

REVIEW OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL ISSUES

180 GEORGE STREET
PARRAMATTA

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CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
for
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1

Precis of the Report



This report discusses the archaeological potential and requirements for land at 180 George Street, Parramatta. The site was redeveloped in 2002 and it is now planned to build on the existing improvements through the construction of a podium and tower. The work will entail some disturbance to an open courtyard that now exists within the centre of the buildings that surround it on all four sides. The purpose of this report is to determine whether this work will impact any extant archaeology and, if so, how that impact should be managed as part of the present development proposal.

Prior to redevelopment in 2002 the project area was subject to an extensive archaeological programme of investigation for both historic period archaeology and Aboriginal archaeology. A report on the results of the Aboriginal archaeological programme was prepared but not for the historic period archaeology and the excavation director declined assistance in providing information concerning the extent of the programme. For the purposes of the current review we have spoken to the director of the Aboriginal archaeological programme and have used the final report and we have spoken to members of the historic period archaeological team and used other resources to determine the extent of that programme of work. We are confident that we can determine the extent of the work and general outcomes, sufficient to inform this review.

With respect to the historic period archaeology, an assessment for the site prepared in 2002 identified a history of occupation dating back at least to 1804 and probably into the 1790s with the George Street frontage encompassing some convict huts. Many of the major mid-later nineteenth century improvements were still standing in the 1960s. These encompassed houses, a shop and a former brewery. From the 1960s to 2002 the site was occupied by three warehouses. The site was assessed in the *Parramatta Historical and Archaeological Land Management Study* as one of exceptional archaeological research value, a conclusion confirmed in the 2002 assessment.

The site was notable for the intact structural evidence found along George Street and particularly the basement areas of nineteenth century buildings at the corner of George and Charles Streets. Extensive artefact collections were found that derived from the Chinese market garden occupation of the later nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century. Images of the excavation show features and particularly post-holes from timber structures across most of the remainder of the project area. These appear to have all been excavated and recorded in 2002.

Without primary documentation from the site works it is impossible to be unequivocal in the conclusions for this programme but, based on discussions with excavation team members and images, our view is that the salvage excavation undertaken on the site for historic period archaeology has removed all evidence of European and Chinese occupation including within the open courtyard.

The Aboriginal archaeological programme was also extensive. . The methodology for the work included a surface collection across the entire site, random placement of test pits, four large salvage excavations and mechanical excavations. More than 210 square metres were hand-excavated and another 250 square metres were mechanically excavated. As well three geo-technical test pits were excavated to aid the interpretation of the sand deposit which lies under the site. It is an ancient river terrace. In the four salvage excavations, areas A, B and D revealed deposit to a depth of approximately 600mm and area C (in the present courtyard) to a depth greater than that.

More than 6500 artefacts were recovered from the site and these were from stone largely imported from beyond Parramatta. The assemblage included several quite rare types of tools and other artefacts and it ranged in date from between 2000 to 20,000 years BP. The site was assessed to be of the highest significance and is registered on the AHIMS as site CG1. The project area is likely to contain more evidence of Aboriginal archaeology. Without specific evidence for the depth of disturbance in the courtyard it is impossible to certify that all archaeology of this type was removed as part of the development process.

The test pits and salvage excavation carried out here in 2002 revealed this to be the deepest part of the archaeological profile.

With respect to ongoing management, no further work will be required for historical archaeological resources. The salvage excavation appears to have comprehensively removed all evidence of this type. It should be noted, though, that in the event that future work does uncover significant historic period relics these are still afforded protection under provisions of the Heritage Act NSW. If this situation occurs, work should cease in the area of the item or feature and it should be given protection. Advice should be sought from a qualified archaeologist and notification made to the NSW Heritage Division. An appropriate strategy for the management of the historic period archaeology will be determined and then implemented on site.

The issue of Aboriginal archaeology is different. Despite the extensive work carried out in 2002 the site still is considered to be one of exceptional significance, more so because of the results of that investigative programme. The evidence suggests that there is likely to be some intact profile within the courtyard area and any works here are likely to disturb Aboriginal objects. These have protection under the provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974).

We have discussed management options with the Office of Environment and Heritage because of the unusual circumstances of the site. The original work was undertaken under a Consent and Permit to Salvage (AHIMS #1433). This is no longer the permit procedure for Aboriginal Archaeology. Because of the extensive work that has been carried out to date on this site the OEH has recommended that this body of work can be used in place of the present assessment and testing requirements. However, an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) will be necessary for the work and the current requirements for Aboriginal consultation. The details of the work that will be required on site will be determined as part of the application process. The following strategies will be required for the present development:

- Identify the scope of impacts in the courtyard
- Undertaken consultation with the Aboriginal community
- Prepare an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit

2

The Project Area



2.1 Project Context

2.1.1 The Project Area

The subject of this site is land at the corner of George and Charles Streets, Parramatta. It has the street address of 180 George Street Parramatta and 30-32 Charles Street. It has frontages to both streets and there are buildings here and others that face the river to the north and enclose the eastern end of the site. The property is in the local government area of the City of Parramatta.



The project area at the corner of George and Charles Street Parramatta

2.1.2 Purpose

This report has been prepared to accompany an application for development at 180 George Street, Parramatta. This site was redeveloped in 2002 with buildings on all four sides around an open courtyard in the middle. It is currently planned to add to the existing buildings by constructing a podium and tower. The work will entail the disturbance of some of the inner courtyard. The purpose of this report is to determine whether there are archaeological issues to be addressed as part of this work, either for historical or Aboriginal archaeology.

2.1.3 Heritage Values

Prior to its development this site was identified on the *Parramatta Historical Archaeology Landscape Management Study* (2000) as one of potential archaeological significance. It was identified as Archaeological Management Unit 3034. This study evaluated the site to

be one of exceptional significance for historic period archaeology. AMU 3034 is still listed in the State Heritage Inventory.

As part of the 2002 redevelopment the archaeological research values of the place were managed by means of a combined historical and aboriginal archaeological investigation. This is discussed in Section 3.0 of this report.

On the basis of this work the site is still listed as one of Aboriginal archaeological value, identified as site CG1 in the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System of the Office of Environment and Heritage. The site is identified as one of high sensitivity on the Aboriginal Sensitivity Map in Parramatta DCP 2011.

2.1.4 Statutory Requirements

The Heritage Act of NSW (1977 amended 2009) provides protection for non-indigenous archaeological relics. They are afforded automatic protection under Sections 139-142 of the Act; these refer to circumstances concerning the disturbance of land known to or likely to contain relics. Provisions are made for permits that respond to the significance of the resource. This report determines the probability for relics to be preserved within the property and, thus, the requirements for management including the necessity or otherwise of applications for permits.

The National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (amended 2010) provides protection for relics or objects of Aboriginal occupation under Section 90 of the Act and for Aboriginal places under Section 84. Protection afforded to Aboriginal objects is irrespective of their significance or issues of land tenure.

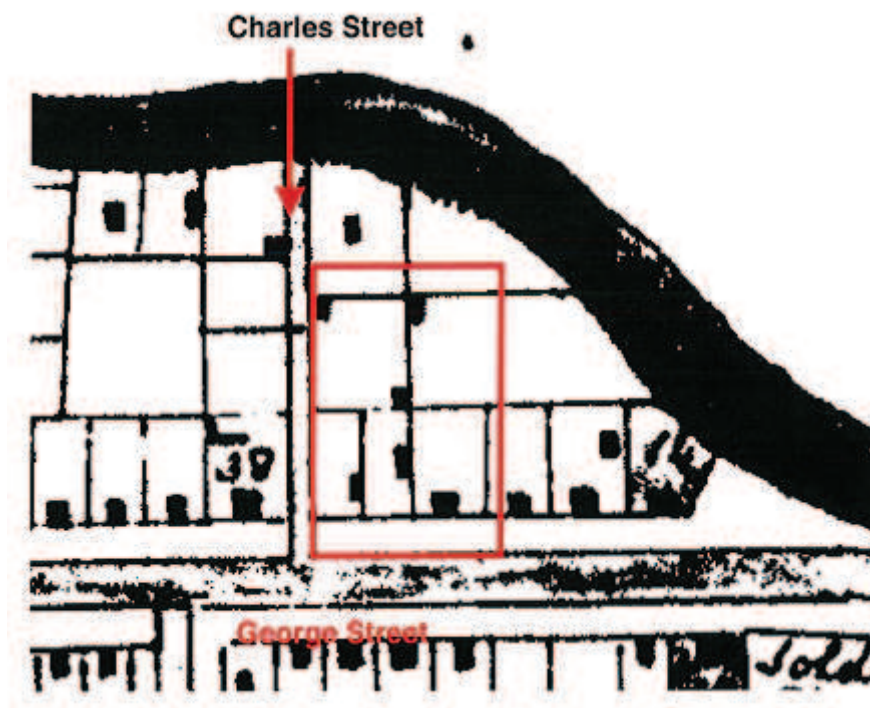
Parramatta City Council has provisions in its planning instruments for the management and protection of archaeological values (Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2011 Section 5.10, Parramatta Heritage and Conservation Local Environmental Plan 1996, Parramatta Development Control Plan 2011 and Sydney Regional Environmental Plan 28).

2.2 Historic Period Analysis

An archaeological assessment for the historic period resources of the site was prepared in 2002 prior to redevelopment of the project area¹. The following brief overview of the history of this site is adapted from this document.

2.2.1 Pre-1820

George Street was the pre-eminent thoroughfare in the original town plan of 1790; it was the street on which allotments were formed to establish huts for the accommodation of convicts. Several of these hut sites have been excavated in the last twenty years. The first town survey shows the project area to encompass three full allotments and portions of two others. Each of the allotments had buildings, one had at least three. The earliest known occupant was Thomas Halfpenny, possibly in occupation by 1802. Sale notices for the property in 1810 refer to it having a valuable house².



Detail from 1804 survey of the town showing the project area over the existing allotments (Source: Casey and Lowe (2002), *Archaeological Assessment 180-180a George Street Parramatta*: 11)

2.2.2 1820s-1840s

In 1823, to bring some order to the chaotic nature of land transactions in the town existing leases and occupancies were reassigned and new town leases issued for the properties throughout Parramatta. The town survey undertaken in that year to accompany the registration process shows that the project area by that date had been subdivided to

¹ Casey and Lowe Pty Ltd (2002); *Archaeological Assessment 180-180a George Street and 30-32 Charles Street Parramatta*

² Ibid: 11-12

encompass six allotments and portions of two others. Each allotment had multiple buildings but not all these buildings were encompassed in the project area.

The improvements to the various allotments were diverse; there were houses, a brewery (at the corner of George and Charles Street), and various out-buildings and many for which the purpose is unknown. A survey of 1844 records even more buildings on the several properties than is shown in 1823.



Detail from 1823 survey of the town showing the allotments and improvements in the project area (Source: Casey and Lowe (2002), *Archaeological Assessment 180-180a George Street Parramatta*: 11)

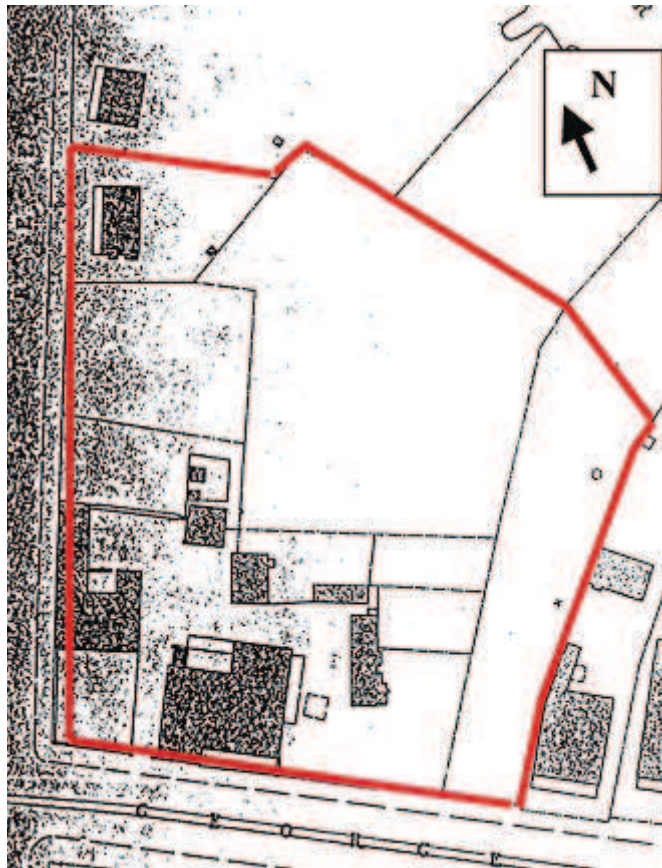
2.2.3 1850s - 1900

By the mid-1850s all of the allotments had been consolidated into one title owned by William Byrnes. This family retained ownership of the properties until the 1950s. Surveys and other primary archival evidence demonstrate that by the later years of the nineteenth century the property included substantial buildings along George Street. There was a substantial house and out-buildings constructed earlier in the 1830s, the former brewery, a small shop and residence. The latter was leased to a Chinese tenant who used part of the site as a market garden³.

³ Casey and Lowe Pty Ltd (2002); *Archaeological Assessment 180-180a George Street and 30-32 Charles Street Parramatta*: 24-25

2.2.4 1900 –1960s

Most of the buildings that were present in the mid-later part of the nineteenth century survived into the twentieth century. A large part of the property was devoted to market gardens and rate assessments from the early 1920s describe the huts and garden of the Chinese tenants, the large house that also had a detached stables, coach house, kitchen, laundry, staff room, store room, fuel shed and pump house. Some of these buildings were still present in the 1960s. The current configuration of the property was made in 1962 with some of the land on the river taken for open space and some along Charles Street to allow for the widening of that thoroughfare. The date of demolition of these structures is not identified in the assessment but certainly occurred in the 1960s.



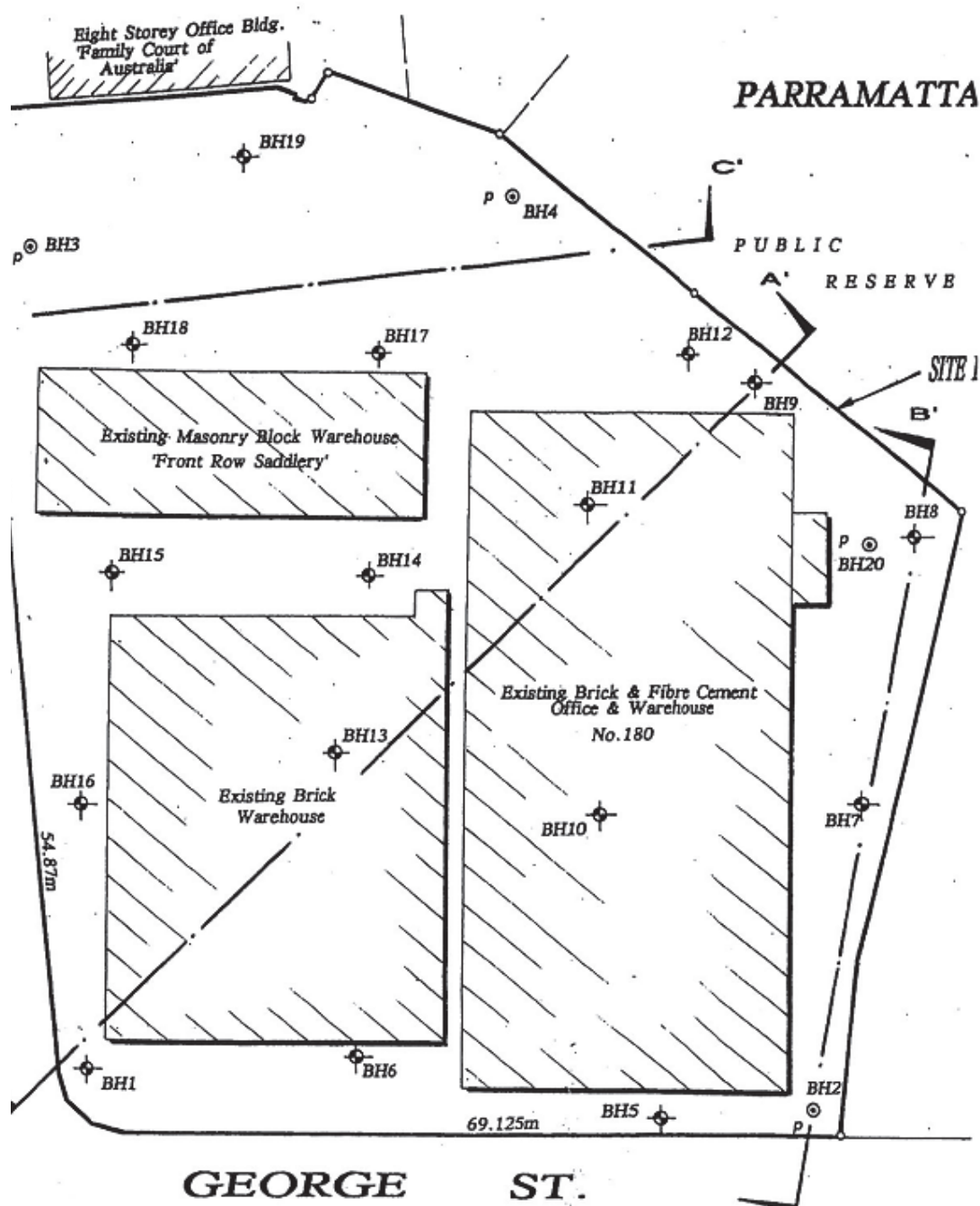
Detail from 1895 town survey of Parramatta showing the improvements on the project area at that time (Source: Casey and Lowe (2002), Archaeological Assessment 180-180a George Street Parramatta: 25)

2.2.5 1960s-2002

The nineteenth century improvements were all removed in the 1960s when the site was redeveloped. Three warehouses were built over much of the property; these were removed when the site was redeveloped for the present buildings.

2.3 Authorship and Acknowledgements

This report was written by Wendy Thorp (Cultural Resources Management). The graphics in the document have been prepared by Ireneusz Golka (Cultural Resources Management) except where otherwise credited. Images of the site are acknowledged in the text. The work was undertaken on behalf of the Meriton Group. Our thanks to Professor Jo McDonald, Ms Guadalupe Cincunegui and Mr Tim Adams for their assistance.



Site plan of the project area immediately prior to redevelopment in 2002 showing the twentieth century warehouses (Source: Casey and Lowe (2002), *Archaeological Assessment 180-180a George Street Parramatta*: 41)

3

The Archaeology



3.1 Redevelopment

The development of 2002 constructed those buildings which now occupy the site around all four edges. These have underground car-parking areas which removed all of the archaeological profile. The courtyard in the centre was also subject to some disturbance. It was stated in the assessment that *“while the central areas of the site appear to be unexcavated the actual requirements for tying the basement into the ground requires the removal of most of this area. The proposed development will disturb all the archaeological remains associated with the site”*⁴. This statement refers only to the historic period archaeology.



Present occupation of the project area; the open courtyard in the centre is the subject of this report

3.2 Archaeological Values

As noted earlier the PHALMS evaluation concluded that this was a site of exceptional research value. The 2002 assessment included the following statement of significance:

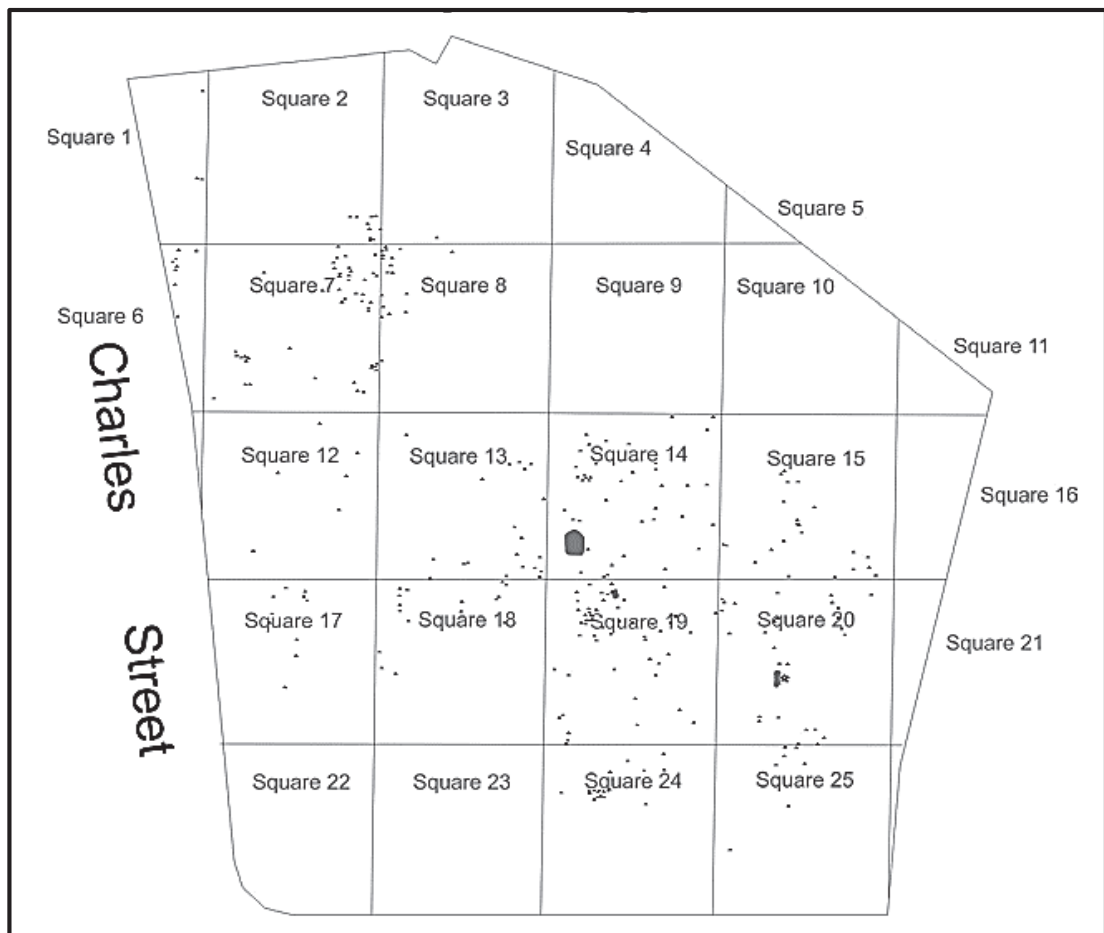
*“The site should contain extensive archaeological remains associated with the early convict period and the settlement of Parramatta in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It should contain remains associated with the long-term occupation of the site by William Byrnes and his family in their main residence. In addition this site should contain remains of early twentieth century Chinese occupation. These remains, through archaeological recording, analysis and interpretation have the ability to address important research questions associated with the material culture of convictism, early free settlement in Parramatta, the process of settlement and urbanisation and Chinese settlement and cross-cultural studies. This site contains remains of State Significance”*⁵.

⁴ Casey and Lowe Pty Ltd (2002); *Archaeological Assessment 180-180a George Street and 30-32 Charles Street Parramatta*: 42

⁵ Ibid: 51

3.3 The Aboriginal Archaeological Programme

A salvage Aboriginal archaeological programme was conducted on this site in 2002. The work was undertaken as a collaboration between archaeologists and representatives of the local Aboriginal Land Council and two other Aboriginal groups. A final report for this work was produced in 2005⁶. More than 210 square metres were hand-excavated and another 250 square metres were mechanically excavated. As well three geo-technical test pits were excavated to aid the interpretation of the sand deposit. The methodology included a surface collection across the entire site, random placement of test pits, four large salvage excavations and the mechanical excavations. In the four salvage excavations, salvage areas A, B and D revealed deposit to a depth of approximately 600mm and area C to a depth greater than that.



The site was gridded and the small black dots here show the location of artefacts recovered from the surface collection (Source: Jo McDonald Cultural Heritage Management (2004); *Archaeological Salvage Excavations at Site CG1; 21*)

⁶ Jo McDonald Cultural Heritage Management Pty Ltd (2005); *Archaeological Salvage Excavation of Site CG1 at the Corner of Charles and George Streets Parramatta*

More than 6500 artefacts were recovered from the site and these were from stone largely imported from beyond Parramatta. The assemblage included several quite rare types of tools and other artefacts and it ranged in date from between 2000 to 20,000 years BP⁷.



The four salvage areas and the test pits (Source: Jo McDonald Cultural Heritage Management (2004); *Archaeological Salvage Excavations at Site CG1*; 22)

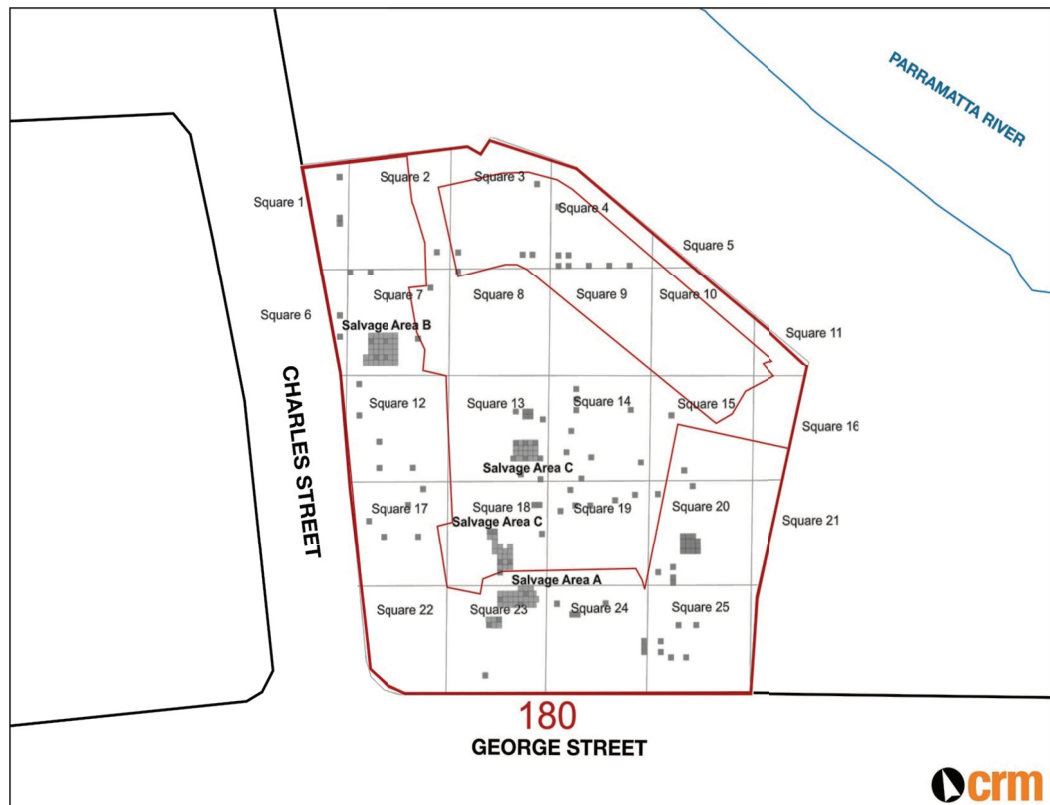
As well as the large artefact assemblage the site revealed several living floors and hearth arrangements. These were located at different stratigraphic levels and indicated repeated use of the site on the river terrace. The top of the sequence had been truncated by nineteenth and twentieth century uses. There was, however, a large collection of glass that had been worked in traditional methods providing evidence of the contact period between the two cultures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The artefact assemblage from this site was highly significant. It was the first systematically collected assemblage of prehistoric evidence from the Parramatta Rive generally and for Parramatta CBD. It provided considerable evidence for occupation and technology in this region. The report for this work concluded that,

⁷ Ibid: i

“site CG1 (NPWS #45-6-2648) has high archaeological significance. It represents a relatively intact archaeological landscape, containing evidence of the types of artefacts and material remains present in a landscape with significant permanent water and in relatively close proximity to a number of identifiable resources. Much of this evidence would appear to have derived from early in the indigenous occupation of the Sydney region”⁸.

It was concluded that the test pits had probably encompassed the full depth of the archaeological profile. As can be seen from the plans prepared for the work substantial portions of the site were not excavated including within the present courtyard. The latter also contains salvage area C which contained the deepest archaeological profile.



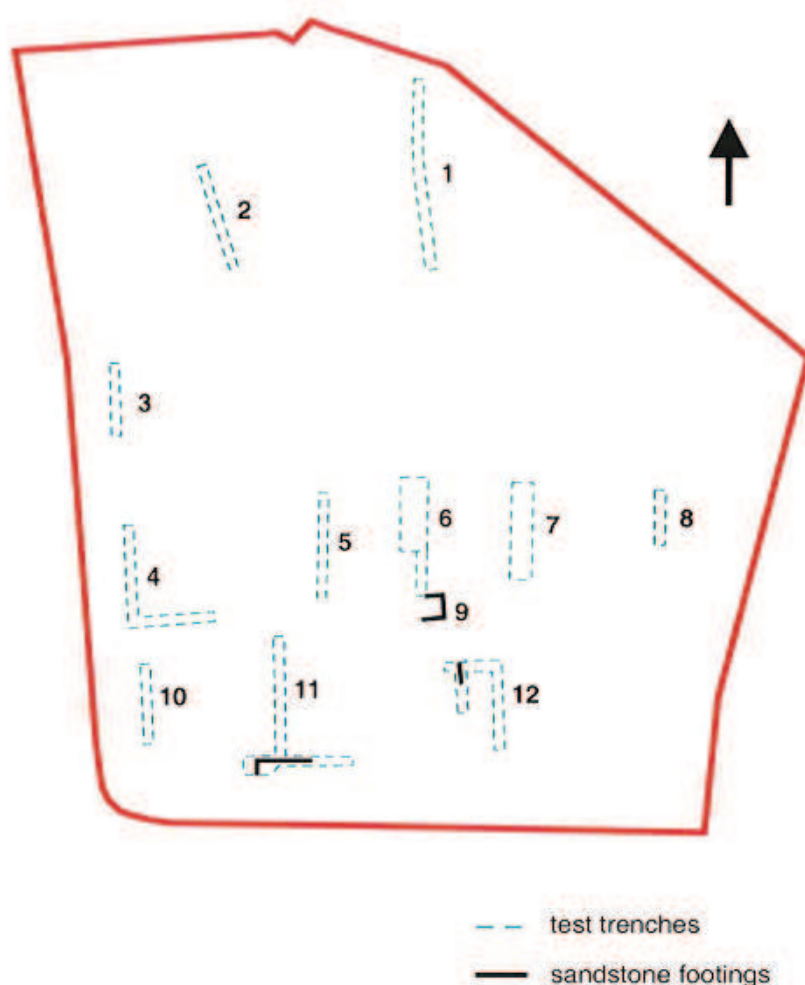
Location of test pits and salvage areas in relation to the present building envelopes

⁸ Jo McDonald Cultural Heritage Management Pty Ltd (2004); *Archaeological Salvage Excavations at Site CG1*; 04

3.4 The Historic Period Archaeological Programme

The final excavation report for this site has not been prepared, there were no progress reports and the excavation director declined to provide any information concerning the extent of the programme. However, we have spoken to two members of the excavation team and reviewed public information from the time and are confident that we can determine the extent of the work and general outcomes, sufficient to inform this review.

A small programme of testing was undertaken in 2002 to confirm the results of the assessment⁹. Twelve trenches were excavated across the site and revealed a mixture of features such as post-holes from timber buildings and stone foundations. The position of the test trenches were largely around the boundaries of the site leaving the middle, the site of the present courtyard largely untouched. On the basis of these results it appears that a comprehensive salvage programme was undertaken across the site.



Location of test trenches excavated during the 2002 test programme (Source: Casey and Lowe Pty Ltd (2002); *Archaeological Assessment and Testing Report 180-180A George Street and 30-32 Charles Street Parramatta*; Appendix)

The recollections of two members of the excavation team are that the site was fully investigated for historic period archaeology and this conclusion is supported by images

⁹ Casey and Lowe Pty Ltd (2002); *Archaeological Assessment and Testing Report 180-180A George Street and 30-32 Charles Street Parramatta*

taken of the excavation. The majority of structural evidence was found along George Street and particularly at the corner of George and Charles Street where substantial nineteenth century basement levels were uncovered.



View of some of the features in the basement area of the George Street house (Source: J. Cincunegui)

The images sourced for this review reveal that a number of substantial structural elements were found including what appear to be drains and floors but the absence of progress or final report makes it impossible to precisely locate these elements.

The site was also particularly informative concerning the early twentieth century occupation by Chinese market gardeners and an extensive collection of artefacts associated with this occupation is stored at the Parramatta Heritage Centre.

The rest of the site, including the present open courtyard appears to have been excavated to reveal mainly post-holes associated with timber buildings. There was, as well a horse burial which may have been in this area. We have no documented evidence for this work or its interpretation but there are several images that appear to show features of this type across the centre of the site.

The most reasonable conclusion from the evidence that is publicly available and discussions with former excavation team members leads is that the project area including the open courtyard is unlikely to encompass any remnant historic period archaeology.



A brick floor excavated on the site, location unknown (Source: J. Cincunegui)



View across the project area to George Street showing post-holes and other archaeological features throughout the site (Source: J. Cincunegui)

3.5 On-Going Management

3.5.1 Historic Period Archaeology

There is unlikely to be any historic period archaeology remaining within the project area, it appears to have been comprehensively excavated in 2002. For this reason no further action is required for the present development with respect to this issue. It should be noted, though, that archaeological evidence has protection under the provisions of the NSW Heritage Act (1977) and should any feature, object or deposit of this type be revealed in future works it will be necessary to manage it. The strategies required are as follows:

- Immediately cease work in the vicinity of this feature
- Provide protection for it
- Seek advice from a qualified archaeologist
- Advise the Heritage Division of NSW of the feature
- Implement any actions required by the Heritage Division

3.5.2 Aboriginal Archaeology

Aboriginal archaeological resources will have requirements for the present development. There may be Aboriginal objects and possibly other features within the areas that will be disturbed by the proposed work. These would be highly significant elements. We have discussed the future management of this place with the OEH because of the unusual circumstances of the project and the significance of this place.

The original work was undertaken under a Consent and Permit to Salvage (AHIMS #1433). This is no longer the permit procedure for Aboriginal Archaeology. In 2010 the DECC issued a Code of Practice for the investigation and assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage (*Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales*). Current requirements include the preparation of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) and, where necessary, test excavations to support the interpretation of likely Aboriginal archaeology. Because of the extensive work that has been carried out to date on this site the OEH has recommended that this body of work can be used in place of the assessment and testing requirements. However, an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) will be necessary for the work and the current requirements for Aboriginal consultation (*Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents 2010*). The details of the work that will be required on site will be determined as part of the application process. The following strategies will be required for the present development:

- Identify the scope of impacts in the courtyard
- Undertaken consultation with the Aboriginal community
- Prepare an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit

References

Technical Reports

- | | |
|---|---|
| Casey & Lowe (2002) | Archaeological Assessment 180-180a George Street and 30-32 Charles Street Parramatta (Meriton Apartments) |
| Casey & Lowe (2002) | Archaeological Assessment and Testing Report 180-180A George Street and 30-32 Charles Street Parramatta (Meriton Apartments) |
| Jo McDonald Cultural Heritage Management Pty Ltd (2005) | Archaeological Salvage Excavation of Site CG1 at the Corner of Charles and George Streets Parramatta NSW (Meriton Apartments) |