

## LSJ Heritage Planning & Architecture

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Bleak House, No. 7 Lawson Street, Mudgee

### Alterations and Additions to existing single residence

### STATEMENT OF HERITAGE IMPACT

Prepared for: J. Pritchard

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## 1. Introduction

This Statement of Heritage Impact (SoHI) provides an analysis of a proposal to make alterations and additions to Bleak House, No. 7 Lawson Street, Mudgee.

This report was prepared by Kate Denny of this office and the site was inspected in 2022 by Ian Stapleton, also of this office.

Bleak House, No. 7 Lawson Street, Mudgee is identified as a local heritage item under Schedule 5 of the *Mid-Western Regional Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2012* (Item No. I88) and is located within the Mudgee Heritage Conservation Area (C1).

It is noted that the listing for the property under the Mid-Western Regional LEP 2012 is described as: 'Bleak House', House and Stables, 5-7 Lawson Street, Lot A Section 1 DP 153641. The former Stables building associated with Bleak House is located at No. 5 Lawson Street (Lot 1 DP 153157) and is not located within the allotment containing the main house. It is further noted that the cadastral description of Bleak House in Schedule 5 is incorrect and should be described as No. 7 Lawson Street, Lot A DP 153641.

The history of the place relied on in this report is based on the research undertaken by John Broadley and contained in *Bleak House 7 Lawson Street Mudgee: An Historical and Architectural Study*, (April 2022). A copy of this report is attached.

This report follows generally the methodology recommended by the NSW Heritage Office in *Statement of Heritage Impact* (Revised 2002) and is in accordance with the *Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter)* and the *NSW Heritage Office Heritage Manual*.

### 1.1. Description

Bleak House, 7 Lawson Street, Mudgee is located on the eastern side of Lawson Street, within the town of Mudgee and the local government area of the Mid-Western Regional Council. The real property definition of the place is Lot A DP 153641.

The property is a large rectangular allotment fronting Lawson Street to the west. Lawson Street is a lightly trafficked road that runs north-south through the eastern outskirts of the town of Mudgee. To the east of the property lies the Cudgegong River, separated from the subject property by the neighbouring property at No. 2 Market Street.

The property contains the main house, a secondary dwelling, a garage and carports. A semi-circular gravel driveway provides access to the front entry of the house from both the northern and southern ends of the front boundary, denoted by faux stone gateposts. The property also features large front and rear gardens.

The main house is a fine example of a Colonial style, two-storey, verandahed, house of face brick with a hipped corrugated metal roof. The verandahs to both the ground and first floor levels wrap around all four sides of the building, with fibrous cement sheeting enclosures at both levels to the north-eastern and south-western corners. French doors with timber louvred shutters provide access onto the verandahs on all sides of the house.

The secondary dwelling is a single storey brick structure of later construction (formerly a garage) and is located to the south-east of the main dwelling. It is connected to the rear (east) of the main house by a covered walkway. The garage located to the south and directly in front of the secondary dwelling is connected to the south verandah of the main house by a large carport structure.



Figure 1: Map of the locality showing the location of the subject property, in red. Source: SIXMaps Spatial Viewer



Figure 2: Aerial view of the subject property, showing the legal allotment boundaries in red. Note the swimming pool has recently been removed as approved by Council. The real property definition of Bleak House, 7 Lawson Street is Lot A DP153641. Source: SIXMaps Spatial Viewer



Figure 3: Western (front) and northern elevations, as viewed from the front garden.



Figure 4: Eastern (rear) and southern elevations, as viewed from the rear garden.



Figure 5: Existing secondary dwelling, to the southeast of the main house.



Figure 6: The southern carport with garage.



Figure 7: Eastern ground floor verandah with enclosure at south-eastern corner.



Figure 8: Southern verandah at ground level, looking east. The proposed kitchen, pantry, and lobby are to be located along this elevation.



Figure 9: Eastern ground level verandah with enclosure at north-eastern corner.



Figure 10: Enclosure at south-western corner at first floor level.



Figure 11: Southern verandah, looking east towards existing infill at first floor level. The proposed walk-in robe and ensuite are proposed to be contained within the existing verandah space along this elevation.



Figure 12: Later addition kitchen located in one of the principal rooms of the house- since removed.



Figure 13: Original chimney breast partially removed by previous owners to accommodate stove. A new door opening is proposed in this location.



Figure 14: Existing bedroom 2. A new door opening is proposed to the left of the fireplace.

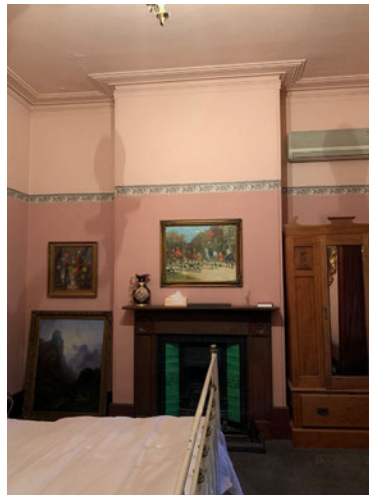


Figure 15: Existing bedroom 1. A new door opening is proposed to the left of the fireplace.



Figure 16: One of the ensuites located in the former box room at first floor level showing surviving original French door to verandah with internal partitioning.



Figure 17: View of later addition door opening into ensuite from Bed 1.

## 2. Historical Development

The following abridged history of Bleak House has been drawn from *Bleak House 7 Lawson Street Mudgee: An Historical and Architectural Study*, prepared by John Broadley (April 2022), with minor additions by the author of this report. For the full history of the place, refer to the copy of this report attached.

Bleak House, No. 7 Lawson Street, Mudgee, is located on Lot 2 of Section 1 of the Town Plan of Mudgee and is associated with the Blackman family and the establishment of the town of Mudgee.

In 1821, James Blackman, was the first European settler to cross the Cudgegong River in 1821, followed by Lieutenant William Lawson, commandant of Bathurst. In 1823, the site of Mudgee was surveyed for a village and Robert Hoddle designed the layout for the new town, which was gazetted in 1838.

A brother of James Blackman, John Blackman apparently built a slab hut, the first dwelling in Mudgee and its general store in c.1837 and it is purported that it was on the site of the current Bleak House. These buildings are apparently evident on a map of Mudgee drawn in 1837 by surveyor J.J. Ogilvie.

In December 1838, William Blackman, brother of James and John Blackman, purchased Lots 1 to 3 of Section 1 of the newly gazetted town plan of Mudgee.<sup>1</sup> It is assumed that Lot 4 was purchased by William shortly thereafter. The terms of the purchase required that Blackman, within two years of the date of purchase, erect a permanent dwelling-house, store or other suitable building to the value of 20 pounds.

William Blackman (c.1799-1854) was born in England and arrived in Australia with his parents James and Elizabeth Blackman and four siblings (including James and John) in 1801 as free settlers. In 1821, William married Sarah Cobcroft, at St. Mathew's Church, Windsor.

In 1823 William acquired a grant of seventy acres at Bathurst, where several family members had already settled, although the 1828 Census lists William as an innkeeper at Windsor.

In 1836 the Blackmans moved to Mudgee where it is purported that William resided in the small slab hut and a general store built by John Blackman (assumed). William also purchased other town allotments, including a number in Section 8 where he built the Mudgee Hotel in Market Street (demolished c.1926). Blackman was the first licensee for the hotel in 1839. He was also actively involved in civic affairs, serving as police lockup superintendent and as a foundation member of the Mudgee district council, formed in 1843.

According to Broadley, it is believed that the Blackmans built a substantial single-storeyed house on the Bleak House site, which seems likely as numerous mortgages were taken out by, and released to, William and Sarah Blackman from 1842 to 1854 against the Bleak House site. However, by the early 1850s they were living in another of their Mudgee properties. They also held other properties in the district, including the station known as Bullororo.

Following the death of William Blackman Snr., the Bleak House site passed to his eldest son, William Richard Blackman (1825-1898). The following year, William Jnr. married Mary Single, daughter of John and Sarah Single of Nepean Park, Castlereagh. Together they had eight children: William, Gertrude, Annie, Mary, Emily, Lillian, John and Richard.

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<sup>1</sup> Old Systems Title, Serial 205 pages 125 to 128

William Jnr. served as an inaugural alderman of the Municipality of Mudgee, formed in 1860, and was also chairman of the Municipality of Cudgegong in 1864. For many years he served as a magistrate, and as the local sheep and cattle inspector. He was on the building committee for St. John's Anglican Church and, although not a member of the congregation, was on the building committee for Mudgee's Wesleyan church, donating £50 towards its construction. He was also instrumental in establishing the Mudgee Mechanics' Institute.

According to Broadley (2022), in c.1859 William Jnr. engaged James Atkinson, a Yorkshire-born builder who resided in Windsor, to extend Bleak House which included the addition of the second storey (no reference is provided for this assertion). James Atkinson built many notable buildings in Mudgee, including St. John's Anglican Church which was completed in 1860 (the foundation stone was laid in 1858<sup>2</sup>). In 1874 William Jnr. sold two allotments opposite Bleak House to James Atkinson who constructed the substantial house known as Beverley House in the mid-1870s as his own residence.

However, it appears that Bleak House was completed by March 1859 based on a number of contemporary newspaper articles, indicating that the house was constructed before 1859.

An article that first appeared in the *Mudgee Newspaper*, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1859 stated: "Further on at the extreme end of the town is 'Bleak House' the residence of W. Blackman Esq., an excellent building having considerable architectural pretensions, the site is good, but the land too small to show it to advantage"<sup>3</sup>

William Jnr. is listed as living on Lawson Street in 1859 according to the *NSW Government Gazette*, indicating that the house was complete by this time.<sup>4</sup>

An article dated 1861 noted: "Of private residences, Bleak House, belonging to Alderman W.R. Blackman, is the first prominent and striking object meeting the eye from the Sydney Road".<sup>5</sup>

It appears the name 'Bleak House' was introduced by William Jnr. in the late 1850s and it is likely it was named after the Charles Dickens novel of the same name which was first published as a serial between 1852 and 1853.

William Jnr. and family did not live at Bleak House permanently, as he had extensive real estate holdings within Mudgee township and in the district, and Bleak House appears to have been frequently leased. Greville's *NSW Post Office Directory* for 1872 lists a William Hellinghame, editor of Mudgee's Western Post as living at Bleak House, while lease documents indicate that Mrs Angwin, the widow of a former Wesleyan Methodist minister in Mudgee, was occupying Bleak House in 1874. Legal documents in 1874 and 1875 refer to William Richard Blackman as 'of Green Swamp', an area between Mudgee and Gulgong, where he lived at Binnawee homestead (included on the State Heritage Register).

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<sup>2</sup> Article: "The Country"; *Illawarra Mercury*, Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October 1858, p. 3

<sup>3</sup> Article: "Many Years Ago", *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> April 1934, p. 9

<sup>4</sup> Municipal Institutions: *NSW Government Gazette*, Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> August 1859 (Issue No. 162 Second Supplement), p. 1851

<sup>5</sup> Article: "Mudgee and the Northern Railway"; *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June 1861, p. 6

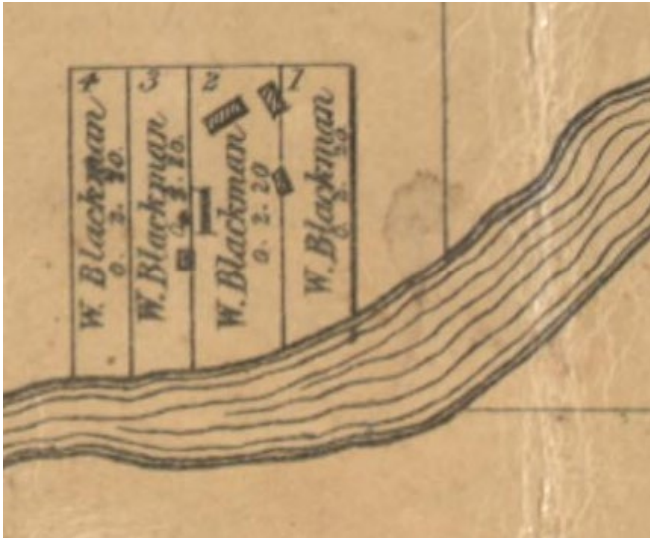


Figure 18: Plan of the town and environs of Mudgee, County of Wellington, dated 1874 showing the layout of Bleak House with outbuildings across Lots 1 to 3 of Section 1 of the town plan. Confusingly, the alignment of the buildings across the allotments do not equate to the existing house. North is to the right. Source: NLA, Map F 24

In the mid-1880s through to the mid-1890s, Bleak House was used as boarding school for young ladies, run by Mrs. Isabella Coates Wilson.<sup>6</sup>



Figure 19: Bleak House while in use as a ladies' academy in the 1880s. Courtesy of the owners.



Figure 20: Bleak House while in use as a ladies' academy in the 1880s. Courtesy of the owners.

<sup>6</sup> Advertising; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June 1885, p.3 and *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 1895, p. 41



Figure 21: Bleak House possibly in the 1890s showing enclosures at ground and first floor levels on the southern verandah. The ground floor level enclosure contained the kitchen. Courtesy of the owners.



Figure 22: Bleak House in the 1920s. Note the tennis court in lower right of frame which was installed in c.1909. Courtesy of the owners.

In 1890 Bleak House was advertised for sale and was described as follows:

*CROSSING & COX, In conjunction with Messrs. HARDIE and GORMAN, have received instructions from W. R. Blackman, Esq., to sell by auction, at Mudgee, immediately after the sale of Messrs Dickson and Sons' properties, on THURSDAY, 15th instant.*

*BLEAK HOUSE and Grounds, the most commanding site in the town for a private residence, being the whole of section 1, town of Mudgee, bounded on the north by Short-street, east by the Cudgegong River, south by Market-street, and west by Market street and immediately opposite the residence of James Atkinson, Esq. Bleak House is faithfully built, a two-storey building of 18-inch brick-work throughout, covered with iron, and comprises 8 commodious rooms – 3 on ground floor and 5 upstairs – kitchen, large store-room, servants' room and cellar under same roof, with wide balcony and verandah all round. Laundry with copper boiler built in, and large room adjoining, with loft over, both of brick and shingles. Stone stables, 5 stalls, coach-house, with cemented room and tank at back.<sup>7</sup>*

At this time, the house did not sell. Note the description of the house states that the kitchen, store room, servants room and cellar were all located under the main roof of the house and it is assumed this is referring to the enclosures located within the southern verandahs as seen in Figure 21 above.

In 1895, William Jnr. transferred the property into his wife's name and in 1898 William Richard Blackman died whilst in residence at Bleak House. Mary Blackman continued to reside at the house,

<sup>7</sup> Advertising; *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May 1890, p. 6



although with some short periods of absence, when the house was tenanted. Mary Blackman died in 1909 at another residence on Lawson Street, Mudgee.<sup>8</sup>

In 1900, while in Mary Blackman's ownership, Bleak House was once again advertised for either lease or sale,<sup>9</sup> and in 1901 Bleak House was sold to Eugene Daly, a local businessman and hotelier of the Club House Hotel. Although Daly had planned to retire, selling his hotel, less than a year later he had repurchased the Club House Hotel and leased out Bleak House. Subsequently, his married daughter resided there.

By 1908, Bleak House was operating as a boarding house, run by Mr. Paul Malitz. A local advertisement described the house at this time as: "comprising 3½ acres of land are situated only two blocks distant from the Exchange Corner. The rooms are large, and well ventilated, the appointments inside are on the most modern lines and there is a spacious balcony on all sides. The gas is laid on in all the rooms, and good baths are provided up and down stairs."<sup>10</sup>

In 1909 Eugene Daly sold Bleak House to prominent grazier, Henry Hunter White of Havilah, Mudgee. Henry Hunter White never lived at Bleak House and during his ownership it continued to be used as a boarding house by Paul Malitz, and others including Mrs. Isabella Champion in 1910, Mrs. Hogan in 1916 and Mrs. J.T. Evans in 1918.

White undertook some changes to the property including the construction of a brick cottage on the grounds in 1909,<sup>11</sup> and in 1917 the former stables building was converted into two cottages,<sup>12</sup> and in 1920 the old cottage was demolished and replaced with a new kitchen wing to designs by Mr. Harold Hardwick, architect.<sup>13</sup>

In 1921 Henry Hunter White offered the house to the Church of England for use as a hostel for girls attending the high school, and eventually deeded the house to the church in 1928. In the article announcing its opening, the place was described as:

*The hostel is at Bleak House, one of the finest residential buildings in Mudgee, which has been generously placed at the disposal of the Hostel promoters and managers by Mr. Hunter White, of Havilah, rent free and for a term of considerable length.*

*There is electric light throughout the building (a light in every bedroom), gas for lighting and heating in the kitchens, and cold and hot water plunge and shower baths on both floors. Amongst the outside attractions are a fine tennis court, and provision for swimming in a deep hole in the river (the original Mudgee water hole) just at the back of the house.*

*The house, which has been taken over just as it stands from Mrs. Evans, who for many years operated it as a first-class boarding house, is well furnished throughout. The bedrooms (all single rooms) are models of comfort, neatness, cleanliness and efficient ventilation. The dining, sitting and recreation rooms are spacious, lofty, comfortable and essentially homelike, and therefore attractive and inviting.<sup>14</sup>*

In 1926, the girls had relocated to Denison Street and Bleak House was in use as a hostel for boys attending the local schools.<sup>15</sup> Several months later the hostel reverted to accommodation for the girls.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Obituary: *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1910, p. 2

<sup>9</sup> Advertising: *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> August 1900, p. 17

<sup>10</sup> Advertising: *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> April 1908, p. 10

<sup>11</sup> Advertising: *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> March 1909, p. 18

<sup>12</sup> Advertising: *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> September 1917

<sup>13</sup> Building Permits: *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 1920, p. 5

<sup>14</sup> *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1921, p. 28

<sup>15</sup> *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> January 1926, p. 11)

During the period of ownership by the Church, the Bleak House land was subdivided and sold off including the north-eastern corner containing the former stables (now No. 5 Lawson Street) and the adjacent north-west corner containing the cottage constructed in 1909 (now No. 3 Lawson Street).

John William Head had purchased No. 3 Lawson Street and in 1936 Head purchased Bleak House from the Church and subsequently disposed of the following lands:

- 1937: 3 Lawson Street, on 22 perches, being part of Allotments 1 and 2, to George Scifleet, greengrocer of Mudgee, for £550.
- 1937: a strip of land containing 1 rood 1 perch on the south-western corner of Section 1 bordering Lawson and Market Streets, to Margaret Edith Munn, married woman of Mudgee, for £85.
- 1937: a strip of land containing 2 roods 22 perches, bordering the Cudgegong River, being parts of Allotments 2, 3 and 4, to Marjorie Kinnear Cox, spinster of Mudgee, for £115.
- 1937: Bleak House, on a further reduced allotment of 2 roods 23 perches, being parts of original Allotments 2, 3 and 4, to William Thomas Fountain, garage proprietor of Mudgee, for £800.

In 1941 William Fountain transferred the title of Bleak House to his wife, Joan, nee Hazeltine. During the period of ownership by the Fountains, Bleak House was converted into four flats to accommodate workers at the recently opened Mudgee Munitions Factory on Market Street. As a result, the lower and upper verandahs were enclosed with fibrous cement sheeting and concrete floors were installed for bathrooms on the north-eastern and south-eastern corners.



Figure 23: Bleak House while in use as flats in the mid to late 20th century. Courtesy of the Mudgee Museum.

In 1950 Mabel McLean purchased the property and renamed the house 'St Leans' which remained as flats.

Bleak House (St Leans) passed through various hands in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century until the property was purchased by Barry Doherty, carpenter and wife Enid in 1981. The Dohertys reintroduced the name Bleak House, restored the house, demolished the 1920s separate kitchen wing and installed a kitchen in the main house.

In 1996 the property was purchased by Walter Costello and Susan Lake who operated a Bed and Breakfast at the place and this use continued under subsequent owners.

In 2003 Bleak House was sold to John and Sue Snape who carried out further modifications to the house including converting the first-floor box room into two narrow ensuite bathrooms, so that each of the four upstairs bedrooms had an ensuite. They also converted the garage into an owner's apartment and continued the bed and breakfast accommodation.

The current owners purchased the property in 2021 and are in the process of converting the house back into a single residence, including undertaking extensive restoration works. Recently some minor works have received approval from council and are currently underway. These include:

- Repair and rectification works to remedy drainage issues and rising damp;

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<sup>16</sup> Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative, Thursday, 13th January 1927, p. 25

- Replacement of ground floor verandah posts to north, south and west elevations with new timber posts to interpret the original verandah posts located on the east elevation.
- Addition of solar panels to the first floor level verandah roof (east elevation).
- New driveway gates.
- Removal of swimming pool, paved surrounds and fencing.

As part of the recent works to remedy drainage issues, the later addition brick paving to the ground floor verandah was removed and revealed evidence that a kitchen oven had once been located within the south verandah, which equates to the description of the house in 1890 (refer to above) and the photograph of around the same date showing an enclosure on the ground floor southern verandah (Figure 21 above).



Figure 24: Evidence of the location of a former kitchen oven or stove found under the later addition brick paving to the southern verandah at ground floor level.

### 3. Significance of the Place

Bleak House, No. 7 Lawson Street, Mudgee is identified as a local heritage item under Schedule 5 of the *Mid-Western Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2012* (Item No. 188) and is located within the Mudgee Heritage Conservation Area (C1). The State Heritage Inventory for Bleak House includes the following statement of significance:

*James Atkinson constructed Bleak House and its stables for William Richard Blackman (son of William Blackman) in 1860. An exemplar Victorian town house, this two-storey mansion was well sited at the end of a long reserve (Lawson Park) and near the banks of the Cudgegong River. (Unfortunately, a house at the end of Market Street now separates it from the river).*

*A largely symmetrical building, it has a steep pitched hipped roof with chimneys at each end. The two-storey verandah is in 7 bays with twin timber posts and cast-iron balustrade on the upper floor, and single broad posts on the ground floor. Windows are generous, double hung on the ground floor with 6 panes per sash. The upper verandah is accessed by French doors. Heads are red rubbed soldier courses. The entrance door has sidelights and fanlight with 'Bleak House' etched. (Snapshot MWRC 2019)*

*It had several tenants during the 1800s including Mrs. Coates-Wilson in 1890 and Mary Black c. 1900. Bleak House was used primarily as a residence but served for periods as a school, boarding house, hostel, and bed and breakfast. It was used as flats for munitions workers during WWII. Possibly during this time, the ground floor was glazed in. A carpenter/builder owner Barry Doherty did considerable work to restore the house in the 1990s.*

*Contributes strongly to the heritage streetscape of Lawson Street. (State Heritage Inventory, Heritage Item ID: 2070088).*

It is noted that no inventory sheet exists for the Mudgee Heritage Conservation Area.

## **Discussion of Significance**

As a result of the research and the information found in the preparation of this report it is recommended that an appropriate statement of significance for the place is as follows:

### **Revised Statement of Significance**

Bleak House, No. 7 Lawson Street, Mudgee is of historical and aesthetic significance on a local level, as a very good, although old fashioned, example of a rural, Colonial style two storey verandahed house built for a prominent and successful pastoralist and local alderman William Richard Blackman, by noted local builder James Atkinson who built many notable buildings in Mudgee, including St. John's Anglican Church and Beverley House.

Constructed originally as a single storey residence for the first owner William Blackman Snr., owner of the Mudgee Hotel between 1842 and 1854, the building was extended into its present two storey form in 1854-1858, and it remains substantially intact to its form and configuration, with high quality cedar joinery and detailing throughout. Although no longer located on its original allotments and isolated from its stables building and river frontage, the house remains located within a substantial garden setting. When originally constructed, Bleak House was a notable, landmark in the town.

Bleak House is associated with the early settlement and development of the town of Mudgee in the 1830s, via the family links with James and John Blackman and for purportedly being the site of the first dwelling and store constructed in Mudgee in the late 1830s. The place is also of some significance for its associations with former owners, including the prominent grazier, Henry Hunter White of Havilah, Mudgee and the Church of England who operated Bleak House as a boarding house for girls and boys attending the local schools in the 1880s to 1890s.

## **4. The Proposal**

### **4.1. Documents Describing the Proposal**

The proposed works are described in the following documents:

- Drawings by Callander Constructions, dated 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022
  - DA-02 – Site Plan
  - DA-03 – Existing Ground Floor Plan
  - DA-04 – Existing First Floor Plan
  - DA-05 – Existing and Demolish Ground Floor Plan
  - DA-06 – Existing and Demolish First Floor Plan
  - DA-07 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan
  - DA-08 – Proposed First Floor Plan
  - DA-09 – West and East Elevations
  - DA-10 – North and South Elevations
  - DA-11 – North and South Sections
  - Bleak House Exterior Visualisation

## **4.2. Summary of Proposal**

In brief, the proposal includes:

### **Demolition**

#### Ground Floor

- Demolish existing Laundry enclosure in southeast corner of ground floor verandah.
- Demolish existing Bathroom enclosure in northeast corner of ground floor verandah
- Form new opening in south wall of existing Family Room.
- Demolish remainder of chimney breast in south wall of existing Family Room.
- Demolish existing later addition southern carport.
- Remove three later addition verandah posts on south side of ground floor verandah.

#### First Floor

- Demolish existing Retreat, Ensuite and WIR enclosures in southeast corner of first floor verandah.
- Demolish existing Retreat and Ensuite enclosures in northeast corner of first floor verandah
- Remove fittings, internal partitioning and later addition doors to two existing Ensuites.
- Form new openings in south wall of Bedroom 1 and Bedroom 2.

### **New Works**

#### Ground Floor

- Construct new weatherboard with CGI skillion roof Kitchen enclosure to south side of ground floor verandah with attached lobby, pantry and utility room, with timber post and corrugated metal roof awning over entry steps on south side.
- Reconstruct verandah flooring and underfloor framing (removed as part of rectification works for damp and drainage issues).

#### First Floor

- Construct new weatherboard enclosure under existing verandah roof to south side of first floor verandah with WIR and two Ensuites, with direct access from Bedroom 1 and Bedroom 2.
- Refit former Ensuites as single Bathroom with new partition wall and reinstate original door to Lobby.
- Remove gyprock panelling to internal face of west wall of new Bathroom to reveal original timber French doors to verandah. Make good French doors.
- Reconstruct north and south walls of new Bathroom to remove former openings.
- Replace missing panels of iron balustrading with new to match existing.

#### Secondary Dwelling

- Create new window opening to study and replace garage doors with new timber barn doors.

### **Generally**

- Repaint all external elevations, including new works in Repaint all external elevations, including new works in Deep Bronze Green, York Stone, Bath Stone, Slate, Stonecrop and Olive Drab.

## 5. Heritage Impact Assessment

### 5.1. Assessment Methodology

This SoHI provides an assessment of the proposal and its impacts on the cultural significance of Bleak House and the surrounding Mudgee Heritage Conservation Area.

An appropriate assessment methodology is to consider the details of the proposal and to compare it with a properly prepared Statement of Significance in order to determine whether the proposal detracts from or diminishes the significance of the place or its setting. In this case the revised Statement of Significance prepared above will be used for this assessment.

Although the place is located within a heritage conservation area, the *Mid-Western Regional Development Control Plan 2013* does not contain any objectives or provisions in relation to heritage items or heritage conservation areas.

### 5.2. Heritage Impact Assessment

In this assessment aspects of the proposal will be compared to the Statement of Significance as follows:

Proposed Works	Impact on Significance
<b>Demolition: Ground Floor</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demolish existing Laundry enclosure in southeast corner of ground floor verandah.</li> <li>Demolish existing Bathroom enclosure in northeast corner of ground floor verandah</li> </ul>	<p>Positive outcome.</p> <p>The current proposal involves the removal of later addition enclosures to the ground level verandah on the southern and northern sides of the building. The enclosures forms part of the work undertaken in the 1940s when the house was converted into four flats, and they currently contain a laundry and a bathroom. As later additions to the building, it is appropriate that they are removed, and this work is a positive outcome of the current proposal. In addition, as these enclosures were constructed of fibrous cement sheeting it is desirable that they be removed given that they likely contain asbestos.</p> <p>This work allows for the restoration of the ground floor verandah on the northern side of the main house.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form new opening in south wall of existing Family Room.</li> </ul>	<p>Minimal impact.</p> <p>The proposal also involves the introduction of a new opening at ground level in the southern wall of the south-eastern room (Family Room). This new opening is being proposed to provide direct access into the new enclosure proposed to the southern verandah at ground floor level.</p> <p>The door opening is being located in the area where a chimney breast was once located (partially removed by previous owners when the room was converted for use as a kitchen). The works involve the removal of a small amount of original fabric in the southern wall, in an area of the room that has already undergone change.</p> <p>The new door opening will not be visible from the garden or from Lawson Street or the adjacent properties to the south as it will lead directly into the new enclosure. The new opening is capable of being infilled in the future and the room configuration and southern wall reconstructed (if that was desired).</p>

Proposed Works	Impact on Significance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demolish remainder of chimney breast in south wall of existing Family Room.</li> </ul>	<p>Negligible impact.</p> <p>The ground floor south-eastern room had been converted into a kitchen during the period when the house was in use as a Bed &amp; Breakfast. At some stage the chimney breast on the southern wall was removed in part by the previous owners. The proposal includes removing the remainder of the chimney breast and providing necessary structural support for the fireplace and chimney breast located in the room directly above, Bed 2.</p> <p>As the chimney breast has already been partially removed and the fireplace completely removed, this work will have negligible impacts on the significance of the house. Providing structural support to the fireplace above is necessary (per structural engineer) and should be supported.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demolish existing later addition southern carport.</li> </ul>	<p>Positive outcome.</p> <p>At some stage a carport was constructed on the southern side of the house, connected to the southern verandah and containing a later garage. As this is a later addition to the property and is considered to be an intrusive feature, its removal is appropriate.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove three later addition verandah posts on south side of ground floor verandah.</li> </ul>	<p>Positive outcome.</p> <p>In order to accommodate the new southern enclosure, three later addition verandah posts are required to be removed. As these posts are not original their removal is appropriate. However, they are to be interpreted by being expressed on the external wall of the new enclosure.</p> <p>It should be noted that approval has already been granted for the reconstruction/interpretation of the unsound ground floor verandah posts to the south, west and north elevations, based on surviving original/early timber verandah posts located on the east elevation.</p>
<b>Demolition: First Floor</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demolish existing Retreat, Ensuite and WIR enclosures in southeast corner of first floor verandah.</li> <li>Demolish existing Retreat and Ensuite enclosures in northeast corner of first floor verandah</li> </ul>	<p>Positive outcome.</p> <p>The current proposal involves the removal of later addition enclosures to the first level verandah on the southern and northern sides of the building. The enclosures forms part of the work undertaken in the 1940s when the house was converted into four flats. As later additions to the building, it is appropriate that they are removed, and this work is a positive outcome of the current proposal. As with the ground floor enclosures, these first-floor level enclosures were constructed of fibrous cement sheeting and their removal is desirable given that they likely contain asbestos.</p> <p>This work allows for the restoration of the first-floor verandah on the eastern and northern sides of the main house.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove fittings, internal partitioning and later addition doors to two existing Ensuities.</li> </ul>	<p>Positive outcome.</p> <p>During the period of use as a Bed &amp; Breakfast, the first-floor level box room was converted for use into two ensuities for the bedrooms to the north and south (Bed 1 and 3). The proposal involves removing all fittings, including the internal partitioning to restore this area into a single room as per its original configuration. This is a positive outcome involving the removal of intrusive features. This work is also necessary as the ensuities currently leak and are causing damage to the ceiling of the entry hall below.</p>

Proposed Works	Impact on Significance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form new openings in south wall of Bedroom 1 and Bedroom 2.</li> </ul>	<p>Minimal impact.</p> <p>The proposal involves the introduction of two new openings at first floor level in the southern walls of Bed 1 and Bed 2. These new openings are being proposed to provide direct access into the new enclosure proposed to the southern verandah.</p> <p>The new openings have been located within the corners of the bedrooms and will not impact on the existing fireplaces also located on the southern walls. The works involve the removal of a small amount of original fabric in the southern wall of both bedrooms. However, the new openings are capable of being infilled in the future and the room configurations and southern walls reconstructed (if that was desired).</p> <p>As the proposal includes the addition of a new southern verandah enclosure at first floor level, these new door openings will not be visible from the garden or from Lawson Street or the adjacent properties to the south.</p>
<b>New Works: Ground Floor</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct new weatherboard with CGI skillion roof Kitchen enclosure to south side of ground floor verandah with attached lobby, pantry and utility room, with timber post and corrugated metal roof awning over entry steps on south side.</li> </ul>	<p>Negligible impacts.</p> <p>The proposal involves the construction of a new enclosure to the southern verandah at ground level replacing an existing enclosure.</p> <p>The new enclosure is to accommodate a kitchen with attached lobby, pantry and utility room. The new enclosure is to be weatherboard with a CGI skillion roof and will project beyond the footprint of the verandah with a flight of stairs leading up into it. Access into this new structure will be from the south from the carparking area to allow easy unloading of shopping etc. directly into the kitchen and pantry, from the eastern (rear) verandah and from the Family Room via the new door opening (see above).</p> <p>When originally constructed, Bleak House had a separate Kitchen, Bathroom and Laundry wing. However, these structures were demolished. By the 1890s, the kitchen (together with other rooms) was located within an enclosure within the southern ground level verandah (see Figure 21). Physical evidence has recently been uncovered under the later brick paving of the southern verandah showing that a kitchen stove or oven was once located in this area. This earlier enclosure was replaced in the 1940s with the existing enclosures and a new, separate kitchen wing was constructed. However, by the early 1980s the kitchen had been inserted into the south-eastern ground floor room of the main house. The current owners are in the process of restoring this room back into a Family/Sitting Room and presently there is no functioning kitchen within the house.</p> <p>The proposal for a new enclosure within the southern ground floor verandah will allow for a kitchen to be provided for the house in a way that will conserve the original configuration ground floor rooms within the main house.</p> <p>The proposal to enclose a portion of the ground floor verandah to provide for much needed facilities is a traditional approach to upgrading a house, as is demonstrated by Figure 21 showing enclosures to both the first-floor level and ground floor level southern verandah in the 1890s. As such, siting a kitchen with ancillary rooms in this location is historically appropriate.</p>



Proposed Works	Impact on Significance
	<p>Locating the kitchen within close proximity to the main house by constructing it within the southern verandah also ensures that the use of the main house is retained. Constructing a new, separate kitchen wing in a pavilion (or similar) would mean that the current owners would find themselves using any separate building with kitchen as their main gathering space, rather the main house. The current proposal allows for the new kitchen to be integrated into the main house in a way that minimises physical impacts on the significant fabric and preserves the configuration and detailing of the principal rooms of the main house.</p> <p>The design for the current proposal is based on the configuration and detailing of the 1890s enclosures.</p> <p>The new enclosure is proposed to be in weatherboard with CGI roofing, finishes that are sympathetic to the historical character of the building and more appropriate than the existing fibrous cement sheeting enclosures that are currently in place. The new enclosure has been simply detailed to appear as a new, sympathetic addition in a traditional form which is appropriate.</p> <p>The enclosure is set in from the front (west) elevation to ensure that the front verandah remains open, preserving existing views of the front elevation of the house.</p> <p>The new enclosure is capable of being removed in the future (if this was desired) and the southern verandah restored.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconstruct verandah flooring and underfloor framing (removed as part of rectification works for damp and drainage issues).</li> </ul>	<p>Positive outcome.</p> <p>The current owners of Bleak House recently undertook repairs and rectification works to the ground floor verandah to resolve drainage and damp problems that were impacting the main house. The flooring of the verandah had been replaced at some stage with brick paving, which was causing rising damp. As such, the brick flooring has been removed to allow for ventilation to the under-verandah space and to install drainage. It is proposed to reconstruct the verandah flooring with timber boarding using traditional methods and as per the original configuration. This work forms part of the restoration works to Bleak House and should be supported.</p>
<b>New Works: First Floor</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct new weatherboard enclosure under existing verandah roof to south side of first floor verandah with WIR and two Ensuities, with direct access from Bedroom 1 and Bedroom 2.</li> </ul>	<p>Negligible impact.</p> <p>The proposal includes the construction of a weatherboard enclosure in the south-east corner of the first-floor level verandah.</p> <p>As discussed above, enclosing a portion of a verandah is a traditional approach to providing additional rooms/spaces in an historic house and is supported by the evidence provided in Figure 21 showing an enclosure to the southern verandah at first floor level. In this case, ensuites are being provided for Bed 1 and 2, together with a WIR for Bed 1 and the benefit of installing these facilities in a separate verandah enclosure means that the configuration and detailing of the original bedrooms within the house are able to be conserved. Each ensuite is to be accessed via new door openings in the south wall of Bed 1 and 2 (refer to discussion above).</p> <p>A similar approach has already been taken on both the north and south verandahs, with enclosures installed in the 1940s containing bathrooms. These enclosures are of fibrous cement sheeting and are</p>

Proposed Works	Impact on Significance
	<p>to be removed as they are unsightly and potentially contain asbestos. The southern enclosure is to be replaced with the new enclosure of weatherboard based on the form and materials of the 1890s enclosure as seen in Figure 21, which is sympathetic to the historical character of the house. The new enclosure has been simply detailed to appear as a new, sympathetic addition in a traditional form completely contained under the verandah roof, which is appropriate.</p> <p>The enclosure is set in from the front (west) elevation at first floor level to ensure that the front verandah remains open, preserving existing views of the front elevation of the house.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refit former Ensuites as single Bathroom with new partition wall and reinstate original door to door to Lobby.</li> <li>• Remove gyprock panelling to internal face of west wall of new Bathroom to reveal original timber French doors to verandah. Make good French doors.</li> <li>• Reconstruct north and south walls of new Bathroom to remove former openings.</li> </ul>	<p>Positive outcome.</p> <p>Currently the former box room located at first floor level is configured as two ensuites with internal partitioning, servicing the Bed 1 and Bed 3. Later addition door openings were also introduced into the north and south walls of the bedrooms respectively.</p> <p>The proposal involves removing the partitioning, infilling the later door openings, and reforming the space as a single room, to be refitted as a bathroom.</p> <p>This space has already been adapted to accommodate two ensuites, refitting the room as a single bathroom is appropriate and is preferable to introducing services into any other room within the house. The work also allows for the partial restoration of the room.</p> <p>As part of this work, the original door to the Lobby is able to be reinstated, as it is currently located in one of the ensuites and is to be relocated.</p> <p>The work also allows for the restoration of the north and south walls of the former box room by enclosing the later door openings and making good these walls.</p> <p>As part of this work, panelling to the internal face of the western wall is also to be removed to reveal the original timber French doors leading onto the western verandah at first floor level. This work forms part of the restoration works to the house and should be supported.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace missing panels of balustrading with new to match existing.</li> </ul>	<p>Positive outcome.</p> <p>As a result of the construction of the first floor level verandah enclosures in the 1940s, the original iron balustrading to the eastern (rear) verandah was removed and replaced with timber lattice.</p> <p>The proposal includes the restoration of the balustrading with iron balustrading to match the existing balustrading found on the south, north and east elevations. This work forms part of the restoration works to the house and should be supported.</p>
<b>New Works: Secondary Dwelling</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create new window opening to study and replace garage doors with new timber barn doors.</li> </ul>	<p>No impacts.</p> <p>Located to the south-east of the main house is located a secondary dwelling that was originally constructed as a garage in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This building is considered to be of little significance and the proposed works involving the introduction of a new window on its northern elevation and replacement of roller garage doors with new timber barn doors will have no impact on the heritage values of Bleak House.</p>

Proposed Works	Impact on Significance
<b>New Works: Generally</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repaint all external elevations, including new works in Deep Bronze Green, York Stone, Slate, Bath Stone, Stonecrop and Olive Drab.</li> </ul>	<p>Positive outcome.</p> <p>Following the completion of the construction works, it is proposed to repaint the exteriors of the house in a selection of traditional colours.</p> <p>The new southern verandah enclosures are to be painted in Olive Drab which will help in making these new additions visually recessive in views of the house.</p> <p>The verandah posts and balustrading are to be painted in a light stone colour. Based on historic photographs of the house (see Figures 19 to 22 above), it appears that light tones were used for the verandah and the new colour scheme replicates this approach.</p> <p>The external joinery (window frames and sashes, doors, architraves and louvred shutters etc.) are also all to be painted in green, grey, and stone colours selected from the Dulux heritage range. Only those surfaces previously painted will be repainted. Stone windowsills and face brick walls will all be retained unpainted as per existing. A small portion of the east elevation at ground floor level has already been painted and it is proposed to repaint only this section of the wall, as removing the paint may cause damage to the face brick.</p>

## Conclusion

The proposed alterations and additions to Bleak House involves a mixture of restoration works together with upgrading works to allow for the house to be used as a single private residence. The works involve the removal of later, intrusive features and the restoration of interior spaces (Family Room and box room) as well as the verandah, whilst providing for a new kitchen, ancillary service areas, a bathroom, ensuites and WIR. The work has been designed to be sympathetic to the historical character of the house using appropriate materials and simple, traditional details and ensures that the main body of the house is able to be retained and conserved in its original configuration with its surviving original detailing. The proposed new enclosures will result in an improved appearance of the house and ensures that the principal façade (east) is conserved.

The proposed new enclosures are of a smaller footprint than the existing enclosures located on both the north and south side of the main house. The removal of the later 1940s enclosures will allow for the north and east verandahs to be restored and will increase available views of the original form and configuration of the main house as seen from the north.

The proposed enclosures to the southern verandahs at ground and first floor levels have been designed based on the 1890s enclosures in these same locations which are evident in Figure 21 of this report and contained the kitchen at ground level. As such, the current proposal is appropriate being based on historical precedence.

The works are capable of being carried out in a sympathetic manner, resulting in minimal loss of original fabric. Any impacts on the significance of the place as a result of the proposal will be off set by the restoration works being undertaken at the same time. All new works are capable of being removed in the future and the main house restored to its original/early configuration.

As Bleak House is sited towards the middle of the allotment with a generous front setback from Lawson Street, the new enclosures to the ground and first floor level verandahs will not be clearly visible or overt in views of the house as seen from the street. The enclosures are replacing existing enclosures of less sympathetic design and materials and the new enclosures will be an improvement to

the presentation of the house. Bleak House will continue to be seen and appreciated as a very fine two storey historic dwelling located in a generous garden setting that makes an important contribution to the Mudgee Heritage Conservation Area.

The current proposal complies with the objectives of Cl. 5.10 of the *Mid-Western Regional Local Environmental Plan 2012*. The proposal for Bleak House will result in the conservation of the environmental heritage of Mudgee and the council area. The proposed works will result in the conservation of the heritage significance of Bleak House and the surrounding Mudgee Heritage Conservation Area, as the fabric of the house is to be restored and conserved. The setting and available views of Bleak House will not be altered as a result of the proposal.

Consequently, in the view of this firm the proposal has a minimal impact on the significance of the item and **should be** approved, in relation to Heritage considerations by the consent authority.



Kate Denny  
Lucas Stapleton Johnson & Partners Pty Ltd  
LSJ Heritage Planning & Architecture

Encls.

State Heritage Inventory

*Bleak House 7 Lawson Street Mudgee: An Historical and Architectural Study*, John Broadley (April 2022)

CV KD

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## Item Details

**Name**  
"Bleak House", House and stables  
**SHR/LEP/S170**  
"Bleak House", House and stables  
**Address**  
5-7 Lawson Street MUDGEE NSW 2850  
**Local Govt Area**  
Mid-Western Regional  
**Local Aboriginal Land Council**  
Unknown

**Item Type**  
Built  
**Group/Collection**  
Residential buildings (private)  
**Category**  
House

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## All Addresses

Addresses

Records Retrieved: 1

Street No	Street Name	Suburb/Town/Postcode	Local Govt. Area	LALC	Parish	County	Electorate	Address Type
5-7	Lawson Street	MUDGEE/NSW/2850	Mid-Western Regional	Unknown			Unknown	Primary Address

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## Significance

Statement Of Significance

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James Atkinson constructed Bleak House and its stables for William Richard Blackman (son of William Blackman) in 1860. An exemplar Victorian town house, this two-storey mansion was well sited at the end of a long reserve (Lawson Park) and near the banks of the Cudgegong River. (Unfortunately, a house at the end of Market Street now separates it from the river).

A largely symmetrical building, it has a steep pitched hipped roof with chimneys at each end. The two story verandah is in 7 bays with twin timber posts and cast iron balustrade on the upper floor, and single broad posts on the ground floor. Windows are generous, double hung on the ground floor with 6 panes per sash. The upper verandah is accessed by French doors. Heads are red rubbed soldier courses. The entrance door has sidelights and fanlight with 'Bleak House' etched.(Snapshot MWRC 2019)

It had several tenants during the 1800s including Mrs. Coates-Wilson in 1890 and Mary Black c. 1900. Bleak House was used primarily as a residence but served for periods as a school, boarding house, hostel, and bed and breakfast. It was used as flats for munitions workers during WWII. Possibly during this time, the ground floor was glazed in. A carpenter/builder owner Barry Doherty did considerable work to restore the house in the 1990s.

Contributes strongly to the heritage streetscape of Lawson Street.

## Owners

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

## Description

**Designer**

**Builder/Maker**

**Physical Description**

Late Victorian mansion of two storey with steep pitched hipped roof and verandahs on two levels. Upper verandahs supported on twin timber posts and balustrade of decorated cast iron, in seven equal bays. One pair of French doors open onto first floor centred on each bay. Two high brick chimneys at either side of house. Stables to north (possibly predate house) may be original cottage are of local stone with projecting parapet gable end.

**Physical Condition**

**Updated**

**Modifications And Dates**

Glazed in ground floor verandah - Inappropriate.

#### Further Comments

Victorian mansion emphasising prosperity of town during 1870-80 period.  
Integrity - Fair. Condition - Fair. Conservation Area.  
DA9/1997 B&B Ijm

#### Current Use

#### Former Use

### Listings

Listings				Records Retrieved: 2	
Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazette Number	Gazette Page
Heritage study					
Local Environmental Plan	Mid-Western Regional Local Environmental Plan 2012	188	8/10/2012 12:00:00 AM		

### Procedures/Exemptions

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

### History

Historical Notes or Provenance

Updated

Bleak House 150th Anniversary by John Broadley

Bleak House was completed circa 1860 for prominent grazier and businessman William Richard Blackman, son of Mudgee pioneers William and Sarah Blackman, nee Cobcroft, who had a slab house and store on the site as early as 1833. At the time it was built the two-storeyed Bleak House was the grandest house in the town and district.

The Blackman family leased out the house for many years in the 1880s and 1890s when it was used to house girls' schools. In 1901 Bleak House passed out of the Blackman family and for many years it was used as a boarding house. In 1921 prominent Mudgee grazier Henry Hunter White of Havilah offered the house to the Church of England for use as a girls' hostel and in 1928 he gifted the property to the church. The hostel closed in 1935 and the property was sold and subsequently subdivided; a cottage near the entrance and the former coach house and stables were now on separate titles.

During WWII the house was divided into flats and many alterations occurred. In 1981 Barry and Enid Doherty began a massive renovation and restoration program to bring the building back to a single dwelling. Fortunately many of the original features were intact: the grand stair hall and cornice, architraves, skirtings, doors, windows and French doors. Subsequent owners continued to enhance the house and expanded the garden which the Dohertys had established. For some ten years until early 2010 Bleak House functioned as a 'bed and breakfast'.

### Historic Themes

Records Retrieved: 0

National Theme	State Theme	Local Theme
	No Results Found	

### Recommended Management

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#### Management Summary

#### Management

Records Retrieved: 0

Management Category	Management Name	Date Updated
	No Results Found	

### Report/Study

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## Heritage Studies

Records Retrieved: 0

Report/Study Name	Report/Study Code	Report/Study Type	Report/Study Year	Organisation	Author
No Results Found					

## Reference & Internet Links

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### References

Records Retrieved: 1

Type	Author	Year	Title	Link
Written	Barbara Hickson	2019	Snapshot: Statements of Significance	

## Data Source

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The information for this entry comes from the following source:

<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Record Owner</b>	<b>Heritage Item ID</b>
Local Government	Mid-Western Regional Council	2070088

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