

GJM Heritage

Level 3, 124 Exhibition Street
[GPO Box 2634, Melbourne 3001]
Melbourne, Victoria 3000

e: enquiries@gjmheritage.com
t: +61 (0)481 284 130
w: gjmheritage.com

Richard Seymour
Development Director
Bookaar Renewables Pty Ltd

31 May 2018

By email: r.seymour@infinergy.co.uk

Dear Mr Seymour

‘Meningoort’, 520 Meningoort Road, Bookaar – Proposed Solar Energy Facility

You have advised us that Bookaar Renewables Pty Ltd is investigating the construction of a solar energy generating facility (the Project) on land within ‘Meningoort’ at 520 Meningoort Road (the Place). A portion of the Place is included on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). While the area where the facility is to be constructed is located well beyond the extent of the VHR registration, you have nonetheless asked us to undertake an assessment of the impact of the Project on the cultural heritage values of the Place – as detailed in the Statement of Significance.

The advice contained in this document includes:

- A brief summary of the heritage status and significance of the Place; and
- An assessment of the impact of the Project on the values of the Place

Our advice is based on a site inspection of the Place undertaken on 25 January 2018 and the following material provided by Bookaar Renewables Ltd:

- General Preliminary Layout. Prepared by Rina Consulting (26 March 2018)
- Elevation Sketch (Undated. Provided on 16 May 2018)
- Bookaar Solar Farm Community Open Day Slides (Undated. Provided on 16 May 2018).

I note that the advice excludes consideration of the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of the Place and consideration of the impact of the Proposal on the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO). I understand that this advice will be obtained independently by Bookaar Renewables.

The Place

The Place is situated at 520 Meningoort Road, Bookaar, in Corangamite Shire (Council), approximately 10km north-west of Camperdown. It comprises part of a large squatting run with a substantial bluestone house, ‘Meningoort Homestead’ dating from 1851 with 1887 additions and a series of bluestone and timber farm outbuildings. The Homestead is sited on the south-eastern slope of the extinct volcano Mount Meningoort, facing Mount Leura and is surrounded by landscaped gardens / lawn containing exotic plantings in a park-like landscape.

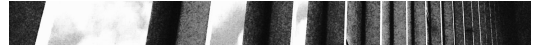


Figure 1: c2017 image of the Meningoort property (Allen & Baker 2017, 95)



Figure 2: Meningoort Homestead Front Porch, Victorian Heritage Database 2008.

Part of the Place is included in the VHR for its architectural, historical and scientific significance to the State of Victoria.

‘Meningoort Homestead’ was one of the first places to be included on the Historic Buildings Register – HBR (the predecessor to the VHR) in 1974. The registration was limited to the Homestead and outbuildings. Figure 3 illustrates the land identified as the ‘Extent of Registration’ upon the transfer of the registration from the Historic Buildings Register (HBR) to the VHR and forms the extent of the Corangamite Shire Heritage Overlay (HO80).

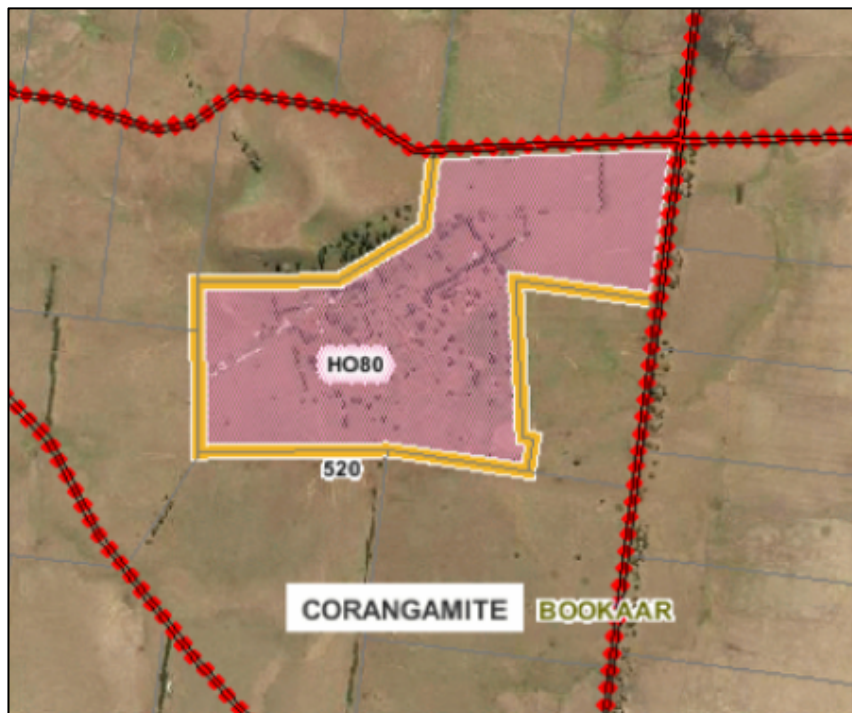


Figure 3: Subject Site Map - Outline of the Subject Site shown in Red. The pink polygon indicates the extent of the HO and yellow line the boundary of the VHR as recorded by Planning Maps Online (accessed March 2018).

Heritage Controls

The extent of registration, as defined in the VHR, was never formally amended at the time of its transfer from the HBR and as such, the mapped extent of the heritage control, does not reflect the actual extent of land subject to the provisions of the *Heritage Act 2017*, which only apply to the buildings within the Place including the Homestead and outbuildings.

We have, however, taken a broader view in our assessment by considering the Statement of Significance combined with a site assessment to determine the potential impact of the project on the cultural heritage values of the Place.

Statement of Significance

The Statement of Significance for VHR H0300 identifies that Meningoort is of ‘architectural, historical and scientific (horticultural) significance to the State of Victoria’ for the following reasons:

Meningoort is of historical significance for its association with the period of early pastoral settlement in western Victoria, the site being first settled in 1837; and particularly for its association with early pastoralists Peter McArthur and Nicholas Cole. This significance is enhanced by its being

maintained in near original condition, and being held by the same family since its construction. Its collection of furniture is intrinsic to the history of the homestead and the wider property.

Meningoort is of architectural significance as an important example of a Western District bluestone pastoral homestead. Its grand scale and setting reflects the wealth and importance of the Western District pastoralists, and the ongoing and prominent role of pastoral families such as the McArthurs in the social and political life in Victoria. The station outbuildings, especially the bluestone woolshed and stables, are significant as fine examples of working buildings, ranging from the architect-designed to the rustic vernacular, and for their contribution to an understanding of the complex workings of the pastoral station.

*The remnant homestead garden, and the broader landscaped grounds, is of horticultural and aesthetic significance for its park-like and picturesque setting, which was characteristic of pastoral homesteads in Victoria. The bold landscaping treatment at Meningoort reflects the visual importance given to the siting of the homestead in the early pastoral period, and the place of the homestead in the natural landscape. Meningoort is also significant for its garden elements, including the terrace, and collection of mature species that includes conifers and an Oak tree (*Quercus sp.*). The property's aesthetic significance is enhanced by the fact that it was painted by Eugene von Guerard in 1861, one of the many pastoral landscapes von Guerard painted in western Victoria in the 1850s and 1860s.*

The full citation is included at Appendix 1.

The Proposal

The Proposal involves the construction of a solar facility that will extend over an area slightly in excess of 6km². The facility will require the erection of associated structures including 80 inverters, a substation platform, drainage lines and a perimeter fence. An internal (unsealed) road will run through the centre of the facility to enable maintenance access. Screening is proposed to be erected along substantial sections of the facility – including the entire eastern side of the facility (which will be visible from the Darlington-Camperdown Road).

Both a single axis tracking system (with panels rotating to follow the sun) and a fixed system are being considered for the site. Neither will exceed 4m in height (as shown in Figure 4). The area to be affected by the proposal is shown in Figure 5.

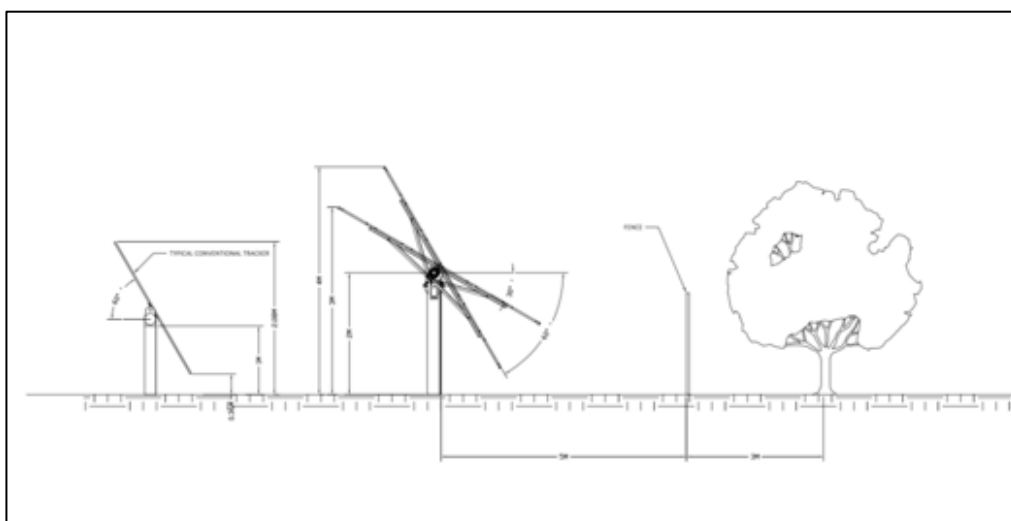


Figure 4. Elevation showing proposed form and maximum height of single axis tracking system panels.

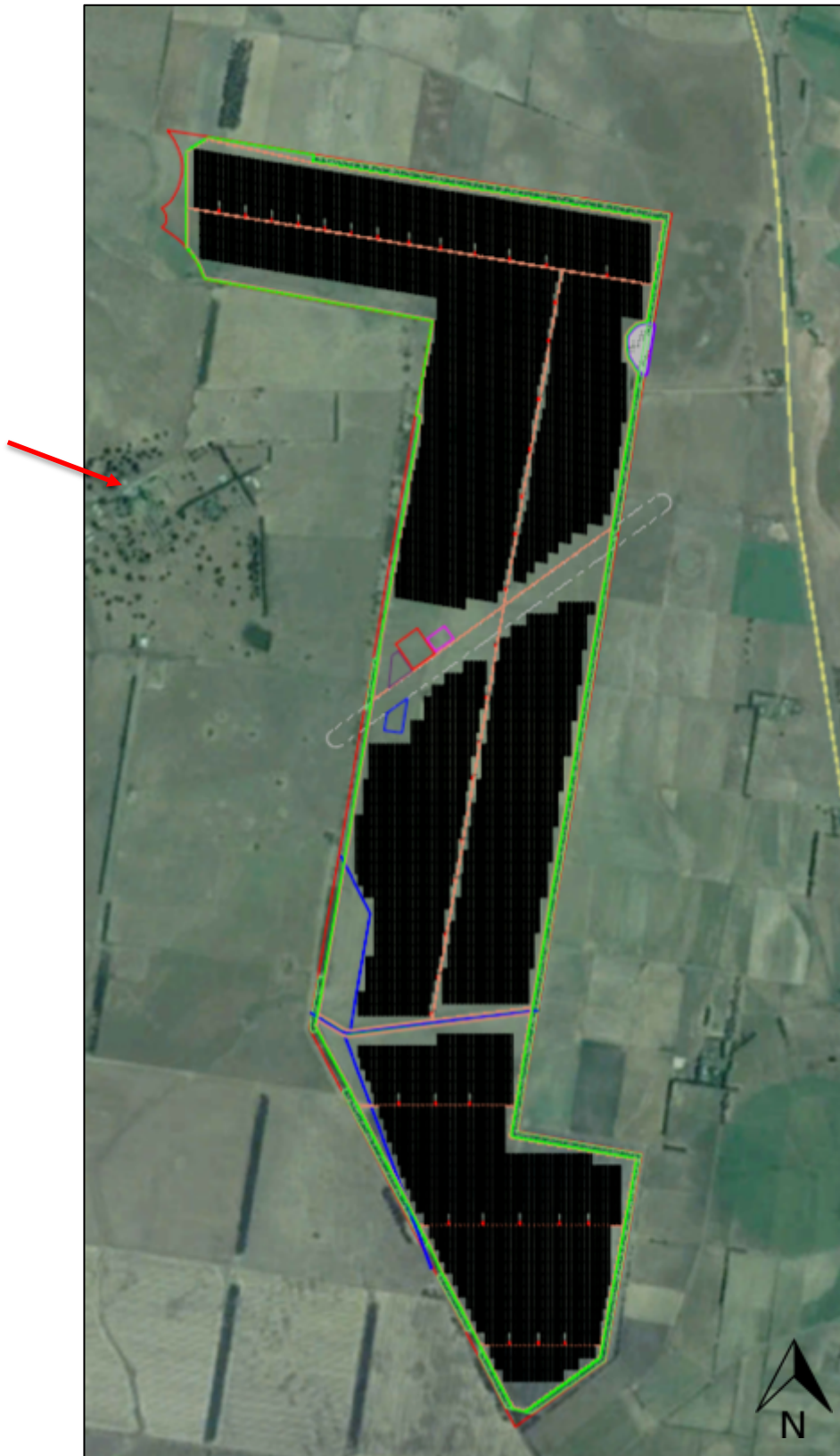
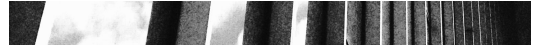
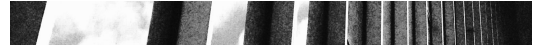


Figure 5. Aerial of part of the subject site and Lot 51 LP4677 Darlington Road (Provided by Bookaar Renewables Pty Ltd). Red arrow indicates approximate location of Meningoort Homestead.



The proposed development will occur at least 1km to the east of the Meningoort Homestead and well beyond 'the broader landscaped grounds' described in the Statement of Significance – which are predominantly to the north and south of the Homestead. The proposed works are also located beyond the (erroneously) mapped extent of registration.

The land proposed for development is currently used for grazing stock. It is flat and largely devoid of significant vegetation (see Appendix 2).

The Impact

The location of the proposed facility, a minimum of 1km away from the Homestead, will ensure that it has no impact on the physical fabric of the Homestead or associated outbuildings. The significant distance will also serve to minimise the visual impact of the proposed development on the 'park-like and picturesque' views to the Homestead. Key public views to the Homestead from the south-east (where the Homestead is oriented) will be unaffected.

The impact of the proposed facility on views to the Homestead from the east (along the Darlington-Camperdown Road) will also be limited and further reduced by the introduction of continuous screening running the length of the eastern perimeter.

While visible from within the Meningoort property itself – and from the Homestead – the proposed facility does not impact on the central driveway or the strong visual axis to Mount Leura. The provision of screening to parts of the western perimeter of the facility will also assist in further reducing the visual impact from within the site.

Conclusion

The proposed development will not, in our view, impact negatively upon the cultural heritage significance of the place. In this respect, we note that the facility will be located a minimum of 1km away from the Homestead and is oriented so as to minimise any impact on key views to or from the Homestead. The provision of extensive screening and the relatively low scale nature of the facility will also assist in limiting the facility's visual impact.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if any of the matters raised above require clarification.

Yours sincerely

Jim Gard'ner – Director | Registered Architect
GJM Heritage

Dr Leo Martin – Director



**Appendix 1: Victorian Heritage Register citation for Meningoort, 520 Meningoort Road
Bookaar, Corangamite Shire (VHR H300)**

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name	MENINGOORT	File No	FOL/15/48544,602 556
Address	520 MENINGOORT ROAD BOOKAAR	Significance Level	Unknown
Place Type	Homestead building, Homestead Complex		



MENINGOORT HOMESTEAD SOHE 2008

Condition	Poor		
Recommended Heritage Protection	VHR - HI - PS -		
Designer / Architect	D'Ebro, Charles	Architectural Style	Victorian Period (1851-1901) Italianate

History and Historical Context

Associated People: Assoc.People NICHOLAS COLE

The draft statement of significance and the above history were produced as part of an Online Date Upgrade Project 2004. Sources were as follows:

Willingham, Allan. *Camperdown: A heritage study*, 2 vols. (1995).

Kaye C. Darby, *The Making of Our Town: Camperdown* (1986).

SLV Pictoria.

Sutherland, Alexander. *Victoria and its Metropolis*. Vol. 2 1888, p. 85.

Henderson, Alexander. *Early Pioneer Families of Victoria and the Riverina*. McCarron Bird, Melbourne, 1936.

Hubbard, Timothy, *Reaching Out: The landscape inside and outside the garden gate at Meningoort*, 14 September 2001.

Clive Lucas, *Australian Country Houses* (1987).

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

<http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/president/x/mcarthur.htm>

View Von Guerard painting at: http://www.christies.com/promos/may02/1029/promo_gallery.asp?page=5

Description

Physical Description

Date Started 1842; Date Finished ; Storeys 1; Desc HOMESTEAD; Walls STONE;
Date Started 1851; Date Finished ; Storeys 1; Desc HOMESTEAD; Walls STONE;
Arch/Design D'EBRO, C; Style ITALIANATE;
Date Started 1886; Date Finished ; Storeys 1; Desc FARM; Walls STONE;
Arch/Design D'EBRO, C; Style ITALIANATE;

Physical Condition

State of the Historic Environment survey report - Condition Poor. See Events.

Usage / Former Usage

1842 ; Farming ; 1842 ; RESIDENTIAL ; 1851 ; Farming ; 1851 ; RESIDENTIAL ; 1886 ; RESIDENTIAL ;

Comparative Analysis

Comparisons

Wiridgil, Camperdown (date?) [HV file no. 600903]

Statement of Significance

'What is significant?'

Meningoort was part of a larger squatting run taken up by Scottish immigrants Peter McArthur and Nicholas Cole in 1837. The run was divided in 1842 or 1843 and McArthur took over the Meningoort section. In 1851, he built a rectangular verandahed bungalow on a terrace cut from the side of the extinct volcano Mount Meningoort. A view of the house and grounds was painted by Eugene von Guérard in 1861. In 1887, the house was partially rebuilt and enlarged to a design by Melbourne architect Charles D'Ebro. Side wings, set back from front of the house on each side, were added to the original house, enclosing a courtyard at the rear; the original house was then rebuilt between these wings. In 1903, D'Ebro delivered an address to the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects titled "Design of Australian Country Houses". Meningoort illustrated many of the features discussed in this paper, particularly the good accommodation provided for the servants.

Meningoort is a grand, single-storey bluestone Italianate homestead with a decorative cast-iron verandah across the front and sides, and a corrugated iron roof. A verandah around the rear court shelters the back entrances to the house. In the symmetrical central part of the house the principal rooms are located at the front, and the bedrooms are located along a transverse corridor behind these. One of the rear wings contains family bedrooms, dressing rooms and nurseries. The other wing contains the kitchen offices, a housekeeper's room, servants' dining room and laundry, with additional servants' bedrooms in an attic above. The interior is intact, and much of the original furniture, notably in the dining room and Peter McArthur's study, remains in the house. At the rear of the house are two long rectangular bluestone buildings;

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the one at the rear of the courtyard containing a billiard room, WC, school-room and servants' sitting room, the other five more service rooms, including a dairy. South of the house are a large bluestone woolshed, two-storey bluestone stables, and a number of other timber and stone outbuildings.

The approach to the house and its setting are spectacular. The homestead is sited on the south-east slope of Mount Meningoort, directly facing Mount Leura. It has an unusual axial approach along a long avenue of red-gums to a circular driveway surrounded by a high hedge in front of the house, and two flights of stone steps lead from this up to the house. The homestead garden is shaped by hedging and low plantings, with large mature species in extensive park-like surrounds. Aspects of the original landscape plan have survived, including the terracing and a number of mature species, including pines and conifers.

Meningoort has remained in the possession of the McArthur family since its construction. The family has made a long and distinguished contribution to public life. Peter McArthur was one of the most prominent pastoralists in the Western District until his death in 1897. His son Sir Stewart McArthur (d.1935) was a Supreme Court judge and a Knight Bachelor. Sir Gordon Stewart McArthur (1896-1965) was a Member of the House of Representatives for thirty-five years; Gordon's son Fergus Stewart McArthur (b.1937) was an MHR until 2007.

How is it significant?

Meningoort is of architectural, historical and scientific (horticultural) significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Meningoort is of historical significance for its association with the period of early pastoral settlement in western Victoria, the site being first settled in 1837; and particularly for its association with early pastoralists Peter McArthur and Nicholas Cole. This significance is enhanced by its being maintained in near original condition, and being held by the same family since its construction. Its collection of furniture is intrinsic to the history of the homestead and the wider property.

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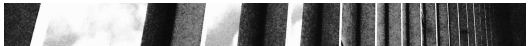
[Online Data Upgrade Project 2004]

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Recommendations

External Paint Controls	-
Internal Alteration Controls	-
Tree Controls	-
Fences & Outbuildings	-
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted	-
Incorporated Plan	-
Aboriginal Heritage Place	-

This information is provided for guidance only and does not supersede official documents, particularly the planning scheme. Planning controls should be verified by checking the relevant municipal planning scheme.



Appendix 2: Site plan showing photo locations from Site Visit (25 January 2018)

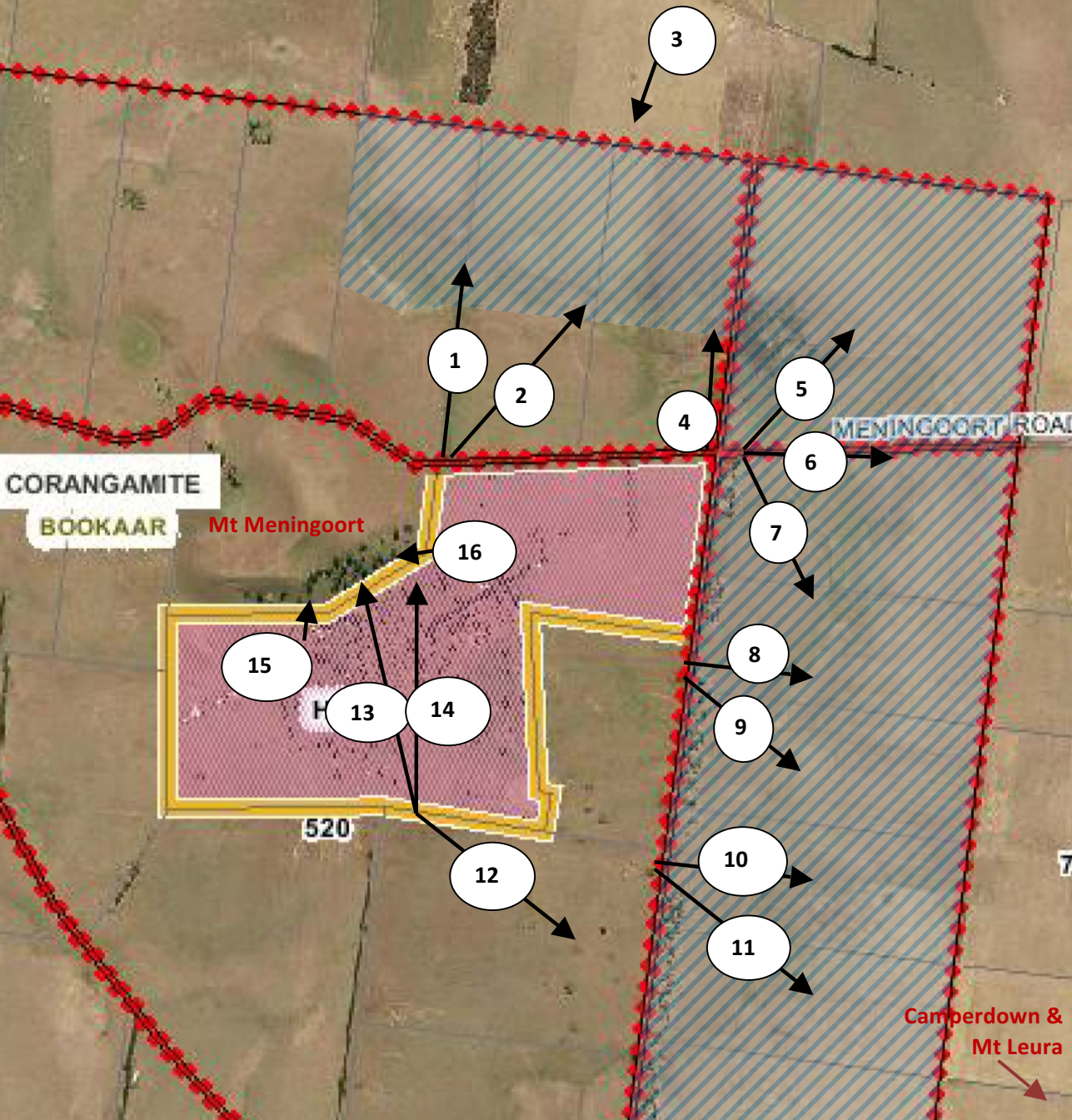


Figure 1. Site plan map showing locations of views in photos that follow. Aerial imagery dates to 2014. North is up (© Planning Maps Online).

Key

- Yellow line VHR boundary (VHR H300) – nominal extent only
- Pink area Heritage Overlay (HO80) – nominal extent only
- Blue hatching Approximate area of proposed solar farm
- Red line Property boundaries of 520 Meningoort Road, Bookaar

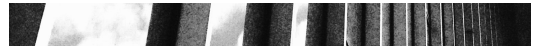


Figure A. View 1 – North



Figure B. View 2 – North-east

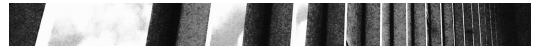


Figure C. View 3 – South



Figure D. View 4 North

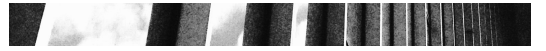


Figure E. View 5 – North-east



Figure F. View 6 – East

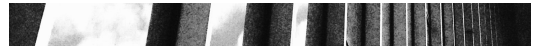


Figure G. View 7 – South-east



Figure H. View 8 – East

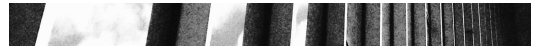


Figure I. View 9 – South-east



Figure J. View 10 – East

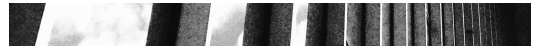


Figure K. View 11 –South-east towards Camperdown and Mount Leura



Figure L. View 12 – South East towards Camperdown and Mount Leura



Figure M. View 13 – North at Mount Meningoort

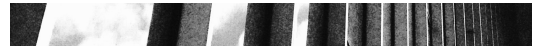


Figure N. View 14 – North at Mount Meningoort (east end)



Figure O. View 15 – North at Mount Meningoort (just north of outbuildings)



Figure P. View 16 – West at Mount Meningoort (east end)