

PINE HILLS

Pine Hills, situated between Bathurst and the village of Peel, features a substantial 1860s homestead which was renovated post-WWII and a garden which was laid out in the 1950s by noted landscape designer Paul Sorensen.

Pine Hills is situated on part of an 1827 crown grant of 2,000 acres to John Wentworth Sturgeon. The property passed to Cornelius Prout and James Holt before being acquired by George Suttor in 1833. George Suttor arrived per *Porpoise* in 1800 and in 1822 took up a 320 acre grant which now forms part of nearby Brucedale which is still owned and farmed by Suttor descendants. Pine Hills passed through several generations of the Suttor family – William Henry Suttor, William Henry Suttor junior, Herbert Cochrane Suttor and the latter's sons Roy and Maurice Suttor.

For many years the house was unoccupied and during WWII the house endured considerable damage when the property was used by the army. Post WWII the homestead on a small acreage was acquired by Spencer Higgins and his wife, Mary, nee Gilmour, who had grown up on a nearby property Blackdown, one of the oldest properties and houses west of the Blue Mountains. Spencer and Marty Higgins called in architect John Leslie Stephen Mansfield, a grandson of noted nineteenth century architect George Allen Mansfield, to undertake a renovation. John Stephen Mansfield, as he preferred to be called, was used widely in the post World War II period in the restoration or renovation of several large houses throughout New South Wales. In 1949 he renovated Gidleigh, Bungendore, for Tom and Helen Rutledge, nee Stephen, a distant relative. Mansfield also altered Rona at Bellevue Hill in Sydney for members of the Knox family, by turning a large Victorian house into two flats: one for the Rutledges and one for Barbara Knox, Helen Rutledge's aunt. Harrington Park, Narellan, was completed renovated for Warwick Fairfax and his second wife, Hanne, in 1949. In 1951-1952 Mansfield remodelled Springfield, Goulburn, for Irwin and Bobbie Maple-Brown, and with Dame Helen Blaxland he was also involved in the restoration of Kirribilli House, Sydney.



Pine Hills was purchased in 1950 by Henry (Theo) Thompson who called in the services of Paul Sorensen; soon afterwards Sorensen carried out work on the garden at Ballantyne, Cassilis, to the north of Mudgee, for Theo's brother, John Thompson. After Theo's death in 1969 Pine Hills was inherited by his son Jim Thompson who sold the property in 1997. Pine Hills has since had several owners.

The Garden

Richard Ratcliffe discussed the Pine Hills garden in his book *Paul Sorensen. Australia's Master Gardener* (1990). The garden sprawls over some 11 acres, with the house majestically sited on top of a hill with panoramic views over the city of Bathurst.

