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REQUEST FOR REZONING
MOXHAM QUARRY, NORTHMEAD
PRELIMINARY HERITAGE REVIEW

1.0 Introduction

This preliminary heritage review has been prepared to accompany an urban design study, land use and preliminary development principles in support of a request for consideration for the disused Moxham Quarry (the site) to be rezoned for medium density residential development.

2.0 Background & Heritage Listing Status

The former Moxham Quarry (the site) is located at the rear of No. 166 Windsor Road, Northmead, (the Northmead Bowling & Recreation Club) and is bounded by Moxham Park along its western site boundary.

It was one of a number of quarries operated by the Moxham and Hourigan families in the area from the c. 1880s. Physical evidence suggests that the site was used to quarry clay. It is assumed that quarrying operations ceased with the subdivision and residential expansion which occurred from 1914 with real development following in the 1940s and 1950-60s. The quarry was certainly abandoned prior to the 1950s, when the site was formally reserved from sale (1953) and the Northmead Bowling, Recreation and Sporting Club, located to its east, was established (1954). Following investigations the site was identified as land suitable for title issue in c. 2001. The quarry has most recently been used as a rubbish dump, however, is now fenced and is water filled and overgrown with reeds and growth, which generally obscure the quarry face.

Moxham Quarry is not currently covered by any instruments under the *NSW Heritage Act* (1977) and is not classified by the National Trust of Australia (NSW). The property is not listed as a heritage item in the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 1996 (Heritage and Conservation), however, as noted above, is bounded by Moxham Park, which has been recognised as a heritage item of local significance. The site is also located north of the Sylvia Gardens Special Character Area outlined in the Parramatta Development Control Plan 2005. It is one of four quarries identified in the Quarry Branch Creek Maintenance & Rehabilitation Master Plan (2005).

This preliminary review has been prepared by Luisa Alessi, Heritage Consultant of Perumal Murphy Alessi and is based on an inspection of the site and context. Photographs, unless otherwise stated, were taken in October 2007, as part of this initial review. Some preliminary historical research, based on material from Parramatta Local Studies, Mitchell Library and Department of Lands, was undertaken. Further detailed inspection was hampered by the degraded site condition. Reference has also been made to the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 1996 (Heritage and Conservation), Parramatta Development Control Plan 2005, Quarry Branch Creek Maintenance & Rehabilitation Master Plan and publications produced by the NSW Heritage Office.

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3.0 Brief Historical Overview

The area was originally part of the Domain surrounding Government House at Parramatta, until it was sold as small farming lots in the 1850s.[1]

It is difficult to trace the development of the site, which was part of Portion 37 of the Parish of St John, as it does not appear to have been granted or sold. The portions to the north and north-west of the site were granted to James Willis, a farmer and orchardist. The allotments to the immediate south and west of the site were granted to George and Francis Oakes in 1865.[2] It is not clear if the Oakes developed the land in any way, however, by 1887, part of their Estate was leased to the Moxham family who established a number of quarries in the former Parramatta Domain area.[3] The largest Moxham Quarry is apparently located alongside Toongabbie Creek, near the Hammers Road Bridge.[4]

Like many contractors of the time, the Moxham's may have started in the district in the timber industry, later switching to farming, quarrying and horse trading. Moxham's "Whitehaven Quarry", which operated in the area north of Moxhams Road, subsequently became one of the major enterprises in the area, where sandstone and clay were quarried for building purposes.[5]

It appears that the site formed part of their operations in the area. A local biography notes that in the 1880s the Moxham's "*opened out their present extensive quarries on the Windsor Road - the stone of which was equal to that of Pyrmont.*" The firm apparently supplied all parts of the Colony and employed about thirty hands.[6]

The remains of old quarry roads, identified in the Quarry Branch Creek Master Plan,[7] extend from the north western corner of the site and indicate that the northern boundary of Portion 37 (and site) may have been used as a link to Windsor Road. Often when land was owned by the Crown or Council, the quarrymen paid a royalty to use the land and supply stone for local buildings.[8] The Master Plan mentions the site and three other quarries, now located in the adjacent Park area (refer **Figure 5.1**). The State Heritage Inventory form on Moxham Park[9] refers to an 1891 subdivision plan that shows "Moxham's Quarry", however, a copy of the plan has not been located.

Tom Moxham, later a local Member of Parliament and one time Mayor of Parramatta,[10] with his brother William, purchased large tracts of land in the area and in 1900, they also acquired the Oakes Estate, which comprised of land on both sides of Quarry Creek, to the immediate south of the site. The certificate of title shows the land purchased and part of Portion 37 to its north which is notated as a "reserve".[11]

From 1914 subdivision of the Moxham's extensive land holdings south of Moxhams Road commenced.[12] A subdivision plan dated 1910 indicates that the brothers sought to dissolve their partnership from this time. The plan shows the quarry located to the south of the site, now part

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[1] Kass, T., Liston, C., McClymont, J., *Parramatta A Past Revealed*, (1996), p. 272.
[2] Department of Lands, Certificate of Title, Volume 1058 Folio 5 and Department of Lands, Parish and Identification Map (U9160-94).
[3] Kass, T., Liston, C., McClymont, J., *Parramatta A Past Revealed*, (1996), p. 272. and Trimmer, P., "*What became of Parramatta Domain*", (2005), p. 101.
[4] Trimmer, P., "*What became of Parramatta Domain*", (2005), p. 102.
[5] Kass, T., Liston, C., McClymont, J., *Parramatta A Past Revealed*, (1996), p. 272
[6] Parramatta Local Studies, Vertical File, Biographies.
[7] Parramatta City Council, *Quarry Branch Creek Maintenance and Rehabilitation Master Plan 2005*, Map 12.
[8] Trimmer, P., "*What became of Parramatta Domain*", (2005), p. 102.
[9] NSW Heritage Office, State Heritage Inventory, Database No. 2240612.
[10] Parramatta City Council, *Quarry Branch Creek Maintenance and Rehabilitation Master Plan 2005*, p. 34.
[11] Department of Lands, Certificate of Title, Volume 1311 Folios 24 & 25.
[12] Kass, T., Liston, C., McClymont, J., *Parramatta A Past Revealed*, (1996), p. 272.

of Charles Herbert Reserve and noted as a "*valuable mason's quarry*".[13] It would appear that sales did not proceed or go well and the Moxham family retained ownership of the land to the north of Moxham Road until 1935, when the Whitehaven Quarry was subdivided. It was subsequently offered for sale privately by the Sylvia Gardens Estate Ltd in 1937. The subdivision was laid out in accordance with the latest subdivision principles of the 1940s with winding roads that reflected the topography of the area.[14] The area, which is now recognised as the Sylvia Gardens Special Character Area, is designed around the quarry shown on the earlier subdivision plan and which has been converted to a park.

In 1951 discussions began regarding the formation of a Bowling Club in the district. By the end of the same year Council had petitioned to commence the required negotiations with the Lands Department to procure Portion 37 (public land of approximately 12 acres with 600ft frontage to Windsor Road) as a site for a Bowling Green and Recreation area. This was the start of a protracted three-way negotiation which was made difficult by obscure legal title to the land. In 1953 the area occupied by the quarry was formally gazetted as a reserve.[15] In the following year the matter was finally resolved and lease signed for land defined as Portion 37 and being six acres of land (excluding) the quarry. The first Bowling Green was opened in 1957 with Club House following in 1961.[16]

By this time Portion 37 was described as a "*wild, rugged, uneven scrub covered area which backed onto an abandoned water filled quarry.*" Its main usage up until that time noted as being an illegal rubbish dump.[17] Another source also indicates that the Hourigan's also quarried the site which had also been used as a trotting track and chicken farm.[18]

The site is now bounded to the south and west by Moxham Park, which is accessed from Whitehaven Road. These names recall the early lessees and subsequent owners of the area and their quarry. The Park area also bounds the Northmead Scout Troop which was also formed in the 1950s.[19] Their Hall, also accessed from Whitehaven Road, opened in 1959. The base of a sandstone structure visible beneath an associated brick toilet block may be the remains of a building associated with the quarry use of the area.[20]

In c. 2001 the quarry site was investigated and plan of the site, identified the site as Lot 7053 DP 1028240 at Northmead and suitable for title issue.[21] Since that time investigations of the Quarry Branch Creek area have identified it as one of four quarries in the immediate area. The investigations also revealed the presence of early quarry roads nearby in the adjacent Park reserves which appear to connect to the north western corner of the site. Archaeological evidence of the road largely remains on the western side of Quarry Branch Creek where sandstone, from the local sources, has been used to build up the access and bridges.[22]

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[13] Mitchell Library, Subdivision Plan, ZSP: B9/53.
[14] Kass, T., Liston, C., McClymont, J., *Parramatta A Past Revealed*, (1996), p. 354.
[15] Department of Lands, Identification Map (U9160-94).
[16] www.northmeadbowlingclub.com.au: *Northmead Bowling Club – Club History.*
[17] Ibid.
[18] Trimmer, P., "*What became of Parramatta Domain*", (2005), p. 123.
[19] Ibid., p. 117.
[20] Parramatta City Council, *Quarry Branch Creek Maintenance and Rehabilitation Master Plan 2005*, p. 82.
[21] Department of Lands, Title Search 7053/1028240.
[22] Parramatta City Council, *Quarry Branch Creek Maintenance and Rehabilitation Master Plan 2005* and Parramatta Local Studies, Vertical File, Parks and Reserve, Article by John Blair, *Gifts from times past*", Hills Shire Times, 4/10/2005.

4.0 The Site Context

The site is located to the west of Windsor Road and is bounded to the east by the Northmead Bowling, Recreation and Sporting Club (at No. 166 Windsor Road), the Northmead Scout Troop, addressing Whitehaven Road to the south and to the west by Moxham Park, No. 19 Whitehaven Road. Residential development also bounds its northern and southern boundaries.

The Northmead Bowling, Recreation and Sporting Club is located to the immediate east of the site. The building is set back from the wide Windsor Road frontage, with grassed verge and sealed car park between the building and street alignment. The building is single storey and low lying, and due to the open street frontage, is a highly visible and recognisable element on this section of Windsor Road. The Club House is also setback from the north and southern site boundaries, which are bounded by residential development. The open car park wraps around the building with bowling greens, lawns and gardens located directly behind (west of) the building. An unsealed access road skirts the northern boundary and provides access to the site.

The Northmead Scout Troop buildings are located to the south of the site, with frontage to Whitehaven Road. The property, which is enclosed by high, mesh fencing, features a number of structures, most notable of which is the main Hall, which a single storey building with gabled roof clad in corrugated iron. The building is utilitarian in nature and appears to have been constructed in stages. It has been noted that the site also retains some remains of earlier structures, possibly associated with the quarry use of the area, however, this could not be confirmed. Like the site, the buildings are surrounded by bushland setting and Moxham Park which contains a number of walking tracks which pass the property.

Moxham Park surrounds the western section of the subject site and is an irregular shaped park bounded by Whitehaven Road to the east, Quarry Branch Creek to the west and Churchill Drive to the north. The Park has been identified as a heritage item in the Parramatta LEP and is of local significance for its historical and social associations and aesthetic character. In addition to the natural attributes of the Park, including mature eucalypts and planting, it also contains three identified quarries and the remains of an old quarry road which extends north-west through the Park from the north western corner of the site. The Park features a number of walking tracks which meander through, along the creek and past the site. It is also part of an extensive green belt which generally follow the creeks from Westmead to the south through Baulkham Hills to the north.

Whitehaven Road is characterised by residential subdivision and development including a number of substantial dwellings which exhibit similarity of age and uniformity of scale, size and materials recognised as part of the Sylvia Gardens Special Character Area. The subdivision was designed around another quarry converted into parkland, the Charles Herbert Reserve. The cut stone wall of the quarry is a prominent feature of the reserve and is surmounted by the residential development that faces Hartland Street.

Figure 4.1 the site is located on the western side of Windsor Road, which is a busy arterial road.

Figure 4.3 The Northmead Bowling, Recreation and Sporting Club, at No. 166 Windsor Road features single storey Club House which is setback from its site boundaries and surrounded by car park.

The Club, which is a highly prominent feature of this section of Windsor Road is generally surrounded by residential development.

Figure 4.2 Typical residential block and dwelling located adjacent to the Club.

Figure 4.4 View of the rear of the Scout Hall and site from Moxham Park.

The Hall is a simple, utilitarian structure clad in corrugated iron.

Figure 4.5 Moxham Park features a number of walking tracks and trails which extend from Whitehaven Road.

Figure 4.6 The Park area is bounded to the west by the Quarry Branch Creek which also contributes to the aesthetic character and significance of the place.

Figure 4.7 The Park is part of an extensive green belt and features significant mature trees and plantings.

Figure 4.8 The Charles Herbert Reserve is surrounded by a subdivision and residential development which have been recognised as part of the Silvia Gardens Special Character Area.

Figure 4.9 The Charles Herbert Reserve from Whitehaven Road.

Figure 4.10 The reserve is enclosed by the prominent cut stone wall of the quarry which was noted as being s a "valuable mason's quarry", owned and operated by the Moxham family.

5.0 The Moxham Quarry

The subject site is located on the western side of Windsor Road and is accessed from an unsealed road which extends along the northern site boundary of the Northmead Bowling, Recreation and Sporting Club. The access and northern site boundary is in turn bounded by a timber paling fence and residential blocks and development addressing Windsor Road and Ulandi Place.

The access adjacent to the Bowling Club is generally level and then falls away to the west as it continues past the quarry into Moxham Park.

The cut and excavated section of the quarry is currently enclosed by a high, steel framed and mesh fence. The quarry wall runs along the eastern section of the site, at the rear of the Bowling Club site, with excavated areas extending west and south-west, toward Moxham Park. The quarry itself is also overgrown, and largely inaccessible, with growth extending up the uneven surface of the excavated face and wall of the quarry. The wall is clearly not of cut stone, like the wall in the Charles Herbert Reserve and possibly was quarried for clay. The western base of the quarry is now water filled and covered with reeds and grasses.

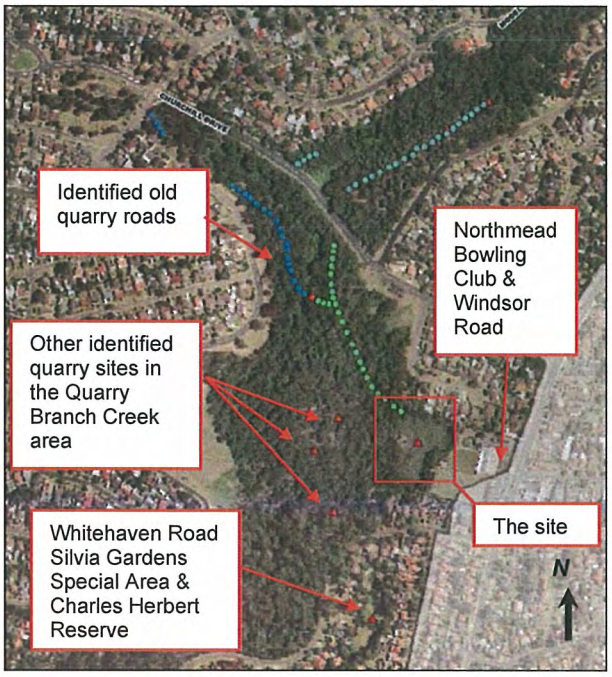

Figure 5.1 Location plan and context.

(Source: Parramatta City Council, *Quarry Branch Creek Maintenance and Rehabilitation Master Plan 2005, Map 12)*

Figure 5.2 View of the site access from Windsor Road. The access skirts the northern boundary of the Northmead Bowling, Recreation and Sporting Club. The building and car park is visible at left.

Figure 5.3 The site access is also bounded by timber paling fence and residential development addressing both Windsor Road and Ulandi Place (further west).

Figure 5.4 View of the quarry wall, which is located at the eastern end of the site. The wall itself does not appear to be cut or as well defined as the quarry wall in the Charles Herbert Reserve and is overgrown.

Figure 5.5 The site most recently has been used as a rubbish dump.

Figure 5.6 View across the quarry looking south.

Figure 5.7 View looking east across the quarry. The base of the quarry is waterlogged and overgrown with reeds and grasses.

Figure 5.8 View looking north east across the quarry. The Bowling Club buildings are just visible above the quarry wall which is located in the eastern section of the site.

6.0 Preliminary Analysis and Assessment

It is difficult to fully assess and appreciate the characteristics of the quarry, based on the limited information available and current condition of the site, however, the preliminary investigations reveal the following.

The former Moxham Quarry, at the rear of the Northmead Bowling, Recreation and Sporting Club at No. 166 Windsor Road, Northmead, is of some historical significance due to its association with the Moxham and Hourigan families. Like the other sites, it would appear that the quarry was operated by the Moxham family, a notable Parramatta family and prominent quarrymen and orchardists who owned large tracts of land in the area including most of the area now incorporated in Moxham Park and the Sylvia Gardens Special Character Area.

The 1910 subdivision plan of the Sylvia Gardens Estate indicates that the quarry in the Charles Herbert Reserve was a "valuable" quarry and significant part of the Moxham operations in the area. Based on the physical character of the subject site and particularly the form of the excavated wall it is assumed that it was used to quarry smaller stones and clay and possibly was leased by the Moxham's to provide ready access to Windsor Road.

The quarry use had long been abandoned when development of the surrounding area and sites, including the Northmead Bowling, Recreation and Sporting Club, Northmead Scouts and the Sylvia Gardens Estate occurred and intensified in the 1950s and 1960s. By this time it was mainly used as a rubbish dump.

The site, particularly the western section of the site is of some aesthetic significance due to its mature trees and plantings which contribute to the character of the site and adjacent Moxham Park. The excavated wall is not as well defined or "cut" as the wall visible in the Charles Herbert Reserve.

The site may be of some social significance due to its association with the quarrying use and more recently due to its proximity to the Moxham Park reserve, Northmead Bowling Club and Scouts. Whilst the site has traditionally been part of a "reserve", its appears to have been largely "closed" and it is assumed that public access has long been restricted due to its lease and use as a quarry and subsequently due to its "isolated" location, fenced and tucked behind the Northmead Bowling Club. The walking tracks within the Park generally extend past the site and parallel to the creek bed.

Further investigation is required to establish if the site, which is a "modified" landscape, is of any technical or scientific significance. The site is currently waterlogged and overgrown which makes detailed inspection difficult. The assumed connection with the old quarry roads identified in the Quarry Branch Creek Master Plan requires further investigation.

The Moxham Quarry is one of four quarries identified in the Quarry Branch Creek area and with the Charles Herbert reserve, one of five known quarry sites in the area. In size it compares to the quarry located in the Charles Herbert Reserve, which has been adapted into a park.

7.0 The Concept

This review accompanies a request to rezone the site for medium density residential development.

It is generally proposed to retain the existing site boundaries and parameters and construct a residential complex (village) of maximum of two levels to step down into the quarry site.

The existing site access and connection with Windsor Road will be maintained and provide vehicular access to the site and proposed multistorey car park, which will be accommodated in the excavated section of the quarry.

The proposed built "village" will be constructed over the basement car parking area and to be setback and overlook the adjacent greens and existing park landscape. The development will be concentrated and located in the western section of the site with amphitheatre affect over an open area to the west. The existing tree cover and planting along the western site boundary, adjacent to the Moxham Park boundary, will be retained and is proposed as a buffer and transitional zone between the Park and subject area.

8.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

The site is not identified as a heritage item, however, is located adjacent to a heritage item (Moxham Park) and is in the vicinity of the Sylvia Gardens Special Character Area.

In relation to **Clause 14** of the Parramatta LEP 1996 (Heritage and Conservation):

(1) ...the consent authority must assess the impact of the development:

(a) on the heritage significance, curtilage and setting of the heritage item or the heritage significance of the heritage conservation area, and

The proposed rezoning of the site will have no impact on the heritage significance of Moxham Park, which is largely associated with its historical and social associations and aesthetic characteristics. The Park will retain its existing site boundaries and identified significant elements and features and will continue to be publicly accessible.

The park is currently bounded by residential development. Whilst a small part of the extended visual curtilage and setting of the Park may change, any potential adverse heritage impacts will be reduced and possibly mitigated by the retention of the existing tree cover and provision of the buffer zone located along the western, shared site boundary.

Any proposed development should be stepped down the quarry site to reduce any adverse visual and physical impacts on the part area.

The proposed rezoning may provide increased opportunities for public visitation and interpretation of Moxham Park and in particular its historical and aesthetic characteristics.

The proposed rezoning of the site will have no adverse heritage impact on the heritage significance, curtilage or setting of the Sylvia Gardens Special Character Area. The site is physically separated from the area, with some development between. The proposed rezoning and development of the site will allow public participation in the site and opportunities to interpret the historical connections between the site and adjacent areas, including the former Sylvia Gardens Estate.

(b) on any significant views to or from the heritage item or the heritage conservation area.

In principle, the proposed rezoning of the Moxham Quarry site will have no adverse impacts on views to or from Moxham Park. Currently views of the Park and its attributes are best viewed and enjoyed from the public paths and tracks within the Park area and which are generally bounded by significant tree and shrub cover. In principle, the proposed rezoning will allow increased views to and appreciation of the Park area, as it will open up an area that is currently of restricted public access.

The proposed rezoning will have no impact on views to or from the Sylvia Gardens Special Character area.

The relevant questions in the NSW Heritage Office guideline document *Statements of Heritage Impact* have also been considered below.

New development adjacent to a heritage item
How is the impact of the new development on the heritage significance of the item or the area to be minimised?

At this concept stage it is not possible to comment in detail on the size, shape and scale, setbacks and materials of any proposed buildings, however, a number of design principles have been identified to reduce any potential impacts on the significance of Moxham Park, site and area in general:

- retention of the site access and connection to Windsor Road;
- retention of the existing subject site and Park boundaries;
- provision of adequate setbacks from the residential development and Northmead Scouts to the north and south of the site;
- retention of mature trees and plantings on the site mainly located in the western section of the site;
- provision of ample setback and buffer zone along the western and shared boundary with Moxham Park;
- and provision of low scale, two storey development that is orientated to the green or natural landscape and steps down the quarry site.

In addition proposed rezoning provides opportunities for increased visitation and interpretation of the site and Park area in general. Presently the site is largely inaccessible and fenced of from the public and obscured by weeds and planting. The proposed rezoning may provide opportunities for connecting paths and interpretation of the quarrying operations that occurred there and adjacent areas.

How does the curtilage allowed around the heritage item contribute to the retention of its heritage significance?

The existing mature trees and planting currently located in the western section of the site will be retained as a buffer zone which, it is considered, will continue to enhance and contribute to the significance and aesthetic character of the Park. In addition the concept provides setback between any proposed development and buffer zone.

The buffer zone and setback will therefore retain a sense of the existing expanded curtilage of the Park and provide a transitional area between the Park and any proposed residential development.

How does the new development affect views to, and from the heritage item? Will the public and users of the park, still be able to view and appreciate its significance? What has been done to minimise negative effects?

As noted above, views to and from Moxham Park will be retained and possibly enhanced by the proposed rezoning which will open up an area that has largely been of restricted access. The users of the park will still be able to view and appreciate the Park, as rezoning will have no impact on the park or its recognised access points or paths. It is considered that the proposed rezoning of the site may enhance and create additional connections and opportunities for increased public use and interpretation.

A number of design principles also outlined above have also been proposed in order to minimise any adverse, negative heritage impacts. The main elements being retention of mature specimen trees and tree cover in the western section of the site, along the shared boundary of the Park and maintenance of appropriate setbacks.

Is the development sited on any known, or potentially significant archaeological deposits?

The site is a former quarry, which has long been abandoned, with most recent use being as a rubbish dump. It is not clear if the site retains any significant archaeological "deposits" as the site is currently overgrown and waterlogged. There may be some potential along the northern site boundary which may be associated with the old quarry roads.

However, the site has been identified as being one of four quarries located in the immediate area, the other three being located within the adjacent Park areas. A well defined, cut stone wall also remains in the Charles Herbert Reserve, to the south of the site.

In principle, the rezoning of the land will provide opportunities to investigate, use and interpret the site. The line of the quarry excavations and possible access road may be retained or interpreted by signs or built fabric. Other benefits to the community and public in general may also include increased physical and visual connections.

Should any deposits be recovered, advice should be sought from a qualified archaeologist.

Is the new development sympathetic to the heritage item? In what way? Will the additions visually dominate the heritage item? How is this been minimised?

The proposed rezoning generally seeks to make use of disused land and in the process provide some additional community benefit and amenity.

As discussed above the proposed rezoning incorporates a number of design principles that aim to reduce and mitigate any adverse impacts on Moxham Park and the surrounding area, including the stepping down of any development into the excavated area of the quarry, retention of buffer zone and setbacks and incorporation of small scale, two storey building massing that can be sustained due to the topography and tree canopy and cover in the area.

9.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

Based on this preliminary review it is considered that the proposed rezoning of the former Moxham Quarry, located at the rear of No. 166 Windsor Road, Northmead, will have no adverse heritage impacts on the significance of Moxham Park or Sylvia Garden Special Character Area. From a heritage perspective, it is considered that the site can sustain, small scale, medium density residential development, provided that the following design principles are maintained:

- retention of the site access and connection to Windsor Road;
- retention of the existing subject site boundaries;
- retention or interpretation of the line of the excavated quarry wall;
- provision of adequate setbacks from the residential development and Northmead Scouts to the north and south of the site;
- retention of mature trees and plantings on the site mainly located in the western section of the site;
- provision of ample setback and buffer zone along the western and shared boundary with Moxham Park; and
- provision of low scale, two storey development to be located within and setback from the site boundaries and that follows the existing landscape/ topography and steps down the quarry site.

The proposed rezoning provides opportunities to use and recognise the site in a positive way that may increase community awareness and interpretation of the history and development and connections within the local area. The built development could also be used to interpret the form of the quarry and be stepped or tiered down the excavated area.