



Hawkesbury City Council

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Historical Information About
Mountain View

date of meeting: 30 June 2020
location: audio-visual link
time: 6:30 p.m.

**Historical Information about Mountain View (now Durham Bowes)
Inalls Lane, Richmond
supplied by Jan Barkley-Jack**

Mountain View or Durham Bowes as it is now known, is stated in its listing on the NSW State Heritage Register as elevated to being not just of state importance but as having **‘outstanding factors [which] contribute to the exceptionally high significance of this item of National heritage’**.¹ This is based on the homestead, its curtilage and sight lines being largely intact. The listing states it to be:

a substantially intact example of early building materials and techniques. It is a harmonious feature of the landscape which provides evidence of having set the example to establish the safe accommodation on the highlands out of reach of the flood waters of the Hawkesbury River. Documentary records and physical evidence support the educational and research potential of Dights Hill and the archaeological resource of an early farm complex. Well documented associations with exploration, pastoralism and prominent historical figures have attracted both local and overseas visitors with an interest in early Australian history to the site.²

The State listing continues:

‘The earliest part of the building is an early Colonial Georgian homestead, with the original two-roomed sandstock brick cottage with mud/shell mortar and plaster a central chimney and original joinery and dates from c1804’.³ This is known from a memorial of John Dight who writes that he purchased the property on the highlands following his house being destroyed in a high flood⁴ and it was this loss of anywhere to live that gives credence to the fact that the small cottage was already on the property in 1806 as shelter was immediately needed. From now famous letters Margaret Catchpole wrote about the demise of the lowland farmhouse after she and Hannah Dight and the children struggled to stay on its roof, the date of the move is identified securely as 1806.⁵ By 1808 the farmhouse was described with additions as ‘a good brick Dwelling House, large barn, garden, etc.’⁶



Photograph supplied by Jan Barkley-Jack.

¹ Heritage NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 26 July 2006, <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails>, accessed 22 May 2020.

² Heritage NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 26 July 2006, <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails>, accessed 22 May 2020.

³ Heritage NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 26 July 2006, <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails>, accessed 22 May 2020.

⁴ Memorial of John Dight, Colonial Secretary’s Correspondence, Reel 119, 2/7842, 28 December 1826.

⁵ Letter Margaret Catchpole, 8 October 1806, published in L. Forth, *Margaret Catchpole: her life and her letters*, author, Richmond, 2012, pp. 107-114.

⁶ *Sydney Gazette*, 26 June 1808.

The State listing continues:

‘The original kitchen with a large fireplace and a bread oven was added pre 1812...The 1812 and 1820s two storey additions are sandstock brick with mud/shell mortar and plaster...a built -in cupboard (1812), cedar chimney pieces and hardwood flooring with handmade nails survive’. The 1812 building contract was witnessed by ex-convict Margaret Catchpole, who assisted the Rouses and other Hawkesbury families as a midwife, including the Pitt family who owned the property ‘Bronte’ where Catchpole died. This contract is written on the back of a page out of John Dight’s journal which adds the information that the family had moved into the new double storey addition by August 1813.⁷

Durham Bowes was listed on the State Heritage Register in 1999⁸ as meeting all heritage criteria, with item (c) stating it to be **‘aesthetically significant because of its harmonious relationship with the landscape’**. Also its heritage value includes the important fact that **‘Its setting on the floodbank escarpment overlooking the lowland farms is an integral part of an historic landscape’**, making its current curtilage and sight lines over the flood plain and the eighteenth century lowland farms part of its significance. The Heritage NSW recommendation in regard to the sight lines adds a special recommendation for the property’s management that the:

Setting needs a DCP and careful control to reinstate views to mountains and lowlands where possible, and control height and proximity of adjacent/nearby development

Historically Mountain View/Durham Bowes has importance from its associations with people themselves important in the development of the whole Colony of NSW: with Margaret Catchpole being a famed midwife for Commissariat’s wife Susannah Palmer in Sydney as well as for local Hawkesbury families, and with explorer Hamilton Hume becoming a son-in-law when he married Elizabeth Dight.

The present owner has taken exceptional care to honour all these heritage values at personal expense for over 30 years. The farmstead has become a centre for tourism and study throughout that time, so the property is socially important for the farmhouse, the curtilage and the sightlines.



Photograph supplied by Robyn and Penelope Sharpe.

⁷ Papers relating to Margaret Catchpole, Microfilm CY2340, call no. Ac 108, item 5, Mitchell Library, Sydney.

⁸ Listing no. no. 00044, *Government Gazette*, 2 April 1999, no. 27, p. 1546.