

Item name: Wade's Corn Flour Mill

Location:

Dungog

Address:

Planning: Hunter & Central Coast

Suburb/nearest town: Dungog 2420

Local govt area: Dungog

Parish:

State: NSW

County:

Other/former names: Cooreei Mill, Cooreei Corn

Area/group/complex:

Group ID:

Aboriginal area:

Curtilage/boundary:

Item type: Archaeological-Terrestrial

Group:

Category:

Owner:

Admin codes:

Code 2:

Code 3:

Current use: Unoccupied land

Former uses: Corn Mill

Assessed significance:

Endorsed significance: Local

Statement of significance: The study site is known for a brief but intense period of corn flour milling between 1878 and 1902. Until such time corn flour products were imported to Australia and the Cooreei mill was one of the first in the state to process locally grown corn. In addition, the scale of operations at the study site appears to far exceed other known historical mills in the same region such as Walker's or Corner's Mills. A notion that is reinforced by the fact that Wade's corn flour products could be purchased well into the 20th century. As the mill was dismantled and moved to Sydney in 1902 and the study site is located on a river bank, a natural feature that is prone to erosion, there is no strong indication of intact archaeological potential. If intact archaeological material is extant, the study site would be considered a locally significant resource to understanding the historical industries of Dungog.

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Historical notes of provenance: The Cooreei Corn and Flour Mill was owned by Wade and Co. A company established by John Wade and R. L. Alison. John Wade was born in Yorkshire, England around 1842, arriving in Sydney with his father and brothers in 1858. Prior to opening the mill Wade worked as a storekeeper in Forbes, then opened his own general store in Dungog. As the area grew an abundance of maize, Wade and Alison partnered to build a mill to process it locally, which had the benefit of giving better returns to the regional farmers.³ The mill was located on 8 acres of Mr Alison's land fronting the Williams River in Dungog. The mill was constructed in the late 1870s and a thorough report was made of it once it had begun producing wheat by 1878.⁴

The Cooreei mill was very well equipped and of solid construction. The cost of the building and the machinery and its erection was estimated at the time as being between £6000 and £7000. Determined to create a good product, the company head hunted their mill manager Mr Kenneth McDonald from the most notable Scottish flour company, Brown and Polson. Prior to his departure to Australia, McDonald put out a tender for the construction of machinery similar to that used by Brown and Polson for use in the Cooreei Mill. Messrs Thomas Reid and Sons of Paisley, Scotland constructed a 24 horsepower high pressure engine and it was shipped to Dungog. Other equipment on site consisted of, a hydraulic press, pump, pipes and two mechanised hoists. Other materials and equipment on site include sieves and shakers, two wooden pan 'runs' 63x6ft, 55 boxes with holes and lined with calico for draining, three 4ft high 10ft wide circular vats in the underground level. There was also a tank, boiler, French burr stones, printed yellow paper bags with inside skin for packaging, a wooden gauge, pre-cut timber and nails for making wooden cases big enough for 40 pounds of corn flour each.⁵

By 1902 the business and all equipment was moved and re-established in Newtown, Sydney, possibly due to the recent imposition of a federal tariff.⁶ The move dismayed the residents of Dungog as the John Wade was described as "a very prominent and public spirited tradesman" who had operated there for over 20 years. ⁷ Wade was also active in the local Methodist Church, founded the Dungog School of Arts and Williams River Steam and Navigation Co Ltd and twice unsuccessfully stood as a Protectionist for the Legislative Assembly. ⁸

After only a few years of business the company was purchased in 1908 by their main competitor in Australia, Brown and Polson. Although they continued selling products with the Wade brand name.⁹

³The Newcastle Herald 24th June 2010

⁴Maitland Mercury 20th July 1878, 15

⁵Maitland Mercury 20th July 1878, 15

⁶The Sydney Morning Herald 20th May 1902, 7

Clarence and Richmond Examiner 15th February 1902, 3

⁷Maitland Mercury 22nd June 1889, 3

⁸The Newcastle Herald 24th June 2010

⁹The Sydney Morning Herald 23rd December 1908, 6

The Sydney Morning Herald 22nd September 1911, 7

Themes:	National theme	State theme	Local theme
	3. Economy	Agriculture	
	3. Economy	Industry	

Designer: Wade and Co - John Wade and R. L. Alison with input from mill manager Mr Kenneth McDonald

Builder:

Year started: 1878

Year completed:

Circa: Yes

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Physical description: In 1878 the main structure of the former mill was a substantial weatherboarded wooden building with ironbark piles located 'just opposite to Dungog on the bank of the Williams River' on 8 acres of Mr Alison's estate. The mill was a four storey building that consisted of three flats or floors above the surface of the ground and one below. The flooring of the upper flats was of hardwood and the ground floor was partly of cement and asphalt. The three 3 upper flats were 120 ft long and 40 ft wide, the "ground flat 90 ft long by the same width, the whole length of the building not having been excavated." Which could imply the basement level is smaller in dimensions than the upper floors. The outbuildings on site had brick walls and the whole establishment was roofed with galvanised iron. The outbuildings included an engine house and a one storey drying house that contained a boiler, was 70x20ft and one of a possible two. There is also the possibility that tanks were excavated from natural rock.

Physical condition level:

Physical condition: The study site is currently unoccupied, vegetated land within a broader estate.

Archaeological potential level:

Archaeological potential Detail:

Modification dates: The mill machinery was dismantled and moved to Newtown, Sydney in 1902.

Recommended management:

Management:	Management category	Management name
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Further comments:

Criteria a): The study site is considered locally significant according to this criterion. The Wade and Co mill and its own brand of corn flour was established and popularised on the study site. Although the mill operated there for only twenty years before moving to Sydney, it represented a significant feat of industry for NSW at a time when corn flour was an imported product. Wade's corn flour products have persisted as a brand well into the 20th century and its origins lie with the maize of local farmers and the entrepreneurial zeal of two local businessmen, John Wade and Robert Alison.

Criteria b):
[Historical association significance]

Criteria c):
[Aesthetic/ Technical significance]

Criteria d):
[Social/Cultural significance]

Criteria e): The study site is considered locally significant according to this criterion from an archaeological perspective as the superstructure is no longer standing. However this assessment is dependent on the discovery of extant archaeology.

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Criteria f): The study site is considered potentially locally significant according to this criterion. Mills were not uncommon in the Dungog area during the 19th century however the Cooreei mill was possibly one of the largest and most ambitious incarnations of a flour mill in the region or the state. Therefore the archaeological signature of the study site could be considered rare due to the sheer scale of operation.

[Rarity]

Criteria g):
[Representative]

Intactness/Integrity: The study site is considered locally significant according to this criterion. Site inspection was conducted from Stroud Hill Road and Cooreei Bridge. No above ground evidence of the former mill was visible although there was possible evidence of land modifications related to water diversion for milling. Whilst the superstructure of the site was dismantled, the site retains some archaeological potential, which if found in tact would be considered locally significant.

References:	Author	Title	Year
	Maitland Mercury and Hunter River G	20th July 1878, 8th April 1876	
	The Newcastle Herald	24th June 2010	
	The Sydney Morning Herald	20th May 1902, 23rd December 1908, 22nd September 1911	
	The Clarence and Richmond Examiner	15th February 1902	

Studies:	Author	Title	Number	Year
	Perumal, Wrathall & Murj	Dungog Heritage Study		1986
	Carste Studio	Dungog Heritage Study Review	22	2013

Parcels:	Parcel code	Lot number	Section number	Plan code	Plan number
	LOT	26		DP	1138012

Latitude:

Longitude:

Location validity:

Spatial accuracy:

Map name:

Map scale:

AMG zone:

Easting:

Northing:

Listing: Name

Title
Heritage study

Number

ListingDate

Data entry: Data first entered: 30/04/2013

Data updated: 19/11/2013

Status: Partial

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Image:



Caption: Wade's Corn Flour Mill - approximate site area

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Image by: AMAC

Image date:

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/3457a3ace7f1ad543f78d591586e8599149.jpg>

Thumbnail url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/Thumb_test3457a3ace7f1ad543f78d591586e8599149.jpg

Item name: Wade's Corn Flour Mill

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Image:



Caption: Wade's Corn Flour Mill - possible evidence of water diversion for milling on site

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Image by: AMAC

Image date:

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/345566b2af583e848039e91b400bc17e12f.jpg>

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