

**Item name:** Summer Hill

**Location:**

Dungog

**Address:**

**Planning:** Hunter & Central Coast

**Suburb/nearest town:** Munni 2420

**Local govt area:** Dungog

**State:** NSW

**Parish:**

**County:**

**Other/former names:**

**Area/group/complex:**

**Group ID:**

**Aboriginal area:**

**Curtilage/boundary:**

**Item type:** Complex / Group

**Group:** Farming and Grazing

**Category:** Agriculture

**Owner:** State Government

**Admin codes:**

**Code 2:**

**Code 3:**

**Current use:**

**Former uses:**

**Assessed significance:** Local

**Endorsed significance:**

**Statement of significance:** Summer Hill is a record of the occupation of the land by the Fisher family since the purchase of the land from Archibald Mosman in 1856. Four generations of the Fisher family have farmed the land during this time until its sale to the Hunter Water Board in 1986 for the proposed Tillegra Dam. William Souter Fisher and his wife Jessie (nee McLennan) who were free settlers were the first generation of the Fisher family and successive generations of the family have owned and farmed the land at Summer Hill, Duncan Archibald Fisher then Bertie Fisher. Graham Stanley Fisher, was the last of the Fisher family to farm the land and in 1986 he sold the property to the Hunter Water Board for the proposed Tillegra Dam.

The demolition of the outbuildings after 1986 and destruction by fire of the house in 1998 has diminished the aesthetic significance of the property, though the remaining structures such as the dairy and yards allow the interpretation of the property and its farming practices. The dairy and original post and rail yards are important early structures and record the use of the property for dairying and beef cattle. The post and rail yards of hand hewn timber and capping rail are a rare element in the local area and increasingly rare in NSW and the slab wall construction in the dairy is an increasing rare building type. The burial site records the families associated with the property and the high rate of infant death.

Summer Hill is valued by descendants of the Fisher family and the local community as a property of historical importance in the Dungog area.

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**Historical notes of provenance:** The land on which Summer Hill is sited was granted to Archibald Mosman who failing to improve the land as a condition of the grant was forced to sell the land at auction in 1856. William Souter Fisher purchased the one block and then subsequently added to his land holdings. William Fisher married Jessie McLennan and they had 5 daughters and two sons. Both were free settlers, William had come from England on the "John Beresford". He initially settled and worked in the Gresford area for a Mr Crowther. William and Jessie's daughters married and left the Munni district and the two sons remained. One at Underbank and the other on Summer Hill. (William is Lorna Johnson's Great Grandfather). Duncan Archibald Fisher inherited the property and he had two sons William and Bertie Austin Fisher. Bertie is Lorna Johnson's father and he continued to farm Summer Hill and died in 1984. Graham Stanley Fisher, Bertie's son, sold the property to the Hunter Water Board in 1986.

The farm practices during the years of occupation have included dairying, beef cattle production and growing of vegetables and lucerne hay.

A number of earlier structures have been destroyed since 1986. These include the homestead which was destroyed by fire in 1998. The hay shed, ceamery, tool shed and garage were all demolished. The only remaining intact structures on the property are a recent three bedroom brick cottage, a dairy and adjoining yards including a cattle race and earlier yards and .

There are burial sites that are unmarked graves on the property and these include:

- John Fisher who died as an infant in 1863. He was the tenth child of William and Jessie Fisher.
- Mary Ann Henwood (nee Cowling) 1816-1863, wife of William Henwood.
- John McKenzie Keppie 1867-1870, third child of James and Johanna Keppie.
- Jessie Winifred Simmons 1872-1873, third child of William Foord and Elizabeth Simmons.
- Richard Ford Simmons 1874-1877, fourth child of William Foord and Elizabeth Simmons.
- A baby Fisher 189, 8th child of William Foord and Elizabeth Simmons.

(letter and oral. Lorna Johnson 2013)

The property including the burial site is currently owned by Hunter Water Corporation and was purchased for use as a part of the proposed Tillegra Dam.

Themes:	National theme	State theme	Local theme
	3. Economy	Agriculture	
	3. Economy	Agriculture	
	4. Settlement	Land tenure	
	4. Settlement	Utilities	
	9. Phases of Life	Persons	
	9. Phases of Life	Birth and Death	

**Designer:****Builder:****Year started:****Year completed:****Circa:** No

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**Physical description:** A number of earlier structures have been destroyed since 1986. These include the homestead which was destroyed by fire in 1998. The hay shed, creamery, tool shed and garage were all demolished. The only remaining intact structures on the property are a recent three bedroom brick cottage, a dairy and adjoining yards and cattle race and earlier yards cattle yards.

The homestead is described by Lorna Johnson as a four bedroom weatherboard house. The homestead and outbuildings are photographed and described in the Heritage Study 1986 as "Large old timber house, probably c.1920. Symmetrical design with low pitched, bellcast roof. Corrugated iron, gambrelled on main ridge. Vernadach on three sides. Now partly enclosed. Fibro balustrade is also more recent? Simple timber posts and brackets. Gablet over entry. Timber and iron outbuildings of special note for their (vertical) rough slab construction. Visible in distance from road." There is little obvious evidence of the house except for building materials strewn on the site and remnant garden plants.

The existing brick house is a recent building. The dairy is extant and is a timber framed building of bush timber construction. It is supported with log posts and sappling rafters and clad in galvanised iron. A section of the dairy which may have been pens for calves or storage area is clad with split slabs and is partially collapsed. The bails are separated with timber circular sawn boards with evidence of a white wash finish. Hand forged fixtures such as hinges are evident.

The stock yards include the yards adjoining the dairy and the cattle race.

Earlier stockyards are evident to the west of the house. These are constructed with hand hewn timbers of post and rail construction with a high capping rail. The yards follow the natural terrain unlike later yards which are usually built on flat land.

The slab, foundations and drainage for the creamery are evident to the south of the dairy. This was built at some distance.

**Physical condition level:**

**Physical condition:** Dairy in fair to poor condition with partial collapse of slab building.

High level of archaeological potential for the identification of burial sites and identification and recording of all demolition sites including the homestead, creamery, hay shed and tool shed.

**Archaeological potential level:**

**Archaeological potential Detail:**

**Modification dates:**

**Recommended management:**

**Management:** Management category

**Management name**

**Further comments:**

**Criteria a):** Summer Hill is a record of the occupation of the land by the Fisher family from the purchase of the land from Archibald Mosman in 1856. Four generations of the Fisher family have farmed the land during this time until its sale to the Hunter Water Board in 1986 for the proposed Tillegra Dam.

**[Historical significance]**

The extant and remnant building sites and cattle yards record the use of the property for dairying and beef cattle.

The burial site records the families associated with the property and the rate of infant deaths.

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**Criteria b):** Summer Hill property is associated with Archibald Mosman as part of the first European land grant. From 1856 until 1986 the property is associated with the Fisher family. William Souter Fisher and his wife Jessie (nee McLennan) who were free settlers were the first generation of the Fisher family. Duncan Archibald Fisher and then Bertie Fisher owned Summer Hill. Graham Stanley Fisher, Bertie's son, sold the property to the Hunter Water Board in 1986.

**Criteria c):** The demolition of the outbuildings and destruction of the house has diminished the technical significance of the property. The remaining structures such as the dairy and yards allow the interpretation of the property and its farming practices. The dairy and original post and rail yards are important early structures.

**Criteria d):** Summer Hill is valued by descendants of the Fisher family and the local community as a property of historical importance in the Dungog area.

**Criteria e):**  
[Research significance]

**Criteria f):** The post and rail yards of hand hewn timber and capping rail are a rare element in the local area and increasingly rare in NSW.  
The slab wall construction in the dairy is an increasing rare building type.

**Criteria g):**  
[Representative]

**Intactness/Integrity:** The homestead and a number of outbuildings have been demolished which has diminished the aesthetic and technical significance. There is documentary evidence of these buildings retained by Lorna Johnson in Dungog. There is enough physical and archaeological potential to interpret the property.

References:	Author	Title	Year
	Lorna Johnson	Letter to carste STUDIO	2013

Studies:	Author	Title	Number	Year
	Perumal, Wrathall & Mur	Dungog Heritage Study	R35	1986
	Carste Studio	Dungog Heritage Study Review	10	2013

Parcels:	Parcel code	Lot number	Section number	Plan code	Plan number
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**Latitude:** **Longitude:**

**Location validity:** **Spatial accuracy:**

**Map name:** **Map scale:**

**AMG zone:** **Easting:** **Northing:**

Listing:	Name	Title	Number	ListingDate
		Heritage study		

**Data entry:** Data first entered: 25/01/2013 Data updated: 19/11/2013 Status: Partial

**Item name:** Summer Hill

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**Image:**



**Caption:** Summer Hill

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**Image by:** Carste Studio

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