

Other Names	N/A	
Street Address	155 Doolbi Dam Road, Corner of Doolbi and Goodwood Roads	Doolbi
Title Details/ GPS Coordinates	1RP108959, 2CK1558, 2CK1567, 2RP108959, 3CK2966, 3RP56812	

Historical Context

The Isis district became an important area for sugar cane farming and refining from the 1880s. The first blocks of land in the district were selected in the early 1870s. The first industry in the 'Isis scrub' was sawmilling, although pastoral stations were established around the scrub from the late 1840s. The first town in the district was Abingdon, beginning with a hotel and then a school, the latter opened in 1880. Homestead blocks were offered to selectors in the late 1870s and the blocks were progressively taken up, with demand increasing the early 1880s. More homestead areas were declared in the district to meet demand. A railway was constructed in 1887, with its terminus at Childers (which at the time of the construction of the railway was merely the line's terminus; there was as yet no town. The village of Horton was the only substantial settlement located on the line).

The Doolbi juice mill was the first mill to crush sugar in the former Isis scrub and therefore marked the beginning of the sugar industry in the Isis district. The Doolbi mill was established by Robert Cran, who owned the Yengarie sugar mill near Maryborough (erected in 1868) and the Millaquin sugar mill, located on the outskirts of Bundaberg (built 1882). The Doolbi mill began crushing in 1890 and it supplied juice to the Yengarie mill until 1900, then Millaquin. The Doolbi mill was the only juice mill established in the Isis district and it also acted as the catalyst for the sugar industry there. As with most of the early mills in the Bundaberg region, the Doolbi mill relied on South Sea Islander labour, particularly for felling scrub and planting cane.

Robert Cran died in 1894 and his sons discovered that their father's debt exceeded the value of the mills. The Queensland National Bank, to which Cran owed his debt, became the owner of Doolbi. The Queensland National Bank was a prominent institution in the sugar industry in Bundaberg, becoming more intimately involved in the commercial aspects of the industry than was common for other banking institutions. The bank, as mortgagee, assumed ownership of the Millaquin sugar mill in 1896 following the death of Robert Cran, along with the Yengarie and Doolbi juice mills. An early and significant acquisition made by the bank was the Mon Repos plantation and mill, which was renamed Qunaba after the first two letters in the bank's title. Waterview and Oakwood plantations were also purchased by the bank and in 1911 it formed a limited liability company called the Millaquin Sugar Company.

In 1900 the Doolbi mill was converted from a juice to sugar mill, with machinery from the now closed Yengarie mill, although it did not produce its first sugar until 1903. The mill struggled to compete against the larger mills in the district: the CSR, Isis Central and Knockroe mills, particularly in securing an adequate supply of sugar cane. Doolbi received cane from the surrounding district, but also further afield, including Pialba (in Hervey Bay), Dallarnil and Booyal. By the 1920s, it was clear that there was not enough sugar cane to ensure all of the mills could remain profitable. The mill was sold to the Isis Central sugar mill in 1924, which dismantled the Doolbi mill and reusing some of its equipment in the Central mill.

The land on which the mill was situated was divided between the local golf club and a local landowner, T. Calder. The golf club was established when the mill operated and the club house was located in the mill grounds. The Central mill allowed the golf club to continue using part of the site for its links, including the school horse paddock.

Physical Description

The Doolbi Mill Remains are located on an area bounded by Goodwood Road in the east, Doolbi Dam Road to the south and farmland to the west and north. The sloping site encompasses approximately 13 hectares and includes a residential property in the south-western corner and the Isis Golf Club, which occupies the remaining area. The south-western corner is covered by shrub, followed by a number of mature fig trees of considerable age on the western boundary. Located throughout the site are a several mature specimen trees, amongst more recent plantings.

Remnant infrastructure illustrating mill operations include a brick chimney and an elevated water tank located on the south-western side. Previous studies have also identified machinery bases, cooling tank and fences.

Integrity	Poor	Condition	Poor
Statutory Listings	No statutory listings		
Non-Statutory Listings	No non-statutory listings		
Inspection Date	24/10/2014		

References

B.W. O'Neill, Taming the Isis, Childers, Isis Shire Council, 1987.

Heritage Significance	
Criteria	Definition
A	<i>The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the region's history.</i>
Statement	The Doolbi Sugar Mill Remains are important in demonstrating the evolution of the region's history, particularly as it is the first plant to crush sugar cane in the Isis district, prompting the establishment of juice and sugar mills throughout the district. The mill also reflects the pattern of the region's history, particularly the dominance of the sugar industry and mills in its history; further, its construction and later closure reflected the rush to build juice and sugar mills in the latter decades of the twentieth century and the eventual reduction of the number of mills in the region as supplies of cane could not continue to supply the large number of mills and eventually only a few, large mills remained, such as the Isis Central sugar mill in the Isis district.

B	<i>The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the region's cultural heritage.</i>
Statement	The Doolbi Sugar Mill Remains demonstrates a rare aspect of the region's history, as it was the first mill to crush sugar in the Isis district and any material remains associated with the mill and its operations represent an important record of this fact.

C	<i>The place has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the region's history.</i>
Statement	The Doolbi Sugar Mill Remains have the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the region's history, particularly juice and sugar mill operations and related infrastructure from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, especially the layout and technology of a smaller juice and sugar mill established in the 1880s.

H	<i>The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in the region's history.</i>
Statement	The Doolbi Sugar Mill Remains have a special association with the life of Robert Cran, an important figure in the sugar industry in Bundaberg (having established Millaquin in 1882), and the Queensland National Bank, which also played a prominent role in the sugar industry in Bundaberg.

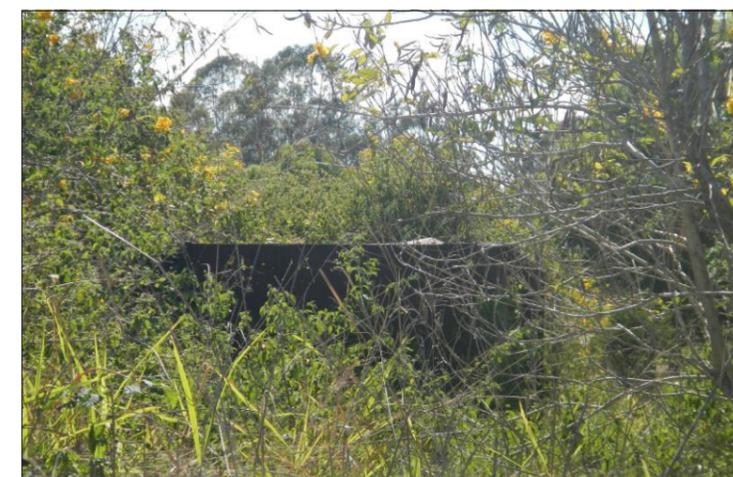
Location Map



Brick chimney in the south-western section.



Mature figtree on the western boundary.



Elevated watertank in the south-western section.

John Kerr, Only Room for One: A history of sugar in the Isis district, Childers, Isis Central Sugar Mill Company Limited, 1996.