

8th August 2013

DRAFT



Mr Roger Bailey
General Manager
Lithgow City Council
PO Box 19
Lithgow NSW 2790

Blue Mountains

10 Asquith Avenue
Wentworth Falls 2782
Phone 02 4757 1856
Fax 02 4757 4335

**RE : LEP 2013
Inclusion of Lidsdale House and Garden on the Heritage
Schedule.**

Dear Mr Bailey,

Thankyou for your letter informing Centennial Coal of the proposed continuation of the existing Heritage listing on the above house and garden into the new LEP 2013 Schedule 5.

I have been asked to respond to Lithgow Council on behalf of Centennial Coal, as their heritage consultant, with regard to the extent of listing and the nature of the listing.

It is understood that the building was added to the Lithgow Heritage Register under the current LEP 1994 in 1997. The building is currently identified as having significance under the State Criterion a) historical, c) Aesthetic, and d) Social significance.

The first part of the house was built in 1920, and was extended in 1940-41, and to incorporate a kitchen and laundry wing, and then in the late 1940's to provide the upper level flat linking the kitchen wing and workshop into the one building.

The gardens were a feature of the property from the 1920's onwards as Mrs Violet Neubeck was a keen gardener and had already established substantial gardens when they first engaged Paul Sorenson in the early 1940's. The first works of Sorenson were to provide the cascade and pergola to the North west of the house. The large terraces and retaining walls were constructed in the 1950s when Sorenson was reengaged to finish the garden.

The buildings were designed by Francis Neubeck, whose good friend Arthur Isely (a Carpenter / builder) helped him with the design and construction. It is possible that Arthur Isely was likely to be the son of a local architect William Alfred Isley who had been prominent in the Victorian and Edwardian period and designed buildings in Lithgow around the turn of the 19th century. Charles Nuebeck (Oral interview Jan 2012) was very clear that Arthur Isely was not an architect, but a carpenter, and the Francis Neubeck was responsible for most of the design decisions.

Robert Fallon
BLA, Cert Hort, AAILA
Landscape Architect
Horticulturist

Margaret Fallon
B.Arch, RAIA
Nominated Architect
Heritage Consultant
BANSW 6056

Centennial Coal supports the continued listing of the building as a Local Heritage Item on Lithgow LEP 2013. We would however request the following updates to the inventory sheet.

1. Change historical notes to correct the reference to Arthur Isely as an Architect. He was a carpenter and simply helped put Francis Neubecks ideas into reality. It seems the building was a collaboration of their tastes and abilities.
2. Update the Historical information based on the attached timeline. Particularly to incorporate the high significance of the persons of the Neubeck Family through a century of work and prominence within the Lithgow Valley region, and the way the house represents this family.
2. Change Year Built to 1920, Year Completed to 1950.
3. Note Physical condition – Good
4. Add Modification Dates – 1990's lions gates, and internal refit of upper level and Kitchen.
6. Update the assessment of significance to include the attached schedule assessed in 2008 and updated in 2012. Include significance under Criterion b), e), f) and g).

We trust that this information is of assistance to you.

Yours Faithfully,



Margi Fallon
Heritage Consultant Architect

Suggested updated Assessment under the State Heritage Criteria

Criterion (a): an item is important in the course or pattern, NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

This item has HIGH historic significance and is assessed as rare on a local basis, as a unique local expression, not just the talents of the eminent Landscape Gardener, Sorensen, but of the combined inventive, cooperative talents of Sorensen, an eminent local businessman Francis Neubeck and his wife Violet. The item also has historic significance as the estate of the owner of the first Lidsdale Colliery and the founder of a number of homes and residential development in Lidsdale to support the mine.

Criterion (b): an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The Item has high Local significance for its association with Francis Neubeck and the Neubeck Family over the first half of the 20th Century, who were founders of the Lidsdale Colliery and prominent citizens in Lithgow in the 20th Century.

The item also has State significance for its association with Paul Sorenson who was a prominent garden designer in the early 20th century. The Garden displays two stages of Sorenson input reflecting his starting as a gardener and nurseryman, though his first small input into the cascade in 1940 then his later more established design credentials in the 1950's when he undertook the major garden reworking and land modulation works.

Criterion (c): an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in the local area.

The item has aesthetic significance and is assessed as rare on a local basis. The gardens are the only local example of the work of the eminent twentieth century Landscape Gardener, Paul Sorensen. The Gardens remain highly intact retaining most of the mature trees, drainage and cascade systems, retaining walls and plantings.

The original house and extensions are a unique example of the design creativity of Francis Neubeck and his wife, with the best examples of high quality interiors from the 1920 / interwar era in the first part of the house through to the late interwar dining and ballrooms, and the early post war moderne styling of the upper level apartments and terrace room. The built form represents both the local environment and response to the surrounds utilizing local stone, and also the modern entrepreneurial spirit and gardening prowess of the owners, in the provision of the large cellar, modern (for 1940) laundry, boiler heating system, terrace room and glass house.

The house further reflects the Neubeck Family in the cast concrete planter boxes bearing the names of the children and the war memorial honour motif for William Neubeck who was lost in battle during the second world war.

The house demonstrates technical achievement in the laundry drying system, the water supply system for the house and garden irrigation, the building techniques to achieve the concrete and glass block terraces and basement cellar, the recycled water system for the cascade and dam, the retaining wells to protect mature trees when the 1950 garden was installed, the underground cisterns, etc

Criterion (d): An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in the area, for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

This item has social significance and is assessed as representative on a local basis". The place is strongly associated with the establishment of Lidsdale, and with the life and social and philanthropic activities of the Neubeck family whose property established Lidsdale as a place, and who regularly opened their gardens for public swimming, weddings and garden parties for the people of Lithgow.

Criterion (e): an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the area's cultural or natural history.

The information available from this place is unavailable anywhere-else locally. Lidsdale House and Gardens are unique locally, in demonstrating the collaborative achievement of local Business Leader Francis Neubeck and his wife Violet, and Paul Sorenson Landscape Gardener and designer.

Ongoing research of the garden will inform future studies into the design methodologies and techniques of Paul Sorenson, helped by the entrepreneurial and engineering mind of Francis Neubeck.

It is an important benchmark site locally and meets the inclusion guidelines under this criterion.

Criterion (f): an item possess uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the area's cultural or natural history.

This place is rare locally in demonstrating designs or techniques of exceptional interest to the wider community and is the only local example of a known, important type. It demonstrates the type of early twentieth century life lived by a wealthy local mining entrepreneur. The property is the only local source of information about the designs of Paul Sorensen. It meets the inclusion guidelines under this criterion.

Criterion (g): an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of the areas cultural or natural places.

The gardens have high Local significance because it is an intact and recognizable high quality example of the principal characteristics of the highly-significant group of Paul Sorensen garden designs, including Everglades in the Blue Mountains. It is also locally significant because of its

setting, size and integrity. It meets the inclusion guidelines under this criterion.

(Assessment of significance established by ERA Heritage Urban Design and Planning 2008, and updated Integrated Design Associates 2012)

Chronology of Significant Events to assist in informing Historic analysis

- 1821 Alois (Aloysius) Joseph Neubeck born (16th August) at Dorfprozelten, Beher, Bavaria, Germany. Alois allegedly educated due to his ability to read and write.
- 1822 James Walker took up his extensive land grant to the northwest of Lithgow and named it Wallerawang.
- 1824 Clara Seus born (8th August) at Dorfprozelten, Beher, Bavaria, Germany
- 1851 Alois Joseph Neubeck married Clara Seus.
- 1851-1854 Alois and Clara Neubeck had two baby boys who died before travelling to Australia.
- 1854 Booming gold rush in Australia.
Alois and Clara board ship 'Peru' in Hamburg, Germany with their son Thomas. Thomas died on journey to NSW.
- 1855 'Peru' arrives in NSW on May 23rd, Alois age 33 and Clara age 30. Immigrant registration lists Alois Neubeck as a Vinedresser.
- 1856 Alois and Clara's fourth child Mary Anne born March 5th at Wallerawang.
- 1855-1858 Alois Neubeck worked for the Walker family at Wallerawang as the master blacksmith and built his first residence at 'Wet Swamp' on walker's property. This house was likely constructed from Wattle and Daub and was located approximately 150 yards from the viaduct and 40 yards from the road.
- 1858 Mary Anne died January 6th and was buried at Walker's graveyard.
Alois set up his independent blacksmith workshop at Wet Swamp and became well known to travellers along the Mudgee Road.
Louisa 5th child born of Alois and Clara on July 8th.
- 1859 George, 6th child born August 28th.
- 1860 George died March 16th and buried beside Mary Anne at Walker's Graveyard.
- 1861 Francis Anthony born December 18th.
- 1862 Alois and Clara and family move to Blackman's Flat (mid 1862)
Alois Neubeck purchased Portion No. 14 of 'The Parish of Cox, Blackman's Flat' on February 4th. The land portion contained 60 acres and was purchased for £60.
Alois built the family home at Blackman's Flat, which originally contained 2 rooms and a verandah (this was extended at a later date). This consisted of stone rubble construction – from uncut stone and held with mud packing.
Alois applied for a Certificate of Naturalisation, which was granted on March 5th upon being sworn in before Thomas Brown (of Eskbank) Police Magistrate.

- 1862-63 Alois Neubeck constructed a blacksmith's workshop on the Mudgee side of the house (west). This became well known by Mudgee travellers.
Alois and Clara Neubeck establish a good garden around the house and blacksmiths shop, which remains today.
- 1863 Alois purchased block of land directly behind his own lot No. 14 which consisted of 40 acres. This block was No. 66 of 'The Parish of Cox, Blackman's Flat' and cost £40.
Approximate time of extension of the Neubeck family home, which consisted of the construction of 2 extra weatherboard rooms (separate from the existing). The new addition housed a kitchen and bedroom.
- 1864 Clara born May 9th.
- 1865 Charles born December 25th.
Hartley remained the centre of the Blackman's Flat / Wet Swamp community at this time.
- 1870s Final section of the Neubeck home constructed from weatherboard having a galvanised iron roof. This section was placed perpendicular to the existing buildings and adjoined each of the two former separate buildings to enclose a central courtyard.
- 1877 Louisa Neubeck married Washington Daniel O'Sullivan July 14th. Together they had 12 children – one died as a child.
- 1879 Alois Neubeck ceased blacksmith operations and focused on agriculture.
Alois purchased Section No. 343 of 'The Parish of Cox, Blackman's Flat (a further 40 acres) for £40 on June 5th.
- 1879-1904 Alois Neubeck undertook orchard and agricultural operations on his land.
- Late 1880s Francis Anthony Neubeck married Margutta Muller
- 1889 Francis Joseph Neubeck (Charles Neubeck and Margaret Donoghue parents) born (2nd October) at Blackman's Flat and baptised at St. Bernard's Catholic Church (Hartley).
- 1893 Clara Neubeck died at Blackman's Flat on December 13th aged 69 years and was buried at Blackman's Flat Cemetery.
Alois Neubeck made his final will.
- 1903 Alois Neubeck purchased lot 342 of 'The Parish of Cox, Blackman's Flat' on August 27th which consisted of 40 acres and was purchased for £40.
- 1904 Alois Neubeck died at Blackman's Flat aged 83 years on September 19th and was buried at Blackman's Flat Cemetery.
All Neubeck children married, and living locally.
- 1905 Probate sworn on Alois Neubeck's will, with the land being divided to the following: Francis Anthony - 2 acres of land facing the Mudgee Road, which contained Francis Anthony's house ('Melrose'). Charles Neubeck – 40 acres 16-16 Portion 342 (Cox Parish, Cook County). Remaining land portions divided equally between Louisa, Clara, Francis Anthony and Charles Neubeck.
- 1909 Margutta died during childbirth.
- 1910 Francis Joseph Neubeck and his brother William made application for mining a lease on January 20th. This was granted on May 27th and was the first coal lease in Lidsdale Parish.

- WW1 Despite his prominence in the local community and business interests Francis Neubeck was required to resign public office and directorships for a short period during the first world war due to his German Heritage.
- 1917 Francis and William drove a traction engine from Gulgong to Lidsdale for work at the mine and saw mill.
- 1919 William Neubeck died.
- 1920 Francis Joseph Neubeck married Violet Amy Elizabeth Roth at the St. John The Baptist Church of England, Mudgee. Francis and Violet moved into their newly constructed house at Lidsdale (later becoming known as 'Lidsdale House').
- 1920s Lidsdale House consisted of 6 rooms and bathroom with the laundry as a separate building. The house was constructed from sandstone, which had been quarried on the site.
- 1930s Francis Neubeck owned and operated a sawmilling and hardware business at Lidsdale throughout the Great Depression years.
- Early 1940s Engagement of landscape gardener Paul Sorenson at this time – together with Francis Neubeck Sorenson designed the gardens containing the pergola, waterfall and fishpond. Francis Neubeck served on the Blaxland Shire Council for a period of time.
- 1940-42 Lidsdale House extended with the assistance Mr. Arthur Isley carpenter / builder. (Note Arthur Isley was a carpenter and close friend of Francis and the son of Architect W. Alfred Isely) Messrs Frank and Kent Bush from Sydney were employed as the stonemasons, who quarried a majority of the stone from the large pool / pond.
- The following works were undertaken at this time:
- Lounge room enlarged to existing size with a dance floor (i.e. the ballroom).
 - Dining room, modern kitchen and pantry built at this time.
 - Servant's quarters constructed which contained a separate entrance and sitting room, bedroom, and bathroom.
 - Verandahs built along the east side and extended along length of new building on west side these were glassed in also.
 - Existing bathroom enlarged significantly. Plaster ceilings replaced old.
 - Central heating and septic systems installed.
 - Walls papered and carpet laid.
 - Laundry extended and modernised (clothes drying cabinet & automatic washing machine).
- 1940-45 Francis Neubeck created mining history in Australia when he was the first coal miner to undertake open cut mining. Francis Neubeck was conservative in his approach to open cut mining and replanted affected areas with vegetation.
- 1942 William Neubeck joined the R.A.A.F March 28th. William left Australia in October 1942.

- Francis' son William Neubeck constructed the large steel tank stand near the laundry shortly prior to enlisting in the Royal Australian Air Force.
- Ca. 1943-45 Momentum of the war in the Pacific encouraged Francis Neubeck to construct an air raid shelter (replacing a temporary one constructed along the west side of the house). Workshop later built on top of this.
- 1945 Flight Lieutenant William Francis Neubeck killed in action during WWII on February 21st.
- 1946 Louisa (Neubeck) O'Sullivan (eldest child of Alois and Clara neubeck) died.
- Late 1940s beginning of upstairs extension of house containing 2 self contained flats with 2 bedrooms, dining room kitchen and bathroom. The flats were built to have separate access to each and access to sunroom (above boiler room). Flats intended for housemaids and / or workers but were not used in this way.
- 1950 Window boxes in the courtyard constructed. Sorenson undertook substantial ground works to establish large retaining walls. Underground water tank put in before earth built up around it. Bush Brothers constructed the walls. Cellar and store completed including the east verandah.
- 1950's Lidsdale House gardens known favourably by garden lovers in the district. Regular public gatherings and swimming allowed by Francis and Violet occurred on the Lidsdale House grounds. Tennis court constructed.
- 1952 Community swimming in the pool ended in 1952 due to legal advice and the health regulations regarding changing facilities.
- 1964 Francis Neubeck sold his Wolgan Valley holdings.
- 1968 Francis and Violet sold Lidsdale House and moved in with their son Charles to 'Kalonga', a property in Ballimore near Dubbo. Lidsdale House was sold to Mrs Cam. Uncle Les Neubeck remained in the house across the road until around 1972.
- 1970 Violet Neubeck died October 11th aged 73.
- Early 1970s One of Charles' sisters remained in a house 'down the hill' and helped maintain the Lidsdale House gardens.
- 1976 Francis Joseph Neubeck died aged 87.

(History summary IDA 2012 - Assisted by Charles Neubeck oral interview 2012)