

# Winton Energy Reserve 1 Facility Historical Archaeology Assessment

Prepared for WSP  
January 2023—Version 5

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05	Steve Skitmore	07/03/22	Mapping update
05	Elizabeth Hawksley	12/01/2023	Mapping and proposed impact updates

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Project brief

Extent Heritage Pty Ltd has been commissioned by WSP Australia Pty Ltd to prepare a Historical Archaeology Assessment (HAA) for the property at 386 Lee Road, Winton (hereafter referred to as 'the study area').

The study area is being redeveloped for the construction of a Gas-Powered Generator and Battery Energy Storage System and solar array. A Historical Heritage Due Diligence Assessment was undertaken by Extent Heritage (dated 9 August 2021) prior to this HAA report, which established that the study area did not contain any items included on the Victorian Heritage Registered (VHR), Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI) or local Heritage Overlay (HO). However, two areas of interest were identified which have potential for significant historical archaeological remains. These areas were subject to a targeted site survey as part of the Due Diligence Assessment and this HAA.

This HAA has been prepared to assess the impact that the proposed activity may have on historical heritage and archaeological values of the study area and make recommendations to manage and mitigate this impact.

### 1.2 Study Area

The study area is located at 386 Lee Road, Winton (lot ID 1/TP95157). It is bisected by the Tottenham to Albury rail through Nelson Road to the north, Lee Road to the south-east and the Hume Freeway to the south (Figure 1 and Figure 2). The northern parcel of land is surrounded by pastoral land to the north and Nelson Road to the south. The study area is located within Winton North and Benalla is the local government authority. The study area is currently occupied by a homestead and associated outlying buildings at the north-eastern extent of the property with the remainder of the study area comprising of dams and paddocks.

### 1.3 Proposed Development

Lochard Energy is proposing the construction of the Energy Reserve 1 Facility which will utilise hybrid technology with Li-Ion batteries and fast-start high-efficiency gas reciprocating engines comprising:

- 200MW / 400MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS);
- 200MW Gas-fired Power Generation (GPG);
- Short gas pipeline; and
- A single electrical substation for both battery and GPG, which then feeds into the local network.

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- A ~3 kilometre (km) 220-kilovolt (kV) underground transmission line from the Glenrowan Terminal Station (GTS) to the subject site.

The transmission line will cross the Hume Freeway and follow the existing AusNet easement northwest from the GTS. It will then head east within the road reserve of Lee Road before entering the subject site.

The proposed activity is to be constructed at 386 Lee Road, Winton, within former agricultural land, 9km east of the township of Benalla in the Victoria Central North Renewable Zone and is proposed to operate for a period of 25 years. Development plans are shown in Figure 3.

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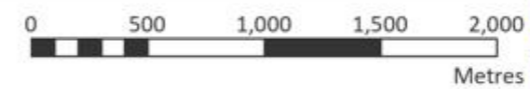


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**Winton Energy Reserve 1**

 Study area

Drawn by: Alexander Murphy  
Checked by: Miranda Gronow  
Date: 28 July 2021  
Projection: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55  
Data sources: Extent, ESRI, DELWP, GA



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Figure 1. General location of study area. Source: Extent, Nearmap.





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Drawn by: Alexander Murphy  
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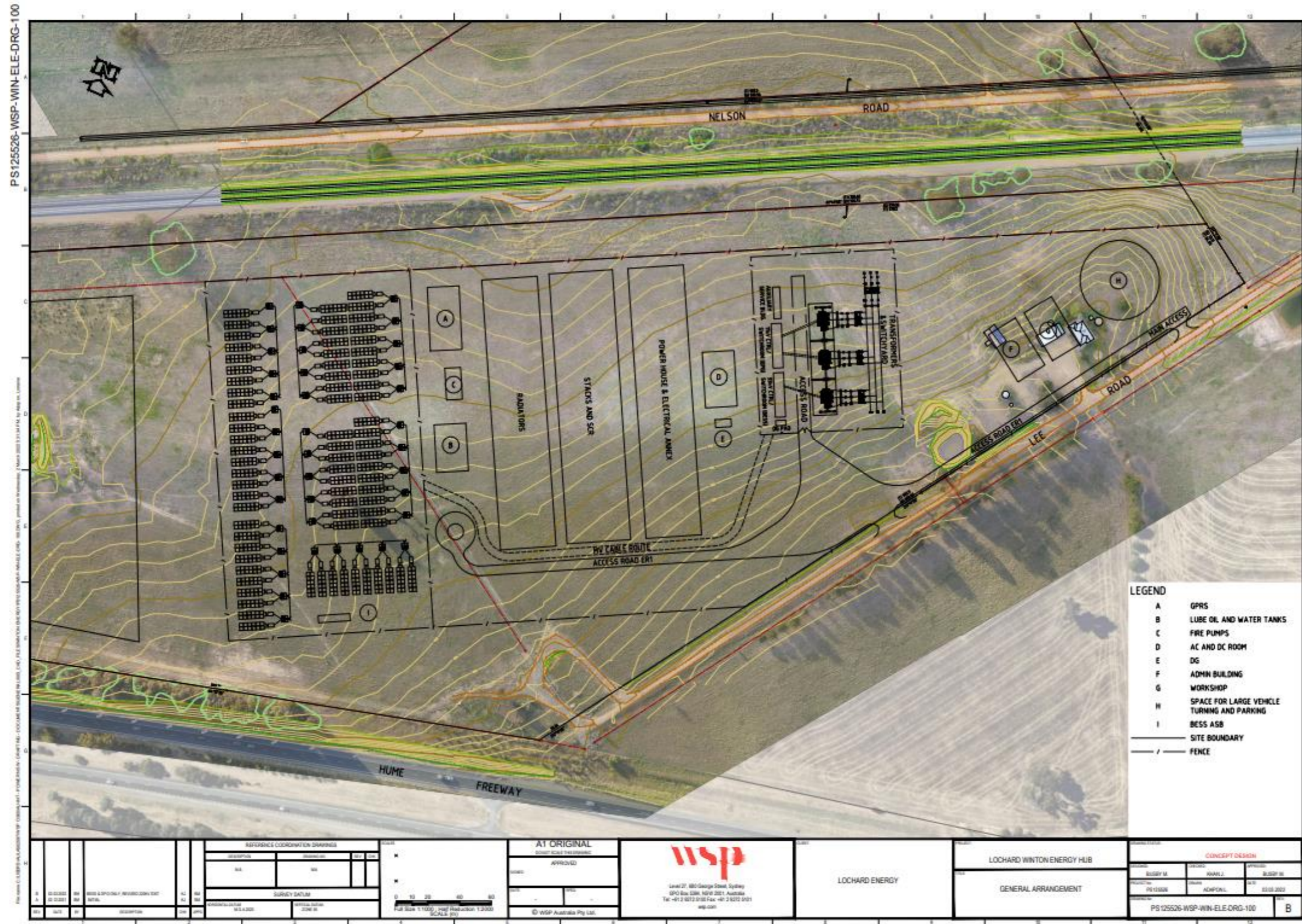


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Figure 2. Plan of the study area with boundary outlined in red. Source: Extent, Nearmap.

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Figure 3. Proposed development plan. Source: WSP.

## 1.4 Report Objectives

This report has been prepared with the following objectives:

- to identify any heritage listings (local, state and Commonwealth) relevant to the study area;
- to assess the study area's potential to contain historical archaeological evidence;
- to assess the level of significance of the study area's historical archaeological resources;
- to identify whether the proposed development would impact on the values of any present significant historical archaeological remains;
- to determine what legislative restraints and obligations under the *Heritage Act 2017* (VIC) and other relevant controls apply; and
- to provide clear articulation of heritage approval processes and outline any further archaeological investigation that may be required in advance of the study area's redevelopment.

## 1.5 Limitations

No community consultation was undertaken for this report. Therefore, observations made concerning the possible social significance of places are based on publicly accessible, published materials.

This voluntary report does not consider Aboriginal cultural heritage and archaeology. A separate voluntary cultural heritage management plan (CHMP 18379) has been prepared by Extent Heritage to provide a management framework of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

## 1.6 Authorship

This report was prepared by Elizabeth Hawksley (BA, MA Ancient History and Archaeology), with development history prepared by Miranda Gronow (BA Hons, Dip Languages, MPhil Classical Archaeology). Site inspection and QA undertaken by Christopher Clark (Master of Heritage Management and BA Archaeology).

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## 2. Legislative Context and Heritage Designations

The following section summarises the relevant legislation applicable to historical archaeology in Victoria, and the results of heritage database searches undertaken on 20 February 2021. Heritage listings applicable to the study area and properties in proximity to it are outlined below.

### 2.1 Heritage Act

All places on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) and the Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI) are legally protected under the *Heritage Act 2017* (the Act) – penalties apply for actions that may damage a place listed on either list in the absence of a permit (in the case of the VHR) or consent (in the case of the VHI) under the Act.

The Act also confers blanket protection on all significant heritage material of over 75 years in age, regardless of whether it is included on a statutory list, and this is particularly relevant in relation to archaeological material. The VHI, under section 117 of the Act, lists all known archaeological sites and artefacts. Under the Act an 'archaeological site' means a place (other than a shipwreck) which:

- a. contains an artefact, deposit or feature which is 75 or more years old;
- b. provides information of past activity in the State;
- c. requires archaeological methods to reveal information about the settlement, development or use of the place; and
- d. is not associated only with Aboriginal occupation of the place.

#### 2.1.1 Victorian Heritage Register

The study area does not include any listings on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR).

#### 2.1.2 Victorian Heritage Inventory

There are no Victorian Heritage Inventory sites registered within the study area.

Three VHI sites are near the study area, located to the north and north-east (see Figure 4). These are:

- H8125-0016— Lake Mokoan Winton North, Benalla Rural City (non-indigenous burial ground) approximately 1.4 km to the north.
- H8125-0017— Ruins of farmhouse approximately 3.7 km to the north.
- H8125-0020— Remain of historic farming complex approximately 3.5 km to the north-east

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Although these VHI sites do not form part of the Winton Energy Hub study area, they provide an understanding of the historical archaeological potential of the study area and its surrounding landscape.

If works are proposed that disturb or destroy historical archaeological sites or places listed on the VHI, an application should be made to Heritage Victoria for a Consent to Damage.

## 2.2 Planning and Environment Act 1987

The *Victorian Planning and Environment Act 1987* is the legislative basis for all planning schemes in the state. It was created to establish a framework for planning the use, development, and protection of land in Victoria. Protection of heritage through the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* is most often enacted through heritage overlays created as part of local council planning schemes.

There are no local Heritage Overlays that apply to the study area.

## 2.3 National and Commonwealth Heritage Lists

A search of the relevant databases shows that the study area is not subject to any National or Commonwealth listing that would be a consideration under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

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Figure 4. Plan showing VHI listing in the surrounding area of the proposed development. Source: NearMap.

### 3. Development History

This section describes the known development history of the study area. It draws primarily upon archival information, including historical maps and aerial photography, to accurately chart historical activity within the study area. This provides a basis from which an assessment can be made of the extent, nature and significance of any historical archaeological remains that maybe present within the study area.

While this information was presented in the previous Due Diligence Assessment (Extent Heritage, 2021), it has been reiterated and expanded to provide historical context for the assessment of the study area's historical archaeological potential.

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#### 3.1 Pre-contact

The study area lies within the traditional lands of the Yorta Yorta people. The Winton area was part of a landscape that past Aboriginal people lived on and managed for thousands of years prior to the invasion of the area by British settlers. The swamps and wetlands of the Winton and Benalla region would have provided Aboriginal people with important foodways and riverine resources. It has also been hypothesised in relation to the 'Faithfull Massacre' (see below) that Broken River, east of Winton, may have been the one of the places used for male initiation ceremonies (Bassett 1989).

As this report is focused on the historical heritage values of the study area, it does not provide detail regarding Aboriginal ethnohistory and pre-contact archaeological potential. For more information see CHMP 18379 (in prep).

#### 3.2 Overland Route to Port Phillip: Winton and Benalla from 1824

The first European historical references to the Winton area are accounts of overland journeys to Port Phillip from Sydney. The first overland journey from Sydney to Port Phillip by Europeans was made by the party of Hume and Hovell between 1824 and 1825. On both their outbound and return journeys, Hume and Hovell took a route east of Winton and Benalla, skirting the foothills of the Great Dividing Range (See Figure 5 , Bland 1837).

After the founding of a settlement at Port Phillip (later known as Melbourne) in 1835-6, 'overlanders' sought to bring their flocks and herds to the reportedly bountiful pastures of the Port Phillip region (Shaw 1996, 131-135). These overlanders were inspired by the journey of Surveyor-General Mitchell in 1836 and the publication of an account of the Hume and Hovell expedition in 1837 (Bland 1837). From 1837, pastoralists began long overland journeys with thousands of sheep and cattle with the aim of establishing new runs. In this period, the overland route roughly followed the modern route of the Hume Highway, eschewing the foothills of the Australian Alps for the flatter plains to its west (Shaw 1996, 176-177).

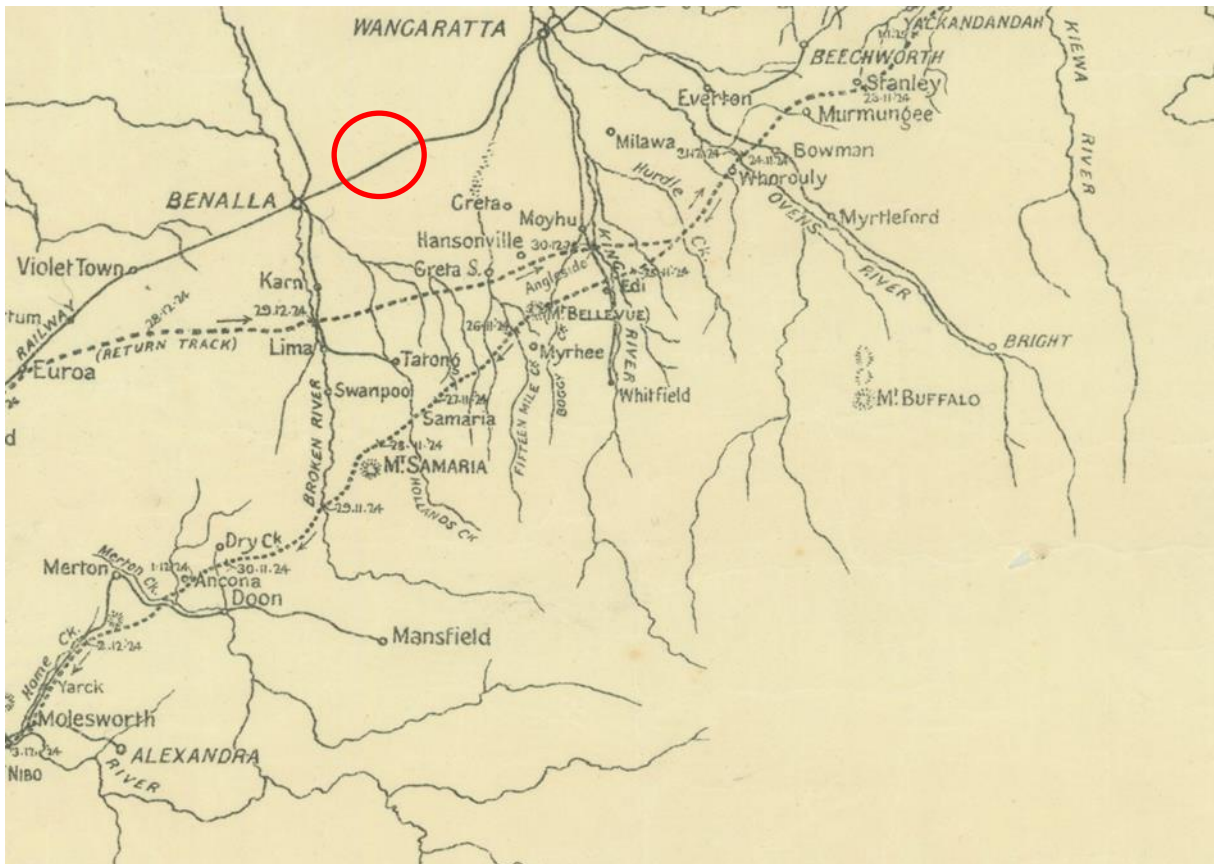


Figure 5. Detail of 'Map Showing Track of Hume and Hovell across Victoria: November and December 1824 and January 1825', c. 1920s, showing the approximate location of the study area. Source: SLV, ID 672820.

One of these overland drives, now recorded in great detail, was the journey of George Faithfull and his party in early 1838 (Basset 1989). In April 1838, two parties of George Faithfull's men, comprising both emancipists and convicts driving sheep and cattle, were attacked by a group of Aboriginal men near the Broken River. At least eight convicts were killed, and at least one Aboriginal man was shot. Faithfull's party ran east towards Wangaratta to escape their attackers and likely passed through the Winton Swamp. This attack sparked widespread fear about the safety overland route to Melbourne amongst the European population of Port Phillip, and later came to be known as 'Faithfull's Massacre'.

Historian Judith Basset has argued that the attack was likely a payback for the killing of an Aboriginal man by a member of Faithfull's party earlier in their journey (Basset 1989). She also argues that historical sources suggest that the Broken River was a ceremonial meeting place for the Aboriginal people of the region, and Faithfull's party likely interrupted a male initiation ceremony and desecrated the meeting place. In any case, the attack on Faithfull's party shows the extent to which early European overlanders encountered and came into conflict with the Aboriginal people of the Winton region even before the establishment of formal farming properties.

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### 3.2.1 Early European settlement and Winton Township

From the 1840s, the Winton area began to be settled by Europeans who sought to use the Winton Swamp as a source of water to irrigate their properties. An 1848 survey map of the area between Benalla and Wangaratta shows that several tracks ran through or adjacent to the study area (Figure 6). The study area is shown to intersect with ‘Out Station Road’, a road running north-east adjacent to the modern-day Winton Wetlands. It also shows two pastoral huts south-west of the study area.

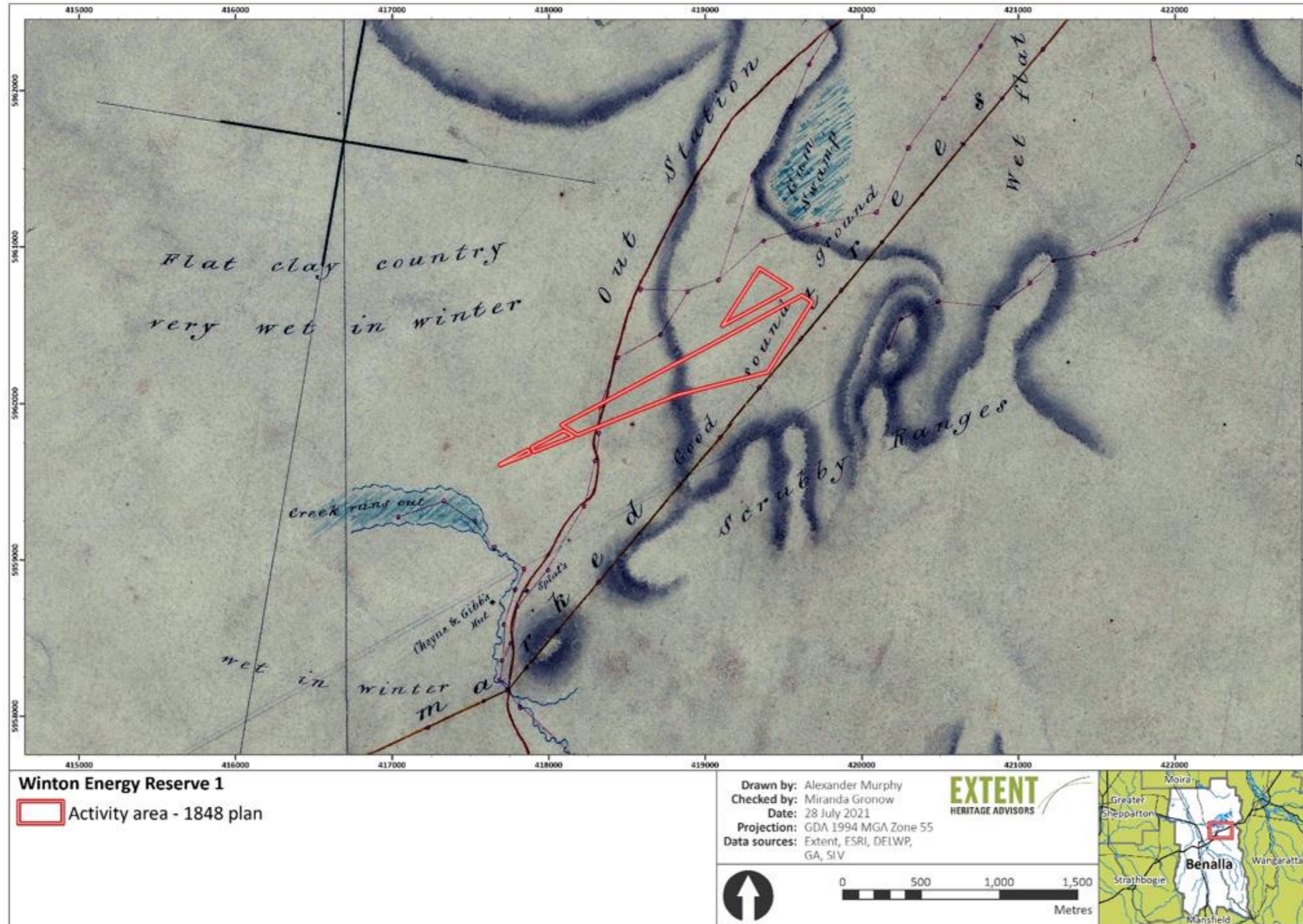
South-east of the study area, two huts straddle this road, ‘Cheyne and Gibbs’ hut, and ‘Splat’s’ hut. Neither of these huts intersect with the study area.

The township of Winton was first surveyed in 1858, at which time it was attached to a number of agricultural ‘selections’ northeast of the township (Figure 7). As part of surveying practice in the mid-1800s trees would be modified to provide a reference marker or survey point during the road’s original development. During a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) site survey of the area, one of these potential markers was identified just outside of the study area. In order to determine the historical archaeological potential of the feature, a site investigation was undertaken and described in detail below in Section 4.

Located between the larger settlements of Benalla and Wangaratta, the township of Winton remained small but the pastoral properties around it expanded over the course of the nineteenth century (see Figure 8). From the 1870s, the region in and around Winton, Benalla, and Glenrowan became known for the activities of bushrangers (see for example, *The North Eastern Ensign*, Tuesday 7 May 1872), the most famous of whom was Ned Kelly, who made his ‘last stand’ at the nearby town of Glenrowan in 1880.

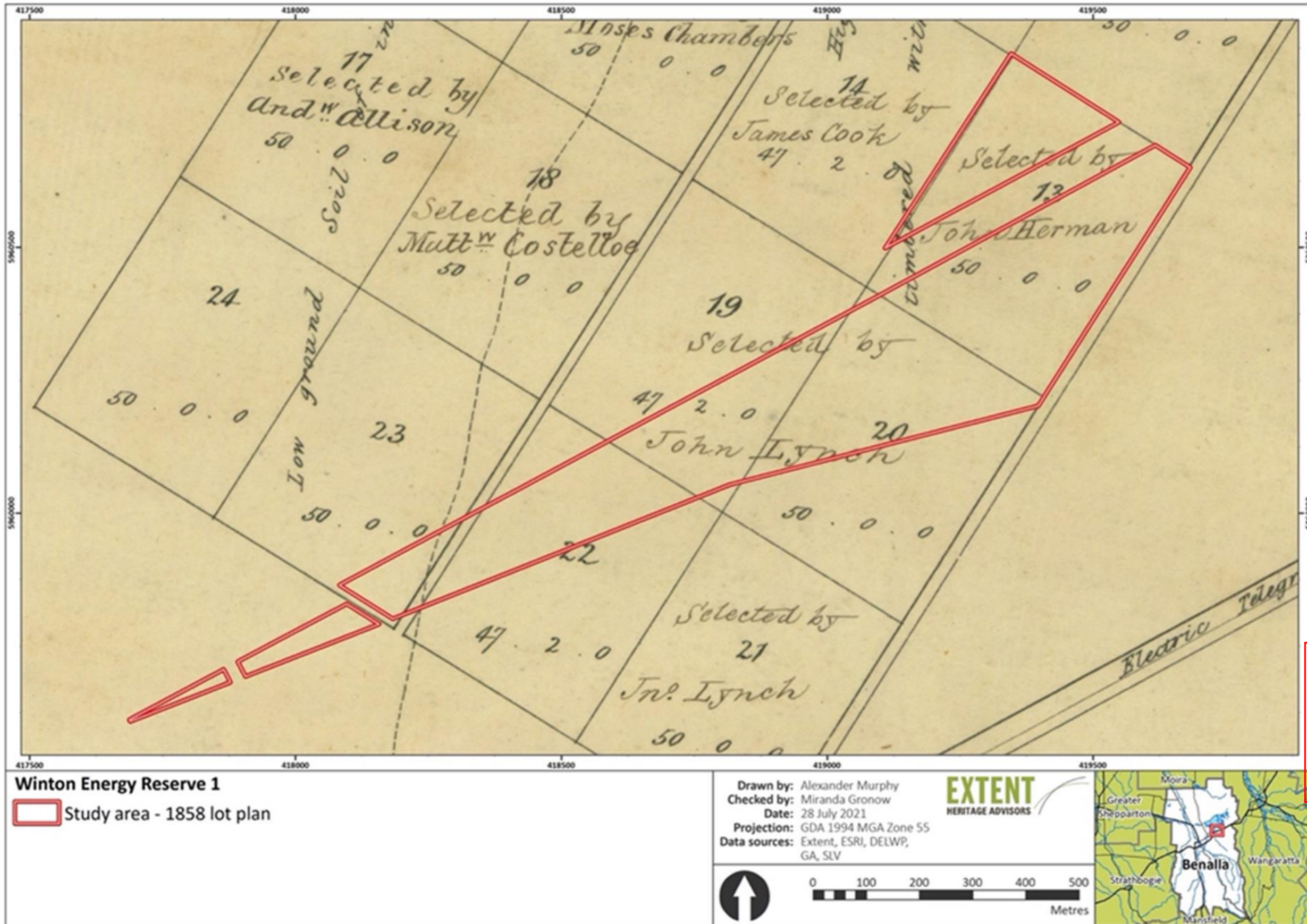
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Figure 6. 1848 map with the location of study area outlined in red. Source: PROV 08168/P0002.



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Figure 7. J. G. Wilmot 1858 surveyor's map of 'Agricultural Lots near the 7 Mile Creek: Parish of Winton'. Source: SLV ID 2312274

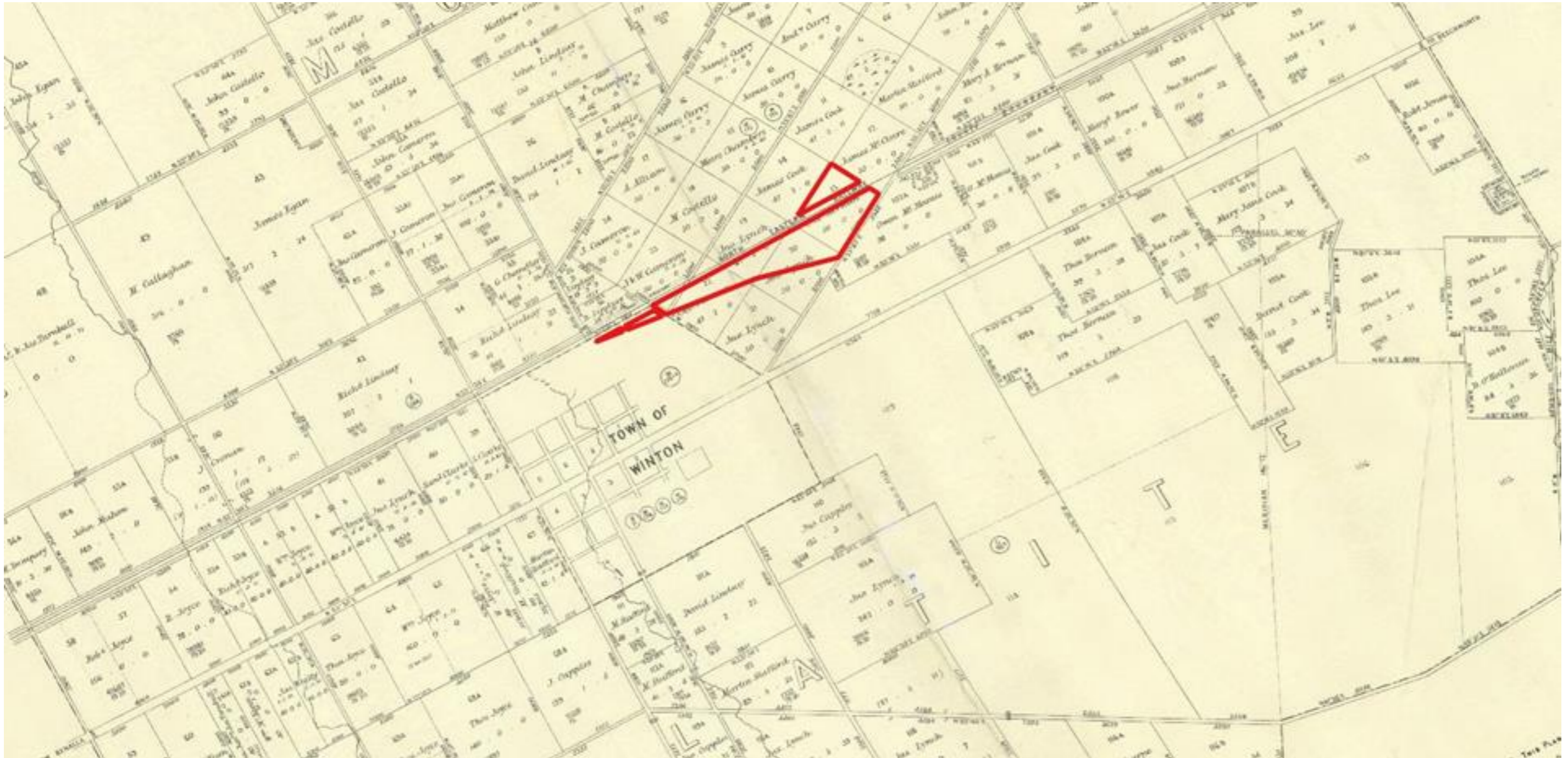


Figure 8. Detail of 1881 Winton Parish Map, showing the expansion of settlement in the vicinity of Winton township, the path of the railway, and the location of the study area. Source: SLV ID 2312271.

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### 3.2.2 The coming of the railway: the north-eastern line

Construction of a Melbourne – Albury railway line began in the 1860s. The line was gradually added to, and reached Benalla in August 1873 (*Leader*, Saturday 23 August 1873, 15). By October 1873, the line had been extended to Wangaratta, and passed through Winton without stopping (see Figure 9; *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, Friday 31 October 1873, 3). The extension of the railway brought with it increased mobility for the inhabitants of Benalla and Wangaratta, easier access to goods and visitors, and was generally thought to add to the prosperity of the region (*Leader*, 23 August 1873, 15). It was a source of some consternation, then, that whilst the new railway line passed through Winton, it did not stop there, and no platform was built in Winton.

A ‘Winton Railway League’ was founded and lobbied for the construction of a railway platform in Winton (*The North Eastern Ensign*, Tuesday 20 November 1883, 2; Tuesday 4 December 1883, 2). A platform was eventually opened just north of the township in 1887 but was closed to passenger traffic in 1959 (Turton 1973).

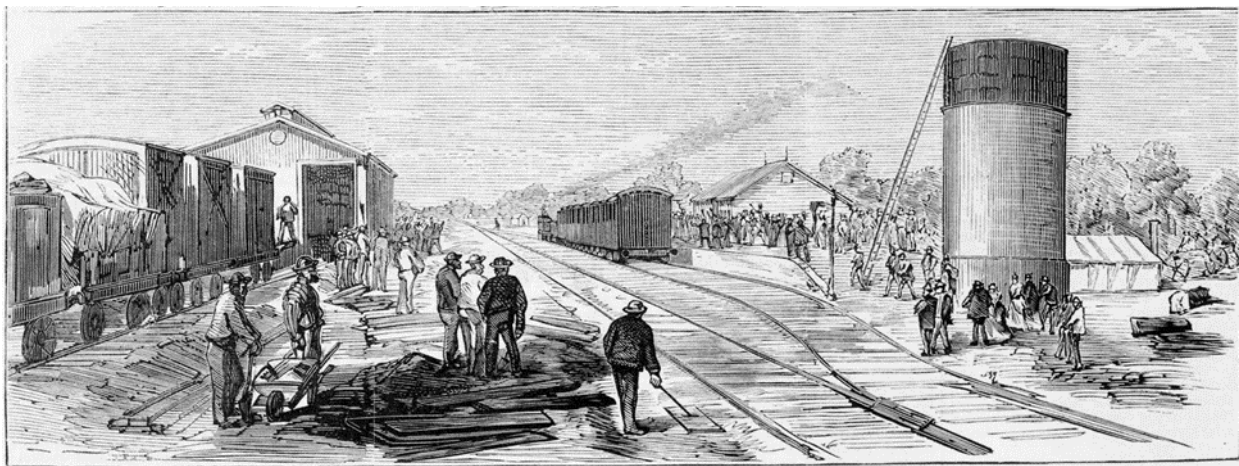
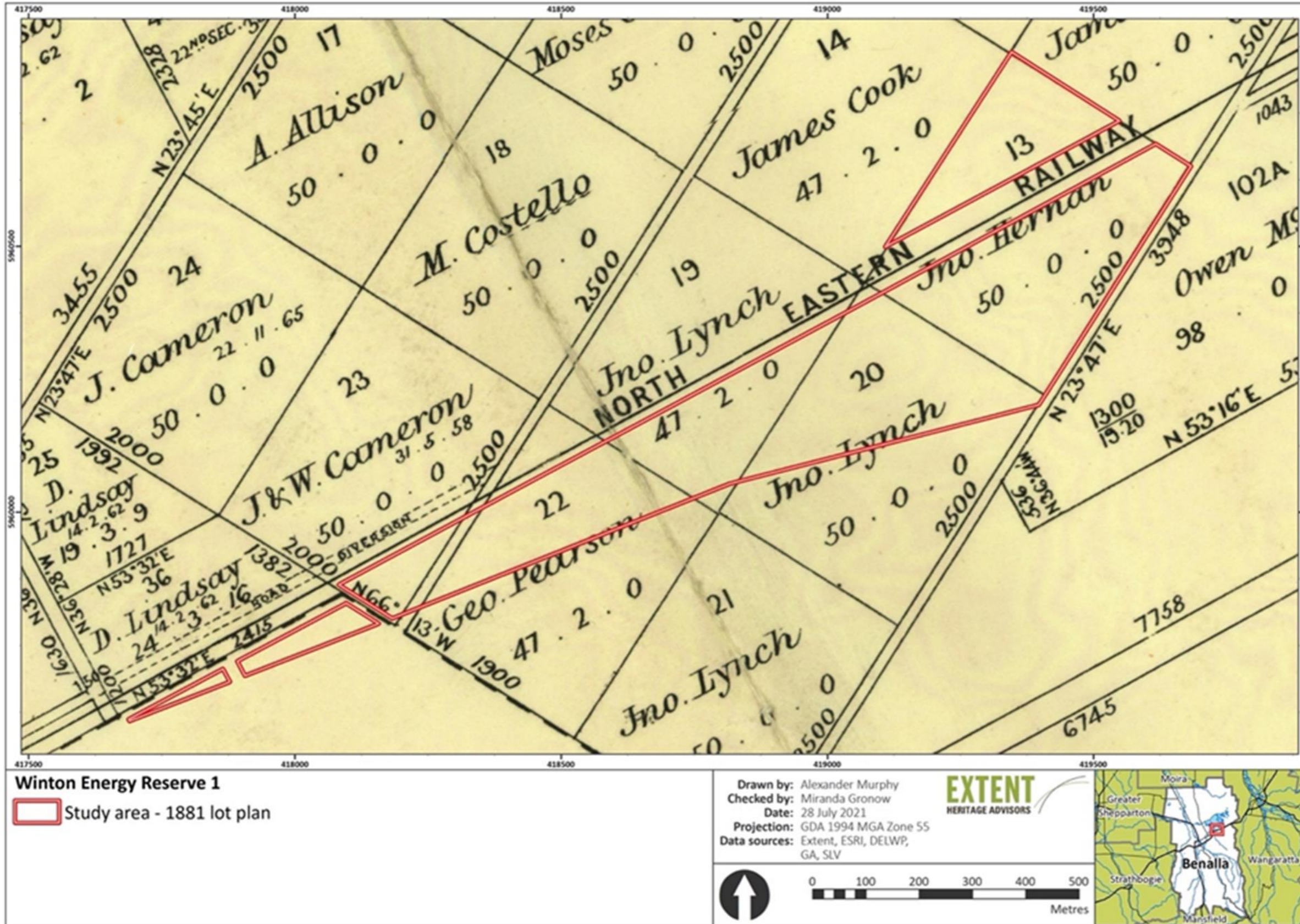


Figure 9. ‘Station at Benalla - Train passing on to Wangaratta’, November 1873. Source: SLV ID 1693510.

The North Eastern Railway forms the northern boundary of the study area (Figure 10). The railway bisected a number of existing pastoral plots within the study area including those which originally belonged to John Hernan and John Lynch. It is likely that the construction of the railway caused some degree of ground disturbance within the study area, and possibly necessitated the demolition of standing structures within the footprint of the new line. Consequently, there may be archaeological evidence of these buildings within this location such as building foundations or buried artefact deposits.

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Figure 10. 1881 Winton Parish Map, showing the location of the study area. Source: SLV ID 2312271.

### 3.2.3 Twentieth century - present

Available historical photography from the 1940s onwards show the evolution of the landscape and use of the study area during the twentieth century (Figure 11 to Figure 15). Key changes include the construction of several structures by 1941, the subsequent construction of a homestead and several outbuildings, and the subsequent excavation of three more dams in the western part of the study area by 1971. Another dam was constructed in the paddock to the north of the railway line by 1988. No other evidence of major ground disturbance is available from aerial photographs or from the site inspection.

In the broader region, the twentieth century brought several dramatic changes to the physical environment of Winton and its surrounds. The most dramatic change to the area surrounding Winton was the construction of 'Lake Mokoan' in 1971. In the late 1960s, the Winton Swamp was identified as a desirable site for a reservoir. The site was excavated and filled with water, flooding a number of historic structures located throughout the wetlands. Sixteen farming families had their land compulsorily acquired, and 52 families had to give up more than 5000 hectares of land in advance of the flooding of the lake (Winton Wetlands, n.d.). The natural cost of 'Lake Mokoan' was also significant and is estimated to have killed c. 200,000 river red gums (Winton Wetlands, n.d.). The construction of Lake Mokoan, as can be seen in Figure 11, caused significant ground disturbance, but this disturbance does not appear to have impacted the study area.



Figure 11. The construction of Lake Mokoan, 1967-1971, showing significant ground disturbance Source: Winton Wetlands, <https://wintonwetlands.org.au/learn/european-history/>.

The reservoir, however, was not a success – it failed to fill naturally and became completely dry in 2009. The lake was shallow across its large surface area, and prone to blue-green algae outbreaks. Lake Mokoan was decommissioned in 2009 and has since been revegetated and

renewed as the 'Winton Wetlands', a project that aims to return the area to its former ecological state.

The second major change to the physical environment of Winton was the construction of the Hume Freeway to the north of the existing 'Sydney Road' in the late 1980s. The Benalla and Glenrowan Bypasses were completed between 1987 and 1988 and ensured that motorists would no longer pass through the centre of the township of Winton on their journeys between Sydney and Melbourne (*The Canberra Times*, Saturday 9 July 1989, 20). The section of the Hume Freeway that bypasses Winton forms the southern boundary of the study area, and the construction of the freeway likely caused ground disturbance in its immediate vicinity.

### 3.3 Landholders within the study area

Little information is available about the original holders of the 'selections' within the study area, John Lynch, John Hernan, and later, George Pearson (Figure 7 and Figure 10). It should be noted that parish maps only ever show the original landholder for any given lot and does not show individual tenant leases. As such, even if a particular family held land within the study area, it does not necessarily provide any indication that they lived there or built any specific structures on the land.

John Lynch and his descendants seem to have stayed in the Winton area until at least the middle of the twentieth century. There is a grave marker to John (d. 1893) and Elizabeth Lynch (d. 1892) at the Winton Cemetery erected by James and William Lynch, presumably their children (Benalla District Cemeteries 2021a). John and Elizabeth are one of twelve Lynches buried at the Winton Cemetery. A probate notice for the estate of William Lynch, "late of Winton, farmer" appeared in the *Benalla Standard* in 1919. This notice states that the application for probate has been made by Helen Douglas Lynch and John Lynch (*Benalla Standard*, 7 February 1919, 3). This generation of Lynches are referred to in several newspaper articles in the early twentieth century. A Mr John Lynch gave evidence about the Winton Hotel at the Licensing court in 1922 (*The North Eastern Ensign*, Friday 28 July 1922, 2). The account of a hospital concert committee meeting in 1923 notes the presence of a Ms Lynch and a Mr Herman [sic] (*Benalla Standard*, 13 April 1923, 5). A notice of sympathy appeared in the *Benalla Ensign* in 1940, noting "deep sympathy ... for Mr and Mrs Jack Lynch, of Winton", who the newspaper notes have lost their baby daughter (*Benalla Ensign*, 5 July 1940, 3); it seems possible that Mr Jack Lynch is the son of either Helen or John Lynch. Jack and Mrs Lynch are also mentioned in a newspaper article recording the birth of a six-legged lamb on their property (*Benalla Ensign*, 3 July 1942). These records, together with grave markers, show that there were at least four generations of Lynches resident in Winton until at least the 1960s.

The history of the Hernan family, the likely owners of the structures visible in the 1941 aerial photography of the study area (Figure 12), is more confused. It seems that the family name 'Herman', listed on the original 1858 Parish Map, is a typographical error: there is a 'John Hernan' listed on the 1881 Parish Map of Winton in place of 'Herman' (Figure 10), and John Hernan and other members of the Hernan Family are listed as holding land elsewhere in Winton (Figure 8). There is also a 'Hernan Road' south-west of the study area. However, it should be noted that the spelling 'Herman' is also used in a 1920s newspaper article and so it is possible that the spelling was frequently confused (*Benalla Standard*, 13 April 1923, 5). Twenty-eight



members of the Hernan family are buried in the Winton Cemetery: the earliest burial is that of John Hernan, who was born in 1826 and died aged 74 in 1900 (Benalla District Cemeteries 2021b).

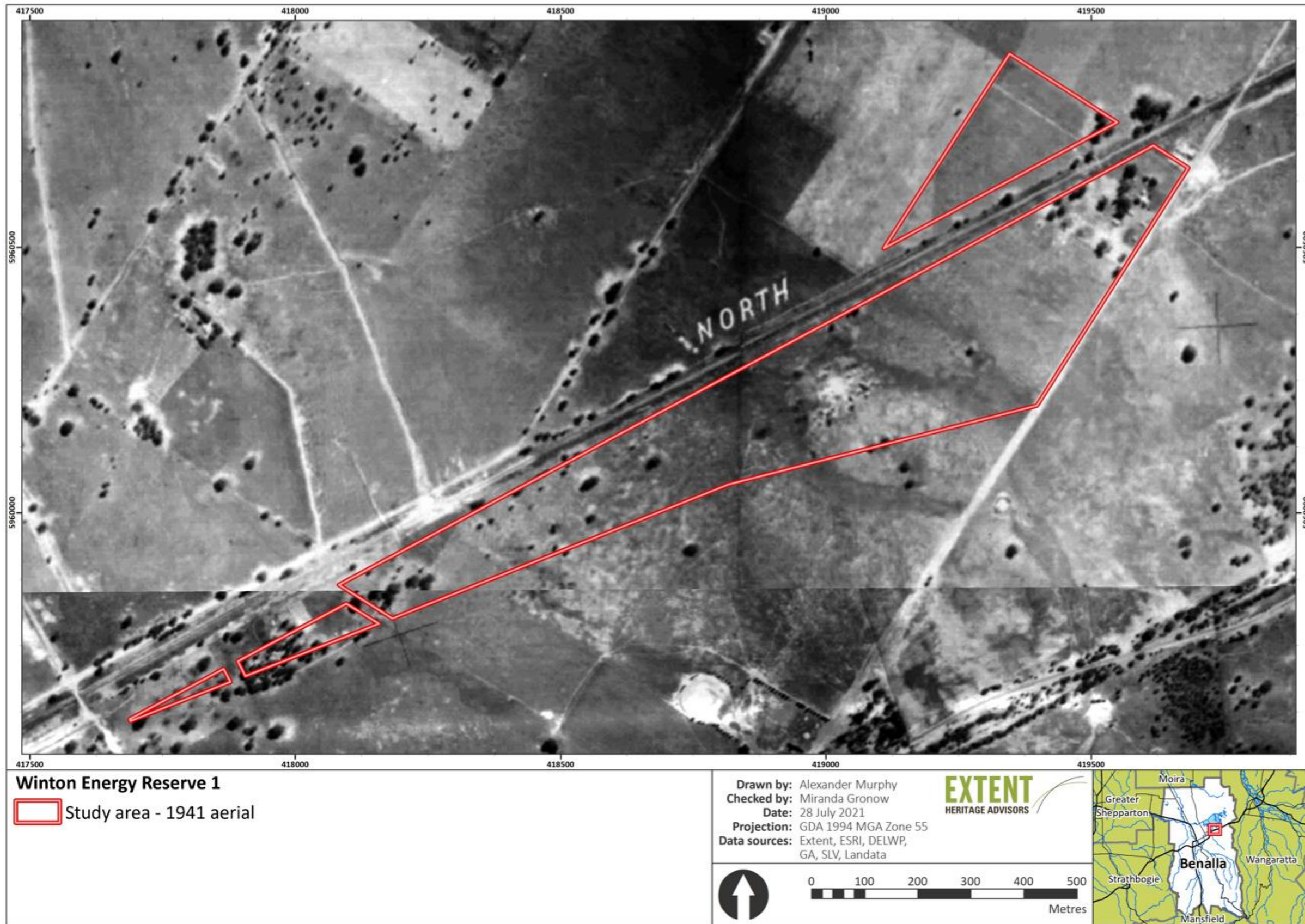
The latest Hernan was buried in the Winton cemetery in 1991, and presumably there are still Hernans in the Winton area. It is difficult to tell which branch of the Hernan family (if any) occupied the land when the structures visible in the 1941 aerial were built; it is possible that it was occupied, for example, by James Hernan, who died in 1947, or one of his sons, Edward, Maurice, and Joe (*Benalla Ensign*, 3 October 1947).

The final landowner present within the study area is George Pearson. The Pearson family does not appear on grave markers in the Winton cemetery. The only available textual reference to a Pearson in the Winton area is a reference to a Pearson who owned a horse running in the “Flying Handicap” at the Winton Races in 1911 (*Benalla Standard*, Tuesday 28 February 1911).

There are, in short, records of both the Lynch and Hernan families staying in the Winton area until at least the middle of the twentieth century. It is possible that these families retained their land in the study area for some time, and that the structures visible in the 1941 aerial photography of the study area are associated with the Hernan family, who were the original owners of that lot. On available desktop evidence, however, it is difficult to tell when these families sold their land, and available parish plans only show the *original* landholder at the time that the lots were surveyed, however its most likely that these buildings were constructed by a member of the Hernan family.

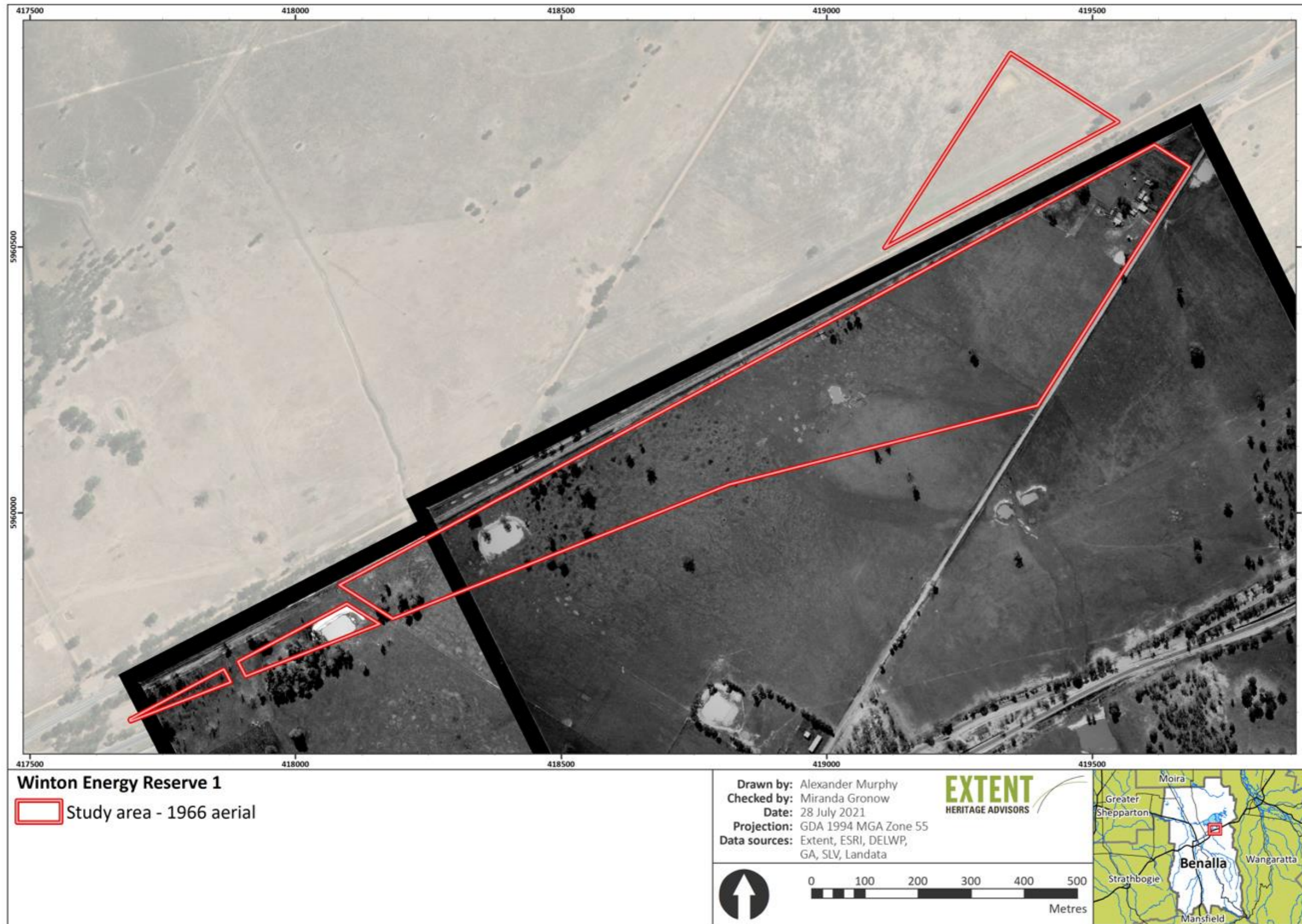
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Figure 12. 1941 aerial photograph, showing the study area. Source: AdastrA Airways.



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Figure 13. 1971 aerial photograph, showing the study area. Source: LANDATA Central Plan Office.



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Figure 14. 1988 aerial photograph, showing the study area. Source: LANDATA Central Plan Office.



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Figure 15. 1991 aerial photograph, showing the study area. Source: LANDATA Central Plan Office.

### 3.4 Summary of Site History

Table 1 sets out a chronological summary of the development of the study area, from which a picture of its archaeological potential can be developed.

Due to the limited record of owners and tenants of land within regional areas of Victoria, the majority of information gathered about the property within the study area was based on the Winton Parish maps. Although the current information does not provide conclusive evidence of ownership and development of the land— none of the recorded tenants were historically notable figures.

Table 1. Chronological summary of the development of the study area.

Period	Development and Occupation
Pre-1824	Pre-contact Aboriginal land use
1824-1825	Hume and Hovell pass through area on their overland journey
1837 onwards	Study area forms part of the overland route from Sydney to the Port Phillip District
1840s-58	Use of the area by European pastoralists and squatters; survey and mapping of the Benalla and Winton landscape
1858	Subdivision of allotments
1873	Construction of the North Eastern Railway Line between Benalla and Wangaratta
1887-1941	Early phase construction of homestead.
1941-present	Extant homestead and farmland

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## 4. Previous Archaeological studies of relevance

No previous archaeological excavations have been undertaken within the study area.

However, the findings of regional archaeological assessments can assist with understanding and interpreting the archaeological resource, as part of a broader landscape.

One previous archaeological assessment was identified and is discussed below.

### 4.1 Lake Mokoan land use strategy existing conditions report (Heritage Insight, 2005)

An assessment of the Aboriginal and historical archaeological potential of Lake Mokoan was undertaken for the Lake Mokoan Land Use Strategy commissioned by the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

The report identified no non-Aboriginal historical sites registered within the boundaries of the Lake Mokoan study area. However, Mr. Neville Atkinson (the Natural Resources Manager Indigenous Facilitator for the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority) indicated that during a site inspection of the main spit between Winton and Green Swamp, remains of a historical structure (timber stumps), blaze trees and associated with pottery fragments (historical artefact scatter) were identified around the perimeter of the lake (Bell, 2005). These remains are associated with the former buildings which were removed, partially removed, or submerged prior to and during construction of the lake and suggests that there is further potential for archaeology in the vicinity of Lake Mokoan.

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## 5. Site Inspection

A site inspection was undertaken on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 by Christopher Clark (Senior Heritage Advisor, Extent Heritage). The inspection targeted parts of the study area which had increased potential based on the land use history presented in the development history (areas shown in Figure 17). Any associated archaeological evidence of former use of the study area would provide insight into the social and economic development of rural Victoria from the 1850s onwards and would need to be included on the Victorian Heritage Inventory prior to commencement of the proposed activity.

These areas targeted by the site inspection were the:

1. North-eastern corner of the activity area where historical aerial images depict a structure in the 1940s; and
2. Potential survey tree<sup>1</sup> identified during the Due Diligence assessment.

### 5.1 Obstacles

When attempting to revisit the location of the potential survey tree, a large snake was seen in a marshy corridor adjacent to the train tracks (Figure 16). The safety risk of posed by limited ground visibility and the known presence of a snake was too high, restricting access for re-examination of the survey tree.



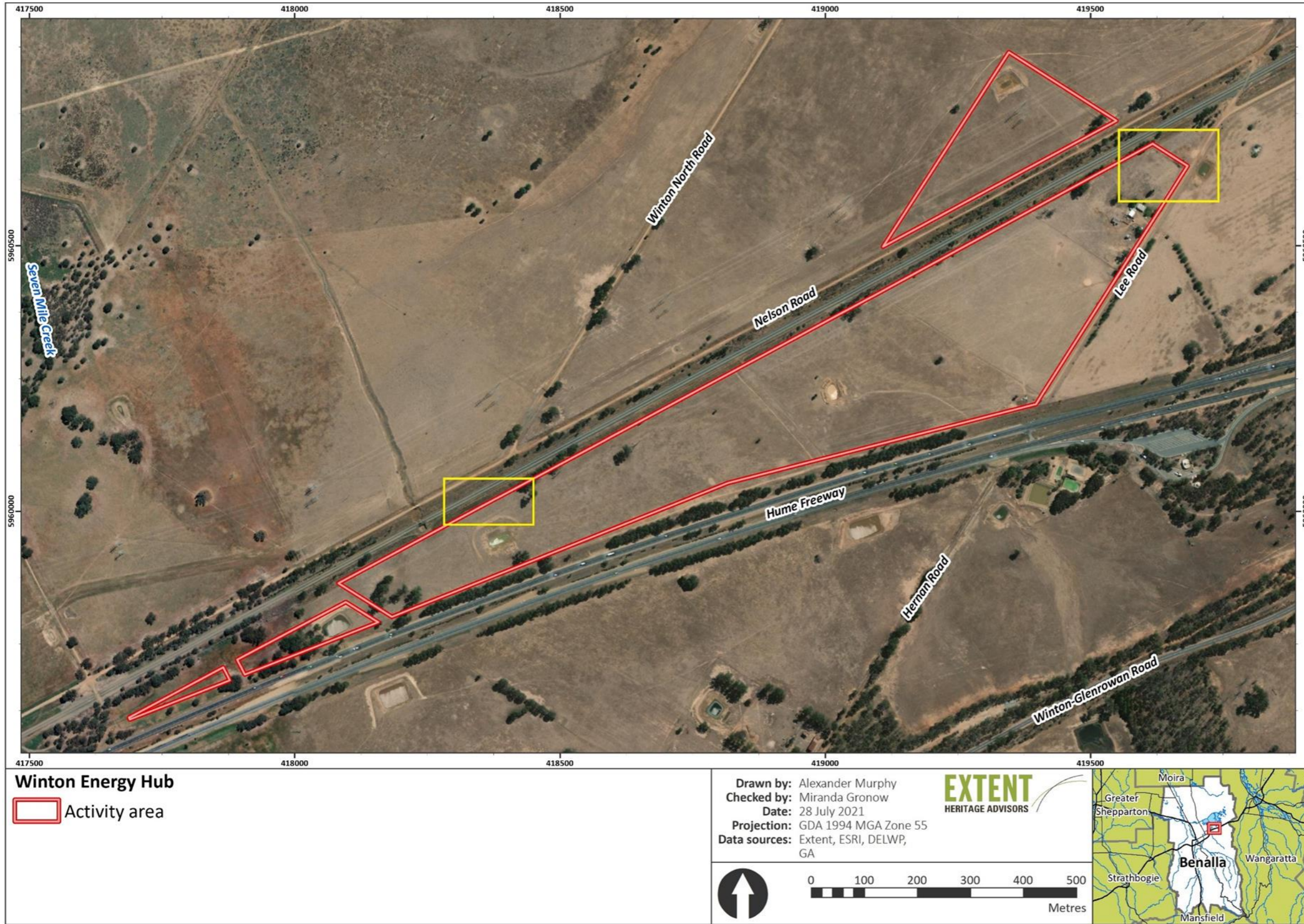
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Figure 16. Marshy corridor adjacent to railway. This area was unable to be accessed to the presence of a snake.

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<sup>1</sup> More information regarding survey trees and their heritage significance included in part 4.3 below.





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Figure 17. Study area with targeted survey locations shown in yellow.

## 5.2 North-eastern corner of study area

In the 1941 aerial image (see Figure 12) a structure is present on the north-eastern limit of the study area, which was likely been built by the Hernans. The structure is not visible in subsequent images and therefore must have been demolished at some point between 1941 and 1966. No aerial images are available before this 1941 date, suggesting that this structure could be older, and potentially dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The site inspection targeted the location of the structure as seen on the 1941 image (north-eastern edge of the study area). No evidence of any structures were present and no significant historical archaeological remains were identified in this part of the study area (Figure 18 to Figure 22).

However, this part of the study area had very low ground surface visibility due to long grasses. While this would not have obscured large, above ground features (such as standing walls, chimney stacks or other structural remains), it may have obscured artefact scatters or evidence of occupation at the ground level (such as foundations).



Figure 18. Example of the very low ground surface visibility encountered in this part of the study area.

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Figure 19. View of the north-eastern part of the study area. Photograph facing north.



Figure 20. View of the contemporary homestead from the north-eastern part of the study area. Photograph facing west.



Figure 21. View of the north-eastern part of the study area facing south.



Figure 22. View of the north-eastern part of the study area facing east

### 5.3 Survey blaze tree

While the potential Survey Blaze tree was unable to be reinspected due to OH&S risks, a re-examination of the recording of the tree undertaken during the original survey is included here.

The survey tree is located within the adjacent rail corridor, just outside of the northern boundary of the study area. The tree itself is in fair condition, however it appears to be dead and rotting from the inside (Figure 23, Figure 24 and Figure 25). While stable for now, environmental exposure may reduce the tree's condition rapidly over the coming years.

Although the tree lies just outside the study area alignment, any potential historical archaeology determined to be 75 years and older is legally protected under the *Heritage Act 2017*. In the event that any additional works are undertaken in and around the study area, which might impact the site, all relevant consents and/or permits will be required in order to reduce the impact or mitigate any damage that might occur.

It is suspected that the modification to this tree occurred in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when early Europeans were settling this part of Victoria. When marking a boundary for a registered plan, a surveyor usually places reference marks. Historically, these reference marks often were in the form of chiselled or removed sections from trees with the surveyor's initials, identifiers or directional points carved into the carved mark (Doherty Smith and Associates 2014). These marked trees were used to mark of new trails, tracks, and property boundaries in early surveys (Doherty Smith and Associates 2014; Andrew Long and Associates 2003), see Figure 26.

When overlaying the location of the potential Survey Blaze tree identified during the inspection with mid-19<sup>th</sup> century plans of the region, its position is close to 'Out Station Road', which once intersected the study area (see Figure 27) demonstrate this association and provide further credence that the tree was modified by Europeans, likely as a reference mark or survey point during the roads original development. Moreover, it is situated on the edge of a property and may have marked the boundary between these lots.

While no inscription is recorded on the tree (such as surveyor's initials, identifiers etc), this internal, exposed section no longer exists and any associated inscription may have been removed as the tree weathered, died and eventually rotted.

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Figure 23. Survey marker tree.

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Figure 24. Potential historical survey mark.



Figure 25. Survey mark.

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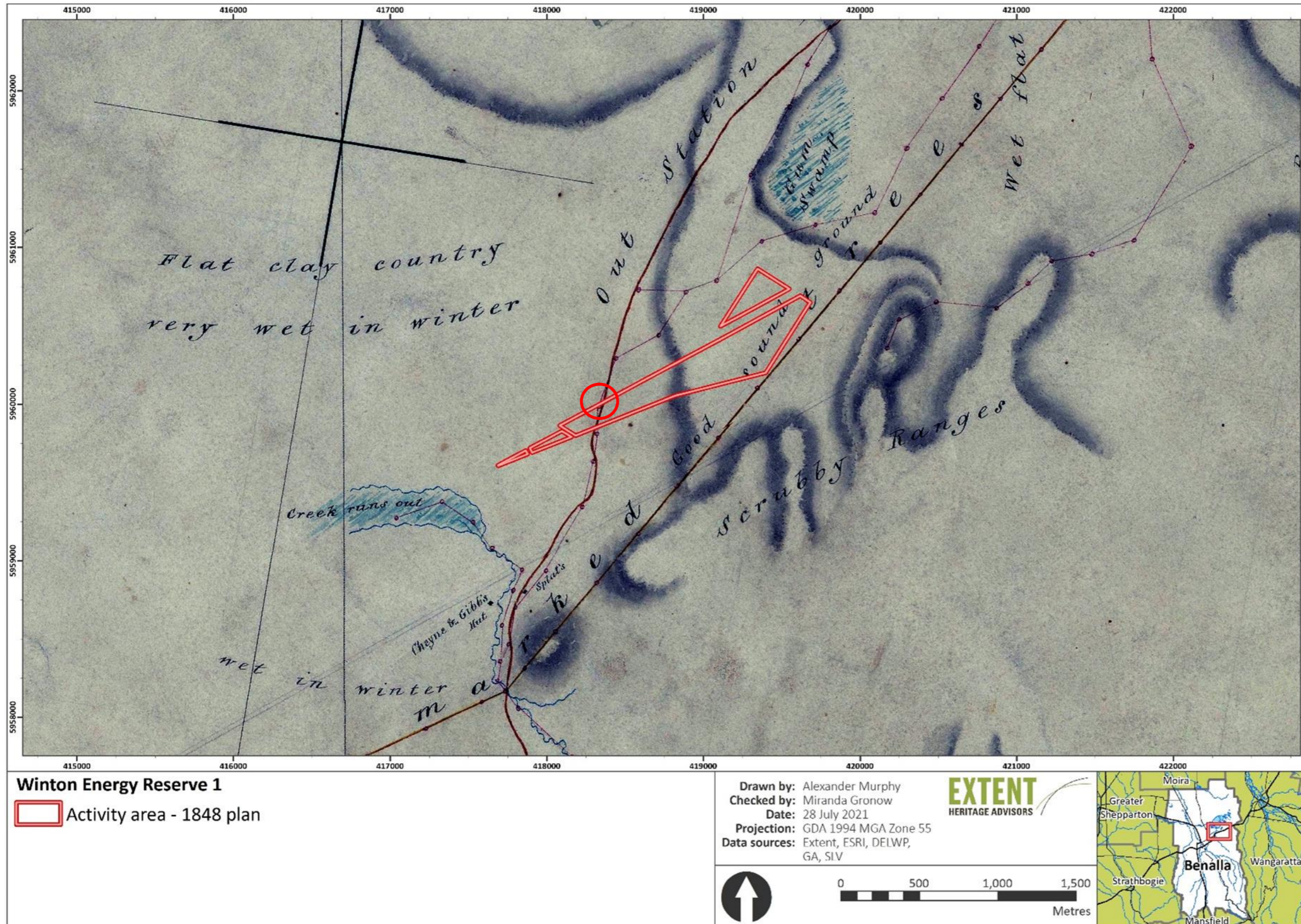




Figure 26. Example of a high-quality surveyor's reference mark in good condition. Source: Doherty Smith, 2014.

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Figure 27. 1848 plan of the study area showing the intersecting 'Out Station Road', and the location of the identified survey blaze tree circled in red. Its location on the road supports the interpretation that it was modified by Europeans as a survey marker. Source: PROV 08168/P0002.

## 5.4 Site inspection conclusions

The inspection of the study area did not identify any significant historical archaeological remains. However, low ground surface visibility limited the effectiveness of the survey. Grass cover may have obscured any intact ground level historical archaeology, such as artefact scatters or low-lying building foundations.

While unable to be reinspected, further analysis of the recorded Survey Blaze tree has reiterated its potential historical modification and that it was used as a reference point to mark property boundaries and the 'Out Station Road' alignment, which once intersected the study area. However, as the tree is associated with early European settlement of the region, it does retain some historical significance to the local community as a tangible link to the early development of the region.

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## 6. Historical Archaeological Potential

This section builds on the development history outlined above, through the findings of previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity and a detailed assessment of the phases in the study area, to determine its historical potential.

### 6.1 Phases of Historical Development

The study area's development history (see part 3) indicate there are four main phases of occupation and use:

- **Phase 0:** Pre-contact Aboriginal land use (pre-1848)
- **Phase 1:** Early survey plan and ephemeral land use (1840s-1858)
- **Phase 2:** Sub-division of farm plots, development of trackway intersecting the study area and introduction of the North Eastern rail line (1858-1887).
- **Phase 3:** Presence of potential early phase homestead (1887-1941).
- **Phase 4:** Relocation and expansion of farmstead and associated farm structures (1941-Present)

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Identified phases of development with the potential to result in the creation of, or impact to, historical archaeological resources are discussed below.

Phase 0 is excluded, as this report does not consider past Aboriginal use and cultural heritage.

#### *Phase 1: Early survey plan and ephemeral use (1840s-1858)*

No development has been identified within the study area during this stage. Historical plans suggest that the study area was likely subject to land clearing and establishing agricultural land.

Archaeological evidence is likely to be limited to the ephemeral remains of transitional or temporary use, including tree boles and wash deposits from land clearing, introduction of fill deposits to level the study area, and isolated artefacts lost or discarded by people moving through the study area. However, there is no evidence for this in available records.

#### *Phase 2: Sub-division of farm plots, development of trackway intersecting the study area and introduction of the North Eastern rail line (1860-1887)*

During this phase, the study area was subject to the subdivision of agricultural selections identified on Winton Parish Maps. It is during this time that the survey blaze tree identified at the north-western extent of the study area (see part 4.3) was potentially created.

The Melbourne— Albury, North Eastern rail line began in the 1860s, which was constructed and passed through Winton by 1873. The rail line bisected both John Hernan and John Lynch properties to the north between the two parts of the study area.

### *Phase 3: Construction of potential homestead and associated outbuildings (1887-1941)*

It is unknown the exact timeframe for the development and landscaping of the study area; however, the 1941 map of the study area (see Figure 12) identified key changes, which included the construction of several structures (farm homestead and several outbuildings). Several dams were also constructed throughout the property. Any archaeological remains that may be associated with this occupation phase would include evidence of the structures, such as stone footings, post holes and slot trenches, as well as unrecorded domestic or agricultural outbuildings and features, such as privies, sheds, wells, cisterns, and workshops.

### *Phase 4: Existing farmstead and associated outbuildings (1941–Present).*

Relocated and expanded property to the west of original homestead comprised of a renovated 3-bedroom weatherboard house, rainwater tanks and newly sunk bore. Five main paddocks (3 holding/weaning) with 4 dams and cattle yards that form part of the property.

It is likely any disturbance due to renovation or remodelling would have resulted in localised impacts to potential historical archaeological remains from Phase 3. Excavation during the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for building footings, walls and services are likely to have removed and truncated earlier archaeological evidence.

## 6.2 Statement of Archaeological potential

The study area is considered to have a low potential to contain significant historical archaeological remains.

However, there is the potential for other 'blaze trees' to be located across the property, which could provide further knowledge and understanding of early surveying methods and techniques employed. These trees do not have archaeological value, however, would be of local historical significance to the community.

Although the inspection provided no further evidence of intact significant archaeological features or deposits, there remains a low potential for diffuse or isolate artefactual deposits associated with the homestead occupation dated to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These remains may have been obscured by the limited ground surface visibility encountered during the site inspection and may include features such as cut and filled rubbish pits in yard spaces, and fill deposits in wells, cesspits, cisterns and drains, as well as accumulated in yard surfaces. However, it is unlikely that these remains would yield any significant information about occupation of the area unavailable from other sources, and therefore their significance is considered to be low.

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Table 2. Overview of the study area’s anticipated archaeological resources pertaining to each occupation phase, and the likelihood of its survival.

Occupation Phase	Site Features or Activities	Potential Remains	Likelihood of Survival
1  1840s-1858	Loss or discard of materials during ephemeral use, such as survey	Isolated artefacts	Low
	Land clearing	Tree boles Wash deposits	Low
	Unrecorded occupation or use	Unrecorded occupation or use	Low
	Surveying practices	Blaze trees	Moderate (within old alignment of ‘Out Station Road’)
2  1860-1887	Subdivision of agricultural land  North Eastern rail construction	Sleepers, dog spikes and associated construction materials	Low
3  1887 - 1941	Residential property and outbuildings	House (stone or brick footings, postholes, slot trenches for walls, floor joists, floor surfaces, chimney, underfloor deposits).  Domestic outbuildings (kitchen, cesspit, well, cistern, etc).  Agricultural buildings (workshop, cattle sheds, stores etc.)	Low
4  1941-Present	Residential property and outbuildings	House (stone or brick footings, postholes, slot trenches for walls, floor joists, floor surfaces, chimney, underfloor deposits).  Domestic outbuildings (kitchen, cesspit, well, cistern, etc).  Agricultural buildings (workshop, cattle sheds, stores etc.)	High / Extant (currently present on site)

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## 7. Historical Archaeological Significance

Archaeological significance refers to the heritage significance of known or potential archaeological remains. While they remain an integral component of the overall significance of a place, it is necessary to assess the archaeological resources of a site independently from above-ground heritage elements. Assessment of archaeological significance is more challenging as the extent and nature of the archaeological features is often unknown and judgment is usually made on the basis of anticipated or potential attributes.

This desktop assessment follows principles established by the *Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* ('The Burra Charter', 2013) on understanding what is significant about a place as an essential precursor to managing any change that may impact on that cultural significance.

It is accepted best practice that the assessment of an archaeological site's significance be gradually refined through successive stages of investigation, should these be necessary – see below.

While adjacent to the study area, the survey tree discussed throughout this HAA is included in the statement of significance below as it contributes towards the heritage values of the study area.

### 7.1 Statement of Significance

The following preliminary statement of significance for the study area's potential archaeological resource is presented in accordance with the Victorian Heritage Council significance assessment guidelines.

#### *What is significant?*

If present, the archaeological remains of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century homestead and outbuildings would be significant.

The survey blaze tree is significant.

#### *How is it significant?*

Any significant remains associated with the early homestead and outbuildings would be of historical and archaeological significance at a local level.

The identified survey blaze tree is of historical significance at a local level.

#### *Why is it significant?*

##### Historically

The property at 386 Lee Road forms part of the farming and agricultural landscape associated with the settlement of regional Victoria, specifically the Winton area. If present, archaeological

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evidence would be historically significant as it would reflect typical 19<sup>th</sup> century farming of the region.

The survey blaze tree is historically significant as it directly associated with early surveying of the area. These marks were usually created by surveyors as reference points within the landscape, usually along roads or other access routes. The recorded location of the survey tree aligns with the historical 'Out Station Road' which would have been one of the main access routes for early European settlers through the area. The tree and its survey mark are tangible links to this early development and are historically significant to the local community.

### Archaeologically

If present, archaeological evidence associated with the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century homestead would be archaeologically significant as they would provide insight into the material culture of early European settlers and bolster our potentially bolster our understanding of the undocumented record, including domestic life.

## 7.2 Summary of significance

Although no historical archaeological remains have been identified within the study area, there remains a low potential for remains associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century homestead to be present within the study area. If present, these remains would be historically and archaeologically significant to the local community, as they would provide insight into typical late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century farm lifestyles.

The survey blaze tree is of local historical significance to the community, as it is a tangible connection to early European development of the area. The tree is aligned with the 'Out Station Road' depicted on early survey maps (see Figure 27) and therefore, likely was modified by an early surveyor. This means that it would be some of the earliest evidence of European occupation and use of the locality, and therefore of local historical significance.

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## 8. Impact Assessment

The proposed activity is for an Energy Reserve Facility located at 386 Lee Road, located in the Winton North region of the Benalla Rural City Council, Victoria.

The proposed activity will utilise hybrid technology with Li-Ion batteries and fast-start high-efficiency gas reciprocating engines comprising:

- 200MW / 400MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS);
- 200MW Gas-fired Power Generation (GPG);
- Short gas pipeline; and
- A single electrical substation for both battery and GPG which then feeds into the local network.
- A ~3 kilometre (km) 220-kilovolt (kV) underground transmission line from the Glenrowan Terminal Station (GTS) to the subject site.

Development plans are included as Figure 3 which illustrate the various impacts proposed by the works.

The proposed development has potential to impact any previously unidentified subsurface historical archaeological fabric that might remain in situ. As no significant historical archaeological remains were identified during this assessment, and there is a low potential for these remains to be present, there are no obligations regarding impact avoidance or mitigation.

The identified survey blaze tree is currently just outside of the study area boundary, within the adjacent rail corridor. As such, the development is unlikely to cause harm to the tree itself, however, may result in works within proximity. Therefore, recommendations are made in part 8 below which will ensure the tree is protected from harm during the course of the proposed development.

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## 9. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study area has been assessed as having low archaeological potential, and the identified survey blaze tree has been determined as having local heritage significance. As there are no registered items within the study area, and there have been no discoveries of significant historical archaeological remains, there is no requirement to obtain any consents or permits under the *Heritage Act 2017* or *Planning and Environment Act 1987* prior to works commencing.

However, the following recommendations are made to ensure the works are conducted in a way which reduced harm to the study area's identified heritage values.

### *Recommendation 1 – Survey Tree protection and Heritage Overlay listing*

No works should occur in proximity to the identified survey tree. The tree is located outside of the proposed development area, and therefore, should not be subject to any impact by the proposed works. Contractors should be made aware of the tree's presence to ensure that harm does not occur during the carrying out of works. GPS location of the tree is available from Extent if requested.

It is also recommended that the relevant local Council planning team is contacted to discuss the potential inclusion of the tree on the local heritage overlay. Ideally, this would be part of a wider listing protecting all known survey trees. This report could be used in support of such an application.

### *Recommendation 2 – Unexpected finds protocol*

No historical archaeological remains were identified during this assessment and the site is considered to have low potential to contain any significant historical archaeological remains. However, all significant historical archaeological material is protected by the *Heritage Act 2017*, and appropriate management steps must be undertaken should any remains be uncovered during the works.

If any suspicious or suspected historical material be uncovered during the works, the unexpected finds protocol included in Appendix A should be followed.

If the remains are considered significant, there may be a requirement to prepare a site card for inclusion onto the Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI) or Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). If this requirement is triggered, they may be additional work required, including archaeological excavations.

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## Appendix A. Unexpected Finds Protocol

While there is low potential for historical archaeological remains within the study area, this protocol has been included to clearly outline appropriate management steps that should be followed during works where archaeological discoveries are made in the absence of an archaeologist.

Works can proceed under the 'unexpected finds protocol' when confirmation is received from the nominated archaeologist. The protocol includes the following steps:

1. If potential archaeological remains are found, **works must cease** in the area. Works may proceed in other parts of the site.
2. **Contact Extent Heritage, (ph: 03 9388 0622), or any other suitably qualified historical archaeologists** to advise of the find. You will be asked to **take a photograph** of the unexpected find and text or email it to the archaeologist.
3. The **nominated archaeologist will advise** if the unexpected find will need to be further inspected and recorded.
4. If the unexpected find **is** of archaeological significance:
  - The archaeologist will attend site to **assess, excavate (where required) and record** the unexpected find.
  - Further consents and archaeological investigations may be required, to be determined in consultation with Heritage Victoria.
5. If the archaeologist identifies that the unexpected find **is not** of archaeological significance, works may then **proceed**.

All contractors and site workers involved in ground disturbance must be made aware of this protocol and the steps required if suspected archaeological remains are identified.

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