

# **STATEMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT**

## 200-206 BRIDGE ST, MUSWELLBROOK



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For  
**Lockbridge**

Issue C  
15 June 2023

**Report Issue Register**

Issue	Details	Date
A	Issue to client for review	9 May 2023
B	Issue to client for review	26 May 2023
C	Issue for Development Application submission	15 June 2023

**Acknowledgement of Country**

PLA respect and acknowledge past, present, and future traditional custodians and elders of the lands on which we live and work. We acknowledge and extend our respect to all Australia's Indigenous peoples.

**Cover Image:** 202 (left) and 204 (right) Bridge Street, Muswellbrook

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This Statement of Heritage Impact has been prepared by Philip Leeson Architects on behalf of Lockbridge and assess the heritage impact of the proposed redevelopment of 200-206 Bridge Street, Muswellbrook. The proposal is documented on architectural drawings prepared by Raymond Design and dated 7 June 20203 as well as the accompanying landscape plans prepared by Spacelab and dated 8 June 2023.

The site currently contains four residences, two of which are vacant. The proposed redevelopment would involve the demolition of all existing structures on the site and the construction of a new childcare centre. This would include a car park with the required number of parking spaces fronting Bridge Street and a new building to the rear (west) of the site.

## 1.2 Site Location

The subject site is located on the west side of Bridge Street, which is part of the New England Highway and currently consists of four separate residential sites. It is located south of Wilkins Street and north of St Heliers Street. The NSW Northern Railway Line is located to the west of the site with a vehicle access lane (identified as 11A Wilkins Street) located between the site and the railway reserve. Only one of the residential sites (no. 204) extends through to the access lane with two of the other allotments separated from the lane by land which is part of 198 Bridge Street.



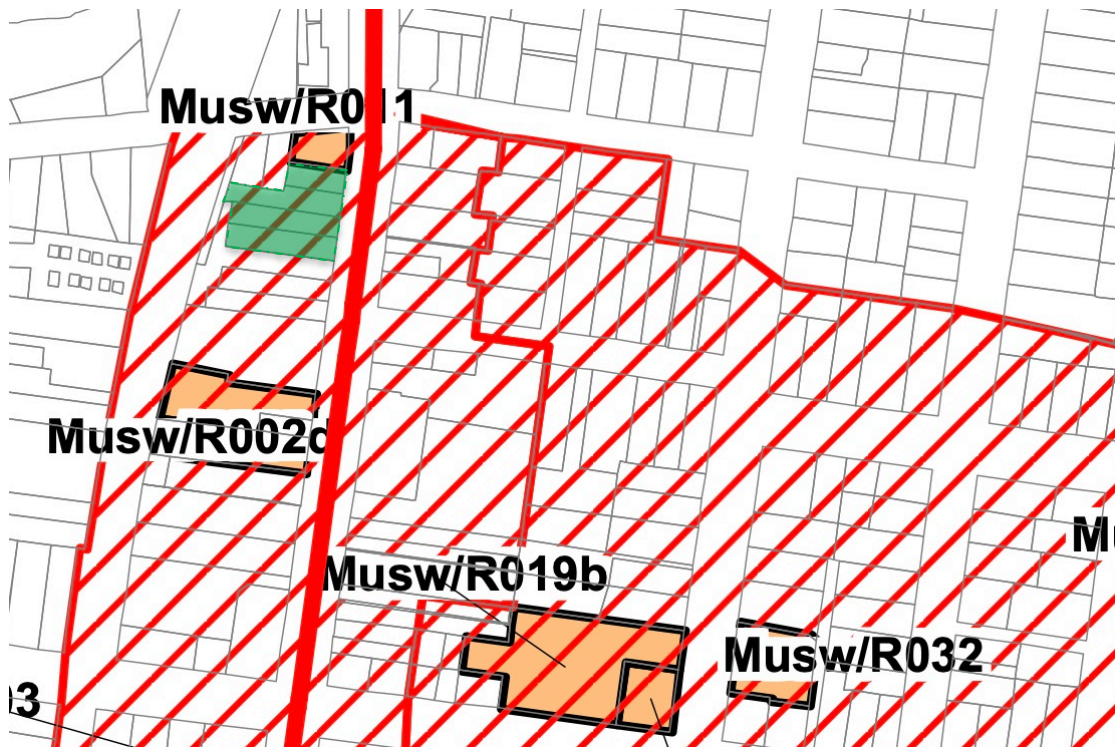
Aerial showing the subject site (200-206 Bridge Street)  
(Source: NSW Maps, Department of Finance, Services & Innovation)

## 1.3 Heritage Status

The site is located at the northern end of the Muswellbrook Business Heritage Conservation Area (also known as the Muswellbrook Central Business District Heritage Conservation Area) which is one of three heritage conservation areas listed at Schedule 5 of the Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan 2009 (LEP).



The site is also located adjacent to an individually identified heritage place known as *Kildonan* (Item no. 176) which has an address of 208 Bridge Street.



Part of Heritage Map – Sheet HER-024 showing conservation areas (red hatch) and individually listed heritage items (orange shading). The subject site is indicated (green)  
(Source: Muswellbrook LEP)

### Muswellbrook Business Heritage Conservation Area

The statement of significance for the Muswellbrook Business Heritage Conservation Area is reproduced below and is taken from the Muswellbrook Shire Development Control Plan, 2009 (DCP).

*This heritage conservation area embraces all the allotments fronting on to Bridge and Victoria Streets from Carl Street and the Railway overbridge to Wilkins Street, together with allotments further east and west to the railway which are in the vicinity of these allotments. Most of the older buildings lie in an older commercial precinct between William and Hill Streets. Precincts north of Hill Street and east of William Street contain mixtures of older and more recent buildings including some originally built for residential purposes.*

#### **Statement of Significance**

*This area is significant for the Upper Hunter region as a physical expression of 150 years of commercial activity in the region. It is highly visible from both a major regional highway and the northern railway as well as from outside the area. While the earliest built features of the streetscape have disappeared, existing buildings provide a tangible link to the commercial history of Muswellbrook, particularly to the interwar period of sustained growth. A variety of building styles is represented but, because most buildings date from the first half of this century, their form and materials tend to be in harmony. Many of the more modern buildings are modest rather than brash, and respect the earlier era character of the precinct. Street and private plantings tend to modulate the intrusive effect of other 'modern' buildings.*

#### Generalised description

*Long, narrow allotments mean that building facades on their street frontages are generally narrow and high. The older commercial buildings in the central precinct between William and Hill Streets tend to occupy the full width of their allotments and, being built on or forward to their street frontages, present a more-or-less continuous wall of facades that is broken only by lanes and alleys giving access to the rear of buildings. The older buildings to the north and east, particularly residential buildings now used or likely to be used for commercial purposes, have more discontinuous facades.*



*Most buildings are single storied but there is a very visible representation of two and three storied buildings and of single storied buildings with substantial parapets. Most buildings are modest in scale and, though some more modern buildings are bulky with large expanses of walls and window[s], the detailing of most of the 'modern' buildings reduces their intrusive impact on the streetscape. Some modern developments have compromised the visual integrity of both the northern and easterly precincts.*

*The older buildings include examples from the 1840s to the 1960s but are predominantly inter-war. Walls are generally of masonry, mostly face brick and rendered brick, with parapets which often include their original decorative brick and plaster work, gables fronting to the street in some residential buildings and detailed lower walls. Rendered surfaces are often painted in colours appropriate to the ages of their buildings. Upper floor windows are mostly vertical in alignments (many are four paned sash windows) and many shopfronts retain their original window and door openings. Some older features of shopfronts, including mullions, glazing and tiles have escaped 'modernisation'. Roofs are not visible from the street but are generally hip roofs of galvanised iron (generally unpainted and often rusting) in commercial buildings and gable roofs in residential buildings. Many rear parts (which are highly visible from the south, particularly from car parks) have been extended in a manner unsympathetic to their primary buildings and many rear parts need cosmetic maintenance.*

*Many building[s] (especially in the eastern part) have skillion (unrolled) galvanised iron awnings projecting over pavements, now cantilevered but formerly supported by posts. Most of the signage on and above these awnings is painted and in character with the buildings, though some inappropriate large illuminated signs project out above awnings and there is much unsympathetic illuminated under-awning signage. Some street signage is obscured by street plantings. Because older buildings are typically built forward to their street frontages there is little private open space in front of most buildings, but some more recent buildings have been set back to provide for inappropriate decorative areas or car parking. Rear yards are generally unlandscaped except for hard surfaces for car parking and access. Pavements, recent street plantings and street furniture (some seats and garbage bins) have not been carried out to any comprehensive plan and do little to offset the negative impacts of the highway; a comprehensive plan for these could help to the visual unification of the area.*

## **Kildonan**

The following statement of significance for Kildonan is taken from the State Heritage Inventory. The entry for Kildonan is derived from the Muswellbrook Heritage Study (1996, EJE Group).

*The Old Tea House has local historic significance for its role in charting the northward spread of Muswellbrook in the latter part of the 19th century. Kildonan has local aesthetic significance for its interesting combination of two quite different building styles and media and for the rarity of its unique Federation roof form and detailing. It also has local aesthetic significance for its contribution to the streetscape on the approach to Muswellbrook. Socially the building has at least local significance for its role in increasing the range of recreational refreshment experiences available in Muswellbrook.*

## **1.4 Limitations**

A site visit to view the interior and exterior of the four houses on the subject site was undertaken during the preparation of this report. The area between the two buildings located at 200 and 202 Bridge Street was not accessed due to the confined nature of this area and the extent of debris and vegetation. Invasive investigations, inspection at height and a review of the sub-floor spaces was also not undertaken during the preparation of this report.

This report does not assess the structural adequacy of the existing building or the cost to repair and adaptively reuse them.

## 2. Historical Summary

### 2.1 Muswellbrook

Muswellbrook (originally Musclebrook) was declared a township in 1833 with surveyor Robert Dixon setting out the town in a rectangular grid close to the junction of Muscle Creek and the Hunter River. The first blocks of land were offered for sale in August 1834. The growth of the town was accelerated by the establishment of the railway in 1869 and the principal industries in Muswellbrook during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were agriculture (wheat, cattle and wool).

The town of Muswellbrook grew steadily during the 1880s.<sup>1</sup> At this time, land to the north of the subject site remained undeveloped whilst Bridge Street, south of the subject site, was lined with a mix of housing and commercial properties. A circa 1882 photograph indicates that the east side of the street, between Hill Street and what is now St Heliers Street, was predominantly lined with residences at this time.



Bridge Street looking north from the intersection with Hill Street (circa 1882)  
(Source: Muswellbrook Shire Local & Family History Society, photo 0117)

By the 1900s, dairying had also been established in the region and coal mining commenced in earnest following the discovery of coal of the Greta Coal Measures in 1907.<sup>2</sup> Muswellbrook grew rapidly throughout the 1920s, with a population increase of 25% to 2640 by 1931. Mining in the area had become more and more important and by the 1930s, with the town changing from a rural service town to that of a predominantly mining town.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.2 Subject Site

The subject site is located outside the original town boundary with Cook Street and what is now St Heliers Street acting as the northern boundary up until 1925. It is likely the houses at 204 and 206 Bridge Street were erected on the larger holding of *Kildonan*, with the original 19<sup>th</sup> century house remaining (with additions) on the adjoining site at 208 Bridge Street (the corner of Bridge and Wilkins Street). The Federation period houses at 200 and 202 Bridge Street appear to have been erected by one of the owners of Eaton's Hotel which was a hub of activity at the north end of Bridge Street.

#### ***Kildonan***

Mr John H Wilkins is thought to have begun living at *Kildonan* by 1870, acquiring land from the large St. Heliers estate which was located to the north of the town of Muswellbrook.<sup>4</sup> Land on the opposite site of Bridge Street was not acquired from St Heliers and added to the Muswellbrook Municipality until 1925.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> HLA-Envirosciences Pty Ltd, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Heritage Study, Muswellbrook Coal Company No.1 Open Cut Extension, 2002

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Jackson Teece Chesterman Wills & Partners, Muswellbrook Environmental Study, Technical Report, 1981.

<sup>4</sup> P26

<sup>5</sup> Map of the Town of Muswellbrook, Parish of Rowan, County of Durham, 1910 base plan, NSW Land Registry Services, Historical Land Records Viewer.

The stone house at *Kildonan* was built by John Wilkins (a stonemason) and was originally two rooms. The house had been extended by the 1890s with the addition of two rooms and a central hall.<sup>6</sup> Timber outbuildings were located on the lower western side of the stone house and included a kitchen, laundry, bath house, boys room, dairy and barn.<sup>7</sup>

John Wilkins died in 1911, with his property advertised for auction in November of that year. The following excerpt from the advertisement provides some insight into the size of the Bridge Street property.

*Town property in Bridge Street subdivided as follows:*

*10 allotments with frontage to Bridge Street, running back to railway, in areas from 16 to 34 perches, with stone cottage, wooden cottage, milking sheds and bails*

*5 allotments, frontage to Wilkins Street, three of which ran back to river, from 28 perches to 1 rood 20 perches*

*1 allotment, of 1 acre 2 roods 13 perches, frontages to Wilkins Lane, running back to river.*

*The sale offers a special opportunity to secure business or residential sites in Bridge Street, which are now practically unobtainable.<sup>8</sup>*

It is thought that John Wilkins son, James moved into *Kildonan* with his seven children after the death of John's wife Frances in 1899.<sup>9</sup> The house at *Kildonan* was again extended in 1919, with a brick addition constructed to the north.<sup>10</sup> It is not clear when the garage was constructed to the south of the house nor when the picket fence (see image below) was replaced by a wrought iron balustrade. Further additions were constructed to the house in circa 1924 and consisted of a service addition to the west side which included an indoor bathroom and toilet, a small bedroom, an informal dining area, kitchen and laundry.<sup>11</sup>



*Kildonan* (circa 1920s). The roof of the house at 202 Bridge Street is evident in the photo (indicated)  
(Source: Robert James Smith, *Kildonan & The Café: Making a Place in Muswellbrook*)

In 1938, Harry Wilkins married and lived in an adjoining house which was built for him in Wilkins Street. A further three houses were built on the same large Wilkins' land holding. These were for female relatives with Nellie's the next after Harry's in Wilkins Street (presumably 11 Wilkins Street), while Becky's and Matties were on Bridge Street towards Eaton's Hotel.<sup>12</sup> The latter may have been the extant houses at 204 and 206 Bridge Street. The pair of houses at 204 and 206 Bridge Street had

<sup>6</sup> Robert James Smith, *Kildonan & The Café: Making a Place in Muswellbrook*, Northern Rivers Press, 2011, p27

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, P64

<sup>8</sup> *Muswellbrook Chronicle*, 18 November 1911, p7

<sup>9</sup> *Kildonan & The Café*, p29

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p91

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p104

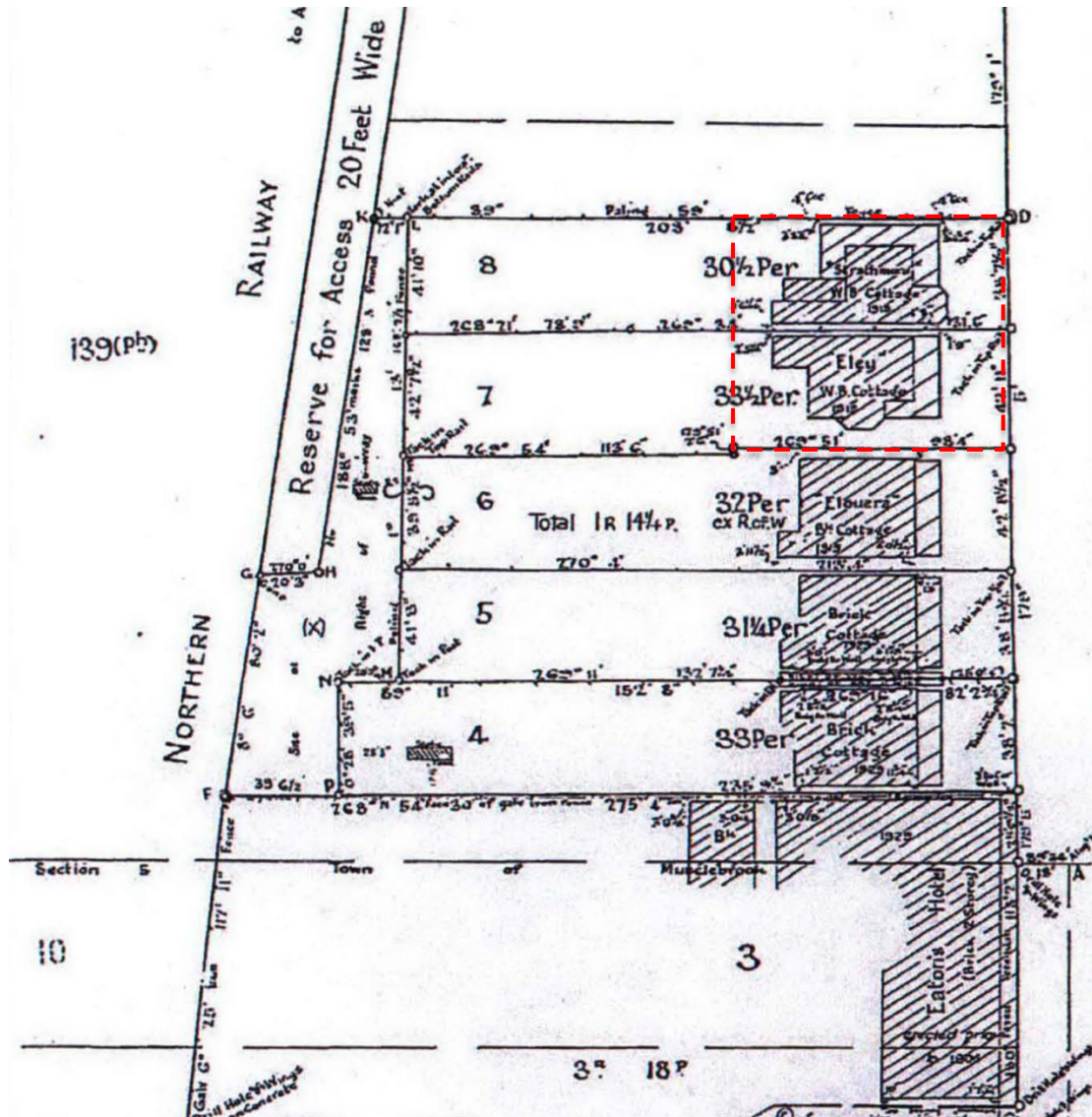
<sup>12</sup> *Kildonan & The Café*, pp117-118



certainly been constructed by 1947 when a Mrs Mitchelmore was reported to be living at 206 Bridge Street.<sup>13</sup>

### 200-206 Bridge Street

A plan of the Eaton's Hotel holdings (LPI Deposited Plan 37789) shows the houses at 200 and 202 Bridge Street as weatherboard cottages that were constructed in 1915. Known as *Eley* and possibly *Strathmore*, the houses were likely constructed by publican Herbert Flanders who purchased Eaton's Hotel and adjoining properties in 1913.<sup>14</sup>



Plan showing the houses at 200 and 202 Bridge Street (indicated)  
(Source: LPI Deposited Plan 37789)

In 1954, the two weatherboard cottages at 200 and 202 Bridge Street were advertised for sale. The sale notice covered both properties with the house at 200 Bridge Street noted to contain two bedrooms, a lounge room, dining room, office, kitchen, bathroom and laundry as well as garage. The house at 202 Bridge Street contained the same room types, though did not incorporate an office.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *The Muswellbrook Chronicle*, 30 May 1947, p7

<sup>14</sup> City Plan Heritage, Eatons Hotel Heritage Impact Statement, 2006

<sup>15</sup> *The Muswellbrook Chronicle*, 29 October 1954, p11

A 1953 aerial photograph includes all four houses on the subject site and shows that Wilkins Street extended across the railway line at this time. This ceased in 1960 when the public level crossing to the Great Northern Railway at Wilkins Street was closed.<sup>16</sup>



Aerial with subject houses indicated (1953)  
(Source: NSW Government Historical Imagery)



Eaton's Hotel with the subject houses in the background (January 1959)  
(Source: ANU Archives, Tooth and Company Records)

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<sup>16</sup> Government Gazette of the State of New South Wales, 29 July 1960, p2341



### 3. Physical Description

This section includes a physical description of the four properties that make up the subject site (200-206 Bridge Street) focusing on the houses. An overview of the area surrounding the subject site is also provided, including a brief description of the nearby properties located in the Muswellbrook Business Heritage Conservation Area.

Brief commentary on the condition of each of the subject buildings is also provided and is based on a visual inspection from the accessible parts of both the exterior and interior. It should be noted that the subfloor space and at height inspection of the buildings was not undertaken during the preparation of this report. Inspection of the subfloor may reveal further defects and could have a major impact on the economic cost of retaining/adaptively reusing the buildings.

#### 3.1 200 Bridge Street

##### Exterior

The presentation of the Federation period residence at 200 Bridge Street has been impacted by changes to the verandah and the temporary boarding up of openings, both of which are readily reversible. The building has a hipped and gable roof which is clad in galvanised corrugated metal sheeting. It incorporates decorative gable ends to the front (east) which are clad in roughcast sheeting and feature timber screens. The main gable end and other gablets to the roof of incorporate timber louvres and the timber bargeboards retain original decorative mouldings at the junction with the roof sheeting. Original metal finials remain to the roof and the gutters are the original quad type.



*Front of 200 Bridge Street*



*Decorative metal finials and timberwork to gable ends*

A substantial brick chimney with terracotta pots also remains. The original decorative timber brackets and verandah posts also remain, though these have been concealed, along with the front wall of the house, by the introduction of a cement sheeting to balustrade height and modern lattice above. The verandah also retains a timber deck, though an unusual stepped threshold has been introduced to the front (east) room.



*Return verandah with decorative brackets (indicated)*



*Bay window to south elevation*



The south side of the house features a substantial bay window with deep hood which appears to be clad in timber shingles and is supported on slender timber brackets. A narrow skillion addition has been constructed to the rear of the house and is accessed via a steep ramp. An enclosure has also been constructed to the northern part of the front verandah where it returns to the north side.



*Skillion addition to rear*



*Front room, with French doors to return verandah*

Original openings to the front of the house remain, though all except for the front door have been boarded over for security purposes. The front door is a four panel type with texture glass to the upper panes and is flanked by sidelights. Original French doors with glazed highlights also open onto the verandah and original windows are a mix of timber-framed casements (to bay window) and double hung sash openings.

### Interior

The interior to the front, original portion of the house is largely intact with many original finishes remaining. Original ceilings are pressed metal types to the front rooms and timber boards to an original rear room. Walls are clad in a mix of battened sheeting, some with a vertical timber dado, and horizontal timber boards. A few original four panel doors with glazed highlights also remain as do a couple of restrained timber fireplace surrounds. Wet areas, including the kitchen and bathroom, have been modernised.



*Pressed metal ceiling and timber dado to one of the principal rooms*



*An original timber lined room to the rear part of the house*

### Condition

The house at 200 Bridge Street is currently vacant and the windows have been boarded over externally to restrict access to the building. This, combined with the condition of finishes, gives the building a run-down appearance. Gaps to internal linings also impact on the perceived condition of the building. Defects evident during the inspection included the following:

- There is considerable rust to the underside of the verandah roof, particularly at the laps of the sheeting. The roof sheeting has likely reached the end of its useful life.

- The timber trims associated with the to the roof (such as the cover strip to the gable ends) have weathered and have partly detached.
- Some of the timber elements to the verandah, including the verandah posts and the beam to the edge of the deck have deteriorated.
- The paint finishes to timber elements has deteriorated and there are missing weatherboards to the skillion addition at the rear.
- There are signs that the building has moved (e.g. some of the internal doors are no longer level).

### 3.2 202 Bridge Street

The former residence at 202 Bridge Street was also constructed during the Federation period and whilst it has a different format to that at 200 Bridge Street, similar forms and details suggest that the two house were constructed at the same time.

There is a modern, pool style fence to the front boundary and a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century garage is located to the rear of the site (this was constructed sometime after 1953). The garage has a gable roof clad in corrugated metal sheeting and the walls are lined with timbers that have a half round profile.

#### Exterior

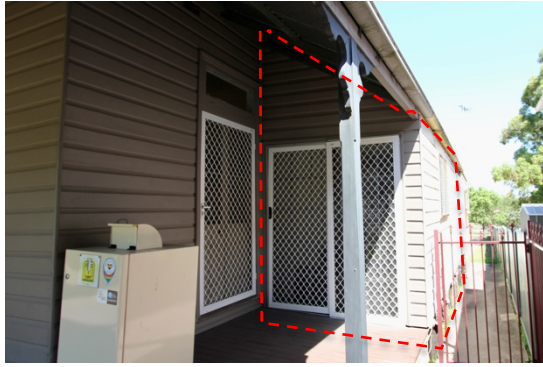
The former residence is mostly intact to the front, with the main change facing the street being the partial infilling of the return verandah on the north side. The modern aluminium screens to the openings are prominent in street views and negatively impact on the presentation of the place.



*Front of 202 Bridge Street*

The building has a gambrel roof with gable end to the street side which projects over a bay window. Like the adjacent house, the gable ends are clad in roughcast sheeting and there are decorative metal finials to both the gablets and the larger gable end. The gablets also contain fixed timber louvres. The roof is clad in short lengths of corrugated galvanised metal sheeting and the gutters are a quad type (these may have been renewed).





*Infilled portion of return verandah (indicated)*



*Additions to rear of former residence*

Walls are similarly clad in shiplap weatherboards and the return verandah has matching chamfered timber posts and timber brackets to the verandah. The bay window also has a matching hood, though this is clad in beaded timber boards. Like the house at 200 Bridge Street, original openings include French doors to the verandah with operable highlights and a four panel entry door with textured glass to the upper part. Original timber casement windows remain to the bay window as do two double hung sash windows to the south side. Windows to the north side have been changed to modern aluminium types as has one window to the south side.

There are a series of later additions to the rear of the former house. These have skillion roofs, are clad in shiplap weatherboards and are a mix of concrete slab and timber-framed construction.

### Interior

The interior to the front, original portion of the house is mostly intact with many original finishes remaining. Like the house at 200 Bridge Street, original ceilings are pressed metal types to the front rooms whilst those to the rear rooms have been replaced with modern sheeting. A couple of rooms retain a vertical timber dado. The front room has battened sheeting above the dado, whilst others rooms now have modern sheeting to the walls. A few original four panel doors with glazed highlights also remain as do the French doors to the infilled portion of the verandah. Wet areas, including the kitchen and bathroom, have been modernised.



*Decorative finishes to front room*



*French doors to verandah*

### Condition

The former residence at 202 Bridge Street gives the impression of being in better condition than that at no. 200 as the building is occupied and the external finishes have been maintained. Internally however, there are multiple rooms where the floor is on a considerable slope, indicating that the structure has moved. Rooms with a sloped floor include one of the original rooms on the south side and an enclosed portion of the original verandah on the north side. Cracks to the internal walls on the south side suggest that there are ongoing issues with movement.

The finishes to the rear of the building are in poorer condition with the paint having deteriorated to the extent that the underlying weatherboards and galvanised roof sheeting is exposed. Staining to both the



north wall of the original house and the internal wall of the infilled verandah indicates that the gutter to the north side is leaking. The ground levels to the front of the building also appear to have increased/built up with the weatherboard cladding to the bay window now partially buried.

### 3.3 204 and 206 Bridge Street

The houses at 204 and 206 Bridge Street are a pair of symmetrical buildings which share a central driveway and garage which is located at the rear of the properties.

#### Exterior

The intact houses are relatively plain with few decorative elements, though each features a central porch with is semi-circular in plan and has a parapet that projects above the line of the eaves. These porches have a deep fascia with that to no. 204 clad in vertical timber boards and that to no. 206 clad in flat metal sheeting. Each porch is supported by a pair of round timber posts, has a timber deck and soffits are lined in battened sheeting.



*204 Bridge Street*



*Porch to 206 Bridge Street*

Both houses have a low pitch, hipped roof clad in short lengths of corrugated metal sheeting and quad profile gutters. Rafter ends are exposed and each house has a brick chimney to the driveways side. These chimneys project out from the walls of the houses and have simple projecting brick mouldings and cappings.

Like the Federation period houses, the pair of residence at 204 and 206 Bridge Street are clad in shiplap weatherboards. Original windows are timber double hung sashes with horizontal glazing bars and are positioned symmetrically either side of the central porch. The entry doors to the porch are multipaned, timber-framed French doors with multipaned sidelights. There is also an entry to the side of each house on the driveway side which is accessed via brick steps and covered by a small canopy with plain timber brackets. Windows to the side elevations are a mix of double hung sash windows with horizontal glazing bars and high level awning windows.



*Rear of 204 Bridge Street*



*Rear of 206 Bridge Street*

The buildings are supported on brick piers and there are decorative brick screens to the side elevations which conceal the subfloor space. Skillion sections to the rear of each house (assumed to have originally been verandahs) have been infilled.



*North side of 204 Bridge Street*



*Shared driveway and garage*

## Interior

The interiors of both houses are largely intact with the configuration of rooms remaining unchanged. Original high waisted panel doors remain internally as do the original architraves, skirting boards and picture rails.

## Condition

The house at 204 Bridge Street is occupied whilst that at no. 206 is vacant. The presentation of both buildings has been impacted by the deterioration of external paint finishes, particularly to timber elements, exposing them to weathering. This includes the weatherboard cladding, door and window openings as well as the posts to each porch. The deep timber fascia/parapet to the porch of no. 204 has also been impacted and the timber decks to both dwellings are weathered. The timber deck to the rear verandah (enclosed) has also been damaged to the house at no. 204.

The roof sheeting to the house at 206 Bridge Street appears to be in poorer condition than that at 204, with extensive rust evident. The gutter to the rear verandah of the house has also rusted through whilst that to the front has dislodged and the flashing installed to the top of the porch presents poorly. The flashing to the north side of the roof to no. 204 has been damaged, leading to the deterioration of the adjacent timber fascia.

The brick elements to both houses have deteriorated with the chimney to each house appearing to be on a considerable lean. These elements may be at risk of collapse. The brick screens to the subfloor space of each house are also in poor condition with numerous loose bricks noted. The brick steps to the side of no. 204 have been damaged (may be partially due to impact damage).

Externally, the shared garage is in poor condition with extensive rust to the roof and deteriorated/rotten timber elements (weatherboards and timber doors).

## 3.4 Streetscape

### Bridge Street

In the vicinity of the subject site, Bridge Street has a varied character and is lined with a mix of relatively recent commercial premises, housing from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as a few historic commercial premises which are part of the Eaton's Group and are included on the State Heritage Register. The buildings in this group are located close to the street boundary, whilst more recent commercial development is generally set back a considerable distance from the street. Houses are mostly set back a small distance from the street (approximately 5 to 9 metres) allowing for a small garden to the front. The adjacent house *Kildonan* is unusual as it has been built to the street boundary.

Bridge Street continues to act as the New England Highway, supporting a high volume of traffic with two lanes in both directions. Buildings are mostly one or two stories with the exception of the Muswellbrook




RSL Club which is a larger building. Pre-1960 buildings are constructed of mostly brick (face brick or rendered), sandstone or are lined with weatherboards. Roofs are generally clad in corrugated metal sheeting.





In the vicinity of the subject site the character of the east and west sides of the street are in stark contrast. Either side of the subject site, the west side of Bridge Street is mostly lined with pre-1960 buildings, though it is noted that some of these have been altered at the front. Closer to Hill Street there is a group of modern buildings which have forms, setbacks and materials that are generally not sympathetic with the earlier building stock. Buildings on the opposite side of Bridge Street also fall into this category and are either quite substantial structures or are surrounded by large areas of car parking which detract from the Conservation Area.

Name and address	Photo	Details
<b>Bridge Street, west side</b>		
<p><i>Kildonan</i> 208 Bridge Street Included in LEP as an individual heritage item</p>		<p>Constructed in several stages with the original portion built in late 19<sup>th</sup> century and additions constructed in about 1890 and 1919.</p> <p>The front portion of the building is constructed with a combination of brick and stone and is unified by the roof and continuous verandah. The verandah and projecting gable end above the entry incorporate timber detailing (brackets, shingles etc.) which are typical of the Federation period. There is a cast iron balustrade to the verandah. Windows are double hung types with multi-panes to the upper sashes and the entry has a panelled timber door with sidelights and highlights (each with leadlight).</p> <p>A separate single garage remains and has timber doors and a gambrel roof which suggest an early 20<sup>th</sup> century construction date.</p>
198 Bridge Street		<p>Originally a house constructed in 1915 with a steep gable roof oriented perpendicular to the street. A late-20<sup>th</sup> century cuboid addition has been constructed to the front of the house, converting it to commercial premises.</p> <p>The rendered gable end with timber vent is visible above the addition.</p>
196 Bridge Street		<p>1929 residence.</p> <p>Brick with tuckpointed façade. Broad gable roof now with shiplap weatherboards to gable end. Front porch with hipped roof and low wall finished in roughcast render with paired Tuscan columns.</p> <p>There are French doors opening onto the verandah with a single, central entry door.</p>






Name and address	Photo	Details
194 Bridge Street		1929 residence. Broad gable roof with shingle boards and batted sheeting to the gable end. Front porch with hipped roof and low wall finished in roughcast render. There are now metal pilasters supporting the porch roof.
Eaton's Hotel 182-184 Bridge Street Included on State Heritage Register		Incorporates a mid-19 <sup>th</sup> century building. The hotel has been extended on multiple occasions and now has a very broad verandah which may have been extended in 1915. The building was also extended to the south in 1915 and to the north in 1929. Two storey buildings (a mix of brick and render) with decorative curved parapets. The verandah to the northern building is supported on timber posts. Both buildings have cast iron balustrades to the first floor and decorative timber brackets.
Eaton's Group - House 178 Bridge Street Included on State Heritage Register		1929 house with later tiles to roof of porch. Brick with large gable roof. There are decorative timber brackets and roughcast render to the gable end. The front porch has a hipped roof supported on paired timber posts and a low wall finished in roughcast render. There are French doors opening onto the verandah with a single, central entry door, all with highlights.
Eaton's Group St Vincent De Paul 174-176 Bridge Street Included on State Heritage Register		1850s building which has been used for a mix of commercial uses. The appearance of the two storey building has been negatively impacted by changes to the ground floor, including enclosure of the verandah with screens and clothing bins. Rendered building with hipped roof clad in corrugated metal sheeting. The building retains a scalloped timber valance to the verandah and has plain timber posts and balustrade to the first floor. Openings to the first floor are single doors with multipaned glazing to the upper part.

Name and address	Photo	Details
Eaton's Group - Shop 172 Bridge Street Included on State Heritage Register		Constructed circa 1895, though thought to have been relocated to the site by 1919. Weatherboard shop with timber vent and screen to gable end facing the street. Skillion verandah supported on modern timber posts. Symmetrical shopfront with timber-framed windows and textured glass highlights. Timber double hung windows to side elevation.
168-170 Bridge Street		Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century, two storey commercial building, set back about 17 metres from the street. Car parking located between building and Bridge Street. Concrete building with transverse gable roof and large format, aluminium-framed windows.
164-166 Bridge Street		Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century, two storey commercial building, set back about 13 metres from the street. Face brick with a parapet that largely conceals the roof from the street. Undercroft parking with vehicle access from Bridge Street.
160 Bridge Street		Circa 1970/80s building which has recently been altered. Two stories plus undercroft storey which extends to the street boundary.
158 Bridge Street		Battle axe block with light industrial sheds to the rear of the property.

Name and address	Photo	Details
148 Bridge Street		Contemporary service station.
<b>Bridge Street, east side</b>		
159 Bridge Street	 <p>(View from Turanville Avenue)</p>	Possibly a mid-20 <sup>th</sup> century house with flat/skillion roof and large additions to each side.
157 Bridge Street		Mid-20 <sup>th</sup> century house with hipped roof clad in terracotta tiles. Large steel-framed windows.
155 Bridge Street		Federation period house with altered gable end and enclosed verandah. The walls are now clad in mini-orb sheeting. Prominent gambrel roof and brick chimney.
147 Bridge Street		Contemporary service station and fast-food outlet surrounded by car parking.



Name and address	Photo	Details
129 Bridge Street		Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century fast-food restaurant with substantial car park. The northern part of the site contained two early houses and a small shop in 2010 (since demolished).
113 Bridge Street		Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century cuboid form building of considerable size. The building is located well above the height of the street with modern concrete block retaining walls between the building and the footpath.
105-111 Bridge Street		Circa 1970s cream brick motel with buildings located around a central car parking area. Buildings are a mix of double and single storey, and largely have a cuboid form.

## Wilkins Street

The section of Wilkins Street east of the railway line is included in the Muswellbrook Business Heritage Conservation Area. There are two houses on Wilkins Street adjacent to the subject site which are included in the heritage precinct. One of these is a Federation Period House (no. 11) which has a similar format to 200 Bridge Street, though appears to be more altered (the house is largely obscured by a shade structure). The other house appears to be a late Interwar period dwelling which is relatively plain with simple hipped roof and small front porch with no decorative details.



13 Wilkins Street



11 Wilkins Street

The opposite side (north side) of the street is not included in the Conservation Area. There are two, late 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial premises on the north side of the street.

## 4. Heritage Significance

The following section includes a brief review of the heritage significance of the houses located on the subject site, including their contribution to the Muswellbrook Business Heritage Conservation Area.

### 4.1 Significance of subject buildings

A brief review of the heritage significance of the extant houses at the subject site is included in the table below and is based on the research completed during the preparation of this report. The four houses have been grouped in the assessment below according to their period of construction which is the key difference between the buildings. They have been assessed against the NSW assessment criteria at a local (rather than state) level.

Assessment Criterion	200 and 202 Bridge Street	204 and 206 Bridge Street
<b>Criterion (a)</b> An item is important in the course, or pattern, of the cultural or natural history of the local area	<p>Whilst a detailed history of the houses has not been prepared, they were constructed in 1915 and are sufficiently intact to be readily identifiable as Federation period houses.</p> <p>Though they are not in themselves of individual importance to the history of the Muswellbrook Shire, they make a contribution to understanding residential development in Muswellbrook during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when there was more intensive growth and building of houses. The significance of residential development from this period is better represented in the Muswellbrook Central Residential Precinct Heritage Conservation Area as well as by other, more substantial groups of houses from the Federation period which are not included in a conservation area nor identified as heritage items in the LEP.</p> <p>This includes groups of houses located in the southern part of Muswellbrook, including a group of over 10 early 20<sup>th</sup> century residences to Mitchell Street (between Sydney and Lorne streets). This group includes houses similar to those on the subject site (such as no. 21) as well as more substantial masonry houses (for example nos 8 and 10). Other examples also remain in nearby streets (such as Skellatar Street). None of these houses are included in a conservation area or identified as heritage items in the LEP.</p>	<p>The houses at 204 and 206 Bridge Street are thought to have been constructed in circa 1938. Externally these houses are relatively plain/restrained and have a similar appearance to places that were constructed in the immediate Post-WWII period (their construction date is not readily apparent).</p> <p>Whilst they were similarly constructed during a period of growth, their contribution to the Bridge Street streetscape could be said to be less than nos 200 and 202 given that they were constructed after the period in which individually listed places within the area were erected. The houses are not of individual importance to the local area's cultural history.</p>
<b>Criterion (b)</b> An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the cultural or natural history of the local area	<p>200 and 202 Bridge Street were likely constructed for Herbert Flanders who was a prominent citizen of Muswellbrook and operated Eaton's Hotel. The association of Herbert with the two timber cottages is however not known to be particularly special.</p>	<p>The houses were likely built for the Wilkins family who were also prominent within Muswellbrook society. Information has not come to light to suggest that the association between the family and the weatherboard houses was particularly important, with family life instead centred around the neighbouring masonry residence <i>Kildonan</i>.</p>

Assessment Criterion	200 and 202 Bridge Street	204 and 206 Bridge Street
<b>Criterion (c)</b> An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in the local area	The subject buildings are representative of Federation period houses and are not considered to be a particularly important or distinctive examples.	The houses at 204 and 206 Bridge Street are relatively restrained examples of late Interwar period buildings. Whilst they incorporate unusual curved porches, they do not have landmark qualities and are not known to have been designed by an important designer.
<b>Criterion (d)</b> An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in the local area for social, cultural or spiritual reasons	No evidence has come to light to suggest that the existing houses are particularly important to the local community or a cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.	
<b>Criterion (e)</b> An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understating of the cultural or natural history of the local area	No evidence has come to light to suggest that the subject site has great potential to yield additional information.  Given that the site was located outside the original town boundary and that early outbuildings to <i>Kildonan</i> are thought to have been located to the west of the stone house, the likelihood of archaeological features such as footings of earlier buildings is considered to be relatively low.	
<b>Criterion (f)</b> An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the cultural or natural history of the local area	Whilst the majority of houses in the Muswellbrook Shire post-date the Federation period, there are other extant houses from the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century, including in the nearby Residential Heritage Conservation Area and other streets in the southern part of Muswellbrook.	Houses from the Interwar period are not considered to be rare in the Muswellbrook Shire.
<b>Criterion (g)</b> An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics or a class of the area's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural or natural places; or</li> <li>Cultural or natural environments</li> </ul>	200 and 202 Bridge Street are representative of Federation period houses with a mix of stylistic influences including the Queen Anne. Key characteristics of the Federation Queen Anne style which have been incorporated into the design include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asymmetrical format</li> <li>Ensemble of varied roof forms</li> <li>Prominent gable facing the street</li> <li>Timber gable screens (to 200 only)</li> <li>Bracketed projecting gable (to side of no. 200)</li> <li>Tall chimney with terracotta pots</li> <li>Roughcast walling</li> </ul>	204 and 206 Bridge Street are modest examples of Interwar period houses, though do not display any particular style or design characteristics that have been identified as important within the Muswellbrook Shire.  Like the house at 200 and 202 Bridge Street, they make a contribution to the historic streetscape to this part of Bridge Street (the west side near Eaton's Hotel) via their siting, scale, form and materiality, though they are later than all other buildings in this group.



Assessment Criterion	200 and 202 Bridge Street	204 and 206 Bridge Street
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide verandah with timber posts and ornamental brackets</li> <li>• Projecting bay</li> <li>• Casement sashes</li> <li>• Multipaned top lights</li> </ul> <p>The subject houses are relatively late examples of this style and are more modest, weatherboard examples when compared with most houses that are identified as individual heritage items in the LEP. There are larger groups of houses from the Federation period in other parts of Muswellbrook (such as Mitchell Street) which include similar weatherboard residences and more substantial masonry dwellings. On this basis, the houses are not considered to be particularly important examples of Federation period residences.</p>	

The assessment in the table above acknowledges that the houses at 200 and 202 Bridge Street are representative of Federation period houses constructed in Muswellbrook, though a review of other streets in the town has confirmed that there are many other residences of a comparable age and design. Given this, 200 and 202 Bridge Street are not considered to be particularly important examples of early 20<sup>th</sup> century residences within the Muswellbrook Shire.

The later houses at 204 and 206 Bridge Street are modest buildings that do not display any particular style or design characteristics. Whilst they were constructed during a period of growth within the town, the individual houses are not considered to be of a level of significance to warrant being listed as individual heritage items in the Muswellbrook Shire LEP, with many other examples from this period remaining.

## 4.2 Significance of conservation area

According to the Muswellbrook Shire DCP, the significance of the Muswellbrook Business Heritage Conservation Area is largely derived from:

- The physical fabric which expresses 150 years of commercial activity, particularly the period between World War I and World War II when there was sustained growth;
- A variety of building styles which generally are in harmony in terms of the form and materiality.

The 'Generalised description' of the Conservation Area notes that 'older buildings' constitute those constructed between the 1840s and 1960s and identifies the following as key characteristics:

- Long, narrow allotments which led to the construction of buildings with a narrow frontage;
- The continuous wall to the street frontage between William and Hill streets which is due to buildings occupying the full width of the allotments. These buildings have skillion awnings over the pavement (originally verandahs, now cantilevered awnings);
- Older buildings to north and east of the precinct have more discontinuous façades;
- Most buildings are modest in scale;
- Walls are mostly masonry (face brick or rendered) with parapets or gable ends to the street;
- Upper floor windows are mostly vertical in alignment;
- Roofs are generally not visible from the street, though are generally hipped (commercial) or gable (residential) and are clad in galvanised iron.

### Contribution of subject buildings to Conservation Area

Whilst it is acknowledged that the four houses at the subject site contribute to the historic streetscape of Bridge Street, particularly the Federation period houses at no's 200 and 202, the cultural significance of the Muswellbrook Business Conservation Area lies largely with the commercial development in the central part of the town as set out in the statement of significance.

Residential development is noted in the generalised description of the Conservation Area (rather than the statement of significance), though the contribution of houses (and former houses) to the significance of the precinct is not established in existing citations/studies. It is also noted that there has been a loss of historic residential building stock in the precinct since the Conservation Area was established, including a group of former houses at the northern end of Bridge Street, opposite the subject site and single bungalow to Hill Street. This has considerably reduced the number of residential buildings in the Conservation Area and diminished the contribution that this typology makes to the identified heritage area.

#### *Demolished residential buildings*

Sometime between 2010 and 2015 two residences and a small shop were demolished at what is now part of 145 Bridge Street (currently Hungry Jacks). These residences appear to have dated from the 19<sup>th</sup> century whilst the shop may have been constructed during either the late Interwar period or immediately after World War II. Both the shop and one of the cottages appear to have been relatively intact in Google StreetView images whilst the other residence appears to have been more altered.



Two cottages and a shop previously located opposite Eaton's Hotel (2007)  
(Source: Google StreetView)

A former residence located in Hill Street was also demolished in circa 2014 to allow for the construction of a new education centre. The Interwar period bungalow had been altered by enclosing the front verandah and had been adapted for use as a Visitors Information Centre. The Statement of Heritage Impact prepared for the redevelopment of the former residential site as an Education Centre, concluded that the bungalow was:

- Of little Local heritage significance due to fabric alterations to the interiors, as well as alterations to the rear of the building.
- Not a good example of the individual bungalow house it once was, with the removal of the surrounding houses that once occupied Hill Street.
- To this degree, it has lost its value as a contributing item to the CBD Heritage Conservation Area, whose cultural significance lies largely with the commercial development of Bridge Street and its surrounds.

*Integrity and condition*

Whilst additions and alterations have been made to the rear of each of the four dwellings, the houses at 204 and 206 Bridge Street are largely intact to the front. The earlier houses at 200 and 202 Bridge Street have undergone a greater level of alternation at the front through the partial enclosure of the front verandahs which negatively impacts on their presentation. Sufficient original fabric however remains to reinstate the original format and detailing to both of these residences.

The condition of external paint finishes and timberwork has also impacted on the presentation of all four houses, with some material such as the corrugated metal sheeting to no. 200 likely having reached the end of its life. Movement in the structures was also noted during the inspection, evidenced by uneven floors and cracking in the walls. The brick chimneys to both 204 and 206 Bridge Street appear to be on a considerable lean and may be in danger of collapsing.



## 5. Proposal

### 5.1 Current proposal

The proposal would involve the demolition of all existing building across the four sites at 200-206 Bridge Street, Muswellbrook. This would include demolition of the four timber dwellings as well as the out-buildings and removal of all existing trees.

A new childcare centre would be constructed on the western part of the site and would be surrounded by a fenced play area. This area would include a small storage shed in the north-west corner. An asphalt car park would front Bridge Street with vehicle access to and from the carpark provided via this street. The car park would contain a refuse enclosure at the north end. Plantings would be introduced to the perimeter of the site and would include screening hedge plants to both the front of the play area and to the front of the carpark. Some plantings would also be introduced within the carpark.

### 5.2 Development of the design

The design of the proposed childcare building has been amended to better respond to the forms and materials of nearby buildings that are identified as heritage items in the Muswellbrook LEP and well as the historic buildings located within the Muswellbrook Business Heritage Conservation Area. This included the following changes:

- Changes to the form of the proposal, including the use of more traditional pitched roofs and verandah forms and increased modulation to reduce the perceived scale of the building;
- Changes to the entry to better reflect the porches of nearby residences. Previously the entry porch had a contemporary, cantilevered form;
- Changes to the proposed materials, including removal of Colorbond sheeting as a wall cladding;
- Modification to the forms of the verandahs located adjacent to the activity rooms to read such that they appear to be a simplified, contemporary version of a traditional veranda;
- Further modulation of the western part of the building to reduce the perceived length of the building when viewed from Bridge Street.

## 6. Relevant Heritage Policy

### 6.1 Background

For heritage places, including conservation areas, included in the Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan 2009 (LEP) both the LEP and Muswellbrook Shire Development Control Plan 2009 (DCP) are relevant. Several clauses that apply to the subject site are reproduced below.

### 6.2 Muswellbrook LEP

Clause 5.10 of the LEP covers Heritage Conservation and prescribes the following objectives:

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

The LEP also sets out when development consent is required with regards to heritage places. Consent is required for any of the following:

- a) demolishing or moving any of the following or altering the exterior of any of the following (including, in the case of a building, making changes to its detail, fabric, finish or appearance)—
  - i. a heritage item,
  - ii. an Aboriginal object,
  - iii. a building work, relic or tree within a heritage conservation area,
- b) altering a heritage item that is a building by making structural changes to its interior or by making changes to anything inside the item that is specified in Schedule 5 in relation to the item,
- c) disturbing or excavating an archaeological site while knowing, or having reasonable cause to suspect, that the disturbance or excavation will or is likely to result in a relic being discovered, exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed,
- d) disturbing or excavating an Aboriginal place of heritage significance,
- e) erecting a building on land—
  - i. on which a heritage item is located or that is within a heritage conservation area, or
  - ii. on which an Aboriginal object is located or that is within an Aboriginal place of heritage significance,
- f) subdividing land—
  - i. on which a heritage item is located or that is within a heritage conservation area, or
  - ii. on which an Aboriginal object is located or that is within an Aboriginal place of heritage significance.

When assessing any of the above, the following applies:

*The consent authority must, before granting consent under this clause in respect of a heritage item or heritage conservation area, consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the item or area concerned. This subclause applies regardless of whether a heritage management document is prepared under subclause (5) or a heritage conservation management plan is submitted under subclause (6).*

Before granting consent for development on land that is within a heritage conservation area (or land in the vicinity of a heritage conservation area), the consent authority may:

*require a heritage management document to be prepared that assesses the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development would affect the heritage significance of the heritage item or heritage conservation area concerned.*

## 6.3 Muswellbrook DCP

Development involving heritage listed items is required to comply with Part 15 (Heritage Conservation) of the Muswellbrook Shire DCP. Several of the most relevant sections of the DCP are reproduced below and relate to heritage conservation areas, demolition and requirements for new development. There are additional clauses in the DCP which may be relevant to the proposed redevelopment of the site, including requirements related to materials and detailing.

### What changes are acceptable?

#### 15.1.13 Buildings

*When proposing to make changes in a place that contains built heritage items or in a conservation area:*

- *Minor changes are likely to be acceptable if they are consistent in form, scale, finishes and details with those of the original.*
- *Substantial extensions may be acceptable where they do not affect the integrity or character of the original building.*
- *Total or partial demolition or removal of a listed heritage item will only be considered under exceptional circumstances. Council must notify the Heritage Council of all proposals to demolish heritage items. If an item of State significance demolition and any other major changes require the concurrence of the Heritage Council.*

#### 15.1.14 Heritage Conservation Areas

*Heritage conservation areas are identified because these areas, overall, are significant for a community. Generally, they contain some buildings, works, relics or trees which have been identified as heritage items but it is not necessary for heritage conservation areas to contain any items that are heritage items in their own right.*

*The purpose of heritage conservation areas is to preserve the physical relationship of features that date from similar periods or are associated with certain historical themes and reflect lifestyles related to the periods or themes. In towns, heritage conservation areas are generally characterised by consistency in design features, materials, scale and proportions of individual buildings, whether the buildings are old or new.*

*New works in a heritage conservation area will be acceptable only if they serve to reinforce the physical character of the area. Works such as buildings that are visually intrusive or otherwise non-contributory to the character of the areas will not be acceptable.*

#### 15.1.15 Development of sites near heritage items and heritage conservation areas

*Because heritage items and heritage conservation areas need to be seen in context in order for their significance to be appreciated it is particularly important for owners of land in their vicinity to understand that proposed changes might affect how a heritage item or heritage conservation areas can be seen. For this reason Council has to assess impact on the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas of DA that relate to adjacent sites.*

### Heritage Items and Conservation Areas Design Controls

#### 15.2.1 Changes to buildings

*Muswellbrook Shire has many buildings of heritage value, dating as far back as the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. These exhibit a range of architectural features which is representative of building styles from many periods. These features are worth keeping because they help to define the special character of both the Shire and its heritage conservation areas.*

*Most changes to built heritage items will involve alterations and additions. Sometimes changes will involve what is referred to as 'adaptive reuse' or a change to the use of a building in its original location. Rarely the changes will involve a demolition and/or relocation of a building.*



Whatever the proposal:

- The **first priority** is to conserve the significance of built features that are part of the environmental heritage of Muswellbrook Shire and
- The **second priority** is to ensure that the building that is a heritage item or is in a heritage conservation areas remains recognisably of its period.

Generally, the older a building the more important it is to retain the original fabric, whether it is visible or not. Fabric means building materials, as they were originally put together.

#### 15.2.4 The form of new works

When the impacts of new building works are being considered the prime consideration will be: 'how will elements of new developments relate visually to existing building works?' Building forms can produce powerful visual intrusions into the curtilage of a heritage item and visual conflicts with features of wider settings of existing building should be minimised where possible.

The main formal elements to be considered when assessing the visual impact of new building works are:

- Building footprints, ie building densities, percentage of allotments which are built on, separations, setbacks, orientation and shapes of floor plans. Although these elements are largely controlled by provisions in Muswellbrook Shire's LEP and DCPs their variation in older buildings is a reflection of the different lifestyles of people and different times. In making alterations and additions to a building care should be taken to ensure that new works do not alter the contribution of the existing building to the 'rhythm' of a streetscape or the character of its internal layout.
- Scale, ie the dimensions and proportions of buildings and their individual elements, including numbers of storeys, building and ceiling heights and horizontal dimensions and overall bulk. Buildings from different eras are often characterised by distinctive heights, horizontal dimensions and size relationships between different parts or dimensions and new buildings works should be designed so as to avoid visual incongruities between old and new work.
- Massing, ie roof pitches and forms, windows/door shapes and dimensions, façade forms and attachments such as verandas, porches and patios. Building of particular historic styles have typical shapes, eg an 'Interwar' Bungalow typically has a medium pitched roof dominated by symmetrical front roof gable while a Federation house often has more complex roof and floor plans with windows symmetrically arranged in walls but a front gable that is asymmetrically placed. The integrity of existing facades should be maintained especially in the front of buildings.

So far as possible new building works should seek to be similar in form to their existing neighbours.

#### 15.2.12 Outbuildings

Often the importance of older buildings such as stables and other purpose-built buildings for an understanding of a heritage item can be overlooked and these buildings can be allowed to fall into disrepair, which is simply bad economics. Older outbuildings should be conserved and new outbuildings such as garages and sheds should conform to the general rules for form and materials set out above.

#### 15.2.13 Site Planning

When new building works are being planned the following principles should apply to buildings in heritage conservation areas and on places that have heritage items:

- If practicable, keep additions to the rear of existing buildings as far back from the street as possible. Additions are best designed as distinctly separate from the main building.
- Generally, the less new work [that] is visible from a street the better. The more visible the new work the more important [it] is to match new and old forms, scale, colour, texture and materials.
- If there is insufficient space for a rear extension, additions may be permitted at the side or front but not usually if the building is a heritage item. New features should not be introduced on the front facades of important buildings; new work on these, however sympathetic, should be set back.
- Adding storeys to existing buildings is to be discouraged but where sites are [...] severely restricted a dormer or similar addition can be possible in residential buildings.

- v. *Where a site permits only very minor additions ways of making better use of available space should be sought instead of additions. Re-building at the rear, or internal structural changes may achieve this without endangering heritage values.*
- vi. *In the grounds new landscape elements should reflect established elements such as gardens and plant types where possible.*
- vii. *In making provision for car parking the following order of preference should be observed:*
  - *at the rear, with access from a rear lane*
  - *at the rear, with access from the front*
  - *at the side, well set back*
  - *uncovered paved area at the front*
  - *on the street*

*In residential buildings front garages are strongly discouraged, no matter how sympathetic. They generally obscure views of the main building and break up the established setback line in the street.*

#### **15.2.14 Subdivision and Infill Development**

*New development adjacent to heritage items and in heritage conservation areas, including sheds, garages and carports, should be consistent in form and scale with adjacent buildings. Their detailing, materials, colours and finishes should be visually sympathetic to these buildings.*

### **Demolition**

#### **15.3.1 Council Consent is required**

*Demolition, whether involving destruction or removal, of any building, work, relic or tree in a place that has been listed as containing a heritage item will only be considered if there are no feasible or prudent alternatives and there are firm plans for redevelopment.*

*This applies to partial demolitions and may affect applications for alterations and additions.*

*In the event of an assessment of heritage impact concluding that there is no alternative to demolition (etc) Council will generally require that any building(s) to be demolished are documented before and during demolition by a suitably qualified heritage consultant (such as a conservation architect), and that the place on which the demolition is to take place is examined before and during demolition by a suitable qualified archaeologies or other heritage consultant.*

*This is to ensure that, while the physical features of a heritage item may be destroyed, forever, a record of them will be kept for posterity. This record should extend to the area surrounding a thing to be demolished, which is integral to understanding and for interpreting the heritage significance of that thing. This area, known as 'curtilage', will generally be taken to be the allotment(s) on which the building(s), works, relics or trees are to be demolished. The reports prepared in fulfilment of Council's requirement will be archived by the Muswellbrook Local and Family History Society after consideration by Council.*

## 7. Assessment of Heritage Impact

### 7.1 Demolition

Whilst the policy contained in the DCP does not provide specific guidance on the demolition of places in Conservation Areas that are not individual identified heritage items, it does note that the purpose of heritage conservation areas is to preserve the physical relationship of features in them that date from similar periods.

The assessment of the existing buildings contained in this report acknowledges that the two Federation period houses at the subject site contribute to the historic streetscape of Bridge Street, though the significance of the precinct lies largely with the commercial development in the central part of the town. Whilst the demolition of these buildings will have an impact on the Muswellbrook Business Heritage Conservation Area, there are other similar examples of Federation period houses which are not included in a heritage area in the LEP even though they form a larger group of residential development dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The demolition of the existing outbuildings on the site would not impact on the significance of the Conservation Area given their later construction date and location at the rear of the property.

The proposed centre-based childcare facilities are permitted (with consent) under the E2 Commercial Centre zone which applies to the subject site. This zone aims to encourage investment in commercial development that generates employment opportunities and economic growth. Only one of the four buildings on the site are currently used for commercial purposes, with two of the former residences vacant.

Whilst retention of the two Federation period houses at the subject site would be preferable to their demolition, it is understood that a review of the former residences was completed to determine if they could be adapted and reused as a component of a 109 space childcare centre. Through this review, it was identified that the buildings and their layouts were not compatible with the requirements of the proposed operator and issues around compliance were highly likely. If the residences were to be retained as part of a childcare centre, there would be major functional challenges including circulation through the complex, mismatched floor levels, small and difficult room sizes/configurations and awkward relationships between the buildings. Other challenges associated with the retention of the former residences include:

- Bridge Street has largely been abandoned for residential use due to the noise of the New England Highway and its proximity to the commercial area of the town. The extant buildings are no longer a desirable place to live.
- A suite of upgrades to the buildings would be required to facilitate new commercial uses. A change in use (building classification) and associated changes in layout are likely to trigger the need to comply with the National Construction Code, including provisions related to thermal performance and accessibility.
- The close proximity of the two houses at 200 and 202 Bridge Street creates an awkward space between the buildings and the separation is unlikely to meet contemporary building (fire) codes.
- The requirements of a contemporary childcare centre can be difficult to accommodate in old buildings for the following reasons:
  - Requirements related to supervision, including the need to have direct access between activity rooms, toilets and outdoor play spaces;
  - Accessibility requirements, including the removal of steps as well as minimum widths for hallways, openings etc.;
  - Car parking requirements;
  - Requirements for secure outdoor play areas of a minimum size;
  - Challenges with hazardous materials, including lead-based paint.



## 7.2 New works

As the site is located in a Conservation Area and is located adjacent to an individually listed heritage item (*Kildonan*), there is a requirement for development to be sympathetic to both the broader precinct and the adjacent house. The following section discusses the heritage impact of the proposed new building and associated works on both the Conservation Area and *Kildonan*.

### General character and car parking

The existing character of the Conservation Area at the northern end of the precinct is varied and there are several examples of large car parks fronting Bridge Street as well as modern buildings that do not contribute to the significance of the heritage precinct.

It is acknowledged that older buildings in the Conservation Area do not have car parking in front of the building line, with modest sized vehicle parking provided to the rear of most historic buildings. Parking at *Kildonan* is provided via a driveway to the south of the house with access from Bridge Street and a single garage which is set back about 5 metres from the street elevation. Whilst the DCP notes that the preferred location for parking is at the rear or side of buildings, the provision of a carpark at the rear of the site (instead of fronting Bridge Street) is not proposed for the following reasons:

- Access to the rear of the site is restricted as there is a section of privately owned land which is associated with a neighboring site and extends along the rear (west side) of 200 and 202 Bridge Street.
- We understand that it has not been possible to confirm who owns the land which is currently used as an access laneway to the rear (west) of the property. This plot is known as 11A Wilkins Street and is unmade, making it unsuitable for access to the proposed childcare centre.
- A sewer easement extends across the rear of 200, 202 and 204 Bridge Street.
- The size and format of the site allow the required number of carparking spaces to be accommodated across the front of the site, with the rear part less suited to this use as it is narrower in width.
- The carpark creates a buffer between the busy New England Highway and the proposed childcare centre.

Whilst the proposed carpark arrangement is not consistent with the development of historic places within the Conservation Area, it is noted that there are many properties at the northern end of the listed heritage area that adopt a similar format with buildings set back a considerable distance from the street and parking provided within the front setback. This includes two substantial sites in close proximity to the subject site with both the contemporary service station located on the opposite side of Bridge Street and the adjacent Hungry Jacks restaurant surrounded by extensive areas of paved carpark.

It is proposed that plantings be introduced in the available space within the carpark to reduce its visual impact. This would include hedge plantings (*Callistemon Viminalis*) between the carpark and Bridge Street as well as between the carpark and the play area. Two trees (*Pyrus Calleryana*) underplanted with groundcovers (*Myoporum Parvifolium*) would be planted in available space within the carpark and low plantings of *Lomandra* would be provided at the north and south ends.

### Setbacks and size of new development

Historic buildings in the vicinity of the subject site are generally constructed to either the street boundary (commercial premises and *Kildonan*) or a set back by about 5 to 9 metres (residences), providing space for a small front garden. The proposed new childcare centre has a staggered front setback which varies from approximately 15 metres to about 31 metres. Whilst these are larger than the setbacks of identified heritage items and other historic buildings in the Conservation Area, the proposed setbacks from Bridge Street are required to accommodate the necessary car parking and to allow for efficient car movement (double loaded). Whilst locating a carpark at the rear of the site would have been more consistent with historic development in the area, locating the built form close to the street and parking to the rear would require a disproportionate area for driveways due to the 'L' shaped configuration of the site.

The proposed layout of the childcare centre has also been developed to meet requirements for secure outdoor play areas and clear lines of sight from the building to outdoor areas. It is noted that due to both the relatively steep slope of the site and the need for accessible paths of travel (to meet accessibility requirements), that there would be a substantial retaining wall to the west side (rear) of the site which would be highly visible from the railway. Whilst this would be a somewhat foreign element in views from the railway, it would be comparable with the retaining walls located on the opposite side of Bridge Street.

The proposal includes a bin enclosure at the northern end of the carpark where it would be located away from the office. The proposed location is understood to facilitate the provision of 27 parking bays and allow for efficient service vehicle movement. Whilst the enclosure would be located close to Bridge Street and the adjacent site, views to *Kildonan* from along Bridge Street would be maintained due to the structures limited size and its 1.5 metre setback from the front boundary.

The proposed childcare centre building would be modulated to better reflect the narrow frontages of historic development on the west side of Bridge Street which is a result of the relatively narrow width of the allotments. Two exceptions are the adjacent house *Kildonan* and Eaton's Hotel, though it is noted that these buildings are also modulated along their length by changes in the treatment of either the expressed roof or parapet.

The projecting entry wing (incorporating the foyer) of the proposed childcare building would similarly serve to break-up the perceived length of the building. The width of this projecting wing would be about 13 metres which is comparable with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses located to the south of the subject site which are about 12 metres wide. The rear part of the proposed building, which would be about 18 metres wider than the projecting wing when viewed from Bridge Street, would relate to the scale of *Kildonan* which has a street elevation that is approximately 16 metres long. Further, modulation of the rear portion of the proposed building would be achieved via a projecting gable end that would help to create a building with a rhythm/module that is sympathetic with the streetscape and the adjoining heritage house.

The height of the proposed single storey building has been proportioned to complement the forms of adjoining properties, particularly the adjacent house *Kildonan*. The childcare centre would have generous ceiling height reflective of early 20<sup>th</sup> century development in the Conservation Area. Further, the scale of the proposed building would be similarly modulated through the inclusion of a skillion verandah and a recessed porch to the front.

### **Massing and form of new development**

The massing and form of the proposed new childcare building has been developed to respond to historic buildings in the Conservation Area and soften the visual impact of the proposal. This includes the incorporation of simple gable roof forms to relate to the historic buildings in the Conservation Area generally which typically have either prominent hipped or gable roof forms that are widely visible from the street.

The proposed pitched roofs have been broken up into separate forms to reduce the perceived scale and limit the heritage impact on Bridge Street and the adjacent house *Kildonan*. Similarly, a traditional recessed porch form to the entry and a plain skillion verandah have been incorporated to reference the format of historic buildings, though they have restrained detailing and are a contemporary interpretation of more traditional forms.

The windows and door openings to the proposed childcare centre have been designed to balance functional lighting requirements and reflect the fenestration pattern evident in both the Conservation Area and *Kildonan*. Like the latter, the north and east elevations of the proposed building would incorporate vertically oriented window and door openings with a similar solid to void ratio similar to that of traditional buildings. The highlight windows above the verandah and square windows to the front projecting wing would read as contemporary elements with the former helping to naturally light the playrooms. These windows would have a fairly limited size such that they would not detract from the character of the Conservation Area.

**Materials for new development**

The proposed childcare centre would have a corrugated Colorbond roof and would largely be clad in horizontal boards (fibre cement) with some sections of bagged brickwork. The play store would also be clad in horizontal boards with a Colorbond skillion roof. The use of horizontal boards and corrugated roof sheeting would be sympathetic with the historic buildings in the Conservation Area which have a mix of roofs clad in corrugated metal sheeting and walls constructed of either timber or masonry. Only a small portion of bagged brickwork would be evident from Bridge Street where the brickwork on the southern elevation wraps around to enclose short section of the front (east) wall. This material would be sympathetic with historic rendered buildings in the area.

*Fencing*

To meet contemporary requirements for a childcare centre, it is necessary for the play area to be surrounded by a 1.8 metre high fence. A solid acoustic fence is proposed along the side and rear boundaries where they would have limited visibility from Bridge Street except for a short section adjacent to *Kildonan*.

A powdercoated aluminium picket fence and screen would be used to separate the play area from the carpark and would be partially screened by a hedge. The use of plain aluminium pickets is proposed as it would be a contemporary interpretation of traditional timber pickets and would be more sympathetic to the Conservation Area and *Kildonan* (which previously had a timber picket fence to the street) than a modern pool palisade fence or other solid fencing panel.

A 1.2 metre high glass fence is proposed to the front porch area to create the required safety zone. Whilst this type of fence is a contemporary type, it would be limited in extent and would therefore have limited impact on the character of the area.



## 8. Conclusion

The redevelopment of the former residential sites would involve substantial change, though the proposed new childcare building has been designed, where practicable, to limit impacts on the Muswellbrook Business Heritage Conservation Area and the adjacent identified heritage item *Kildonan*.

Use of the site for a childcare centre is consistent with the E2 Commercial Centre zoning with the existing residences no longer a desirable place to live, owing in part to the heavy traffic of the New England Highway. Whilst the demolition of the Federation period houses at 200 and 202 Bridge Street would result in the loss of historic building stock within the Conservation Area, the significance of the heritage listed area lies primarily with commercial buildings. Further, the northern end of the Conservation Area has already been negatively impacted by more recent development, including the substantial service station and fast food restaurants located opposite the subject site. It is also noted that there are also other more substantial groups of relatively intact Federation period houses located elsewhere in Muswellbrook which are not identified heritage items in the Muswellbrook LEP.

As the existing buildings were constructed as modest timber houses, their adaptation for commercial purposes poses some challenges and is not considered practicable for adaptation to a childcare centre. A purpose-built childcare facility is instead proposed. Key challenges with incorporating the existing houses into a new childcare centre include compliance issues and functional challenges due to mismatched floor levels and the awkward relationships between the buildings. Other challenges have also been discussed in this report.

It is acknowledged that the contemporary functional and statutory requirements of a childcare centre would mean that the proposed development incorporates a substantial carpark and large fenced play areas which are not features of historic development in the Conservation Area. Whilst the location of the carpark at the rear of the site would be preferable, this is not considered practicable due to the lack of access from the rear and the need to efficiently accommodate 27 parking bays.

The proposed childcare building has been designed to respond to the character of the listed heritage area and the individually identified *Kildonan* located adjacent to the site. The incorporation of gable roofs together with traditional elements including the recessed porch and skillion verandah would help to reinforce the character of historic development in the Conservation Area. Further, the modulation of the built form, including a projecting bay and projecting front wing, would serve to reduce the perceived bulk of the proposed building, making it more sympathetic to the nearby heritage buildings.