this building will be visible from the Silcock Street HCA.
- Plantings along the western side of the lane. These plantings could be supplemented to soften the impact of the development.
- The presence of sheds, outbuildings and fences within the yards behind the houses.

Scale

The Lithgow Valley Colliery Company developed a very large industrial complex in the areas located north and northeast of the proposed development site. The scale of this activity is clearly shown in **Plate 1.4**. Bulky retail developments, such as the proposed Bunnings Small Format store, are considered to be consistent with the scale of historical land use.

Significant features

The site of the proposed development appears to have been waste land associated with the former Lithgow Valley Colliery. The block has been remediated in recent years and coal from this part of the colliery lease was extracted leaving no evidence of historical features.

Archaeological features

Given the former uses of the development site, and subsequent remediation, it is considered highly unlikely that any archaeological features are located on the property. The place is considered to have low archaeological potential.

The Lithgow Valley Colliery Quoits Field, which is located on the western side of the development, has a high archaeological potential. If the development proceeds as planned there should be no direct impact on this site. The site should be protected from disturbance by plant or traffic during the development and construction process.

2. Statement of Heritage Impact

2.1 The following aspects of the proposal respect or enhance the heritage significance of the item for the following reasons:

The proposed development is located below the level of the nearby Lithgow Valley Colliery & Pottery site and the proposed Silcock Street Heritage Conservation Area. A site line study undertaken in 2020 indicates that the highest point of the proposed retail outlet will only be marginally higher than other retail buildings located nearby. This will ensure no impact on the curtilage of the Lithgow Valley Colliery & Pottery site and only negligible impact on the curtilage of the proposed Silcock Street Heritage Conservation Area. Curtilage has been defined in **Section 1.2** of this report.

The development respects the cultural heritage significance of nearby heritage places in the following ways:

1. Lithgow Valley Colliery & Pottery site;
 - a. The development is located well away from this location and will have no physical impact or impact on the curtilage of the place.
 - b. Due to its separation from the site by both distance and elevation the development will have no negative impact on any of the aspects of significance ascribed to this place.
2. Silcock Street Heritage Conservation Area;
 - a. The development will have no impact on the assessed characteristics of this precinct.
 - b. The development will enhance one assessed characteristic of the precinct: “It is also of interest that the estate is separated from other housing and continues to be surrounded by commercial and industrial development. The character of the estate, through its isolation, will remain”²
3. Lithgow Valley Colliery Quoits Field;
 - a. The development has been positioned to avoid disturbance of the quoits field site.
 - b. The location of an access roadway and carparks on the western side of the development will protect the visual curtilage of quoits field precinct.

2.2 The following aspects of the proposal could detrimentally impact on heritage significance. The reasons are explained as well as the measures to be taken to minimise impacts:

It is considered that the proposed development is located at such a distance and designed to such a height that will not detrimentally impact on the assessed cultural heritage significance of the Lithgow Valley Colliery & Pottery site or the Silcock Street Heritage Conservation Area. This is partly a benefit of the elevation of the site on which the development will be located, which substantially mitigates any impact on the curtilage of either place.

There is potential that construction traffic could accidentally damage the quoits field site. This area should be fenced and protected prior to commencement of the development.

2.3 The following sympathetic solutions have been considered and discounted for the following reasons:

No alternate solutions have been considered as the proposal is considered to be an appropriate use of the site, with little impact on the cultural heritage significance of nearby precincts.

² Paul Davies Pty Ltd, 2010, Draft Lithgow Heritage Development Control Plan. Silcock Street Lithgow (Pottery Estate) Conservation Area.

3. References

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