

Item Details

Name
Former Minchinbury Winery
SHR/LEP/S170
LEP #

Address
Minchin Drive MINCHINBURY NSW 2770

Local Govt Area
Blacktown
Local Aboriginal Land Council
Unknown

Item Type	Group/Collection	Category
Built	Manufacturing and Processing	Other - Manufacturing & Processing

All Addresses

Addresses								
Records Retrieved: 2								
Street No	Street Name	Suburb/Town/Postcode	Local Govt. Area	LALC	Parish	County	Electorate	Address Type
	Barossa	MINCHINBURY/NSW/2770	Blacktown	Unknown			Unknown	Alternate Address
	Minchin Drive	MINCHINBURY/NSW/2770	Blacktown	Unknown	Melville	Cumberland	Unknown	Primary Address

Significance

Statement Of Significance

The former Minchinbury Winery is of national significance for its special role in the establishment and development of the Australian wine industry. It was the first and largest champagne producer in New South Wales and was the second most important producer in Australia after the Great Western Cellars in Victoria.

For over a century Minchinbury was the focus of an industry which required specialised skills which were initially imported but, through generations, an indigenous culture of wine making emerged and a world class wine producer evolved. The technologies and techniques employed can be interpreted through the surviving buildings and remnant machinery and vats still on site.

James Angus who established the Minchinbury winery is credited with introducing modern wine making techniques into Australia in the late nineteenth century. In 1903 he also introduced the sparkling wine that has made the name Minchinbury famous in Australia.

Leo Buring, one of Australia's most famous winemakers, had a long association with Minchinbury winery, working there from 1902 to 1918.

The longest and one of the most important historical associations with the former Minchinbury Winery is that of Penfolds Wines Pty Ltd who operated the estate from 1912 to 1978, developing the winery to its final form.

As a large complex of buildings with similar form, massing and detailing, the former Minchinbury winery provides a contrast to the closely spaced late twentieth century residential development. The plantings of oak trees and cabbage palms associated with the winery development are distinctive elements in the local townscape. The large complex of buildings and the plantings combine to form an important local landmark.

Criteria a)

Historical Significance

The former Minchinbury Winery is of national significance for its special role in the establishment and development of the Australian wine industry. It was the first and largest champagne producer in New South Wales and was the second most important producer in Australia after the Great Western Cellars in Victoria.

The winery was an important centre of operations for Penfolds Wines Pty Ltd, an icon of the Australia wine industry, from 1912 to 1978.

Criteria b)

Historical Association Significance

The former Minchinbury winery has a number of important historical associations.

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The name of the former winery provides a link with the original grantee of the property, William Minchin, an interesting figure in the early history of Sydney.

Criteria c)

Aesthetic/Technical Significance

As a large complex of buildings with similar form, massing and detailing, the former Minchinbury winery provides a contrast to the closely spaced late twentieth century residential development. The plantings of oak trees and cabbage palms associated with the winery development are distinctive elements in the local townscape. The large complex of buildings and the plantings combine to form an important local landmark.

Criteria e)

Research Potential

With building fabric from the establishment of a winery on the site in the 1870s through to the closure of the complex in 1978, the former Minchinbury winery provides an insight into the continued development of techniques for the production of wines over a period of more than 100 years.

The new Adaptation works to create housing and an active use for the site as well as the interpretive walk through the site provide an important example of the possibilities of Adaptation and a key public interpretive tool for understanding the former significance of Minchinbury.

Criteria f)

Rarity

Sites with tangible evidence of commercial wine production are rare in the Sydney region. Although the complex has been damaged by fire the former Minchinbury winery retains clear evidence of large scale wine production over a period of more than 100 years.

Integrity/Intactness

The former Minchinbury winery was extensively damaged by fire in 1987. Despite this, the buildings retain most of the walls and underground structure enabling the functions of the winery to be interpreted. The new adaptation works have enabled the key historical elements to be retained and interpreted and accessible to the public.

Owners

Records Retrieved: 0		
Organisation	Stakeholder Category	Date Ownership Updated
No Results Found		

Description

Designer	Builder/Maker
Robertson and Marks (1939 cellar additions)	

Physical Description	Updated
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The former Minchinbury Winery is located at the corner of Minchin and Barossa Drives, Minchinbury. The site has a slope from the north corner to the south. The winery buildings are set into the slope of the hill. Rows of cabbage palms mark the original driveways on the north-west side of the site. Mature oak trees are also on the north-western area of the site.

This site retains the core buildings associated with the former Minchinbury Winery. The complex of cellar buildings includes the 1870 cellar constructed by Dr William McKay through various twentieth century additions for storage, filtration and a boiler to the 1960s additions for bottle washing. The cellar buildings are arranged across the slope of the land, running northwest to southeast. To the north of the main cellar buildings is the former still store.

The McKay cellar is the oldest part of the complex and is located to the northwest end of the cellars. It is constructed of brick finished with plaster and has openings with hardwood lintels. The date 1870 is inscribed over the original door. A concrete floor has been added to this cellar. Despite the implication of the term cellar, the building was built above ground.

Additions to the cellar in 1902 were constructed in brick. Another addition soon after was built of concrete. The first underground cellar in the complex was built in 1903, partly below McKay's 1870 building.

A new storage room built with concrete walls up to two metres thick and a concrete floor was built in 1906-7 on the south-western side of McKay's cellar. It had three levels linked by timber stairs. Concrete used in the construction included mud binders and broken bottles for aggregate.

Three separate concrete cellars were built on the south side of the earlier buildings between 1908 and 1913 to provide additional storage space. These were later formed into one building.

Further additions in 1919-20 continued the use of broken bottle aggregate for the concrete walls, combining it with wire rope for reinforcement. Slabs were constructed with "sacrificial" timber form work which has deteriorated.

The filtration tower built c.1927 is clad with corrugated iron.

A bullnose verandah was built on the northern loading bay, south side and the western front in the late 1920s.

A reinforced concrete addition of three levels is on the north side of the cellars and dates from 1939.

The site also retains a corrugated iron still store with a concrete/ mud in situ sub floor space.

The remaining stable elements of the winery including all the above elements were incorporated into an adaptive reuse of the site for housing. The original brick cistern and significant site trees, and Palms have been retained and a new interpretive trail developed through the site. Archaeological remains of a former manager's residence have been retained under the surface of the western car park facing Ann Minchin Drive. The works included some reconstruction of original elements and full retention of others. The underground cellars have been incorporated into an underground Gym and swimming pool complex.

Grape vines found growing on the site were propagated and replanted in a mini vineyard formation at the entrance to the site.

The Stills store has been converted to a café restaurant.

Physical Condition

Updated 11/18/2015

Good

Modifications And Dates

1819 Grant of 1,000 acres to William Minchin

1820s Minchin family house at Minchinbury, occupied by Ann Minchin, her daughter and son-in law.

1821 Death of William Minchin

1828 Minchinbury leased to Dr Michael Bergin

1859 Minchinbury purchased by Dr Charles McKay and used to establish a vineyard and to cultivate silkworms.

1870 Construction of first cellar by Dr McKay

1872 Minchin family house destroyed by fire

1890 Minchinbury purchased by James Angus and Sons

1895 James Angus expansion of vineyards and cellar complex

Late C19 Manager's house built near winery
Barn built on north side of cellars

c.1900 Minchinbury vines struck by Phylloxera louse

1902 Extensions to cellar

Early C20 Planting of olive trees at entry

1903 Construction of underground cellar

1906-7 Western addition to cellar

1912 Minchinbury purchased by Penfolds Wines Pty Ltd

1919-20 Cellar buildings joined to become a single structure

1921-22 Major extensions to cellar, new boiler room and chimney
Verandahs built on west façade
Cabbage palms planted

1927 Filtration tower built

1933 Electrical substation built

1939 Last major additions to cellar complex
Manager's house demolished

1950s Luncheon room and amenities block built

1962 Vineyard cultivation ceased due to degradation by soil erosion

1970 Bulk wine tanks constructed

1977 Minchinbury wine production ceased

1978 Cellar closed

1987 Fire caused extensive damage to cellar complex

1988 Subdivision and sale by Land Commission

1994 Demolition of brick cottage and tennis court

1995 Additional subdivision

2005 Demolition of extensively damaged barn

2009-13 Adaptation for reuse as multi residential development.

Further Comments

Current Use

Former Use

Winery

Listings

Listings

Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Records Retrieved: 2		
			Gazette Date	Gazzette Number	Gazzette Page
Local Environmental Plan	Amend No 143		4/12/2002 12:00:00 AM	72	2262
Local Environmental Plan	Blacktown Local Environmental Plan 2015	I39	7/7/2015 12:00:00 AM	430	

Procedures/Exemptions

Records Retrieved: 0					
Section of Act	Description	Title	Comments	Action Date	Outcome
No Results Found					

History

Historical Notes or Provenance

Updated

Minchin Family

Ensign William Minchin left England to travel to Australia on 2 March 1797 as commander of the military guard on the Lady Shore. The prisoners mutinied on 1 August 1797, casting Minchin, his wife Ann and 27 others adrift. The group landed in Brazil two days later. Minchin and his wife returned to England before leaving again for Australia, finally arriving in Sydney in November 1800. They settled in the Hawkesbury district until 1808 when they travelled to England, returning to Australia in 1809. In 1810 Minchin was again in England, to give evidence at the trials that followed the Rum Rebellion. During the following years he was promoted to Captain and served in a number of areas before retiring from military service in 1817.

Minchin returned to Australia in September 1818. The following year he surrendered a number of earlier land grants made to him in exchange for a grant of 1,000 acres at Melville, which he named Minchinbury. In 1820 he was appointed Principal Superintendent of Police and Treasurer of the Police Fund. He died on 36 March 1821 leaving his wife and a daughter Maria Matilda.

Ann Minchin married again in 1823, to Captain Eber Bunker of Liverpool. Her daughter married Bunker's shipmate Henry Howey in 1826. In 1838 the Howey family, including all six children, perished at sea. Ann Bunker died in 1839, leaving no descendants of William Minchin.

Ann Minchin lived on Minchinbury with her daughter and son-in-law during the 1820s. The property was offered for lease in 1828 and included an "excellent" residence of eight rooms. It was located "on a commanding position near the roadside." In 1872 the Minchin family's home on Minchinbury was destroyed by fire.

In 1828, the government census showed Michael Burgan as the owner of Minchinbury. The property at that time covered 1,200 acres with 500 acres cleared, 60 acres under cultivation and it held two head of cattle.

Dr Charles McKay

In 1859 Minchinbury was purchased by the Army Surgeon, Dr Charles McKay. He used the property to establish vineyards as well as planting mulberry trees to cultivate silkworms. McKay also acquired Rooty Hill and Lubin Park estates, amassing a total of 2,000 acres in the area.

Dr McKay planted about 40 acres of grape vines six feet apart in rows six feet wide. Varieties planted included Lambruscat, Riesling, Shiraz, Verdelho, Burgundy, Pineau Blane, Hermitage and Muscatel.

The first cellar on the site was built in 1870 using bricks made on the estate. It was 60 feet long and 40 feet wide, with a hipped roof. The first room held two large vats and a screw press worked with a windlass. A grape crusher was also housed in the cellar.

Dr McKay entered his wines in the International Exhibition held in Sydney in 1879 and was awarded one Highly Commended, one Commended and one Honourable Mention. Mackay did not live at Minchinbury, preferring to reside in his 26 room house on the Rooty Hill estate that he also owned. This house became known as Dr McKay's mansion and later as Minchinbury House.

James Angus and Sons

James Angus and Sons, who are also described as railway contractors, owned Minchinbury from 1890 to 1912. They purchased the Rooty Hill estate of Dr McKay and lived at Minchinbury House, changing its name to Artornish Hall.

In 1900 the Minchinbury estate comprised 2,000 acres. It was described at that time as having

"been improved by clearing, subdivision into paddocks, the sowing of exotic grasses - the conservation of water in reservoirs, dams, tanks, and wells; and clumps of timber have been left here and there for shelter of cattle and horses."

"A feature of the estate is the vineyard and wine cellars, which are among the oldest in the colony. The vineyard is 75 acres in extent, some of the vines being over 30 years of age, and still in robust health and luxuriant bearing. ... The vines comprise various varieties of wine grapes, and they seem to thrive to perfection. Originally they were planted 6 ft. apart, but becoming too crowded as they grow older, Mr Angus had every other row dug out on the diagonal, which gives them over 8 ft apart between the rows, and the diminished number of plants yield a greater weight of grapes per acre than the large number did. ... The wine cellars are spacious, composed of brick and wood walls, with iron roof. The varieties of wine made mostly consist of Burgundy, Hock, Shiraz, Claret, Port, Hermitage, Madeira and Riesling. The cellar at present contains about 90,000 gallons, mostly contained in casks of 1,000 gallons each. ... The wine presses are two ton each ... worked by hydraulic pressure. The hydraulic pump which works the presses is capable of putting on a pressure of 2,500 lb per square inch, or on each press a weight of thirty tons. The vessel which contains the water which feeds the pump is 2 ft 6 inches x 15in x 15in in dimensions. ... Water for cleansing purposes is laid on all over the premises, (and is) furnished by a large catchment reservoir close to the cellar. ... The wines, of course, made under such conditions are first class, and have a great reputation over all the Australian colonies."

(Town & Country Journal, 29 December 1900)

This report contradicts a brief history provided by Penfolds Wines Pty Ltd in 1973 stating that Phylloxera struck the vineyard in 1898 necessitating the burning of all the vines and replanting with resistant stock. It is possible that Phylloxera struck soon after the Town & Country Journal report of 1900.

The Angus family leased about 1,300 acres of their land to neighbouring farmers for dairy purposes and about 100 acres were cultivated for feed.

A house close to the winery is thought to have been built in the late nineteenth century and to have been used as a manager's residence. It was demolished in 1939 and a new brick cottage was built on the site for then manager Ivan Combet. Other staff houses were scattered around the estate.

Angus enlarged the cellar built by McKay and built a press house soon after acquiring Minchinbury. He extended the cellars again in 1902, initially in brick and later in concrete. In 1903 he constructed an underground cellar, either under or behind McKay's building. Another underground cellar with a storage room above it followed in 1906-7. The storage room was in front (downhill) of McKay's cellar and a new gabled roof covered both McKay's cellar and the storage room.

It is thought that the still to the north of the main cellar was built during the Angus ownership of Minchinbury. It was built of a mud cement mix on the lower level and cut into the side of the hill. The upper level is of timber and corrugated iron. A barn was also built on the hill behind the cellars, probably during the 1890s.

During the Angus family ownership of Minchinbury, winemakers at the estate included Leo Buring and the Kupke family. Leo Buring was born in Germany in 1856 and emigrated with his family to South Australia. He trained at Roseworthy Agricultural College in Adelaide studying viticulture, and later returned for further specialist training at the wine college of Geisenham (Germany) and Montpellier (France). After working in South Australia (Barossa and Clare Valleys) and Victoria (Rutherglen) in the 1890's, he moved to NSW in 1902 to take up the position of Manager at Minchinbury Winery. He worked at Minchinbury for 17 years from 1902, producing the first Minchinbury champagne. Buring planted a row of olive trees at the entry to the winery. The olive oil was used to prevent oxidation of the wines. Leo Buring became one of Australia's best-known winemakers and later established his own winery at Leonay.

Penfolds Wines Pty Ltd

Minchinbury was purchased by Penfolds Wines Pty Ltd (Penfolds) in 1912. Penfolds undertook a program of upgrading the facilities at the winery. Alterations in 1919-20 joined the cellar buildings into one structure. Substantial additions built in reinforced concrete followed in 1921-22 and included additional cellars, a boiler room and chimney on the south side and more cellars on the north side. In 1927 a new corrugated iron tower was built over the north-eastern cellars to improve wine filtration. Verandahs were built over the loading bays and on the western façade. Cabbage palms were planted around this time.

In 1939 the architects Robertson and Marks designed further additions. A building behind the cellars was demolished and three levels of

cellars were built at the southeast corner of the group. The building was set into the slope so that only one level is visible.

The barn at the rear of the cellars complex was used by Penfolds for storage and later as a carpenters’ and coopers’ workshop.

Other additions to the complex undertaken by Penfolds include a new luncheon and amenities block in the late 1950s and bulk storage facilities in the 1970s. The luncheon room and amenities block were located downhill from the main cellars on the site of a former dam that had been filled. A tennis court was also located on the site of the former dam.

Penfolds produced their well-known Minchinbury champagne style wine at the winery as well as Hermitage, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot, Alicante Bouchet and Durif.

The new vines planted after the Phylloxera damage lasted until 1962 when soil erosion led to their demise. From that time grape growing for the winery was transferred to leased fields.

Penfolds closed the Minchinbury winery in June 1978. The wine still in the Minchinbury cellars was transferred to their Tempe cellars and the estate was acquired by the Land Commission. The Lands Commission in conjunction with Rex Homes developed it for housing. The entrance gates and row of olives were retained. The winery buildings were retained at the centre of the new suburb.

A fire broke out in the winery buildings on 13 April 1987, destroying much of the roof structure. The buildings were offered for sale soon after.

The winery site was further subdivided in 2006 for the creation of Anne Minchin Drive and additional houses. The winery remains continued to deteriorate until the site was converted to residential housing in 2010-13.

The adaptation works have restored and reconstructed parts of the winery, converting the cellars to a gym and pool area, and providing an interpretive walk through the site. The stills store has been adapted to contain a café restaurant.

Historic Themes

Records Retrieved: 4

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
4. Settlement	Land tenure	Unknown
3. Economy	Technology	Unknown
3. Economy	Industry	Rural Industry
3. Economy	Agriculture	Farming activities

Recommended Management

Management Summary

Management

Records Retrieved: 0

Management Category	Management Name	Date Updated
No Results Found		

Report/Study

Heritage Studies

Records Retrieved: 3

Report/Study Name	Report/Study Code	Report/Study Type	Report/Study Year	Organisation	Author
In House Heritage Items Review			2009		Margaret Fallon
Blacktown Heritage Study			1995		(not stated)
Blacktown Heritage Study			1988		Jonathan Falk Planning Consultants in association with Rodney Jensen and Assoc.s

Reference & Internet Links

References

Records Retrieved: 12

Type	Author	Year	Title	Link
Written	City Plan Heritage	2010	Conservation and Management Plan- Minchinbury Winery	
Written	Form Architects	1995	Conservation Plan for Minchinbury Winery, Minchinbury	
Written		1987	"Champagne era comes to fiery end" in Sydney Morning Herald 14 April 1987	
Written		1987	"There goes our heritage" in Star 15 April 1987	
Written	Helen Guy	1983	"Our oldest bubbly came out of the west" in Sydney Morning Herald 1 Nov 1983	
Written		1978	"History May Crumble"	
Written		1978	"Closed - after 108 years" in Blacktown Advocate 5 July 1978	
Written	F.G. Barnes, Manager, Penfolds Wines Pty Ltd	1973	Letter of 7 March 1973 to Blacktown Municipal Council	
Written	St Magnus	1900	"Minchinbury Estate - A Well-Conducted Farm and Vineyard" in Town and Country Journal 29 December 1900	
Written	National Trust of Australia (NSW)		Minchinbury Winery Listing Proposal	
Written			"A Visit to Minchinbury" c.1970 Undated newspaper article (1870s?)	
Written			Minchinbury Winery - vertical file	

Data Source

The information for this entry comes from the following source:

Data Source	Record Owner	Heritage Item ID
Local Government	Blacktown City Council	1140035

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