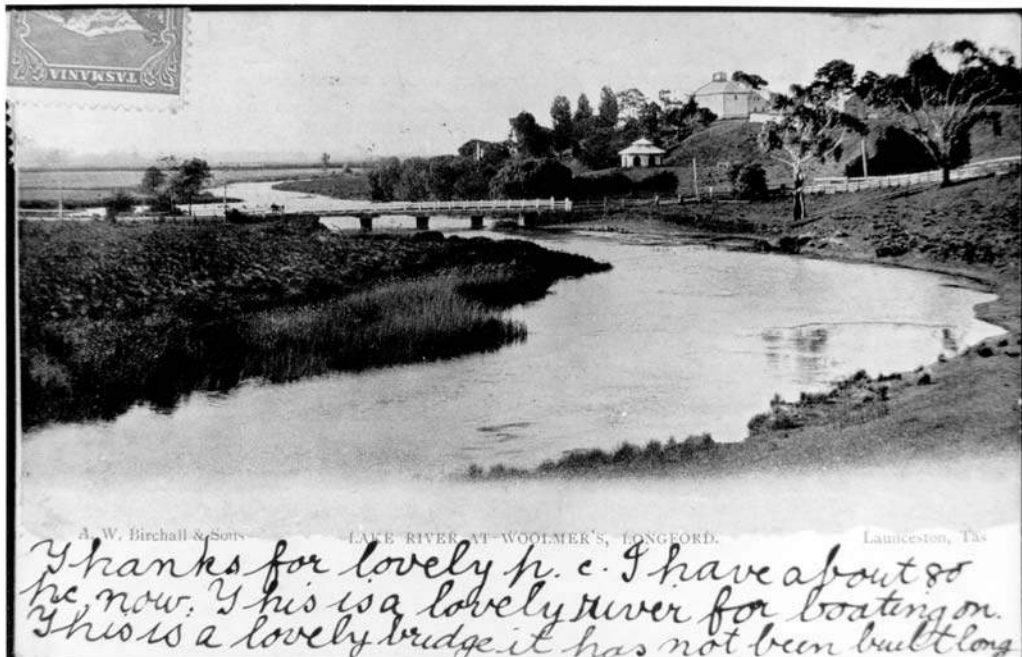


Woolmers Estate Longford, Tasmania

Conservation Management Plan



Postcard showing Woolmers, c1900. Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Prepared for:

Woolmers Foundation

Woolmers Estate

LONGFORD TAS 7301

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Revised -9th January 2008

Executive Summary

Woolmers is an 82-hectare property located on the alluvial soils of the Macquarie River flood plain, near the town of Longford, Tasmania.

Four precincts have been identified within the study area: the House Precinct containing a set of pre-1850s estate buildings, including the main house in its garden setting; the Coach House Precinct, containing a group of colonial buildings, including the Coach House, Coachman's Cottage, and a number of timber sheds of more recent date; the Outbuildings Precinct, containing several colonial buildings including the Woolshed, Store, and several Workers' Cottages; and the Cottage Precinct, which contains Woolmers Cottage.

Woolmers is recognised by the Tasmanian Heritage Council for its cultural heritage significance. Woolmers is included on the National Heritage List and, together with ten other convict sites in Australia, Woolmers is part of a serial nomination to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for inscription on the World Heritage List. This management plan is prepared in accordance with the National Heritage Management Principles to serve as the management plan for the place.

The property was bequeathed by Thomas William Archer, the sixth generation of Archers to own the estate, to a non-profit trust organisation with the express intent that the estate and its contents be preserved and made available to the public. The Woolmers Foundation is the managing body, under the direction of a Board. In addition to tours of the Main House and other buildings, there are several colonial buildings available for overnight guest accommodation.

The Official National Heritage Values of Woolmers are provided in Sections 4 and 5. A general statement of heritage significance of the place is formulated in Section 5 as follows:

With a continuous ownership by one family from 1817 to 1994, which has enabled the place to remain largely intact, Woolmers Estate is of outstanding cultural significance in demonstrating the early settlement and establishment of a large pastoral holding in Australia. The extant outbuildings, workshops, cottages, houses, and contents of the main house (including Archer family papers) are a very rare record of the scale and range of operations of a substantial colonial pastoral estate.

Established during the convict assignment period in Van Diemen's Land (where transportation was suspended in 1852), the Woolmers Estate grew to be one of the largest land holdings in Tasmania, and was influential in the development of the Tasmanian wool industry. Associated with William Archer, Tasmania's first native-born architect, the estate was re-created in the Picturesque mode in the 1840s. The estate remains a fine example of estate planning based on English estate ideals (as set out by writers like Loudon) in Australia, containing numerous buildings of outstanding architectural merit and demonstrating the separation of working aspects of the estate from the life of the landed gentry.

The constraints arising from the significance of the place, its statutory obligations, and an assessment of the owners' requirements for the place are discussed in Section 6.

The Conservation Policies (Section 7) provide a framework of guidelines for decision making about the place. Key recommendations include

- Guidelines for when to involve tradesmen and professional heritage advice
- Recommendations for ameliorating the impact of recent developments which are considered to detract from the character of the place
- Identification of reconstruction/restoration opportunities.

The Implementation section (Section 8) revisits the National Heritage Management Principles and recommends methods for adopting the principles and carrying out the recommendations of the Management Plan.

Inventory sheets describing and setting out policies for the individual components of the place are included as an Appendix.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Objectives

This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) is an update of the Conservation Plan prepared by Clive Lucas, Stapleton and Partners (with Lindy Scripps, historian) in 1996. It was commissioned by the Woolmers Foundation with 'Gift to the Nation' funding from the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

Woolmers Estate is one of eleven Australian convict sites nominated for UNESCO World Heritage listing. The updated Conservation Management Plan takes into consideration the National and potential World heritage values of the place, and conforms with the National Heritage management principles as set out in the Regulations to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The primary objective of this report is to prepare an updated Conservation Management Plan for Woolmers Estate and its components. The CMP aims to provide a clear philosophy to guide decision making about the place, based on a thorough understanding of the significance of the site, its components, and contents.

1.2 Definition of the Place and Features

The study area includes the place known as Woolmers Estate, which is defined as Lots 1 and 3 Title Reference 135619. The location of the place is shown in Figure 1. 1.

The study area has been divided into four precincts in order to facilitate understanding of the history of the place and the context of its components. These precincts and the major components of the place are described in Section 3 and shown below in Figure 1. 2.

1.3 Methodology

The form and methodology of this report follows the general guidelines for conservation management plans outlined in J S Kerr, *The Conservation Plan*, The National Trust of Australia (NSW), sixth edition, 2004, the guidelines to the *Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter)*, and the *National Heritage Management Principles*.

1.4 Limitations

This report addresses the only the European cultural significance of the place.

This report does not address indigenous heritage significance, which can take the form of archaeology of indigenous pre-history, post-contact history, or present-day associations or spiritual attachments.

As a comprehensive landscape plan was recently (2006) prepared by Gwenda Sheridan, landscape heritage planning consultant, landscape elements are only addressed generally in this report. The findings of this report are summarised in Section 6.

1.5 Study Team

Clive Lucas and Meg Quinlisk of Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners, Pty. Ltd., architects and heritage consultants prepared this report, with assistance from Alison Henning, Kane Murdoch, and Mark Shibata, also of this office. Unless otherwise stated, photographs are by the authors.

1.6 National Heritage Management Principles

The Regulations of the EPBC Act include a series of seven National Heritage Management Principles which have been adopted as the standard for looking after the National Heritage values of a place. One of the tools used in managing a National Heritage place is a management plan which is consistent with the National Heritage Management Principles.

Listed in the table below are the National Heritage Management Principles with a comment as to how each principle is addressed by this CMP. A more detailed table is contained in the preface to the section on Implementation (Section 8), providing a concordance of where each policy/recommendation meets the relevant Principles.

<i>National Heritage Management Principles</i>	<i>How this CMP applies</i>
Principle 1: The objective in managing National Heritage places is to identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit, to all generations, their National Heritage values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed historical background (Section 2) - Descriptions of individual elements and precincts (Section 3) - Outline of the existing management framework (Section 6) - Policies for conserving the values of the place as a whole and for the individual components (Section 7 and inventory sheets) - Policies for the handling of the archaeological resource (Section 7) - Policies on the Woolmers collection (Section 7)
Principle 2: The management of National Heritage places should use the best available knowledge, skills and standards for those places, and include ongoing technical and community input to decisions and actions that may have a significant impact on their National Heritage values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policies establishing appropriate conservation practice (Section 7) - Description of the applicable legislation (Section 6) - Policies for training of individuals involved with the management of Woolmers (Section 7) - Suggestions for future research priorities (Section 7) - Identification of activities which require professional/technical expertise (Section 7)

<i>National Heritage Management Principles</i>	<i>How this CMP applies</i>
Principle 3: The management of National Heritage places should respect all heritage values of the place and seek to integrate, where appropriate[...]State[...]and local government responsibilities for those places.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of different types, or levels, of significance (Section 5) - Description of the applicable legislation (Section 6) - Recommendations for managing statutory reporting and other requirements (Section 7)
Principle 4: The management of National Heritage places should ensure that their use and presentation is consistent with the conservation of their National Heritage values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policies for assessing proposals for changes to the fabric and changes of use (Section 7) - Policies for planning and managing future work (Section 7) - Identification of activities which require professional/technical expertise (Section 7) - Description of current interpretation of the place (Section 6) - Guidelines for future interpretation of the place (Section 7)
Principle 5: The management of National Heritage places should make timely and appropriate provisions for community involvement, especially by people who: a) have a particular interest in, or associations with, the place; and b) may be affected by the management of the place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendations for public consultation (Section 7)
Principle 6: Indigenous people are the primary source of information on the value of their heritage. The active participation of Indigenous people in identification, assessment, and management is integral to the effective protection of Indigenous heritage values.	Not applicable to Woolmers at this time.
Principle 7: The management of National Heritage places should provide for regular monitoring, review and reporting on the conservation of National Heritage values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendations for ways to implement the conservation policies (Section 8) - Policies for regular review of the management plan (Section 7)

1.7 Acknowledgments

The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance of the following:

- Damian Saunders and members of the Woolmers Foundation Board
- Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Historic Heritage Assessment Section
- Melinda Percival, Department of Tourism Arts and Environment.

1.8 Copyright of Images

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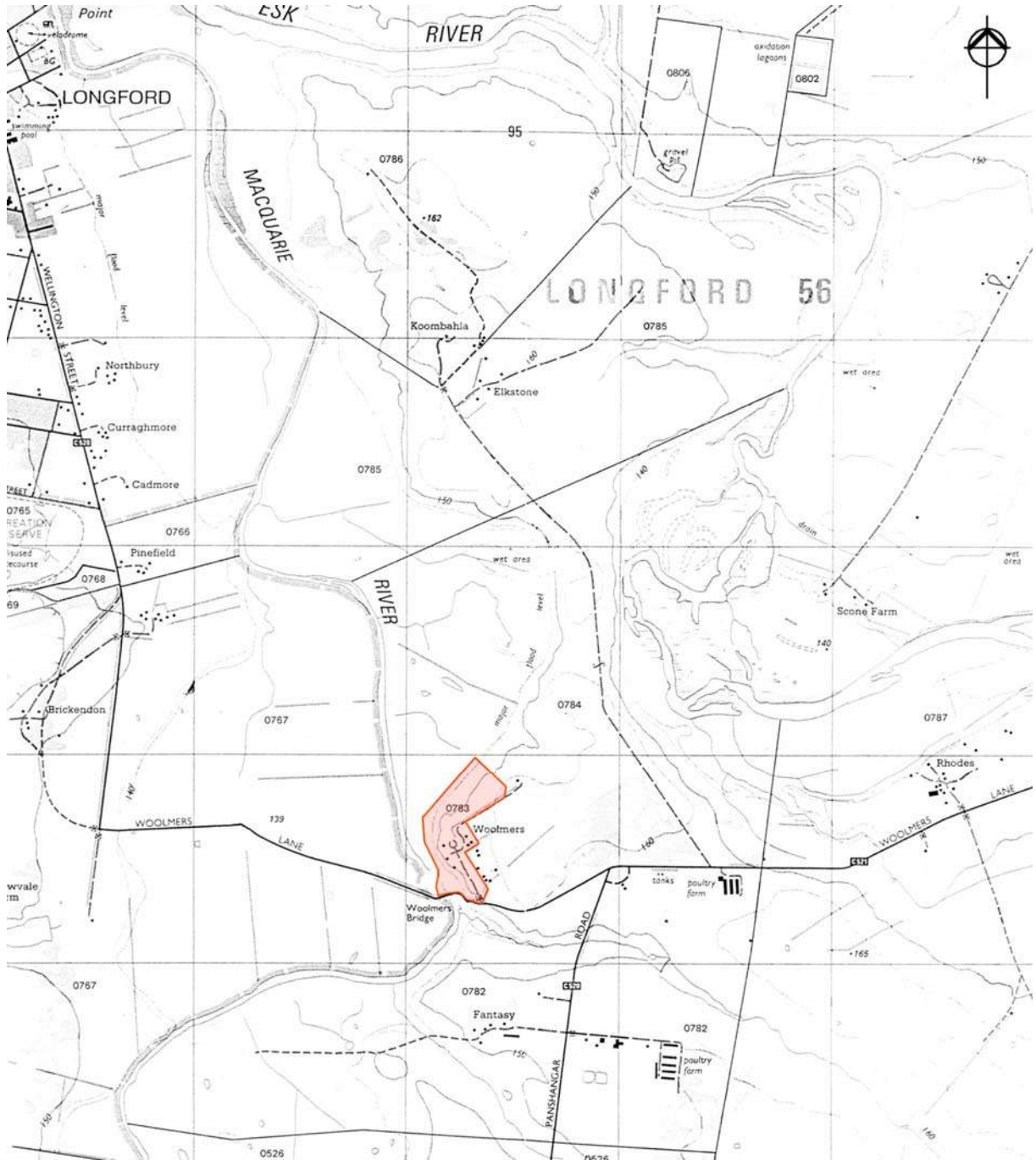


Figure 1. 1: Location plan showing the study area shaded in red.

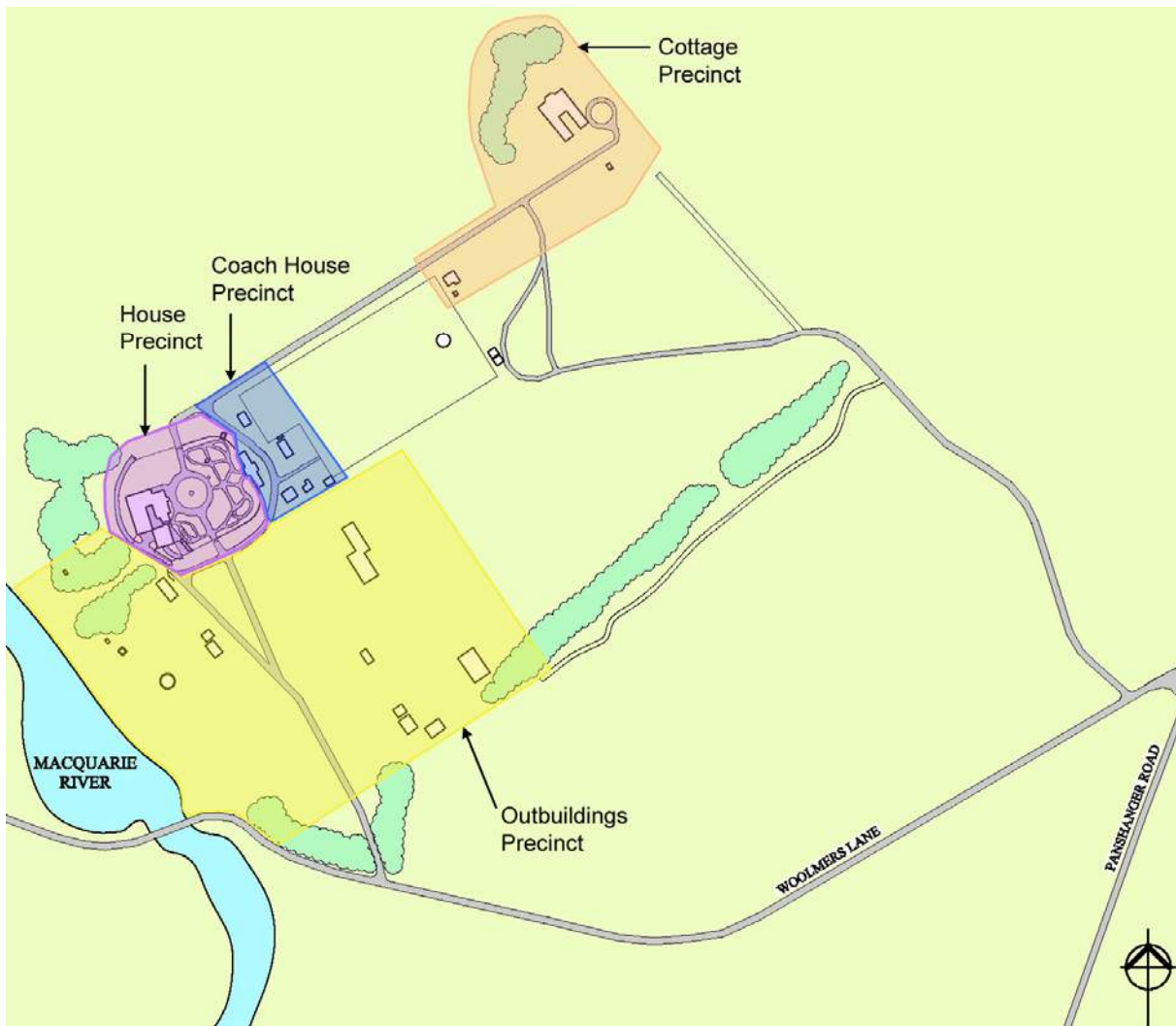


Figure 1. 2: Plan of the place identifying the four precincts referred to in this report.

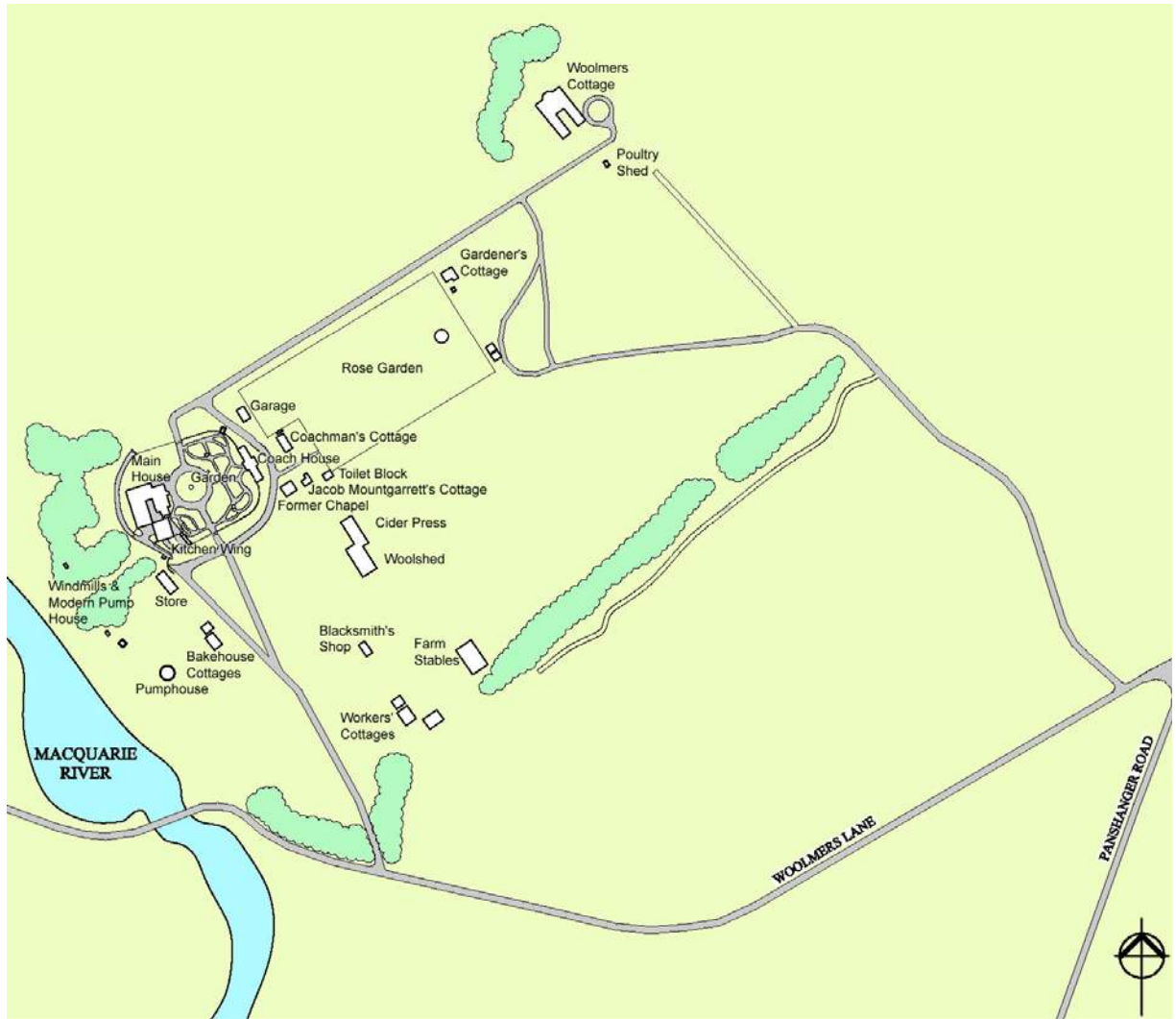


Figure 1. 3: Site plan identifying the main features of the place.

2 Documentary Evidence

2.1 Understanding the Place

In order to understand the place, information from both documentary and physical sources has been collected and analysed. A history of Woolmers and its components is provided below.

2.2 Brief History of Woolmers

Woolmers is situated on the Norfolk Plains, in northeast Tasmania. At its peak, Woolmers comprised more than 12,000 acres of rich and fertile farmland, created from an initial grant by Governor Macquarie to Thomas Archer of 800 acres (nominally, actual measurement 1054 acres) bounded by the Macquarie and South Esk Rivers in 1817. In addition to the property at Woolmers, the Archer family also held various other properties in the area, including Brickendon, Mona Vale, Cheshunt, Fairfield, and Panshanger. Woolmers remained in the Archer family's ownership until the death of Thomas William Archer in 1994.

Thomas Archer (1790-1850)

Thomas Archer was born in Hertfordshire in 1790 and arrived in Sydney in 1812 to take up the position of Deputy Commissary. Following a reorganisation in the Commissariat, Archer left to take charge of the Commissary in Port Dalrymple in September 1813. Thomas was joined in Van Diemen's land by his brothers, Joseph, William and Edward, and later by his father, William Snr. In 1816 Thomas married Susannah Horte. They had fourteen children, only six of whom survived childhood.¹

Under Thomas Archer's management, Woolmers became a centre of activity in the district, producing a range of agricultural products. Primary amongst these was merino wool for export to England. Archer added to his estate at Woolmers through grants and additional purchase of allotments during the 1820s. Government returns of 1820 show that he had 5 assigned convicts and 10 merino rams. In 1825 he employed 40 convicts and had 6,000 sheep. The Land Commissioners survey, carried out in 1826, noted the growth at Woolmers:

Came to Thos. Archer's, he has built a large weatherboard House, lined with brick, and what is rare to see, is well finished and furnished. He has lately built a brick store which is much better constructed than the house, everything here is on the most extensive scale. Carpenters, Sawyers, Bricklayers, Blacksmiths, and a long list of labourers, a hundred Working Oxen, and about ten thousand sheep, he has laid down a great quantity of very fine alluvial Soil in English grasses, in short this place speaks forcibly of what may be done in Van Diemen's land.²

¹ G. T. Stilwell, 'Archer, Thomas (1790 - 1850)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 1, Melbourne University Press, 1966, pp 25-26.

² *Journal of the Lands Commissioners*, p 18, cited in Scripps, 1996, p 6.

Staple crops such as wheat, barley, oats and potatoes were grown at Woolmers and an orchard produced sufficient fruit (apples, pears, and plums) to supply neighbouring properties.

In all, Thomas Archer described his land under cultivation, in a letter to Lieutenant Governor Arthur, as probably being cultivated “to a greater extent than [that of] any other Gentleman on the island”.³ In 1833 William Lyttleton (who had known Thomas Archer at the Port Dalrymple Commissary) painted a well-known scene depicting the river frontage to the main house and the ferry used for river crossings. At its zenith, Woolmers was more than 12,000 acres in size, and in order to work his holdings Archer required up to sixty convict workers, provided by the government, as well as additional non-convict labourers. A census taken in 1842 recorded 55 people in the house on the night of the census, excluding Thomas Archer and another servant. In later years as many as 110 people were resident at the property, although some of these may have been seasonal workers, such as shearers.

Despite being “the largest establishment of any individual in the country [Tasmania]”, and having numerous buildings on the property, Woolmers was not a luxurious home. In 1829 Henry Widowson was surprised to find “so little attention paid to elegance or comfort in the arrangement and buildings in the island generally; and more particularly in this spot [Woolmers]”. Despite the apparent capital put into the buildings, Widowson lamented the lack of “neatness or convenience so constantly displayed in a large farmhouse or homestead in England.”⁴ Other visitors to the property reported similar opinions in later years.

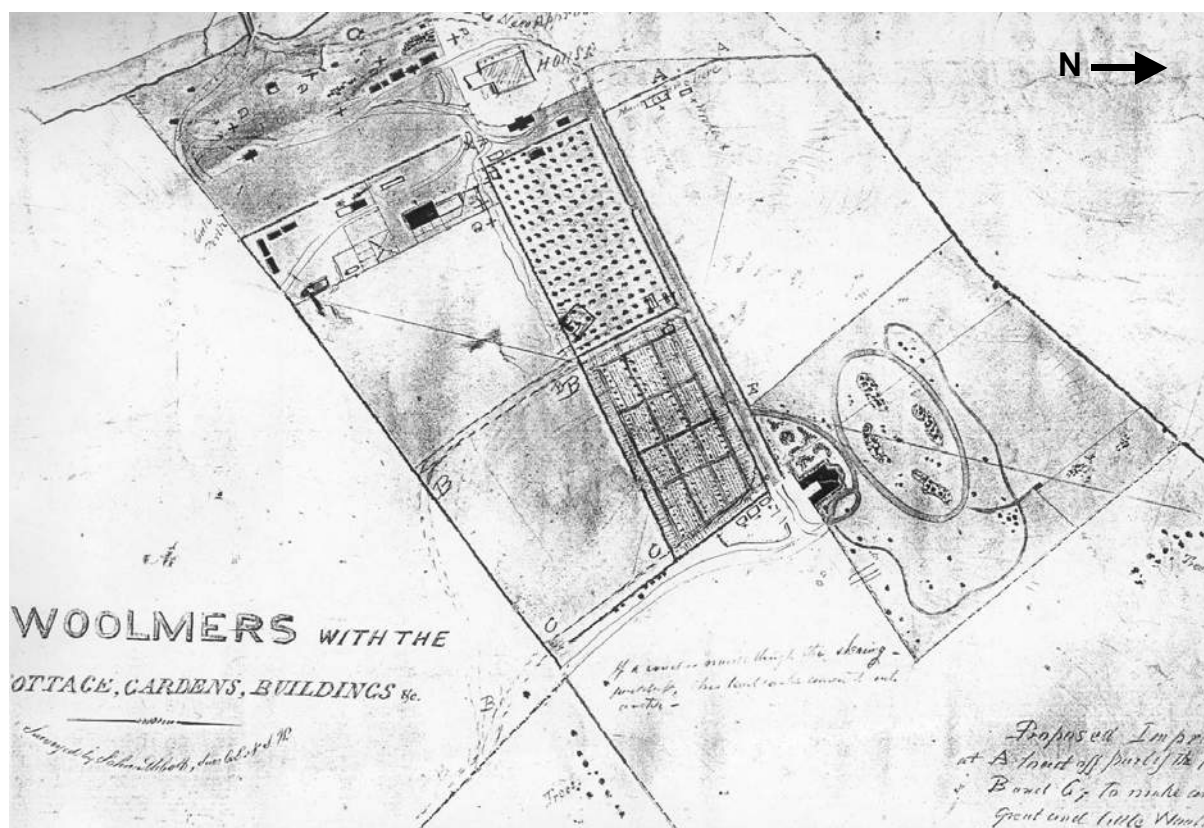


Figure 2. 1: 1840s plan of Woolmers showing the main house, Woolmers Cottage, the outbuildings, and the layout of drives, gardens, and the orchard. (Source: Woolmers Collection)

³ CSO 1/100/2404, 3 January 1825, cited in Scripps, 1996, p 4.

⁴ Widowson, p 133, cited in Scripps, 1996, p 7.



Figure 2. 2: The original section of the main house at Woolmers, with typical estate fencing visible in the foreground. Undated photograph, c1870s. (Source: Brickendon Collection)

their fellow partners in the bank, were left with significant debts as a result. The amounts to be repaid totalled £63,000, with Thomas's share amounting to £12,000. In order to repay the debt Thomas was forced to mortgage 9,440 acres of land, including parts of Woolmers and Fairfield.⁶

Aside from managing his properties and other economic interests, Thomas Archer was a strong supporter of campaigns to abolish transportation of convicts to Van Diemen's Land, and also to close the penal settlements. In 1850, only months before his death, Thomas signed a petition moving for the immediate abolition of transportation. It was signed not only by Thomas, but by his three brothers, his son-in-law Dr John Stewart Kilgour, and by William Kermode, the father of another son-in-law (later resident at Woolmers) Robert Quayle Kermode.⁷ Following the abolition of transportation Thomas Archer was "among the first to import free emigrants for his extensive establishment."⁸

In 1842 Thomas's son William returned to Woolmers from his architectural studies in England, and set about aggrandising the house by adding an Italianate front, as well as the dining room, drawing room, and front hall. The kitchen wing was added after these three rooms.⁹ Several years later Jane Williams, a previously unimpressed visitor to Woolmers ("it is like a bungalow rather than the residence of a man worth £15,000 a year"¹⁰), described the revamped Woolmers as being "like a township, there are so many buildings."¹¹

Thomas Archer died in 1850 and left the estate to his grandson, Thomas Chalmers Archer, whose father Thomas William had died of scarlet fever in 1844. At the time of his grandfather's death, Thomas Chalmers was ten. Trustees managed the estate until his age of majority in 1865. Thomas's widow, Susannah, continued to live at Woolmers and received a lifetime annuity. In addition, Thomas willed that Thomas William's widow, Mary Archer, nee Abbot, be allowed use of Woolmers Cottage so long as she remained unmarried. Thomas' land holdings were broken up amongst his sons. William received Cheshunt, and Fairfield was bequeathed to Joseph.

⁵ Chick, Neil, *The Archers of Van Diemen's Land*, Lenah Valley, 1991, p 122.

⁶ Ibid, pp 122-126.

⁷ Ibid, p 102.

⁸ Archer Papers Woodside 3/2, reprinted from *Examiner*, Launceston, 19 October 1850, quoted in Chick, p 103.

⁹ *Dawbin Journal*, 2 March 1845, cited in Scripps, 1996, p 10.

¹⁰ *Clyde Co. Papers IV*, p. 30-35, cited in Scripps, 1996, p 10. (1836)

¹¹ *Clyde Co. Papers IV*, p. 9, cited in Scripps, 1996, p 10. (1846)

In 1855 the decision was made to let Woolmers by tender for seven years, however there was no agreement reached and a manager was appointed to oversee the property. The death of Thomas Archer signalled the beginning of decline for the Woolmers estate.

Convict workers at Woolmers

The successful development of such a large pastoral estate relied to a great extent on the availability of cheap labour afforded in Van Diemen's Land by the convict assignment system which operated between 1803 and 1840. During the period of the establishment and early growth of Woolmers, 80 to 90% of the available work force in the colony was comprised of convicts and ex-convicts.

Van Diemen's Land was established as a penal colony in 1803. By 1853, some 75,000 convicts were transported to the colony, about 45% of all convicts transported to Australia. In Van Diemen's Land, convicts were managed under the assignment system until 1840, under which free settlers could be assigned convict labourers in return for feeding, clothing, and housing them. The assignment system was founded on the premise that convicts would be reformed under the proper moral guidance of their masters, while the masters would be able to take advantage of the labour source. The government also benefited by relieving itself of the costs associated with the welfare of the transportees. While the government service took priority in selecting skilled labourers for various public works, convicts with particular skills, e.g., sawyers or bricklayers, were loaned to free settlers from time to time, and were highly sought after in requests for assignment.

The majority of assigned convicts worked on farming properties. Larger farming properties were not only in greater need of the convict labour force than smaller operations, they were in a better position to provide the requisite provisions for their assignees. Thus, large landed estates such as those of the Archer family received the greater portion of assigned convicts. It appears that the Archer brothers worked in concert, sharing convict labour forces during intensive periods such as harvest seasons. As shown in the table below, the combined number of convicts assigned to Thomas Archer of Woolmers and William Archer of Brickendon was the second highest number of assignments in the colony (with the Van Diemen's Land Company having the highest number of assigned convicts).

Year	Convicts at Woolmers	Convicts at Brickendon
1830	51	39
1832	60	38
1833	64	43
1835	45	34

The assignment system was designed to reward good behaviour of convicts, and required masters to behave in accordance with a long set of regulations. Masters who did not meet the requirements, such as failing to observe the Sabbath, risked losing the services of their convict assignees. Well-behaved convicts could become eligible for tickets-of-leave, which enabled them to earn wages while serving out their sentence.

The assignment system was not without its critics. Opponents of transportation pointed out that the system amounted to a form of slavery, while others considered its inconsistencies to rely too heavily on the character of masters. Settlers who relied on the labour force often found the unskilled labour to be less than useful. The Molesworth report of 1838 concluded that transportation was an ineffective method of reform and recommended the abolition of the assignment system.

In place of the assignment system, the probation system was established in the colony in 1840. This system required all convicts to service a fixed term as part of a gang employed on public works. Once the fixed term was completed satisfactorily, the convict could make himself or herself available for hire to private settlers.

The early 1840s saw a dramatic drop in the number of convicts available to private settlers as no convicts were available to settlers in 1841 and 1842. However, the number of convicts arriving in Van Diemen's Land began to increase in the same period as transportation to NSW ceased. The labour shortage was credited as a partial cause of the economic depression of the early 1840s.

The probation system achieved few of its aims and inevitably as the colony matured, the economic advantages of convict labour began to fade in preference to reducing the stigma of a penal colony. From the mid-1840s, the anti-transportation movement gained momentum and eventually led to the abolition of transportation to Van Diemen's Land in 1853.



Figure 2. 3: The main house at Woolmers following the 1845 Italianate style additions by William Archer. The original unaltered section of the house is to the right. Undated photograph, possibly taken to coincide with the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh to Woolmers in 1868.
(Source: Woolmers Collection)

During the convict assignment period, the Woolmers estate took shape. Many buildings relate to the assignment period, or to the early years of the probation system. During this period, up to 64 convicts were working at the property, engaged in agricultural and building activities. As well, female convicts would have been working in the domestic quarters. The size of the work force and range of skills represented, together with the workshops, accommodation, and goods produced on the property allowed Woolmers virtually to operate as a self-sufficient village under Thomas Archer.¹²

Thomas Chalmers Archer (1850-1890)

At the age of 20, Thomas Chalmers Archer showed no interest in assuming the responsibility of running the property. In 1862 the trustees of the estate decided to grant him a £600 annual allowance, although there was some disagreement amongst his family as to whether this would be adequate.¹³ In addition he was allotted the use of Woolmers Cottage rent-free following his marriage. In 1865 he assumed full ownership of the property as willed by his grandfather. Although not worked directly by the family for some time, in 1865 Woolmers was still producing high quality produce and livestock,

¹² Summary of the convict system drawn from National Heritage List inventory sheet for Woolmers (Place ID 105976); A. G. L. Shaw, *Convicts and the colonies*, London, Faber & Faber, 1966; 'Prisoner discipline' in *The Van Diemen's Land Annual for the year 1834*, Hobart, H. Melville, 1833; Ian Brand, *The convict probation system; Van Diemen's land 1839-1854*, Hobart, Blubber Head press, 1990; Alison Alexander ed., *The companion to Tasmanian history*, Hobart, Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, University of Tasmania, 2005.

¹³ *W. Archer's Diary*, 4 January 1862, cited in Scripps, 1996, p 21.

winning awards at agricultural shows that year. In 1868, the Duke of Edinburgh visited Woolmers, receiving a “most enthusiastic reception” followed by a “magnificent luncheon”.¹⁴ Other dignitaries in the Duke’s party included the Governor and the Archdeacon of the diocese.

Thomas Chalmers Archer’s lack of interest in running the property, or even maintaining Woolmers as a cohesive estate, was quite clear. John Whitehead, an observer who knew Thomas Chalmers, noted the breaking up of the estate with the comment, “What is the use of a man putting property together as old Tom Archer did to be all made away with in one generation?”¹⁵ In 1880, Thomas Chalmers rented sections of the property to other members of the family such as Joseph Archer of Panshanger (who took over nearly 6,000 acres of land), as well as neighbouring landowners such as Herbert Gatenby (2,500 acres).¹⁶ He later abdicated his right to income (but not ownership) from the estate to George Collins until his death when ownership passed to his son, Thomas Cathcart Archer.

Thomas Cathcart Archer (1862-1934)

By 1883 Woolmers had fallen into ruin and was overrun by rabbits under the unconcerned stewardship of Thomas Chalmers Archer. His son, Thomas Cathcart Archer, assumed ownership of the property upon the death of his father in 1890. Similar to his father, Thomas Cathcart Archer held little interest in taking up a life of farming, and continued to live in Launceston, pursuing sporting interests, such as cricket and yachting (he was at one time the Commodore of the Tamar yacht club), until later in the decade. From the time of his father’s death, the property was rented to a cousin, William Archer Kermode, who lived there with his family until 1897, at which time Thomas Cathcart and his family moved to Woolmers permanently. As well as his keen sporting interest, as evidenced by the golf course he had built at Woolmers, Thomas Cathcart held a strong interest in politics, although not personally involved aside from acting in the capacity of warden of Longford Municipality on several occasions.

During Thomas Cathcart’s tenure as owner, the government acquired (by resumption) nearly 6,000 acres at the south of the property in 1912 under the Closer Settlement Scheme. This scheme was established in 1906 and was designed to attract immigrants from Britain and America in order to boost Australia’s small population through the purchase and subdivision of large tracts of land into smaller farming plots. Woolmers was identified by the scheme as being under-utilised and 6,147 acres of the property was purchased by the government for the sum of £18,000. As always, the quality of the land was the main attraction, with one report describing it as “just the kind of property which is suited to immigrants from Home who are not prepared to take up a settler’s life in the rough bush country of Tasmania.”¹⁷ The acreage was divided into eleven farms and within three years a number of houses had been built on what became known as the Woolmers Estate.

Thomas Edward Cathcart (1892-1974)

About 1912 Thomas Cathcart’s son, Thomas Edward Cathcart, was given an orchard on the property in order to provide him with both an income and an occupation. Despite wishing to live in Launceston on an allowance, he moved into Woolmers Cottage with his wife, Marjorie, whom he married in 1915. In 1921 Thomas Cathcart transferred ownership of the remainder of Woolmers (excepting the Homestead Area of some 34 acres) to Thomas Edward.¹⁸ The majority of this land continued to be leased to other farmers, however Thomas Edward retained direct control of slightly over 2,000 acres

¹⁴ *The Mercury*, 17 & 18 January 1868, cited in Scripps, 1996, p 23.

¹⁵ *Whitehead Letters*, 1 September 1879, p 159, cited in Scripps, 1996, p 24.

¹⁶ *Assessment Rolls*, cited in Scripps, 1996, p 25.

¹⁷ JPPT 1912, Number 12 and 13, cited in Scripps, 1996, p 33.

¹⁸ Deeds Office, 15/5185, 30 September 1921.

until the death of his father in 1934, at which time he assumed ownership of the remainder of the property and moved into the main house at Woolmers.

In 1947, the government compulsorily acquired nearly all the remainder of the property still owned by Thomas Edward under the Soldier Settlement Scheme. The new Closer Settlement area was known as the Longford Estate. Thomas Edward Cathcart was left with the Homestead Area of some 34 acres. In 1954, Thomas Edward Cathcart applied to purchase Lot 2a of the Longford estate, comprising some 698 acres adjoining the Homestead Area to the north, east, and west. On this curtailed estate, Thomas and Marjorie Archer lived with their Thomas William.

Thomas William Archer (1917-1994)

Throughout his youth and into adulthood, ‘Young Tom’ Archer was “mollycoddled”¹⁹ by his mother, and spent the majority of his time alone indulging interests in cars and wireless radio.²⁰ Indeed, Kerry Archer from neighbouring Brickendon describes his first visit to Woolmers upon his engagement in 1956: “There was no sign of young Tom, he was kept in the back room, in fact I always wondered if she kept him there because it might have given him ideas of why he didn't have this opportunity [to get married].”²¹

Following the deaths of his mother Marjorie in 1969, and father Thomas in 1974, Young Tom, by that time in his fifties, inherited the property. A bachelor, he maintained interests in motor cars, building and boating. Archer lived at Woolmers alone for the next twenty years, until his death in 1994. His will bequeathed the estate to the Archer Historical Foundation, later the Woolmers Foundation Inc.

¹⁹ *Dynasties: The Archer Family* (transcript), 21 October 2005, ABC television.

²⁰ *Say It With Roses*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 February 2006.

²¹ *Dynasties: The Archer Family* (transcript), 21 October 2005, ABC television.

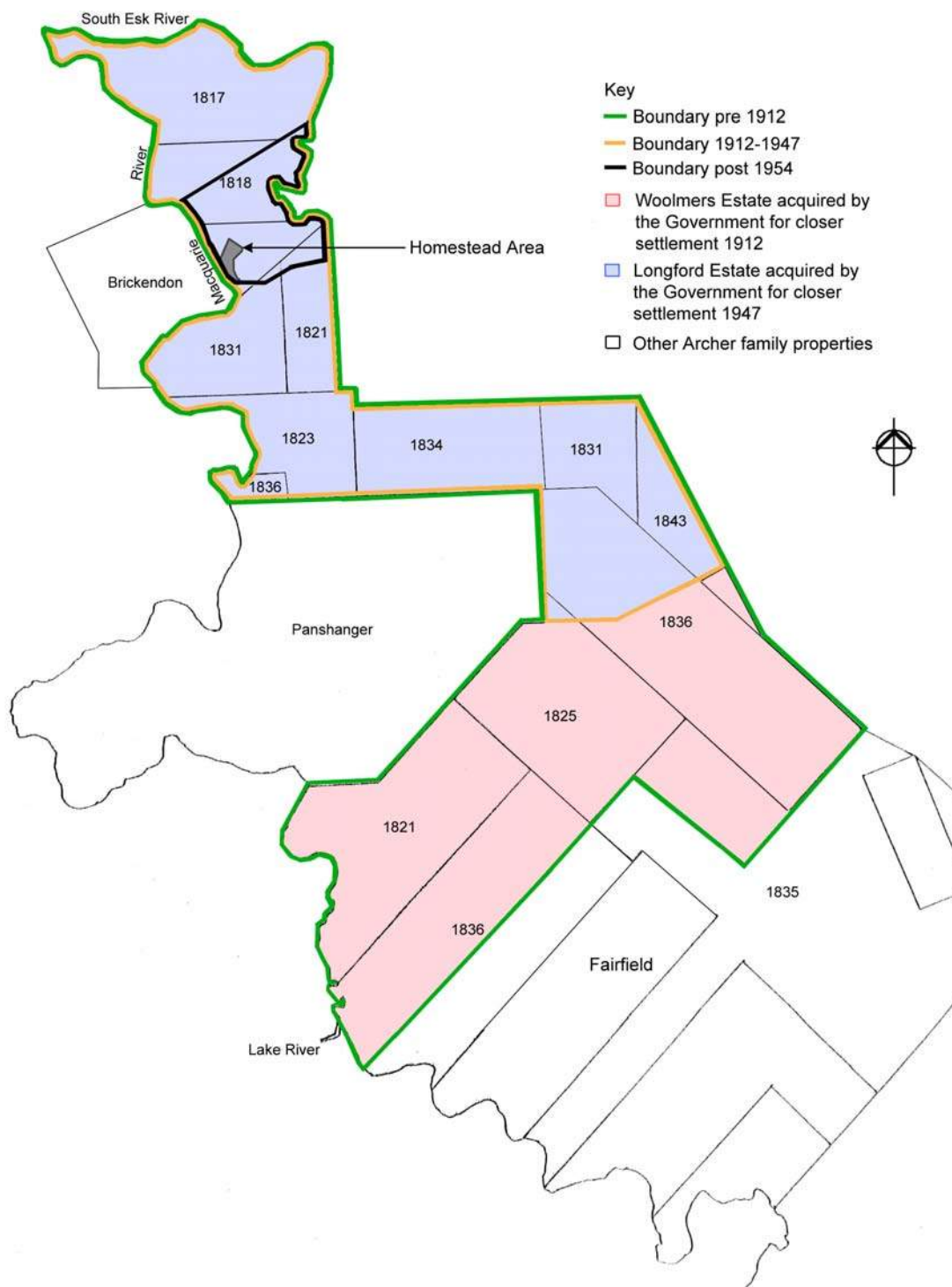


Figure 2. 4: Diagram showing the evolution and devolution of the Archer land holdings at Woolmers. The allotments show the year of acquisition by Thomas Archer (either by grant or by purchase). The 34-acre Homestead Area approximates the current extent of Woolmers.

2.3 Chronological Development of Components

The development of components at Woolmers in the history below has been organised in chronological order in regards to the Archer who was currently the owner of the estate.

Thomas Archer 1817-1850

While Thomas Archer owned the estate the following developments took place:

Woolmers Main House

The main house was constructed between 1819 and 1821 on the third of Archer's four land grants, which, together with additional purchases, comprised the Woolmers Estate. The earliest documentary evidence for the main house is when Governor Macquarie recorded that he "took lunch at Mr Archer's"²² on 29 May 1821. In 1826, the Land Commissioners surveyed and valued land in the settled districts and described the house as "a large weatherboard House, lined with Brick, and what is rare to see, is well finished and furnished"²³.

The house was a large symmetrical bungalow with two fronts and flagged verandahs overlooking the Macquarie River (then known as the Lake River). As noted by contemporary visitors to Woolmers, the house was rather plain for a person of Archer's standing. In 1845, having returned from carrying out architectural studies in England, Thomas's son William drew up plans to aggrandise the house. The work essentially turned the house away from the river to address a new private walled garden, and included the addition of three large rooms to the garden front of the house.

The addition created a dining room and drawing room on opposite sides of a new entry hall, all spaces of generous proportions and architecturally avantgarde. The dining room was executed in an Italianate manner to match the exterior of the addition, with recessed arches either side of the chimneypiece, a blind arcade on the west wall balancing the windows opposite. The drawing room is more Grecian in taste and is fitted with a chimneypiece of statutory marble carved with caryatids. Above the hall is a bedroom overlooking the garden. A service passage was located behind the dining room opening onto a number of small service rooms. The new spaces were well appointed, with furniture ordered from Gillows of Lancaster.

Other changes to the original part of the house made about this time include the division of the original drawing room to form the principal bedroom and a hall which connected the two original stair halls. The former front and back doors were closed off.

In 1848, the bathroom and lavatory were installed in the older part of the house, resulting in an amended position of the back stairs to accommodate the pipework.

A large man whose poor health led to the retention of fluid, Thomas Archer was aware that his coffin would not be able to be removed from the house through the narrow hall, and so he had the windows in the principal bedroom enlarged prior to his death.

²² CSO 1/100/2404, 15 October 1821, cited in Scripps, 1996, p. 3.

²³ *Journals of the Land Commissioners*, p. 18, quoted in Scripps, p. 6.

Woolmers Garden

The formal garden at Woolmers appears to have been laid out at the same time as other works carried out by William Archer in the 1840s. It had certainly been put in place by 1847, when William recorded a doorway being made in the garden wall. The garden was designed to buffer the family's living quarters from the working sections of the property behind the high brick wall that surrounds the garden. It contained all the elements of the Gardenesque style with lawns adjacent the house, shrubbery, pavilions and a picturesque coach house on the axis of the front porch, at the far end of the garden. The main shrubberies were screened from the house by a bay hedge. There were also two lavatories incorporated into the garden wall.

Garden Smoking Room

Although there are no records for the construction of the smoking room, or garden pavillion, they are thought to be contemporary with the garden, and therefore probably designed by William Archer in the 1840s.

Garden Lavatory and Garden Privy

The two lavatories in the garden were constructed at the same time as the garden wall in the 1840s. The garden privy contained a double thunderbox, still intact.

Mountgarrett's Cottage

The cottage is reputed to have been relocated in 1830 to Woolmers from Mountgarrett's land to the south west of Woolmers. Thomas Archer purchased Mountgarrett's farm in 1827. The land was later made part of Brickendon and conveyed by Thomas to his brother William in 1839.

Dr Jacob Mountgarrett (1773-1828) is believed to have been born in Ireland in 1773, and trained as a naval surgeon. He arrived in NSW in 1803 and was appointed surgeon to the new settlement on the Derwent. On arrival, he was told he was not needed and stayed to be the first man to harvest wheat in the colony. He was granted 600 acres on the south Esk River. Later in life he became known as a bad debtor and died insolvent in 1828.

Kitchen Wing

The construction of the kitchen wing was already underway when the earliest entries in William Archer's surviving diary were written in March 1847. The diary notes that estate labourers Seth and Gilham carried out most of the work. Included in the tasks was fixing bars to the windows. It is possible that bars were fixed to the windows of the servants quarters in the main house at this time as well. The old kitchen was largely demolished to make way for the new kitchen wing.

Blacksmith's Shop

In early 1822 Ensign White, overseeing a construction gang working near Woolmers, was instructed by the Lieutenant Governor to apply to Mr Archer, "at whose residence a Forge is about to be erected, to allow his Smith to repair such of your Tools as require it [...]".²⁴

²⁴ *HRA III iv*, 14 January 1822, p 422, cited in Scripps p 3.

Bakehouse Cottages

These cottages, of which there were originally three, appear to have been built around 1840. It is thought that the smaller central building was the primary bakehouse and two larger buildings either side housed the two bakers who worked at Woolmers. In addition to the main bakehouse, there are three fireplaces in the southernmost cottage, suggesting that these were used as supplementary ovens.



Figure 2. 5: Pencil drawing of Woolmers from the river by Anna Maria Nixon. Undated, probably late 1840s. The drawing shows the octagonal pump house and store as well as the Gothic style punt man's cottage (far right) and other buildings near the river which are no longer extant. Brickendon is visible in the distance at the left of the drawing.

(Source: Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston)

Store

The 1826 Journals of the Land Commissioners records the construction of the Store: "He has lately built a Brick Store which is much better constructed than the House, everything here is on a most extensive scale".²⁵ There is evidence to suggest that a timber balcony existed over the front door to assist in the movement of goods between the ground floor and first floor.

There have only been minor changes to the store, even in the process of conversion in the 1990s to an office and reception area for the estate.

Pump house

The pump house is reputed to have been built in 1841, however there is no documentary evidence to support this date. It is not shown in Lyttleton's painting of c1833, and it is shown in Nixon's drawing, late 1840s.

²⁵ *Journals of the Land Commissioners*, p. 18; quoted in Scripps, p. 6.

Situated prominently on the drive to Woolmers from Longford, it was designed as a Gothic building with pointed arched openings, wide eaves supported on timber brackets, and fretted barge boards on the gables to the pump room. The original iron pumping machinery was manufactured by Braithwaite, Milner and Co., London and remains intact.

When Dorothy Kermode stayed at Woolmers in the 1890s, the pump house was still being used. She described it as “ an octagonal pumping house, very attractive in creamy stone. In the middle of it was a wooden bar to which a horse was harnessed. He went round on a tan bark floor until sufficient water was pumped up the house to supply for some time.”²⁶

Other Buildings

While no documentary evidence has been identified to date, the following buildings are shown on an 1840s plan of the estate (see Figure 2. 1) and must have been constructed by then:

- Garden Pavilion
- Garden Lavatory
- Garden Privy
- Woolmers Cottage
- Coach House
- Coachman’s Cottage
- Former Chapel
- Gardener’s Cottage
- Farm Stables
- Woolshed
- Cider Press
- Workers’ Cottages

Thomas Chalmers Archer 1850-1890 (Under Trustees’ management 1850-1865, then leased)

While Thomas Chalmers Archer owned the estate the following developments took place:

Woolmers House

In 1859 painters and plasterers were employed by John Smith, manager of Woolmers, to work on the dining room, drawing room and the hall. In addition, centres and lamp chains for the ceilings at Woolmers were also purchased. The following year saw further work carried out on the house, including replacement of the shingles and saddleboards for the house, and the repair and papering of rooms, the latter carried out by plasterer William Wright.²⁷

Woolmer’s Cottage

In 1857 plastering is thought to have been carried out on Woolmers cottage by William Wright, who previously did similar work on Woolmers House.

²⁶ *Dorothy Kermode Diaries*, quoted in Scripps, p 28.

²⁷ *Woolmers Cash Book*, May-September 1861, cited in Scripps, p 20.

Woolmers Garden

The stork fountain in Woolmers garden was installed by Robert Kermode in 1863. The iron seat in the garden was probably also brought into the garden around this time. Both were made by Colebrookdale in England.

Woolshed

Repairs were carried out on the Woolshed in 1859, the floor battens being repaired in Longford before being relaid in the woolshed.

Store

In 1860, the shingles of the store's roof were replaced. The shingles are now covered by corrugated iron.

Gardener's Cottage

By 1863 the gardener's cottage was badly in need of repair, and work was carried out for "fitting and (banding?)" of the cottage.²⁸ This was probably the installation of iron tie rods to the cottage. A rear verandah was enclosed in brick, probably around 1880.

Thomas Cathcart Archer 1890-1934

While Thomas Cathcart Archer owned the estate the following developments took place:

Woolmers House

During the tenure of Thomas Cathcart in Woolmers House, the ceilings in a number of rooms were replaced with asbestos sheeting and timber battens. The rooms affected were the dining room, breakfast room, back hall, Mrs Archer's room and the principal bedroom.

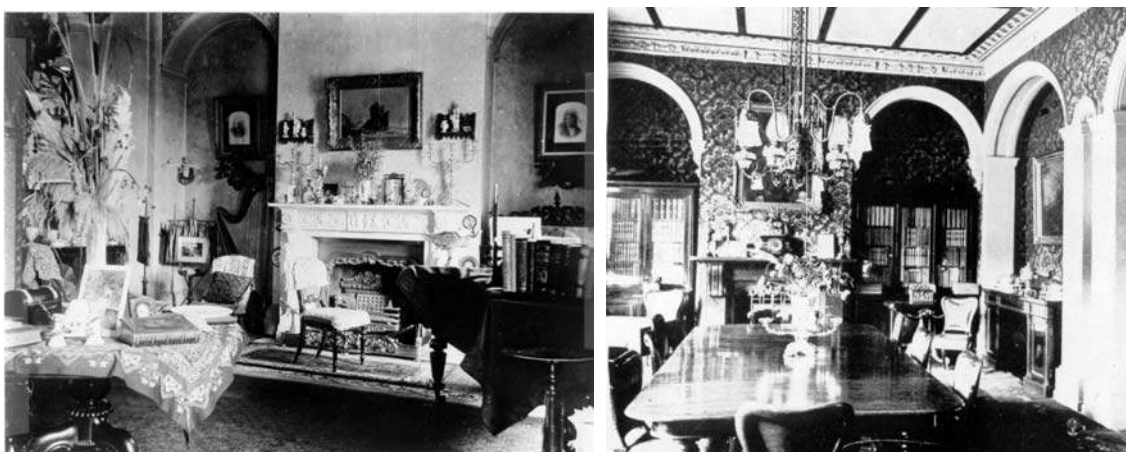


Figure 2. 6: (Left) The drawing room in the main house, 1893. (Right): The dining room in the main house, 1931. The interiors of each room are still largely complete and intact today. (Source: Archives Office of Tasmania – (Left) 30/5650; (Right) from *Weekly Courier* 4 November 1931, p. 22.)

²⁸ *Woolmers Cash Book*, 1863, cited in Scripps, p 21.

Woolmers Cottage

The walls of Woolmers cottage were relined with asbestos sheeting during the period 1915-1930, during which time it was inhabited by Thomas Edward Cathcart Archer and his wife Marjorie.

Kitchen Wing Shed

This small weatherboard shed was constructed around 1915 and was probably associated with the nearby petrol bowser. It has since been converted into a small workshop.

Coachman's House

In the early twentieth century the coach house was used to store Thomas Cathcart Archer's Wolseley motor car. In addition, the building may have been used in the estate's orcharding activities, with a 1920s-era fruit grader located in the building for several decades.

Former Chapel

Following the establishment of his orchard in the 1910s, Thomas Edward Cathcart used the former chapel to house an apple grader. In the course of this use the west wall was removed and replaced with timber columns, and a skillion extension was built with large timber doors to facilitate the easy loading and unloading of fruit. The fruit grader, manufactured by D. Harvey Ltd of Box Hill, Victoria, survives in the building.

Jacob Mountgarrett's Cottage

It is thought that the Mountgarrett's cottage was lived in for some time following its placement at Woolmers, judging by the numerous layers of wallpaper that built up in the cottage. An open skillion addition constructed of weatherboard was added to the Mountgarrett's cottage in the 1920s.

Garage

The weatherboard garage was constructed in the early twentieth century, probably to house part of the family's collection of motor cars, two of which are still kept there.

Bakehouse Cottages

One of the bakehouse cottages was demolished prior to the 1920s.

Timber Windmill

Although it is unknown when the windmill was built, a 1921 aerial photograph shows it, and the pump house which the windmill replaced was still in use in the 1890s.

Thomas Edward Cathcart Archer 1934-1974

While Thomas Edward Cathcart Archer owned the estate the following developments took place:

Woolmers House

Thomas Edward Cathcart Archer and his wife Marjorie moved from Woolmers cottage to Woolmers House following the death of Thomas Cathcart Archer in 1934. Some renovations were carried out, with wallpapers and fabrics in a number of rooms, such as the drawing room, back hall, Mrs Archer's room and the principal bedroom dating from this time. In addition, the south return of the verandah was also enclosed to form a sunroom around this time.

Kitchen Wing

During the 1940s the main room of the kitchen was converted to a garage space for the servicing of motor cars. The west wall was opened up and large timber garage doors installed.

Garden Pavilion

Accounts from the late nineteenth century describe the garden pavilion as somewhat dilapidated, and the pavilion was largely rebuilt around the 1930s. It is now a weatherboard structure, with a finial replacing the weather vane that previously topped it. The timber seats remain inside, as does a shelf supported by a cedar stump.

Garden Privy

The garden privy was relined with fibrous cement sheeting during the 1950s.

Blacksmith's Shop

Repairs were made to Blacksmith's Shop in 1963. The exact nature of the repairs is unknown.

Workers' Cottages

Workers' cottage no. 3 was lined out in the 1930s.

Pumphouse

The roof of the pumphouse was replaced after 1931 with asbestos shingles.

Thomas William Archer 1974-1994

While Thomas William Archer owned the estate the following developments took place:

Woolmers House

In the 1970s the tower bedroom and back hall were redecorated by Thomas William Archer.

Woolmers Cottage

During the course of 1956-58, works were carried out on Woolmers Cottage including repairs to the roof and external piping, plumbing and the replacement of the bath, painting and papering, a new entrance and ramp, and repairs to the septic tank. The Roof Saver Company carried out further repairs to the roof in 1963.

Coachman's House

The building was altered in the early 1980s by architect Robert Morris Nunn, including the insertion of a new stair, forming new windows, and a new partition wall and kitchen and bathroom fittings. Nunn was awarded a Royal Australian Institute of architects (Tasmania Chapter) merit award for the work in 1984. Since then a separate lavatory has been added.

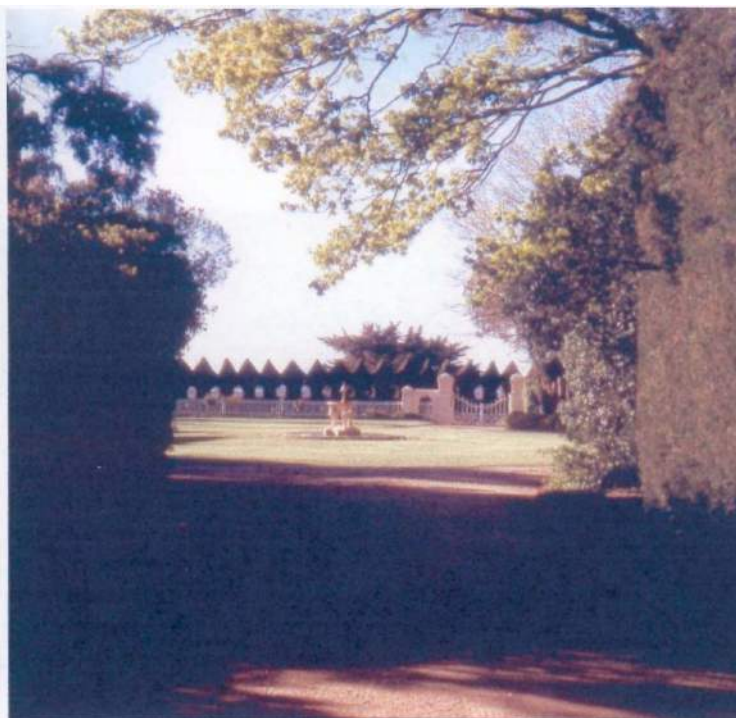


Figure 2. 7: The macrocarpa hedge surrounding the garden was kept trimmed by Thomas William Archer and was a striking feature of the place.
(Source: Woolmers Collection)

Workers' Cottages

Following earlier work in the 1930s, cottage No. 3 was fitted with a kitchen sink and cupboard in the 1960s.

Bakehouse Cottages

The remaining cottages were adapted for use as rental accommodation by T.W. Archer in the 1980s. This work included the insertion of kitchen and bathroom fittings in the larger bakehouse and minor modifications of the original fabric. In the smaller building the windows were enlarged and fitted with frames and sashes salvaged from other buildings on the site.

Woolmers Foundation Ownership (1994-present)

While the Woolmers Foundation owned the estate the following developments took place:

Kitchen Wing

Oil stains from mechanical work carried out in the former main room of the kitchen were removed in the 1990s. In addition new glazed doors have been added behind the large timber doors, public lavatories installed, and the servants rooms of the kitchen wing converted for use as caretaker's accommodation.

Woolmers Garden

In the 1990s, following the collapse of a mature tree on the garden wall, the majority of the garden was uprooted to prevent further problems of this sort. In the process most of the garden beds were buried. Since that time there has been efforts to rejuvenate the garden, with garden beds uncovered and some of the shrubs revived.

A macrocarpa windbreak along the formal drive between the main house and Woolmers Cottage was cut down recently for safety reasons.



Figure 2. 8: Photograph of the drive to Woolmers Cottage, 1970s. The windbreak at left was recently removed for safety reasons. The gable of the gardener's cottage is visible above the hedgerow to the right of the frame. (Source: Woolmers Collection)



Figure 2. 9: View of the drive to Woolmers Cottage, 2007, following removal of the windbreak.

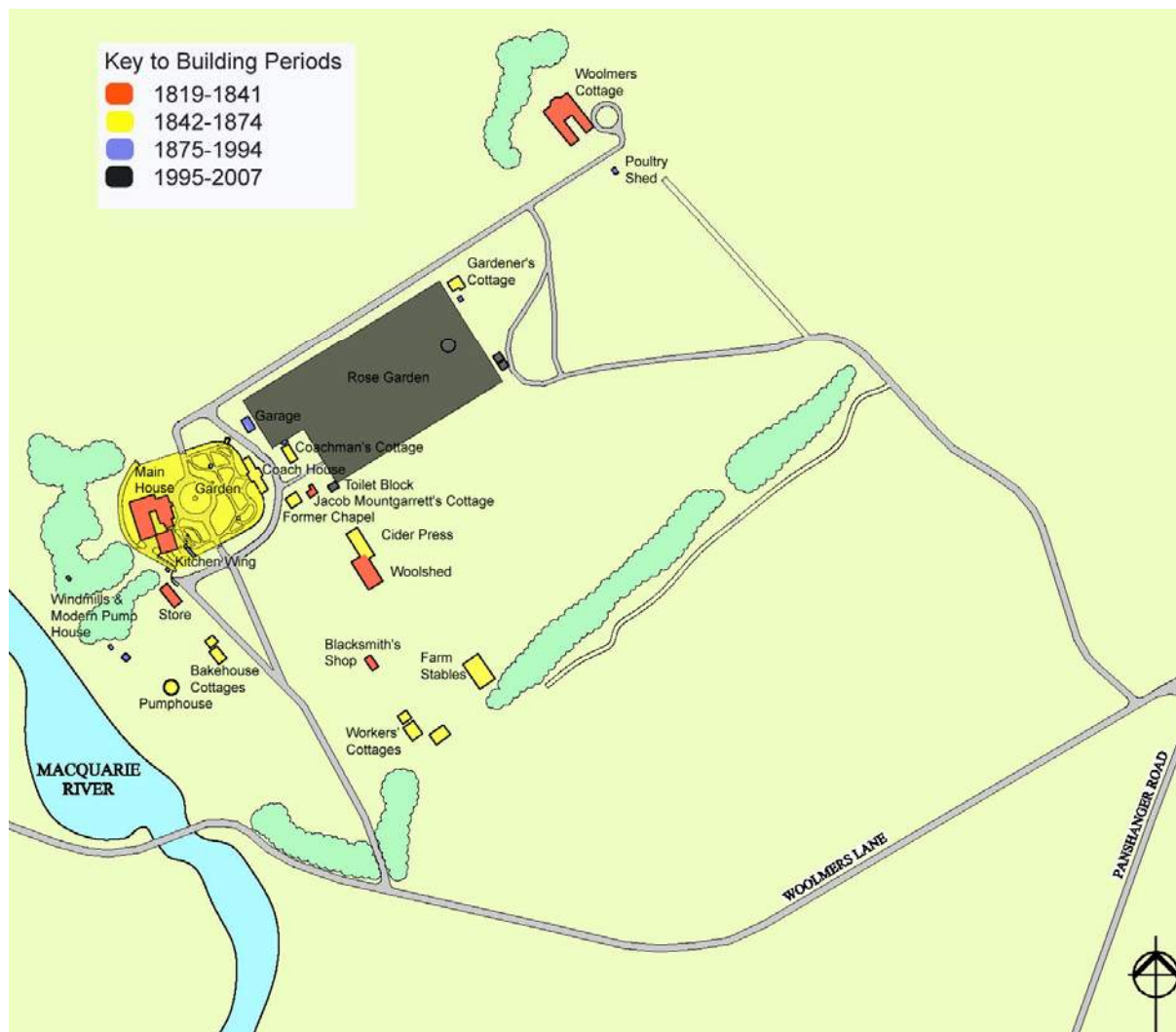


Figure 2. 10: Diagram showing the key building and development periods of Woolmers