

FAIRBRIDGE HERITAGE PROJECT

**HISTORIC RECORD OF THE FAIRBRIDGE
FARM SCHOOL SETTLEMENT AT MOLONG
NEW SOUTH WALES.**

JULY 2006

IAN BAYLIFF

and

DAVID HILL

Fairbridge Heritage Project

Historic Record of the Fairbridge farm School Settlement at Molong New South Wales

Introduction

Establishing Fairbridge Farm at Molong.

The first moves calling for the establishment of a Fairbridge Farm School in NSW came at the biennial conference of the Fellowship of Rhodes Scholars held in Melbourne in January 1935.

In July 1935, the NSW Rhodes Scholarship began to organize financial support for the opening of the Fairbridge centre.

Mr. Gordon Green of Fairbridge London was visiting Australia and met with the NSW interests in Sydney in March 1936.

In the same month, RG Casey committed the Australian Governments support, subject to Fairbridge securing the support of the British Government.

In July 1936 the British Government, via the High Commissioner in Canberra agreed to contribute a capital grant of 15,000 plus 5/- per week per child. The Australian Government then agreed to 3/6 per child per week.

On February 24, 1937 a public subscription was launched in the Sydney Morning Herald. The target of 50,000 pounds was quickly reached and passed.

On February 8, 1937 the Fairbridge Committee approved action by Mr. Reid to purchase the 1600 acre site at Naragoon, near Molong NSW.

Development of the Fairbridge Farm site.

The first development of the site, completed in 1937 was the installation of a water supply. A windmill was installed near to the Molong Creek on the northern boundary of the property and a pipeline lay to two 50,000 gallon water tanks on the hill side above the site selected for the building of the village.

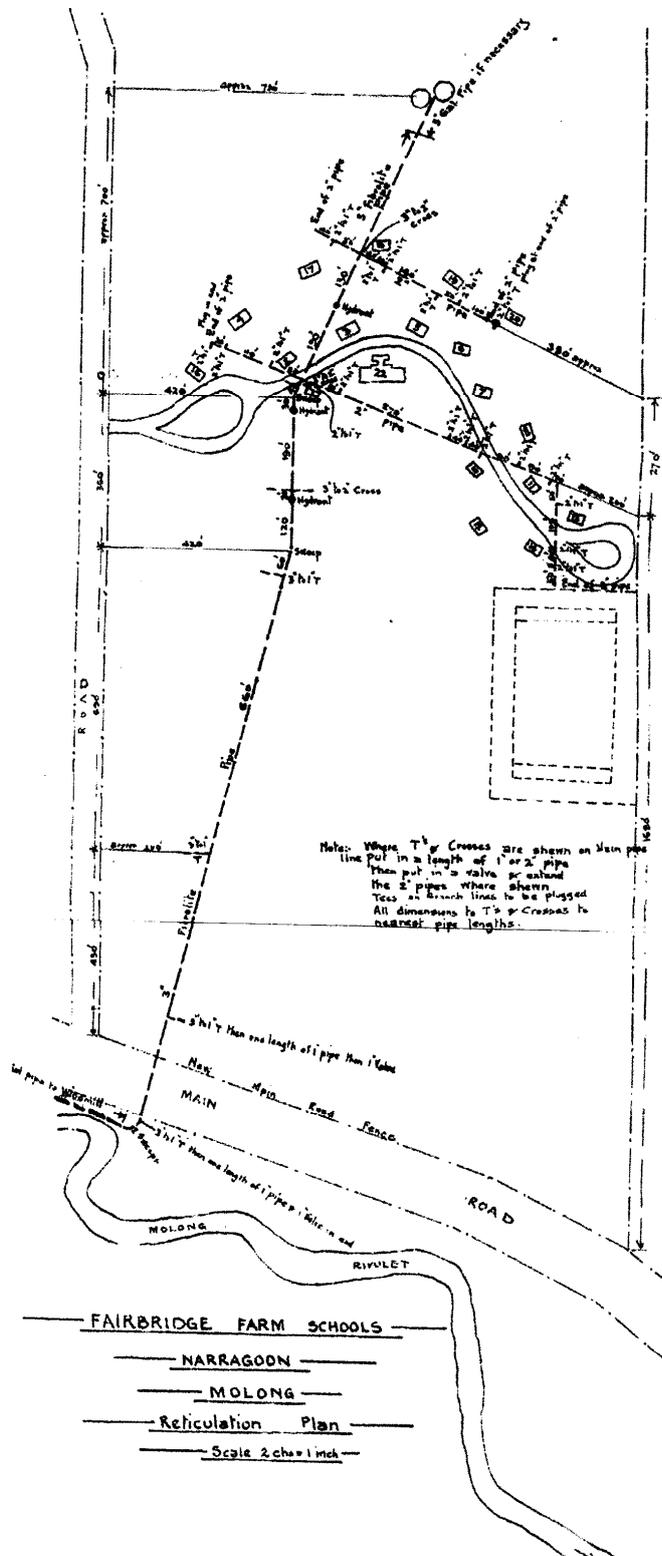


Figure 1. Plan of the water supply system at Fairbridge c1937. The Plan predates the building of the Fairbridge Settlement. It includes a proposed layout of some of the buildings that were subsequently built in the Fairbridge village

The two 50,000 gallon water tanks were designed to provide water to the farm, the village gardens, and the laundry and for showering. Each of the cottages and other buildings were constructed with rainwater tanks, which were to provide water for drinking and cooking.

Construction of the Buildings and facilities.

At the time of the purchase of the Narragoon property by Fairbridge in 1937 there was a timber cottage already on the site, which was to become the farm manager's cottage for the next 40 years.

Construction of the Fairbridge Farm School settlement began in 1937 and the first three children's cottages were completed in time for the arrival of the first party of 28 boys in March 1938.

The original plan for the Fairbridge settlement was for 20 cottages, each with a capacity of between 14 and 48 children, housing a total of more than 300 children.

Eventually only 15 cottages were built, each with a capacity for 15 children (but sometimes housing up to 16 each). Ten of the cottages were completed by the end of 1939 and another was completed during WWII. Four more were built in 1952 and 1953. No more cottages were built after this time and the total number of children at Fairbridge at any one time never exceeded 200.

The cottages included (cottage number 1) Molong Cottage, officially called 'The Andrew Reid' cottage, after Andrew Reid, who as one of the founders of the Fairbridge farm School at Molong donated money for the building of Molong Cottage and Lady Gowrie Cottage.

Gowrie Cottage (cottage number 2) was initially called Green Cottage but was renamed Lady Gowrie Cottage after she officially opened the cottage on November 24, 1938 when her husband, the Governor-General Lord Gowrie officially opened Fairbridge Farm School.

Brown Cottage (cottage number 3) was officially known as 'The Mathew Robinson' cottage in recognition of a donation for its construction by the Robinson family.

In 1937 the vegetable garden was established and fenced and half an orchard planted on the northern end of the property close to the Molong Creek.

Also completed in March 1938 before the arrival of the first party was the Principals House, its small guesthouse and a separate garage with a small office attached. The Principals House was also used to house some of the Fairbridge girls.

Two other cottages were under construction when the first party arrived in March 1938. They were Rose Cottage, which was officially known as 'Louis Robinson' Cottage (cottage number 4) and Orange Cottage (cottage number 5). Orange cottage was also known as the 'F.C. Pye' cottage in recognition of a financial donation from Mr. Fred Pye.

By 1938 construction began on the large dining hall and was completed in November of the same year. It was financed by a donation from Lord Nuffield and known as Nuffield Hall. The construction also included the village kitchens, store and a bakery.

By the end of 1938 the headmasters house, dairyman's cottage, slaughterhouse and meat house were completed.

During 1938 construction started on Canary Cottage, (cottage number 6) officially known as the 'Jean McGill' Cottage, Blue Cottage (cottage number 7), officially known as the 'George Gillespie' cottage and Green Cottage (cottage number 8), officially known as the 'Margaret Christmas' cottage. All three cottages were completed in 1939.

Also completed by the end of 1939 was the village hospital, officially known as the 'E.R. Williams' Hospital, the Staff Quarters, the Deputy Principals House, the dairy, silos and feed shed. Other work undertaken during the year included the extension of the water supply, village roads and paths, tree planting and fencing, pasture improvement and dam construction.

Construction began in 1939 on two more cottages. These were Red Cottage (cottage number 9), officially known as the 'Mary Jane Patterson' cottage and Lilac Cottage (cottage number 10), officially known as the 'John McCaughey' Cottage. Work also started on the poultry and the piggery. The work on the cottages, the piggery and the poultry were completed in 1940.

By the end of 1940, with the establishment of the farm, dairy, poultry, piggery, vegetable gardens, bakery and slaughterhouse Fairbridge was largely self sufficient in food production.

In 1941, New Cottage (cottage number 11), officially known as the 'Mrs. Faithful Anderson Cottage' was constructed.

In 1947 a former army hut was purchased and converted into a workshop and storeroom.

In 1948 the village laundry was built. A start was made on the kitchen chef's quarters, which were built on the back of Nuffield Hall next to the kitchens and completed in 1949.

Also in 1949 a farm assistant's cottage and a garage for the newly acquired Fairbridge School bus was built and two verandahs and a surgery added to the village hospital with further money donated by Mr. E.R. Williams.

In 1949 Fairbridge decided to build 4 new cottages with a donation of 15,000 from the Goldsborough Mort pastoral company who were celebrating their centenary.

In 1951 a second teacher's house was built near the school. It was later to be used as a farm assistant's house. Also in 1950, the Staff Quarters were extended.

In 1952, Gloucester House was built and the first two of the Goldsborough Mort cottages completed. They were named Corinda and Canonbar. The remaining two, named Goldsborough and Mort, were completed in 1953.

In 1952 the Fairbridge Society decided to 'temporarily defer' the 'original intension' to build 20 cottages. Hence no additional cottages were built after the fifteenth cottage in 1953. The only other buildings constructed after this date included a new shearing shed in 1955 (with the old shed being converted as a machine shed) and the village chapel in 1961

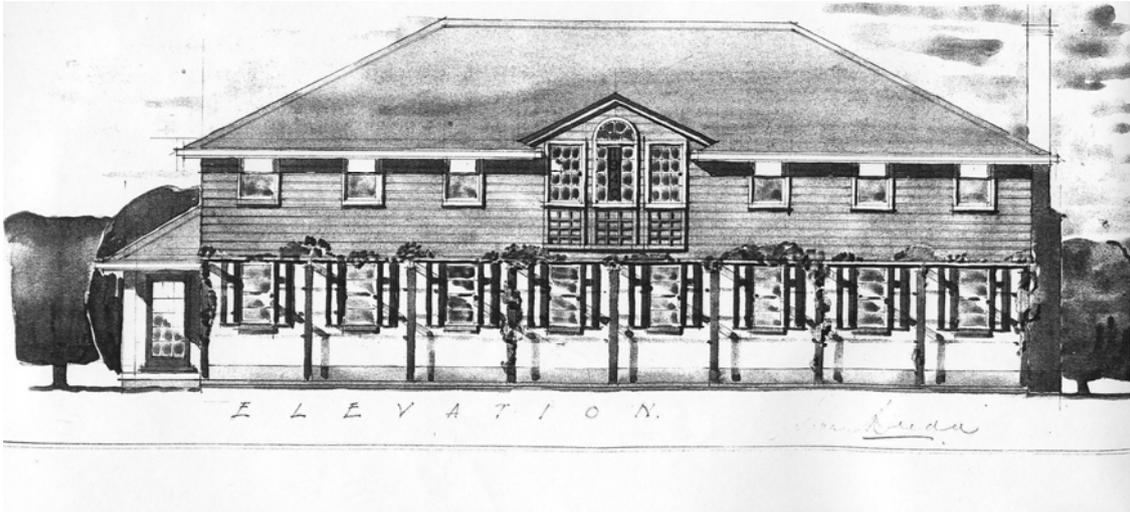


Figure 2. Architects impression of a proposed 2 storey, 48 beds 'Trainee' cottage. None of these cottages were ever built.

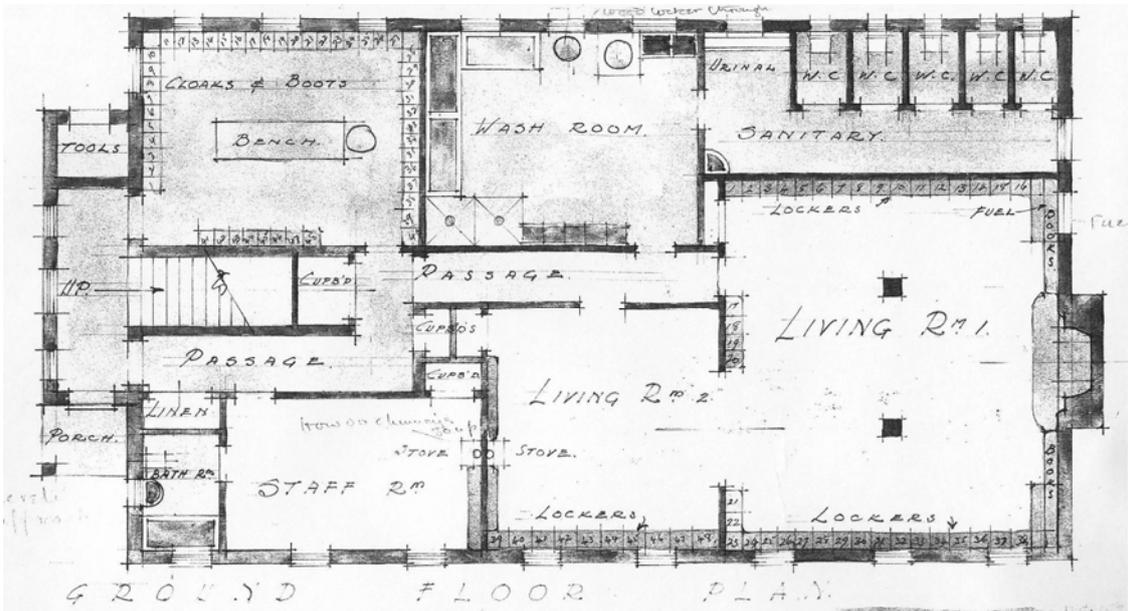


Figure 3 Ground Floor plan of the proposed 48 bed 'Trainee' cottage

SUGGESTED TRAINEES QUARTERS,
 FAIRBRIDGE FARM SCHOOLS OF N. D. W. MOLONG.

SCALE. 1" = 8' 0"

67' 0"

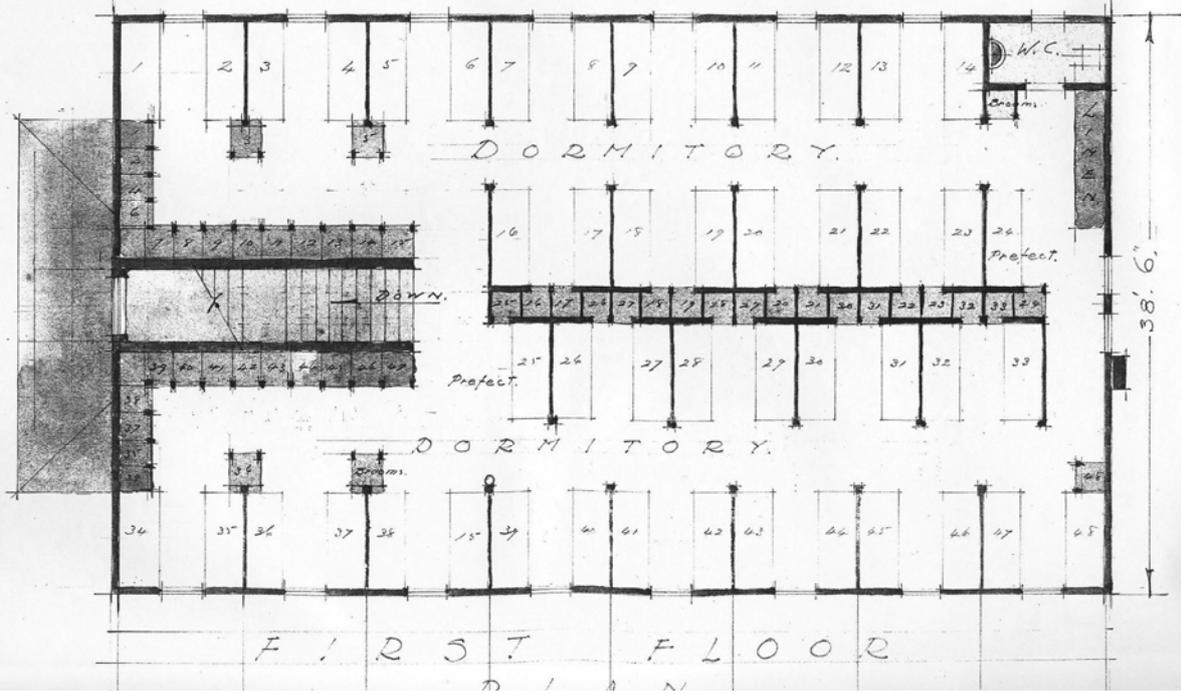


Figure 4. Plan of the second level of the Proposed 48 bed 'Trainee' cottage

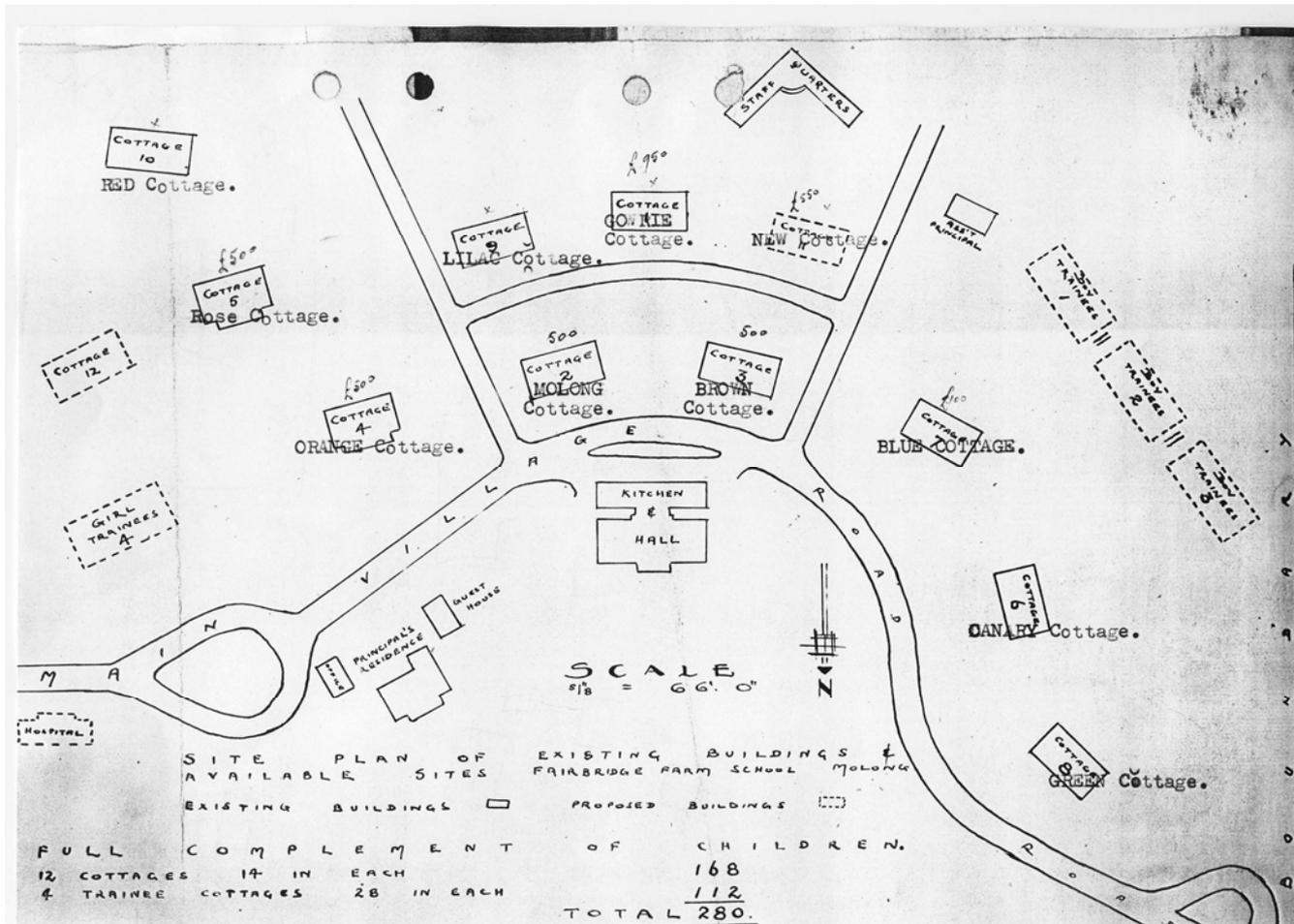


Figure 5. An early plan of the proposed lay-out of the Fairbridge Farm School village. 1939.

At the time of this plan, 10 cottages had been constructed. The village hospital was to be constructed by the end of 1939 and New Cottage was built in 1941. The proposed 'Trainee' cottages number 1, 2, 3, and 4 (the 'Girl Trainee' cottage) and cottage number 12 was never built. Later, in the early 1950's four other cottages were built in a line running from south-east to north-west from the Nuffield Hall below Blue, Canary and Green Cottages. The additional cottages were called Corinda, Canonbar, Goldsborough and Mort.

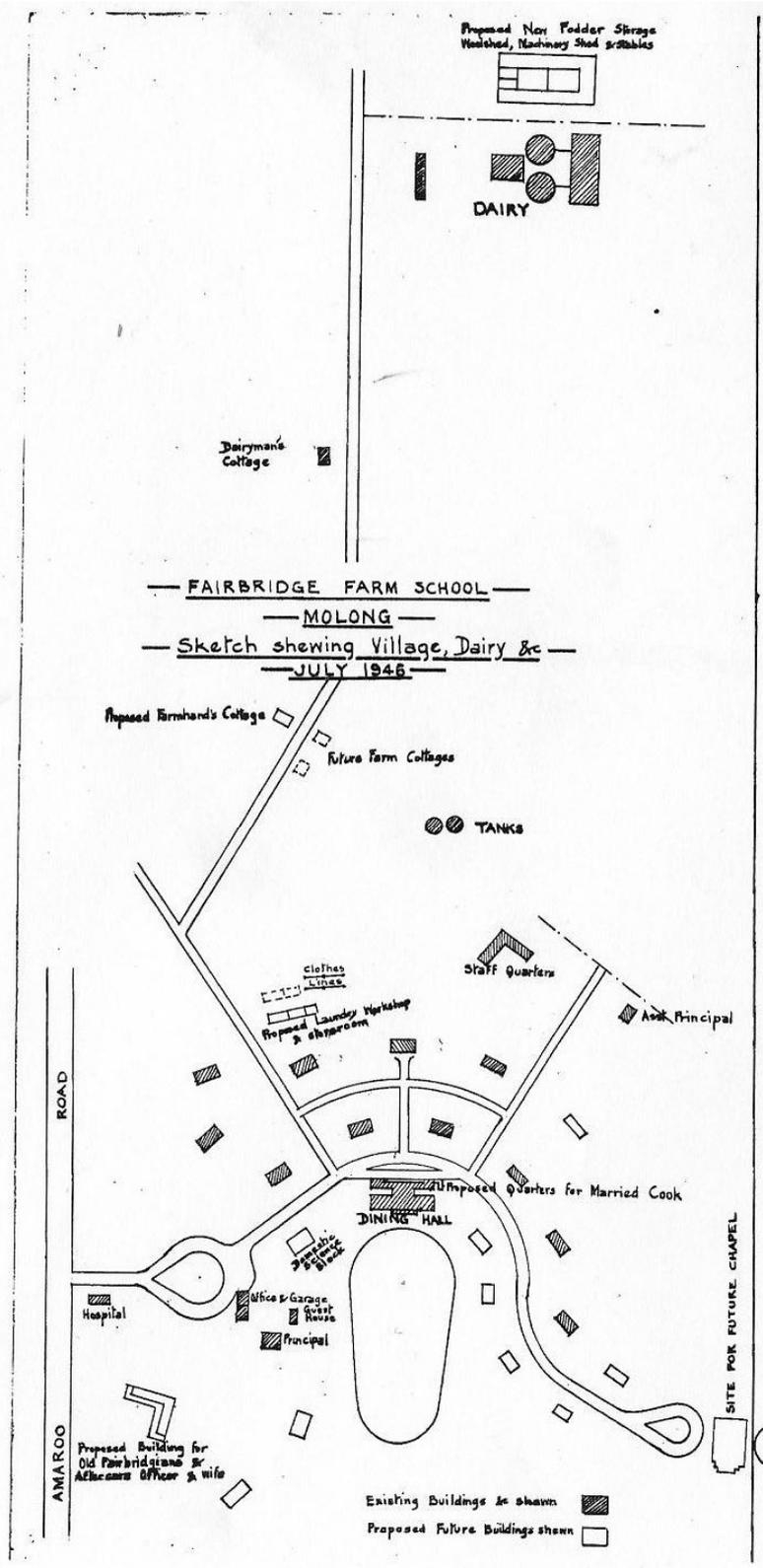


Figure 6. A plan of the lay-out of the Fairbridge village 1946. The proposed Old Fairbridgians building was to be built in 1952 but south of the hospital. The proposed Domestic Science building and a number of other proposed buildings in the plan were never built.

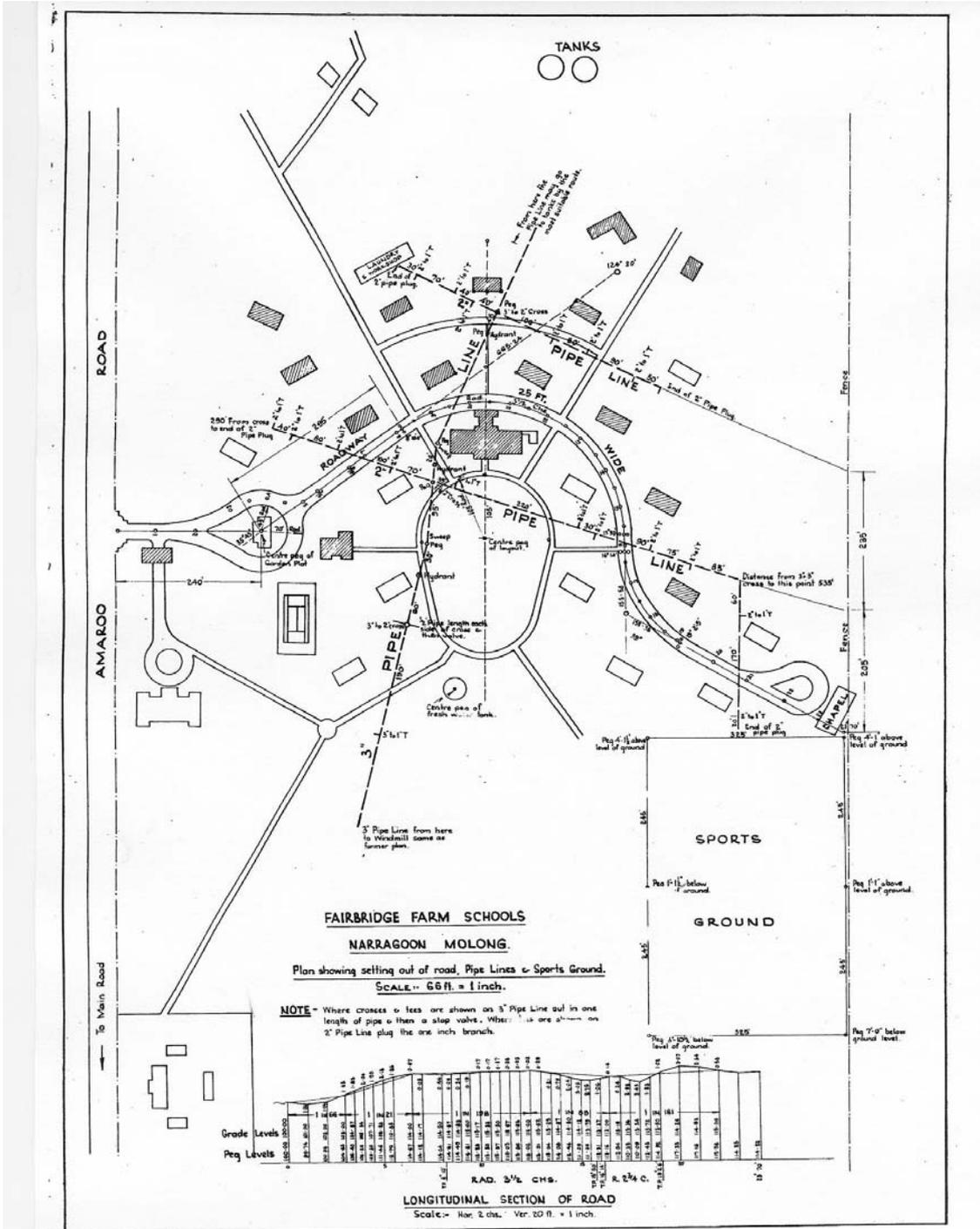


Figure 7. A plan showing the proposed lay-out of Fairbridge Farm School village. 1946. The plan proposes an increase in the capacity of Fairbridge in anticipation on more children following the resumption of child migration after WWII. The shaded areas showed existing buildings.



Figure 8 Molong Cottage (foreground) and Brown Cottage shortly after construction in 1938



Figure 9 Gowrie cottage (first known as Green cottage) soon after completion 1938



Figure 10 Rose Cottage under construction and a number of the Crossman & sons builders



Figure 11 Orange Cottage under construction



Figure 12. Canary cottage (building with 3 Cape Cod type air vents) on opening day 26th November, 1938 Green cottage in the background.



Figure 13, Blue cottage completed in 1939. c1962



Figure 14 Green cottage on completion 1939



Figure 15 Red Cottage the 9th cottage to be completed. c2006



Figure 16 the 10th cottage to be built at Fairbridge was Lilac cottage built 1939 c1952



Figure 17 New cottage was the 11th cottage to be built completed in 1941 New was the last cottage to be built until 1952 when Corinda and Canonbar cottages were built. C1941



Figure 18 Corinda cottage the first of the Goldsborough Mort cottages to be completed in 1952



Figure 19, Canonbar cottage, 13th cottage to be completed and the second of the Goldsborough Mort cottages. c1959



Figure 20 Mort cottage c2004



Figure 21 Goldsborough Cottage



Figure 22 Nuffield Hall on opening day 26th November, 1938



Figure 23 Principals House on completion March, 1938, the Guest house to the right of the photo.

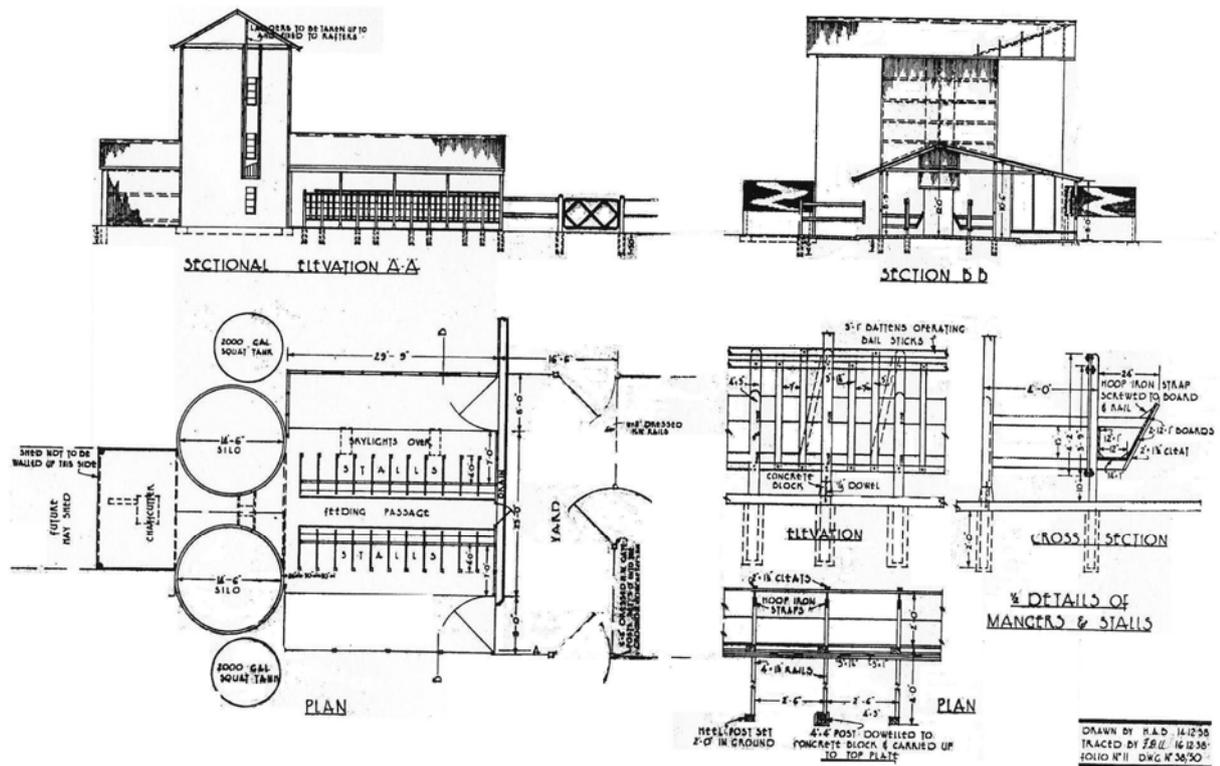


Figure 24 Staff Quarters 6.3.2006

SILOS AND FEED STALLS
 FOR FAIRBRIDGE FARM SCHOOL
 MOLONG

N.S.W.
 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"



DRAWN BY H.A.D. 14-12-38
 TRACED BY F.B.U. 16-12-38
 FOLIO N° 11 DWG. N° 38/30

Figure 25 Plans for the Fairbridge Dairy drawn up 14th December, 1938

