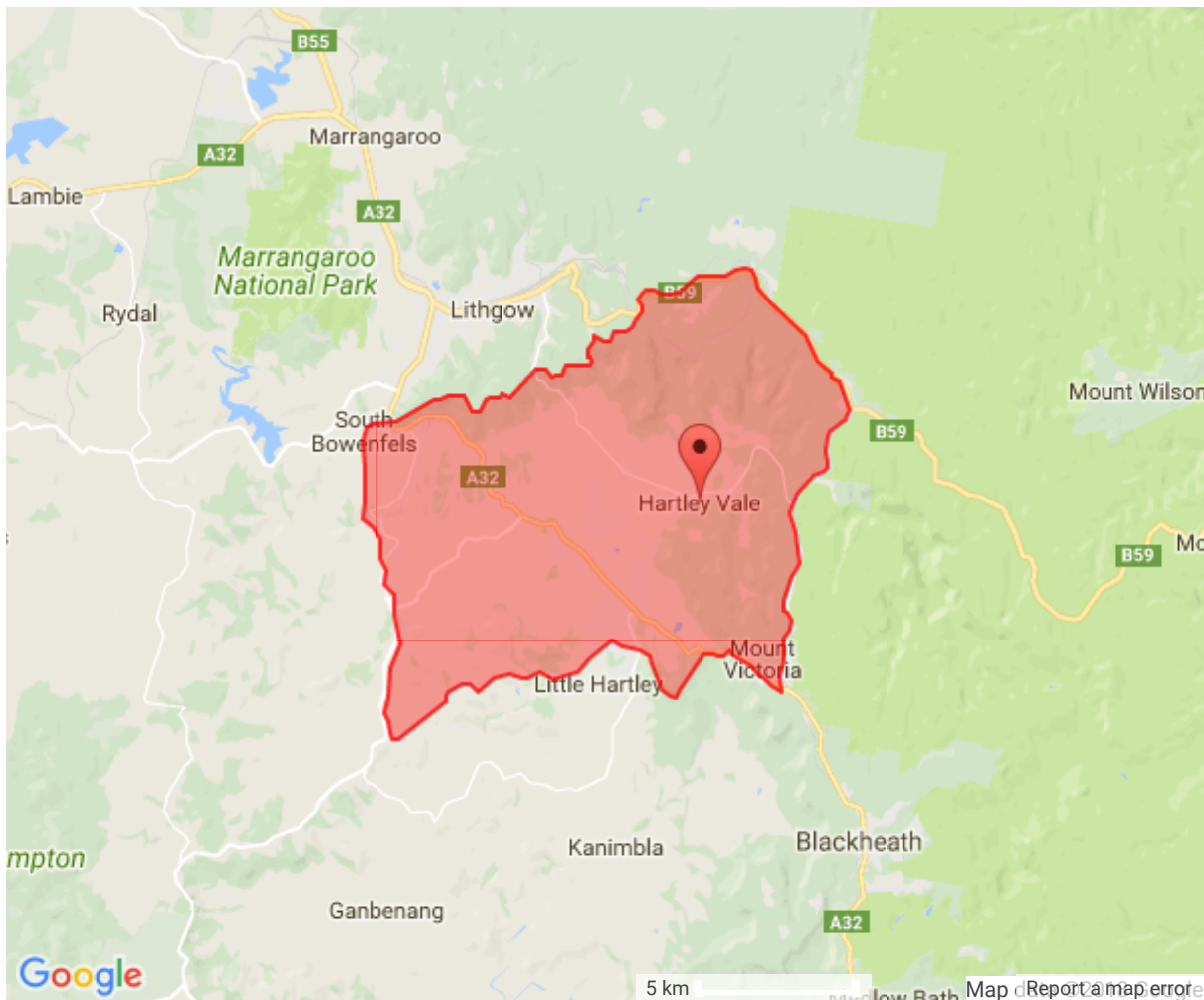




CITY/SUBURB/TOWN	NAME OF IDENTIFICATION	ADDRESS OR LOCATION
Hartley Vale	Hartley Valley (Cox's River) Landscape Conservation Area	

LGA:	Lithgow	ABORIGINAL NATION:	Dharug
POSTCODE:	2790	LOT/DP:	
COMMITTEE:	Landscape Advocacy Committee	GRID:	-33.5383827, 150.2284732
AUTHOR:	Armstrong, I	LISTING DATE:	19/01/1987

BOUNDARY



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hartley Valley Landscape Conservation Area is significant because it contains:

- Mt. Blaxland, the limit of crossing of the Blue Mountains by Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson.
- Patterns and evidence of early settlement, with historic towns and buildings.
- Industrial archaeology associated with mining.
- Historic passes down the western escarpment of the Blue Mountains.
- A rural landscape of high visual quality.
- Dramatic escarpments which are visually and geologically significant.
- Rare and endangered plants in isolated catchments.

DESCRIPTION

The Hartley Valley, which is formed by the River Lett, a tributary of the Cox's River, is contained by major sandstone escarpments to the north, east and, in part, to the south. The Conservation area is bounded by the escarpment of Hassan's Walls, the Bell Line of Road, the road from Bell to Mt. Victoria, the Great Western Highway to Mitchells Pass and the line of vegetated hills from Mt. Sugarloaf to the Jenolan Caves Road and then north to Old Bowenfells. It is contiguous with the Megalong and Kanimbla Landscape Conservation Area to the south.

The Hartley Valley is fragmented by the Great Western Highway, which creates two separate land units. The eastern section is an attractive valley, with the flat floor contained by the dramatic sandstone escarpments. The western section, while it is not as contained, is steeply undulating landscape associated with the drainage pattern of the Cox's River and Whites Creek.

The settlement pattern of the Valley reflects the early road routes over the mountains and the relatively early construction of Mitchell's Pass, which has remained the major road route to this day. Little Hartley and Hartley, which developed to serve travellers on the road to Bathurst, remain as reminders of that early period.

The mine sites, and the village of Hartley Vale are important evidence from the period of mining in the Valley.

HISTORY

The Valley was first sighted in May, 1813, by Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson. The area was visited in late 1813 by Assistant Surveyor George Evans, who surveyed a route to the Bathurst Plains, and named Mt. Blaxland, Wentworth Sugarloaf and Lawsons Sugarloaf in the northern end of the Valley.

The Valley was opened to European settlement by the construction of Cox's Road in 1814/1815. A number of other routes were developed, but Mitchells Pass, constructed in 1829, became the major and only practicable route and is still in use. The development of this route re-oriented development in the Valley to follow this road and the Hartley Courthouse was built in 1836 to service the village which had developed in the 1830s and '40s. The nearby village of Old Bowenfelds dates from the same period, and the Bowenfelds Presbyterian Church, constructed in 1842, formed the nucleus of the settlement.

Little major development occurred in the Valley until the development of the Hartley Vale Kerosene Shale Mine which began in c. 1865. A system of tracks and cables hauled the shale out of the Valley to meet the railway north of Mt Victoria. Initially, all the shale was sent to Sydney for refining, but later poorer quality shale was refined in the valley before being sent to Sydney as crude oil for further refining. The development of the railway to Lithgow, in the 1860s and '70s, had a major impact on the Valley. The mountain centres and Lithgow expanded, but the decline in road transport resulted in the demise of Hartley. In later periods when the popularity of road transport increased, the improved efficiency of transport meant that Hartley was bypassed.

In the last quarter of the 19th Century, Hartley Vale was a prosperous if simple village of 600 persons. The Valley serviced Hartley Vale, and in addition foods were sent to Lithgow for transport by rail. The end of the shale mining in 1901, and the closure of operations in 1913 resulted in the rapid demise of Hartley Vale.

Settlement in the valley was originally based on small-scale grazing and much of the valley was cleared between the 1820s and 1850s. Grazing has remained an important landuse, but the development of the railway resulted in the introduction of orcharding due to improved transport efficiency.

The villages within the Valley, Hartley, Little Hartley, Hartley Vale and Old Bowenfelds, are all worthy of conservation. Suitable curtilages will be required to prevent intrusive and unsympathetic development. Many individual buildings are of significance and should be protected.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The National Trust recommends that:

1. appropriate curtilages be defined for Hartley, Little Hartley and Old Bowenfelds and zoned Environmental Protection 7(h) to prevent inappropriate development and subdivision;
2. significant landscape features be protected from development and visual degradation by Environmental Protection Zoning;
3. no further ad hoc rural subdivision be approved. Subdivisions should be located in areas of poorer quality soils, and outside areas of environmental significance.
4. the conservation status of Dargans Creek should be ensured by environmental protection zoning, or acquisition by NPWS and that other minor catchments should be investigated for nature conservation values;
5. design guidelines be established for development within the valley, and particularly within the areas zoned 7(h);

6. any upgrading of existing roads should respect the heritage values of adjacent areas.

NATURE CONSERVATION

The Dargans Creek Catchment has been identified as being significant due to the presence of rare and endangered and endemic species

Rare and endangered species:

Eucalyptus gregsoniana 3RCa

Adenochilus nortonii 3RC,

Deyeuxia microseta 3VC,

Allania endlicheri 3RC,

Dillwynia stipulifera 3RC,

Eriostemon obovalis 3RC,

Olearia quercifolia 3RC.

The major threats to this area are a result of development in the catchment.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brechwoldt, R (ed). "A Heritage Study of the Kanimbla, Megalong and Hartley Valleys";

Eardly, G H & Stevens, E H (1974) "Shale Railways of NSW"