

*Florence Jaquet*

*L a n d s c a p e   a r c h i t e c t*

## EXTENDED HERITAGE CURTILAGE FOR VARROVILLE (SHR00737)

### Right of reply relating to the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019 presentation to IPC- Landscape Reply

#### Preamble

Being unfamiliar with the IPC process, I was surprised to see that there were no requirements for swearing in nor supplying Statutory Declarations prior to giving evidence to ensure some accountability and factuality into what is being presented. I am prepared to supply a Statutory Declaration to accompany any of my submissions.

#### Mrs Kirkby presentation

**Claim:** CMCT has never offered to buy the property.

**Response:** Incorrect. Although irrelevant to the matter at hand, the offer was made verbally by CMCT's representatives at our first meeting with Mrs Kirkby on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2013 in the afternoon at the Catholic Club. I was witness to it.

**Claim:** The Masterplan has not changed since day one.

**Response** Incorrect.  
This is the Masterplan in 2013 (below)



This is the Masterplan in 2015 (below) with highlighted main differences (red)



-New building arrangements following the appointment of FJMT as new architect to the project.

This is the DA's Masterplan in 2017 (below) with highlighted main differences (red)



- Roads around the "Vineyards" re-routed and in places reduced to one-way to minimise visual and re-grading impact
- Roads to Outbuildings modified to comply with RFS regulations
- Relocation of Function Rooms to minimise traffic impact
- Re-alignment of Chapel and modifications to concealed crypts
- Re-alignment of roads around the workshop

**Claim:** The Masterplan has not incorporated any of the public comments.

**Response:** Incorrect- Details of changes following the June 2017 Public Consultation process , in particular, are listed on pages 92 and 93 of the DA's Design Response Document (Extract appended N1)



**Claim:** Project has been promoted as a lawn cemetery and it is not.

**Response:** Incorrect - The project has always been presented as a landscaped cemetery and Memorial Park.

It has always been described as a mix of:

- Lawn plaques on concealed concrete beams (left below) (a visual improvement on the commonly used plaques on exposed concrete beams- right below)



- And headstones in screened burial rooms
  - And a small number of concealed above-ground burials,
- as described in this extract (page 33) of the 2013 Masterplan report below:

#### Burials areas

The burial types on offer will directly respond to the site. Some will be integrated in the landform, some will follow the "green" or "natural" burial concept:

- **Lawn burials:** These typically consist of lawn areas with plaques on a concrete base. They will typically be on flatter land and close to the main roads. To generate some privacy for grieving families, larger grave expanses will be divided by planting to create "rooms". (Fig. 44)
- **Monumental lawn burial:** These typically consist of flat or terraced lawn areas with concrete beams onto which a low headstone is placed. Height will be limited depending on its location on site, the ability to offer screening or minimise its visual impact from the roads. (Fig. 46)
- **Monumental graves:** for the denominations which require it, monuments will be allowed but limited in height to a maximum of 1.5m. These will be concealed in screened rooms and placed furthest away from the main roads.
- **Natural Woodland burials:** Consisting in single grave sites within an existing woodland area, these respond perfectly to the "green" burial options, where the land is allowed to regenerate between burial events. It uses no chemicals and natural materials only in the burial process. Plots are identified by metal rods and can be found using a metal detector. Memorialisation can only be made of wood or other biodegradable and renewable materials. (Fig. 49)
- **Family Estates Blocks:** Nested into the side of the hill, on unencumbered inward facing slopes only, these sculptural elements will already be built, ready for purchase. They consist of cubes with an expected capacity for 9 interments. Natural materials would be used to "blend" into the environment.

## Heritage Council/OEH presentation

Overall, I found the HC/OEH presentation misleading to the extreme. It confirmed my disbelief that such a crucial organisation involved in the understanding and preservation of State Significant Heritage could rely so heavily on flawed, bias and manipulated information. Similarly to the OPP report, the presentation raises more questions than answers.

### Item 1: Aerial map from Slide #6 and associated text

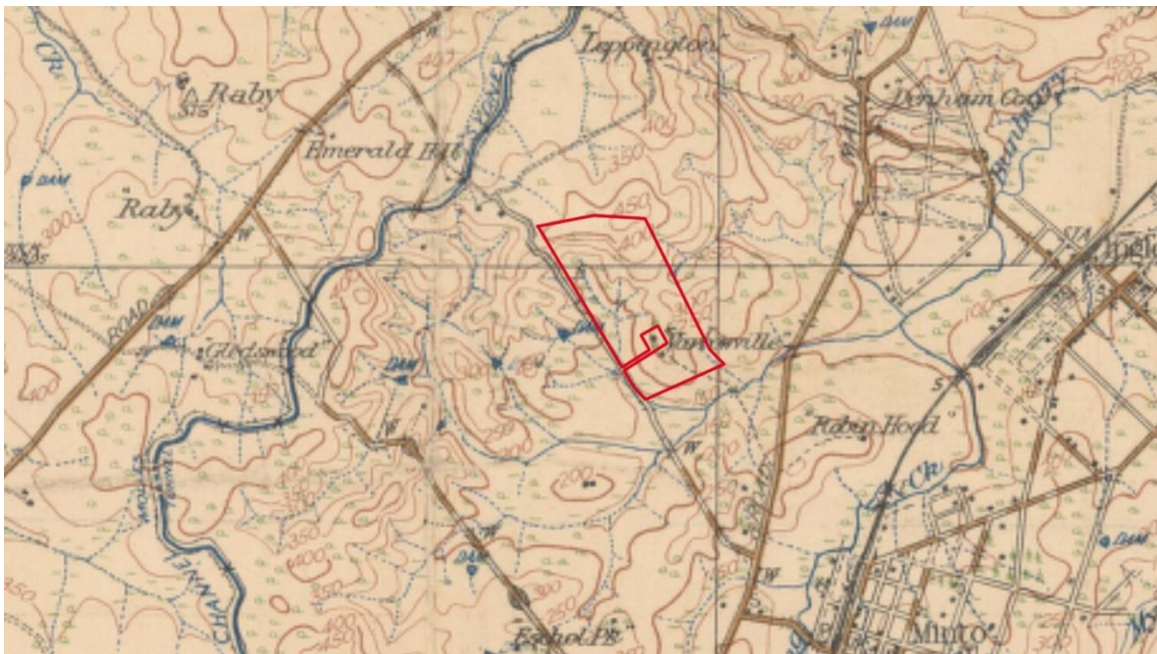


**Response:**

Although not a Heritage Consultant, I make a point of understanding information supplied by other consultants and make it my professional duty to challenge unsubstantiated and unclear information.

In this instance I fail to understand:

- How the addition of blue dots all over a pixelated 1947 aerial map (as shown on above OEH slide) proves anything? It is important for the panel to be supplied with an unedited copy of this aerial map to make their own interpretation of dam evidence in 1947 (appended N2).
- It is not recognised nor mentioned in the presentation that natural landscapes suffer greatly from erosion and watercourses are not static over time as is well documented in “Losing Ground: An Environmental History of the Hawksbury-Nepean Catchment”, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney 1995, commissioned by Sydney Water. This site falls within this catchment. There is a real possibility that watercourses on this site have moved over the last 200 years, especially after the consistent vegetation clearing which has occurred over the last 150 years.
- How a 1947 aerial map could be used to prove any claim relating to Charles Sturt, who owned the property for 3 years only (whilst hardly living there) more than a 100 years prior to the said aerial photo.
- Why this map contradicts the military map of 1917 (below) which shows no dam on the whole site, yet is being withheld from the presentation. (Dams are shown as blue triangles with the word “DAM” next to it)



Source: Commonwealth Section Imperial General Staff;  
Commonwealth Department of Defence, 1917

## Item 2: image from Slide #7 and associated text



Response: In this instance I fail to understand:

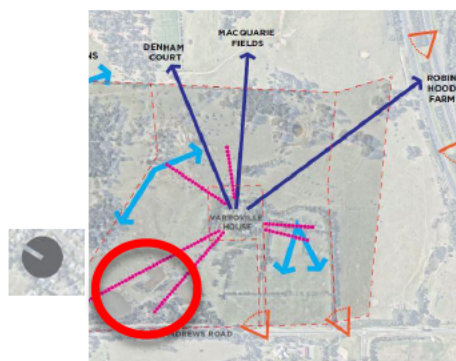
- How this sketch showing a house sitting on a knoll with 360 degrees views proves any connection with Capability Brown or Repton. Does this mean that every house sitting on knoll must be inspired by these well-known landscape architects and that nobody thought of it prior to them?
- Why no other conclusions regarding its siting were drawn, possibly relating to microclimate (taking advantage of night breezes and its relationship to the sun's movement)?

## Item 3: image from Slide #9 and associated text



Response: This juxtaposition of these unrelated images is highly misleading. It demonstrates the speculation and lack of rigour displayed throughout the report it relies on.

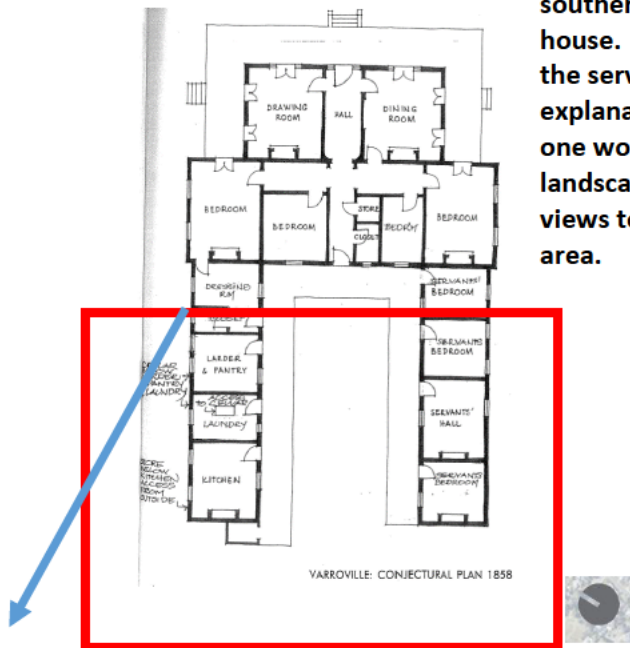
- The images on the top right and left-hand side appear to have been taken recently (i.e. this century) at the angle looking south from one of the west facing windows. If the dams were purposely located with Grand English Landscapes in mind, wouldn't they have been placed in line with the window as the central Ackermann painting is trying to justify? If not, what is the purpose of the image from Ackermann?



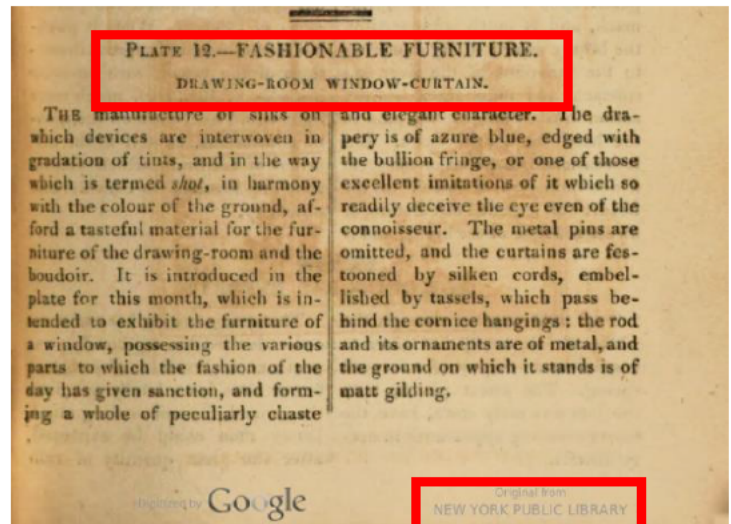


- The present-day photographs display dams built in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by the Jackaman's, with no evidence of any of them being there prior to 1917 (as demonstrated by the military maps on page 4 of this document), let alone in Charles Sturt's time (c.1830's) which pre-dated Varroville House. Based on this evidence, why juxtaposing a random painting next to current views? What does it prove?
- In 1858-59, when Varroville house was built, the so-called string of dam, supposedly located along St Andrews Rd and supposedly attributed to Charles Sturt, would have been viewed mostly from the

southern U-shaped end of the house. This end of the house was the servant's quarters and some explanation is needed as to why one would have purposely landscaped the site for the best views to be from the servants' area.



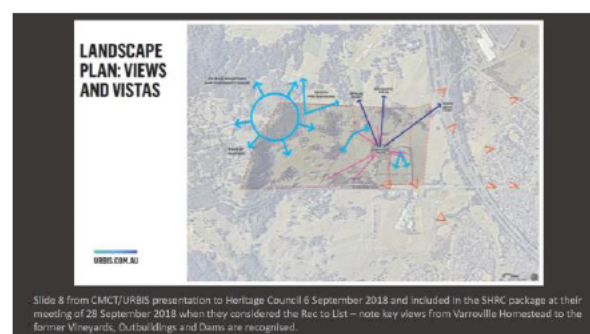
- On the OEH slide, the central image attributed to Ackermann has a caption relating to a "preferred" pastoral landscape. It is extracted from a 2015 unpublished dissertation by Mr P. Gibbs who is unqualified as a historian, an objector to the proposal and a part owner of Varroville house. Why does the presentation rely so much on such unqualified source? It only helps to reduce its credibility.
- One could be forgiven for thinking the juxtaposition of these 3 pictures gives them some relationship with the subject site. It should be clarified that the "painting" does not relate to Varroville in anyway and does not even relate nor substantiate anything relating to landscape setting. It can only be seen as selective and extraordinarily out of place.
- As a demonstration of the blatant lack of rigour and manipulation of information which is paraded as thorough research through the OPP curtilage report, I offer this research below:



Source: 1815- Drawing Room Window Curtain from Ackermann's Repository- **New York Library**

- The original caption for this image is very different and relates to "curtain fashion" as demonstrated above in our own research. What is the intention behind withholding the original author's caption? Although there is some acknowledgment in the OPP report that this painting relates to Interior Design, it is not made clear on the slide, nor does it explain how this painting is relevant to the Varroville curtilage issues. It is misleading and fanciful at best.

#### Item 4: image from Slide #11 and associated text



**Response:**

The text associated with the slide is misleading and implies an endorsement of the views by our team as having some significance. It is purposely out of context.

This analysis map has been produced by our office and features in our DA's Design Response report so I am best placed to comment on its purpose and place it into its proper context.

- We have been approached by OEH at various times to consider these views after a meeting they had with the owners' of Varroville House, no doubt influenced by the OPP report which we were not able to receive a copy of.
- We have never recognised nor labelled the views to the dams, vineyards or outbuildings as "significant". With regards to the views onto the western dams, we recognise that these views are pleasing not historically significant until proven so. Nothing put forward to date has proven their significance. To put our position in its proper context, and extracted from our Design Response Report 2017, the legend for these 3 views (shown in pink on the plan) are as follows:

#### 2.2.5 VIEWS

Significant views from key viewpoints outside the site (shown in orange) have been carefully assessed prior to the JRPP decision. These views are the subject of a separate analysis report by Dr R. Lamb & a recent re-rendering exercise.

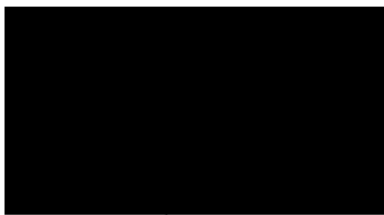
A number of 'historically significant' views to Macquarie Fields, Denham Court & Robin Hood Farm (shown in dark blue) were identified in the Bitton & Morris' 2000 study of colonial properties of the Cumberland Plain. It is acknowledged that some of these vistas are now partially or totally obscured.

We have identified a number of key vantage points (shown in light blue) within the site where long scenic views are on offer, onto the Sydney CBD, the surrounding landscape & neighbouring hilltops- these should be retained & enhanced.

We also recognise that Varroville Homestead has enjoyed, over the years, a number of views into the site. Although it is unwarranted to 'freeze them in time,' the pastoral character should be retained and views onto structures mitigated (shown in pink).

Thank you for the opportunity to comments on the presentations made by other parties on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

Yours Sincerely.



Florence McIver- Jaquet  
Principal – FJLA  
Registered Landscape Architect AILA-



## 8. RESPONDING TO


### 8.5 PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

The Community Information and Feedback Sessions were held on Thursday 22nd and Saturday 24th June at the Campbelltown Catholic Club, 20-22 Camden Road, Campbelltown.

The following table is an extract of the table provided in the Urbis - "Macarthur Memorial Park Community Consultation Summary of Outcomes Report" which details the feedback received either verbally or in writing though the above process.

Our response below is limited to the items relating the Landscape Design.

It demonstrates our efforts to incorporate the feedback and comments wherever possible and where changes have been made as a direct response to the above process (bold and underlined).

Category	Details	Response/ Comments
Burial design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment against the use of horizontal lawn plaques.</li> <li>Comment in support for a crematorium on site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Horizontal plaques installed on concealed beam are the least visually intrusive.</li> </ul> 
Roads and Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern that the masterplan does not indicate the proposed road network within the site.</li> <li>Concern regarding the proximity of roads to Varroville House.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All roads are shown on the Masterplan.</li> <li>3 options were explored for the road proposed to the east of Varroville house (refer civil engineer's report). <u>Adjustments have since been made to the proposed levels to minimise visual impact.</u></li> <li>Further options were explored for the road proposed to the south of Varroville House.</li> </ul> <p>Due to Bushfire limitations on dead-end roads and visual impact of roads on the grassy slopes below the homestead from external views, the road has been made RFS compliant and positioned for least visual impact behind an existing ridge running between the current Outbuildings' driveway and Varroville House's driveway, based on the advice of Dr R. Lamb and Travers Bushfire P/L.</p> <p><u>Adjustments have since been made to the move it away from the homestead boundary, within the limitations of existing CPW trees and historical items.</u></p>
Parking and access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment that the masterplan does not indicate parking areas.</li> <li>Comment that motor car access to the site is not indicated on the masterplan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Masterplan does indicate parking areas.</li> <li>Access points have been made clear on the DA documents.</li> </ul>

# APPENDICES

## Appendix N1

### Responding to Public consultation feedback (June 2017)

## 8. RESPONDING TO

### 8.5 PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

Category	Details	Response/ Comments
Landscape design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for the proposed gardens and incorporation of open space.</li> <li>Support for the landscape design which is considerate of the environment of the Scenic Hills region.</li> <li>Support for the lawn burials, waterways and landscaped recreational areas.</li> <li>Preference for native fauna in the planting design.</li> <li>Comments that the design is not in line with the rural setting of the area</li> </ul>	
Sculptures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment against the visual design of the sculptures.</li> <li>Suggestion for good seating and toilet facilities.</li> <li>Comment that the masterplan does not detail the location and design of proposed sculptures and monuments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sculptures have not been designed yet. They will be sited to complement the landscape and be in scale with their surroundings.</li> <li>Park-style seating and few shelters will be provided throughout. As the park is large and reliant on car access, toilet facilities will be limited to key areas and generally associated with buildings.</li> <li><u>Sculptures' proposed locations and maximal sizes have been added to the DA documentation.</u></li> </ul>

## Appendix N2



Aerial photo 1947