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Hobart Tasmania 7001
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Name: Brownfield
Status: Permanently Registered
Tier: State

THR ID Number: 12070
Municipality: West Tamar Council
Boundary: CPR11352

Location Addresses

30 BROWNFIELD LANE, RIVERSIDE 7250 TAS
30 BROWNFIELD LANE, RIVERSIDE 7250 TAS

Title References

28403/6
19137/2

Property Id

6054480
6054480



Main house, Brownfield
©2016 NRET



Weatherboard dairy and shed, Brownfield
©2016 NRET



Barn, Brownfield
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Barn, Brownfield
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Statement of Significance: (non-statutory summary)

Statement of Significance: Brownfield demonstrates patterns of rural land ownership and management, including the granting of grasslands to early-nineteenth-century graziers, the development of tenant farming and the evolution of the dairy industry. For most of its history it was part of the larger estate of Cormiston (THR#5681), but it was equipped as an independent farm. It was a tenant farm for more than 60 years from the convict probation period into the post-transportation era, when large landholders needed cheap immigrant labour to develop their properties. Although now badly damaged by fire, the c1840 main house at Brownfield is a rare example of a surviving timber homestead on a major early-nineteenth-century pastoral property. The site of

'Boney's house', a former 1820s stockman or overseer's hut, and the site of the possible convict worker's hut have the potential to contain surface and sub-surface deposits which may contribute to an understanding of the diet and living conditions of early-nineteenth-century workers and their families. The jetty site at Haystack Point may contain archaeological deposits pertaining to the movement of produce, armaments and explosives. It may contribute to an understanding of nineteenth-century water transport and freight haulage. Early construction techniques may be revealed at all three archaeological sites. Brownfield demonstrates the principal characteristics of a nineteenth-century farming complex, with a main house, worker's residence, dairy, milking shed and barns. In addition, archaeological sites exist of an early-nineteenth-century stockman's/manager's house and outbuilding and what is possibly an assigned convict worker's hut. This suite of features builds a picture of two centuries of pastoralism. Brownfield has a special association with the St Andrew's Immigration Society. Several Scottish immigrant families assisted by this society developed Brownfield as a tenant farm, its owner Archibald Thomson being one of the society's proponents.

Why is it significant?:

The Heritage Council may enter a place in the Heritage Register if it meets one or more of the following criteria from the Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995:

a) The place is important to the course or pattern of Tasmania's history.

Brownfield demonstrates patterns of rural land ownership and management, including the granting of grasslands to early-nineteenth-century graziers, the development of tenant farming and the evolution of the dairy industry. For most of its history it was part of the larger estate of Cormiston, owned by the Thomson family, but it was equipped as an independent farm. Its fertile grasslands and proximity to Launceston made it ideally placed to supply the town's need for dairy produce and meat. It was a tenant farm for more than 60 years from the convict probation period into the post-transportation era, when large landholders needed cheap immigrant labour to develop their properties.

b) The place possesses uncommon or rare aspects of Tasmania's history.

Although now badly damaged by fire, the c1840 main house at Brownfield is a rare example of a surviving timber homestead on a major early-nineteenth-century pastoral property.

c) The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Tasmania's history.

The site of 'Boney's house', a former 1820s stockman or overseer's house and outbuilding, and the site of the possible convict worker's hut have the potential to contain surface and sub-surface deposits which may contribute to an understanding of the diet and living conditions of early-nineteenth-century workers and their families. The jetty site at Haystack Point may contain archaeological deposits pertaining to the movement of produce, armaments and explosives. It may contribute to an understanding of nineteenth-century water transport and freight haulage. Early construction techniques may be revealed at all three archaeological sites.

d) The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of place in Tasmania's history.

Brownfield demonstrates the principal characteristics of a nineteenth-century farming complex, with a main house, worker's residence, dairy, milking shed and barns. In addition, archaeological sites exist of an early-nineteenth-century stockman's/manager's house and outbuilding and what is possibly an assigned convict worker's hut. This suite of features builds a picture of two centuries of pastoralism. However, the ability of the main house to demonstrate the principal characteristics of a Victorian Georgian house has been compromised by the 2016 fire.

e) The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement.

No Data Recorded

f) The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social or spiritual reasons.

No Data Recorded

g) The place has a special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Tasmania's history.

Brownfield has a special association with the St Andrew's Immigration Society. Several Scottish immigrant families assisted by this society developed Brownfield as a tenant farm, its owner Archibald Thomson being one of the society's proponents.

h) The place is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

No Data Recorded

Heritage approval is required for work that will result in changes to the nature or appearance of the fabric of a Heritage place, both internal and external.

Please refer to the Heritage Council's Works Guidelines (www.heritage.tas.gov.au) for information about the level of approval required and appropriate outcomes.

Heritage Advisors are also available to answer questions and provide guidance on enquiries@heritage.tas.gov.au or Tel 1300850332

This data sheet is intended to provide sufficient information and justification for listing the place on the Heritage Register. Under the legislation, only one of the criteria needs to be met. The data sheet is not intended to be a comprehensive inventory of the heritage values of the place, there may be other heritage values of interest to the Heritage Council not currently acknowledged.

Setting:

Brownfield occupies flats along the Tamar River at Riverside north-east of Launceston. The easterly outlook from the property is across the wide river towards Newnham and Mowbray. The westerly outlook is to the twentieth-century hillside homes of Riverside. Another former Cormiston farm, Cleghorn (THR#5675), and the Windsor Park sports ground also buffer the farm, with only the West Tamar Council office buildings and one modern property development disturbing the rural setting.

Description:

The property extends about 1 km from the collection of farm buildings at the end of Brownfield Lane to the Tamar River. It contains drainage channels emptying into the Tamar. This is a whole of title registration (two titles), including the mature plantings.

Features of high significance

1. The **main house**. Although the c1840s main house seems modest externally, it has formal internal elements which suggest it was designed for someone of status. The house has two distinct parts. One is a single-storey timber Victorian Georgian home with a steeply-pitched hipped roof clad in sheets of corrugated iron. It features a wide-roofed verandah that has been filled in on two sides of the house. There are two corbelled brick chimneys, several six-paned double-hung windows and three Georgian French doors that provide sweeping views of the Tamar River. The interior features four-panelled blackwood doors, two simple Georgian fluted fireplaces and a later Victorian fireplace, a skylight over the main entrance leading into a wide hall, and lath and plaster walls and ceilings. This early section of the house was extensively damaged by fire in 2016.

The second, probably later, part of the main house has weatherboard walls and a hipped roof clad in sheets of corrugated iron with a skillion at the back. At the front it has a small enclosed porch and one 12-paned double hung sash window, plus a bay of three single-pane double hung sash windows. There are two corbelled brick chimneys. One wall has faux brick cladding. Internally it features Baltic pine walls and ceilings, with some dado panelling. The main house at Brownfield faces the river, suggesting that the original driveway, a continuation of the present Brownfield Lane, curved around to the river side of the building, where there was probably a carriage circle. It is possible that the second section of the house discussed above was originally the separate kitchen building with two additional rooms which existed in 1858 during WD Grubb's tenancy.

2. A **split-paling cottage** with a hipped roof of corrugated iron sheets. This building, now derelict, is probably a nineteenth-century worker's or farm manager's cottage. Several 'men's huts' existed by 1858.

Features of contributory significance

Although none of these features is considered to be of high significance in its own right, they all have contributory significance. These include

1. The **suite of farm buildings** includes two barns with gabled roofs clad in sheets of corrugated iron. One is a split-timber broken-back building; the other is clad in sheets of corrugated iron but has shingles beneath the present roof.

2. A **weatherboard dairy** with a sliding door in the manner of a granary or packing shed. The roof of the dairy was raised to accommodate boat building (Lee 2008).

3. A **dilapidated timber milking shed**.

4. A **concrete stock loading ramp with timber railings**.

Exclusions from the registration

1. **Modern farm buildings** are considered to have little or no heritage significance.

2. A **small, separate title (221759/1)** within the north-eastern corner of the property near the Tamar River, the site of the former Tamar (Cormiston) Battery, is excluded from the registration, as it is proposed to be registered separately (THR#5684).

Archaeological sites

The site of 'Boney's house' would have been the house and stable or barn of William Field's overseer in the years c1829–31 (Devon 4 map). The location of the buildings is approx. 508449E, 5416402N. The same map marks two buildings on George Lawson's location. One is presumably Lawson's house, but it sits outside the present boundaries of Brownfield. The site of the other, smaller hut is on present-day Brownfield at approx. 508443E, 5416804N. This may have been an assigned convict worker's hut. Haystack Point (508929E, 5416907N), at the north-eastern edge of the property on the Tamar River, is believed to be the site of a jetty which once served the property and the Tamar Battery. Remains of footings or other associated jetty features may exist there.

History:

The West Tamar area is the country of the North Midlands Aboriginal nation (Ryan 2012, pp.29–31). The property now known as Brownfield was selected as three parcels of land, 100 acres located to George Lawson (c1754–1827), 100 acres located to Olivia Lucas née Gascoigne (1763–1830) and 200 acres located to her son Nathaniel Lucas junior (1793–1875). Lawson served as Chief Constable at Launceston, while Olivia and Nathaniel Lucas senior (1764–1818) were ex-convict First Fleeters who were among those chosen to pioneer settlement at Norfolk Island in 1788.

Nathaniel Lucas senior became a significant builder in early Sydney (Herman 1967), training his Norfolk-Island-born sons in that profession, but after his death the remaining Lucas family moved to Van Diemen's Land. Lawson drowned in the Tamar River near his farm in 1827, leaving a wife and four young children (Death certificate 1827; 'Accident' 1827). Nathaniel Lucas junior preferred the building trade to grazing ('Notice' 1836). He and his brother William, for example, constructed a windmill on Windmill Hill in 1817 (Editorial 1817). By 1829 the Lucases' property was owned by ex-convict Launceston hotelier, William Field, who had a bullock team at work presumably ploughing it ('Ten pounds reward' 1829). Field would have valued grazing land close to Launceston for the production of meat and dairy products for his hotel. An undated Devon 4 map places 'Boney's house' (two buildings) on Olivia Lucas's location (Devon 4 Map). This would have been the hut and stable of Field's overseer, who was either Joseph Bonney junior (1801–61) or his brother John Atkins Bonney (1799–1875).

Archibald Thomson (c1795–1865)

Archibald Thomson was recommended as a settler in Van Diemen's Land in May 1821 ('Recommendation of settlers' 1821, p.2). He migrated from Edinburgh, Scotland in 1822 on the Castle Forbes and was located land on the West Tamar which he named Cormiston (THR#5681), presumably after his native place in Scotland. Thomson opened a store in Cameron Street, Launceston, married fellow Scottish immigrant Agnes Ralston ('Married' 1828) and farmed with the benefit of assigned convict labour, Cormiston being well placed to supply nearby Launceston with produce. However, frontier life contained challenges. Violent conflict between Europeans and Aborigines as the latter were dispossessed of their land peaked in the late 1820s, with 70 attacks on the 'Settled Districts' in the period September 1827 to March 1828 alone (Ryan 2012, p.98). In November 1827 one of Thomson's assigned convict shepherds was speared to death by Aborigines while they robbed his hut ('The country post' 1827). Escaped convicts in need of food also took advantage of forest cover to attack settlers. In February 1830 Thomson's home at Cormiston was robbed by bushrangers Bevan and Britton, who kidnapped Fagan, one of his servants (Editorial 1830).

Brownfield was a later addition to the Cormiston Estate, with Thomson buying Olivia and Nathaniel Lucas's locations from William Field in 1831 (conveyance 1/989) and gaining Lawson's by exchanging it for another lot in 1836 (conveyance 1/5793). The Thomsons were in Scotland 1832–36, where their first son John Thomson was born, but at the time of the 1843 census the family lived in a timber house at Cormiston. There were 28 people on the premises, 12 of them convicts (CEN1/1/68/127A and 128A, TA), suggesting that the Thomsons were undertaking a substantial farming operation.

William Grubb's tenancy

Like other landholders, Thomson found that in the probation era, with convict labour harder to find, he needed tenant farmers to keep his large property viable. Engaging tenant farmers was a way for a landowner to develop his property without paying for the work. Cormiston was divided up into several farms. When exactly the main house at Brownfield was built is unknown but a likely date for the earliest section is by 1842 when Archibald Thomson's fellow Scottish immigrant JA Learmonth was either managing or leasing the property (Advert 1842). The next tenant (1843–58) at Brownfield was London-born attorney, politician and entrepreneur William Dawson (WD) Grubb (1817–79). At this time the 200-acre property was divided into eleven paddocks ('For sale' 1853; 'To be disposed of' 1858). Grubb took advantage of nearby Launceston's need of dairy produce. Brownfield featured a six-roomed cottage with a large dairy, a separate kitchen with two rooms attached, two large rooms used for cheesemaking, a ten-stall stable with barn and stone granary, men's huts, a cow shed and other outbuildings. In the days before the invention of the cream separator a dairy meant not a milking shed but a room where pans of milk were left to set on benches as part of the process of producing cream, butter and cheese. In pre-refrigeration times, the most important thing was to keep the milk cool so that it did not spoil. Grubb appears to have left the property fifteen years into a twenty-year lease at a rental of £150 per annum ('To be disposed of' 1858).

Scottish immigrant tenant farmers

The Thomsons were involved in the St Andrew's Society, a body formed to celebrate Scottish heritage and culture. In 1854 its committee launched the St Andrew's Immigration Society, which in the years up to 1862 aimed to introduce to Van Diemen's Land 'a superior class of yeomen and servants from our native land' ('St Andrew's Society' 1854). For the editor of the *People's Advocate* this was a Brisbane Street clique bringing in cheaper and more compliant labour—virtual slaves—to replace that which was already available ('The working classes' 1855). Not surprisingly, Society member James Aikenhead, in his role as *Launceston Examiner* editor, supported this recruitment of extra labour, believing that the Scottish immigrants would soon pay for themselves in tax revenue and wages: 'The farm labourer, if of the right sort, is sure to rise to be a tenant farmer, and at length the occupier of land belonging to himself and the employer of labour' (Aikenhead 1861). Before embarking on their voyage the chosen immigrants agreed to reimburse their passage money after arrival in Van Diemen's Land.

After Grubb's departure from Brownfield, there seems to have been a pattern of Thomson and his son tapping into a network of Scottish bounty immigrants for their tenants. The first were James and Catherine Patterson, who with their children were St Andrew's immigrants, James Patterson senior having been a 'farm servant' in Scotland (CB7/12/112, book 47, p.122). In 1861 James J Patterson (that is, presumably James Patterson senior) leased 80 acres from Thomson (Assessment roll 1861). In 1869 29-year-old James Moray Patterson (that is, James Patterson junior) seems to have taken over and enlarged his father's lease to 370 acres (Assessment roll 1869). He married 23-year-old Martha Cheek at the Independent Church, Launceston, in 1870 (Marriage registration 1870).

John Thomson (1836–99) takes over from his father

Archibald Thomson died in 1865, his estate then being valued at about £6000 (Will no. AD960/1/7/1130, TA). James Moray Patterson's landlord was the former's son, John Thomson of Cormiston, who had married Mary Catherine Denham (1837–88) in 1858. Patterson was gone by the time Thomson advertised the 6150-acre Cormiston Estate for sale in eight separate lots in November 1881. Lot 2, Brownfield, was one of several which were equipped to be operated independently as a farm, with its own cottage or house and associated farm buildings. Brownfield was described as 308 acres of 'rich bottom land, divided into 14 paddocks by post and rail fences'. The buildings seem to have been unchanged from Grubb's day, the property apparently being suited to both dairying and fattening beef cattle ('Cormiston Estate' 1881).

The estate was not sold. The next tenant appears to have been Scottish bounty immigrant John Kirkland (1848–1900), who in 1884 offered for sale his 150 acres of crops and unexpired lease. Ill health forced him to relinquish these ('Tenders' 1884). Kirkland had married another St Andrew's Immigration Society arrival, Isabella Beaton (1854–1903).

Next came Scottish bounty immigrant brothers Duncan (c1840–1916) and Donald Cameron (c1833–99), who arrived in Van Diemen's Land as part of another family introduced by the St Andrew's Immigration Society (CB7/12/1/5, book 26, pp.322–23). Donald married fellow immigrant Barbara McKenzie in 1876 when he was a Launceston publican before farming at Brownfield. In 1889 the Camerons promised the Launceston and Suburban Gun Club 'plenty of strong birds' for a shoot on the property ('The gun' 1889).

The Freeland family

By 1885 the mechanical milk separator which skimmed off the cream had ended the time-consuming process of setting milk in pans to allow the cream to rise (Cassidy 1995, p.10). This would have been a boon for the next

Brownfield tenants, native-born Samuel Freeland (1845–1912) and his native-born wife Sarah Freeland (1844?–1922), née Crisp, in the years c1890–1906. Samuel Freeland was the son of a Scottish immigrant, James Freeland.

Samuel and Sarah Freeland appear to have worked the property with their sons Ernest Freeland (1870–1940) and Sydney Douglas Freeland (1871–1940), the former continuing pigeon shoots there which attracted marksmen from across the colony. Ernest Freeland married Agnes Thomson, which meant that his landlord John Thomson was also his father-in-law. He was Legislative Councillor for Tamar 1919–37 and at one time was warden of West Tamar. The Freelands also ran sheep and bred racehorses.

John Denham Thomson (1864–1941) in occupation

The third generation of Thomsons inherited Cormiston, including Brownfield, in 1899, when John Thomson's five sons became the proprietors, with John Denham Thomson occupying and operating the estate. At this time the Freelands delivered milk to central Launceston by horse and jinker via the one-lane South Esk River bridge. In about 1906 they gave up Brownfield in favour of renting a large part of the late William Barnes' Trevallyn Estate. They later added one of the Cormiston farms, Cleghorn (THR#5675), to their holdings, giving them about 7000 acres. In 1935 the Freeland family celebrated 50 years of their Trevallyn Dairy by opening a modern new plant ('Trevallyn Dairy instals modern new plant to mark golden jubilee' 1935). During that same year, with John Denham Thomson perhaps ready to retire, Brownfield was offered for sale as a 195-acre dairy farm with an eight-room weatherboard dwelling, barns, cow shed, 33 stalls and loose boxes, and divided into sixteen paddocks ('Auctioneers' notices' 1935).

Brownfield has had a variety of owners over the last century while remaining a pastoral property. Dairying expanded from the 1940s, with electricity bringing increased mechanisation and saving labour. However, higher wages and smaller families also contributed to a reduction in the rural workforce, and a rationalisation of the industry. Since 1960 there has been an inverse relationship between the size of dairy herds and the number of dairy farms in Tasmania: in 1960 there were 6300 farms, in 1993 900 farms and in 2016 only 432 (Cassidy 1995, p.47; Newman et al 2016, p.7). From the 1980s Brownfield produced beef and veal rather than milk and cream. The historic main house was severely damaged by fire in 2016.

Comparative analysis: timber framed and weatherboard-clad buildings

Timber buildings of this period (c1840) are rare. The main house at Brownfield is a rare example of a surviving timber homestead on a major early-nineteenth-century pastoral property. The first homesteads on some properties, such as Huckamabad at Glencoe (THR#554) or Thompsons Villa at Enstone Park (THR#553), with split timber external walls, shingle roofs and lath and plaster interior walls, fell into disrepair and collapsed or were demolished long after they were replaced by a stone or brick main house. In other cases, such as at Woolmers (THR#5077), Kelvedon (THR#1562) and Mount Stuart (THR#4469), the original timber homestead was not abandoned but incorporated into a larger structure and thereby remained in use. The 1819 timber section of Woolmers and the 1829 Oyster-Bay-pine-walled section of Kelvedon are still in good repair today. Like the c1829 slab Cottage at Red Banks (THR#12020), the 1823 Brumbys Cottage at Richmond Hill (THR#5058) is a rare example of an early timber homestead still standing near its brick or stone replacement—the difference being that Brumbys Cottage has been used and maintained until recent times, whereas the Cottage was abandoned at least half a century ago and is now partly a ruin. Other early examples of timber buildings include 225a Collins Street, Hobart (THR#2236), said to date to the 1820/30s, whilst at Port Arthur Historic Site, the Shipwright's residence (THR#6 c1834) has survived, complete with internal brick nogging. The timber building attributed as the residence of Captain Swanston's secretary on Risdon Road, New Town (THR#2729) is also said to date to the 1840s, although an exact date has not been determined.

Comparative analysis: nineteenth-century farming estates

Brownfield is an intact example of a mid-nineteenth-century farming complex, with a c1840 main house, worker's residence, dairy, milking shed and barns. In addition, archaeological sites exist of an early-nineteenth-century stockman's/manager's house and outbuilding and what is possibly an assigned convict worker's hut. This suite of features builds a picture of two centuries of pastoralism.

Similarly, **Glencoe** at Falmouth (THR#12019) demonstrates the characteristics of a mid-nineteenth-century farm, featuring a colonial-era Georgian rural house, the archaeological remains of the earliest (c1829) house and two historic dairy buildings. The two dairy buildings there have moderate integrity. Together with the homestead, the Steel family cemetery and the archaeological site of Huckamabad, they demonstrate the evolution of a farming property from its earliest days in a relatively remote location through a long period of dairying and cheese production.

A similar example of a rural property demonstrating this class of place is **Red Banks** (THR#12020) near Swansea, which features successive nineteenth-century main houses, a barn, an animal shelter, a shearing shed, blacksmith's shop, the ruins of workers' quarters, the site of a shepherd's hut, remnants of an early orchard and mature plantings.

Kelvedon (THR#11994) and **Cambria** (THR#12021) near Swansea exhibit a similar range of early colonial farming estate features. **Cambria** has an 1835 stone main house, brick stables, timber barn, timber shearing shed, relatively intact orchard, nut trees and other mature plantings. **Kelvedon** has a house dating from 1829, early stone stable, Oyster Bay pine shearing shed, Dutch barn and stone workers' cottage.

Woodstock at Triabunna (THR#12001) features an 1830s homestead, stone stables, Oyster-Bay-pine-framed barn, the substantial remains of a eucalyptus distillery and the archaeological sites of a men's shed and two shepherds' huts.

There are a few more complete examples of early colonial farming estates such as **Woolmers** and **Brickendon**. Each of these demonstrates the granting of savannah woodlands to 'respectable' wool-growers as part of the convict assignment system, as well as the features of an early colonial mixed farming operation. They demonstrate traditional early nineteenth-century concerns with finding a settlement site that commanded fresh water, shelter, a fine prospect of the surrounding area and in the case of the East Coast properties, access to shipping.

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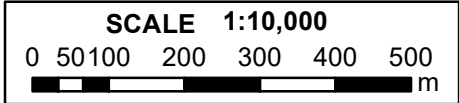
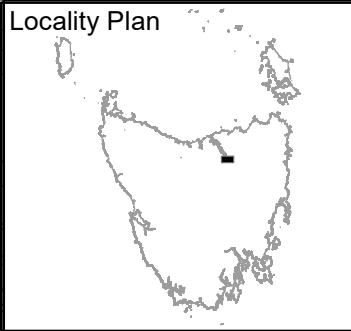
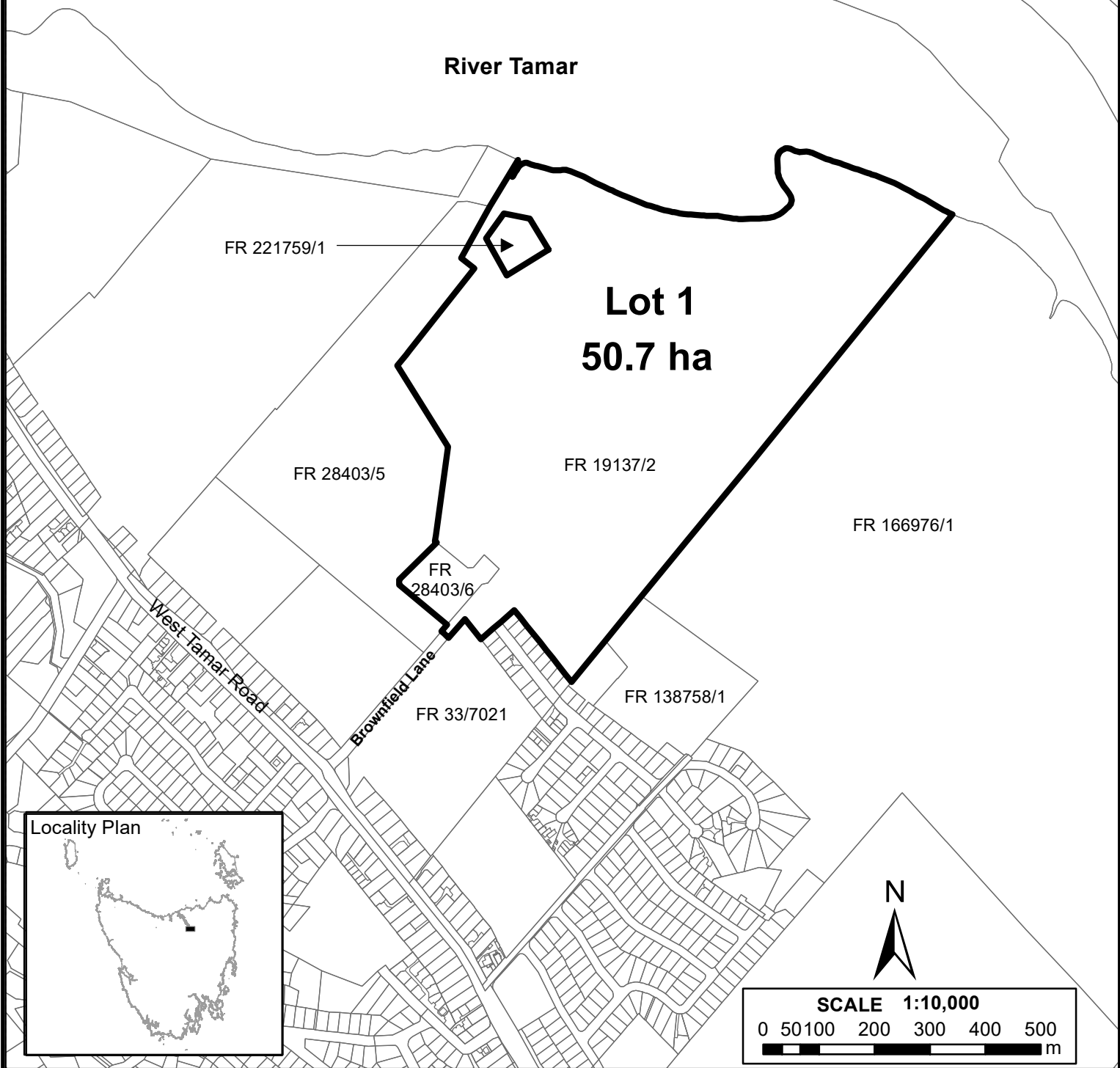
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Note


1. Lot 1 represents the registered boundary for 'Brownfield', #12070 on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.
2. Lot 1 is the whole of parcels of FR 28403/6 & 19137/2, the boundaries of which are marked by a heavy black line.
3. All boundaries are parcel boundaries unless otherwise stated, details of individual land parcel boundaries may be accessed through the Land Information System Tasmania (LIST).




TASMAP: LAUNCESTON - 5041		GRID: MGA94 / ZONE 55		DATUM: AHD		CONTOUR INTERVAL: N/A	
No.	PRODUCTION / AMENDMENT	AUTHORITY	REFERENCE	DRAWN	APPROVED	DATE	 Tasmania
1	Production	THC	12070	AW	M.RICHARDSON	28.4.23	

Brownfield
 30 Brownfield Lane, Riverside


PREPARED BY
 HERITAGE TASMANIA



CENTRAL PLAN REGISTER

p.p. Surveyor General: 

Date Registered: 1.5.23



CPR
11352