

Catholic Diocese of Maitland Newcastle

M

All Saints College MPC Maitland

LGA: Maitland

Archaeological Due Diligence Assessment

2 March 2022

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Date: 2 March 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

McCardle Cultural Heritage Pty Ltd (MCH) has been engaged by the Catholic Diocese of Maitland Newcastle to undertake an Archaeological Due Diligence Assessment for the proposed new MPC and refurbishment of existing hall at Horseshoe Bend, Maitland.

Located at 20-24 Hunter Street, Horseshoe Bend, the geology of the project area includes quaternary gravel, sand, silt, "Waterloo Rock" and marine and fresh water deposits. Consisting of low-lying flat landform, the project area consists of the Hunter Soil Landscape which covers the floodplains of the Hunter River and its Tributaries. These soils consist of an upper soil Horizon A and underlying. Unit A and Unit B are interpreted as being Holocene and Pleistocene in age respectively. Within the region, sites tend to occur on or within soil Horizon A or are often present at the interface of the A and B horizons. Within the A horizon the lowermost (in terms of vertical positioning) artefact assemblages tend to contain artefacts that are typically attributed to the mid-Holocene.

In terms of fresh water sources, the project area is located approximately 250 metres south of the Hunter River, a major source of reliable fresh water and resources. Whilst camping along the Hunter River was favoured, locations such as the project area, would have utilised for more transitory activities such as hunting and gathering. Evidence of such landuses manifests in the archaeological record as a background of discarded artefacts across the landscape. The project area has been cleared and primarily used for pastoral purposes (grazing), would likely to have been ploughed at least once for the introduction of pasture grass, the construction of the existing buildings, basketball hard courts, sports fields, cricket practice pitches and a car park north of the building. These landuses and how they impact on the landscape and deposits are easy to see and understand.

A search of the AHIMS register identified three known Aboriginal sites recorded within two kilometres of the project area and includes two artefact sites and one PAD. There are no registered sites or Aboriginal Places within the project area. Considering the AHIMS results, local and regional archaeological investigations as well as the environmental context, given that fresh water was necessary for survival and the project area is located 250 metres from the Hunter River and its resources, the absence reliable of fresh water indicates the project area and immediate surrounds may have been used no more than hunting and gathering opportunities rather than large-scale long-term camping. Evidence of such past Aboriginal land uses manifest in the archaeological record as low-density artefact scatters and isolated finds. The site types that may have been present within the project area prior to previous works for the buildings, car park, sports fields, basketball hardcourts and cricket pitches, include very low-density artefact scatters and, or isolated artefacts.

The project area was surveyed as one survey unit based on landform elements. The survey identified that the project area had been previously cleared, and during the time of the survey the buildings, car park, sports fields, basketball hardcourts and cricket pitches were present. Ground surface visibility was hindered by the buildings, car park and hard courts, but exposures were high due to the construction works across the project area from past land uses.

No archaeological sites or Potential Archaeological Deposits (PADs) were identified during the survey and this is likely due to a number of factors including, the distance from reliable water and subsistence resources indicates the project area was unlikely to have been utilised for camping; the project area may have been used for travel and/or hunting and gathering which manifest in the archaeological record as very low-density artefact scatters and/or isolated finds; and past and present land uses would have displaced and/or destroyed any evidence of past Aboriginal land use.

As no sites were identified in the project area, there are no impacts on the archaeological record and the following recommendations are provided:

- 1) The persons responsible for the management of onsite works will ensure that all staff, contractors and others involved in construction and maintenance related activities are made aware of the statutory legislation protecting sites and places of significance. Of particular importance is the National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2019, under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974; and
- 1) Should any Aboriginal objects be uncovered during works, all work will cease in that location immediately and the Environmental Line contacted.

GLOSSARY

Aboriginal Place: are locations that have been recognised by the Minister (and gazetted under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*) as having special cultural significance to the Aboriginal community. An Aboriginal Place may or may not include archaeological materials.

Aboriginal Site: an Aboriginal site is the location of one or more Aboriginal archaeological objects, including flaked stone artefacts, midden shell, grinding grooves, archaeological deposits, scarred trees etc.

Artefact: any object that is physically modified by humans.

Artefact scatter: a collection of artefacts scattered across the surface of the ground (also referred to as open camp sites).

Assemblage: a collection of artefacts associated by a particular place or time, assumed generated by a single group of people, and can comprise different artefact types.

Backed artefact: a stone tool where the margin of a flake is retouched at a steep angle and that margin is opposite a sharp edge.

Background scatter: a term used to describe low density scatter of isolated finds that are distributed across the landscape without any obvious focal point.

Core: a chunk of stone from which flakes are removed and will have one or more negative flake scars but no positive flake scars. The core itself can be shaped into a tool or used as a source of flakes to be formed into tools.

Debitage: small pieces of stone debris that break off during the manufacturing of stone tools. These are usually considered waste and are the by-product of production (also referred to as flake piece).

Flake: any piece of stone struck off a core and has a number of characteristics including ring cracks showing where the hammer hit the core and a bulb of percussion. May be used as a tool with no further working, may be retouched or serve as a platform for further reduction.

Flaked piece/waste flake: an unmodified and unused flake, usually the by-product of tool manufacture or core preparation (also referred to asdebitage).

Harm: is defined as an act that may destroy, deface or damage an Aboriginal object or place. In relation to an object, this means the movement or removal of an object from the land in which it has been situated

In situ: archaeological items are said to be "in situ" when they are found in the location where they were last deposited.

Retouched flake: a flake that has been flaked again in a manner that modified the edge for the purpose of resharpening that edge.

Typology: the systematic organization of artefacts into types on the basis of shared attributes.

ACRONYMS

ACHA	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment
ACHMP	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan
AHIMS	Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System
AHIP	Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit

AHIMS SITE ACRONYMS

ACD	Aboriginal ceremonial and dreaming
AFT	Artefact (stone, bone, shell, glass, ceramic and metal)
ARG	Aboriginal resource and gathering
ART	Art (pigment or engraving)
BOM	Non-human bone and organic material
BUR	Burial
CFT	Conflict site
CMR	Ceremonial ring (stone or earth)
ETM	Earth mound
FSH	Fish trap
GDG	Grinding groove
HAB	Habitation structure
HTH	Hearth
OCQ	Ochre quarry
PAD	Potential archaeological deposit.
SHL	Shell
STA	Stone arrangement
STQ	Stone quarry
TRE	Modified tree (carved or scarred)
WTR	Water hole

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

McCardle Cultural Heritage Pty Ltd (MCH) has been engaged by the Catholic Diocese of Maitland Newcastle to undertake an Archaeological Due Diligence Assessment for the proposed new MPC and refurbishment of existing hall at Horseshoe Bend, Maitland.

The assessment has been undertaken to meet the Heritage NSW, Department of Premier & Cabinet Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW and the brief. The purpose of a due diligence assessment is to assist proponents to exercise due diligence when carrying out activities that may harm Aboriginal objects or Aboriginal places and to determine whether that should apply for a consent to harm Aboriginal objects or Places through an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIP). The purpose of this due diligence report is to demonstrate that all reasonable and practicable measures have been undertaken to prevent harm to any Aboriginal objects and/or place within the project area. This report has met the Heritage NSW Due Diligence requirements and considered the relevant environmental and archaeological information, the project land condition, the nature of the proposed development activity and impacts, as well as preparing appropriate recommendations.

1.2 THE PROJECT AREA

The project area is located at 20-24 Hunter Street, Horseshoe Bend. Including Lot 2 DP1268, the location of the project area is shown in Figures 1.1 and 1.2.

Figure 1.1 Regional location of the project area

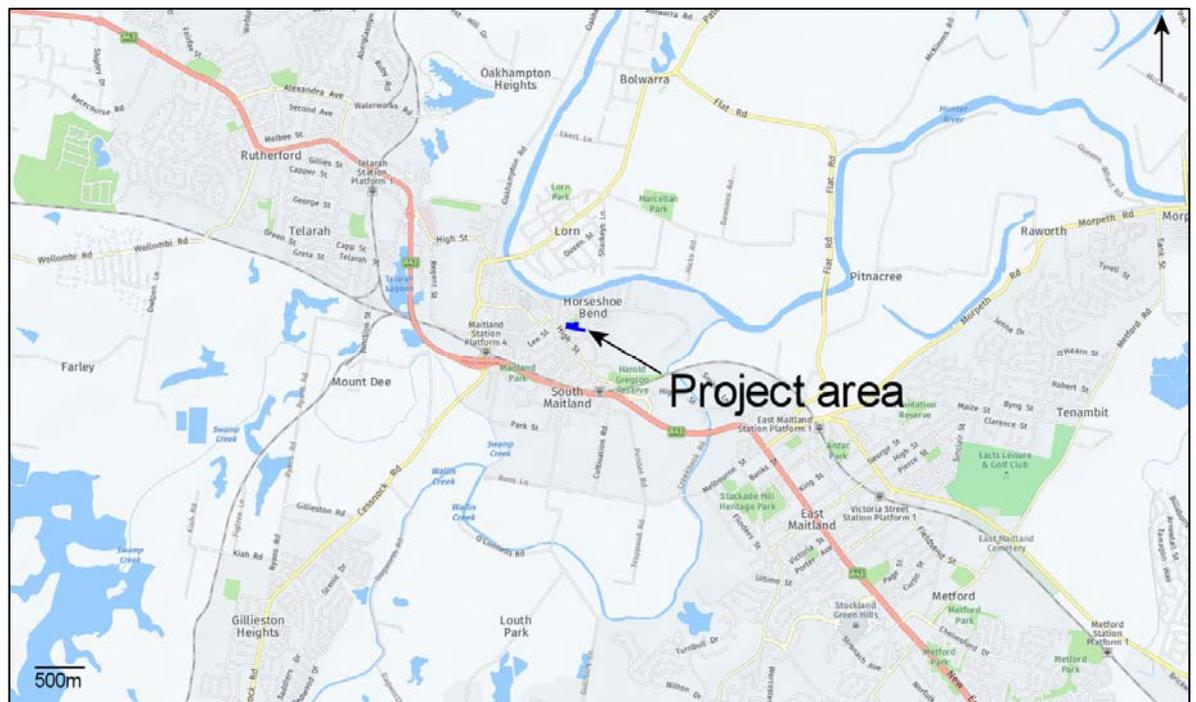


Figure 1.2 Aerial photograph of the project area (Nearmap August 2021)



1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal includes the refurbishment of St Paul's Parish Hall, with critical maintenance works currently underway, and future reinstatement of the original footprint of the building forming part of the development application. A new multi-purpose centre will sit behind the existing hall in a future stage of works, providing essential covered play space, classrooms and a central gathering space to All Saints College. The design is elevated from the ground to meet flooding controls and formalised landscaped forecourts will site to each side of the hall creating a flow between the existing St Paul's Parish Hall, the new MPC building and the existing site landscape and play space.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE DUE DILIGENCE ASSESSMENT

The objectives and primary tasks of this due diligence assessment were to:

- undertake a search of the Aboriginal Heritage Management System (AHIMS) and other relative registers;
- undertake research into the environmental and archaeological contexts of the project area;
- develop a predictive model of site location for the project area;
- undertake a field survey of the project area;
- assess the potential impacts of the proposed development on any identified Aboriginal sites or potential archaeological deposits (PADs) identified within the project area;
- assess the significance of any identified Aboriginal objects or sites identified within the project area;
- complete and submit site cards to AHIMS for any Aboriginal sites identified; and
- provide appropriate recommendations.

1.5 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The following overview of the legislative framework, is provided solely for information purposes for the client, and should not be interpreted as legal advice. MCH will not be liable for any actions taken by any person, body or group as a result of this general overview and MCH recommends that specific legal advice be obtained from a qualified legal practitioner prior to any action being taken as a result of the general summary below.

Land managers are required to consider the effects of their activities or proposed development on the environment under several pieces of legislation. Although there are a number of Acts and regulations protecting Aboriginal heritage, including places, sites and objects, within NSW, the three main ones include:

- National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974, as amended)
- National Parks and Wildlife Regulation (2019)
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979)

1.5.1 NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE ACT (1974, AS AMENDED)

The National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974), Amended 2019, is the primary legislation for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in New South Wales. The NPW Act protects Aboriginal heritage (places, sites and objects) within NSW and the protection of Aboriginal heritage is outlined in s86 of the Act, as follows:

- “A person must not harm or desecrate an object that the person knows is an Aboriginal object” s86(1)
- “A person must not harm an Aboriginal object” s86(2)
- “A person must not harm or desecrate an Aboriginal place” s86(4)

Penalties apply for harming an Aboriginal object, site or place. The penalty for knowingly harming an Aboriginal object (s86[1]) and/or an Aboriginal place (s86[4]) is up to \$550,000 for an individual and/or imprisonment for 2 years; and in the case of a corporation the penalty is up to \$1.1 million. The penalty for a strict liability offence (s86[2]) is up to \$110,000 for an individual and \$220,000 for a corporation.

Harm under the National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974, as amended) is defined as any act that destroys defaces or damages the object, moves the object from the land on which it has been situated, causes or permits the object to be harmed. However, it is a defence from prosecution if the proponent can demonstrate that;

- 1) harm was authorised under an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) (and the permit was properly followed), or
- 2) the proponent exercised due diligence in respect to Aboriginal heritage.

The ‘due diligence’ defence (s87[2]), states that if a person or company has applied due diligence to determine that no Aboriginal object, site or place was likely to be harmed as a result of the activities proposed for the Project Area, then liability from prosecution under the NPW Act 1974 will be removed or mitigated if it later transpires that an Aboriginal object, site or place was harmed. If any Aboriginal objects are identified during the activity, then works should cease in that area and Heritage NSW, Department of Premier & Cabinet notified (DECCW 2010:13). The due diligence defence does not allow for continuing harm or as defence to s.86(1) or (4).

The archaeological due diligence assessment and report has been carried out in compliance with the Heritage NSW (DECCW 2010) Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW.

1.5.2 NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE REGULATION (2019)

The National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2019 provides a framework for undertaking activities and exercising due diligence in respect to Aboriginal heritage. The Regulation (201909) recognises various due diligence codes of practice, including the Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW, but it also outlines procedures for Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) applications and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements (ACHCRs); amongst other regulatory processes.

1.5.3 ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & ASSESSMENT ACT 1979 (EP&A ACT)

EP&A Act establishes the statutory framework for planning and environmental assessment in NSW and the implementation of the EP&A Act is the responsibility of the Minister for Planning, statutory authorities and local councils. The EP&A Act contains three parts which impose requirements for planning approval:

- Part 3 of the EP&A Act relates to the preparation and making of Environmental Planning Instruments (EPIs), State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) and Local Environmental Plans (LEPs).
- Part 4 of the EP&A Act establishes the framework for assessing development under an EPI. The consent authority for Part 4 development is generally the local council, however the consent authority may be the Minister, the Planning Assessment Commission or a joint regional planning panel depending upon the nature of the development.
- Part 4, Division 4.1 of the EP&A Act establishes the assessment pathway for State Significant Development (SSD) declared by the State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011 (NSW). Once a development is declared as SSD, the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) will be issued outlining what issues must be considered in the EIS.
- Part 5 of the EP&A Act provides for the control of 'activities' that do not require development consent and are undertaken or approved by a determining authority. Development under Part 5 that are likely to significantly affect the environment is required to have an EIS prepared for the proposed activity.
- Part 5.1 of the EP&A Act establishes the assessment pathways for State Significant Infrastructure (SSI). Development applications made for SSI can only be approved by the Minister. Once a development is declared as SSI, the SEARs will be issued outlining what issues must be addressed in the EIS.

The applicable approval process is determined by reference to the relevant environmental planning instruments and other controls, LEPs and State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs). This project falls under Part 4.

1.6 ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A due diligence assessment relates to the physical identification of Aboriginal objects, sites and places. Community consultation is only required once Aboriginal objects, sites or places have been identified and an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) is deemed necessary. Section 5.2 of the

Heritage NSW (DECCW 2010) Due Diligence Code of Practice for the protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW specifically states that;

'consultation with the Aboriginal community is not a formal requirement of the due diligence process' (2010:8).

1.7 QUALIFICATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATOR

Dr. Penny McCardle: Principal Archaeologist & Forensic Anthropologist has 22 years experience in Indigenous archaeological assessments, excavation, research, reporting, analysis and consultation and 19 years in skeletal identification, biological profiling and skeletal trauma identification for NPWS, NSW Police and the NSW Department of Forensic Medicine.

- BA (Archaeology and Palaeoanthropology): Indigenous archaeology, University of New England 1999
- Hons (Archaeology and Palaeoanthropology): Physical Anthropology, University of New England 2001
- Forensic Anthropology Course, University of New England 2003
- Armed Forces Institute of Pathology Forensic Anthropology Course, Ashburn, VA 2008
- Analysis of Bone trauma and Pseudo-Trauma in Suspected Violent Death Course, Erie College, Pennsylvania, 2009
- Documenting Scenes of War and Human Rights Violations. Institute for International Criminal Investigations, 2018
- PhD, University of Newcastle, 2019

1.8 REPORT STRUCTURE

The report includes Section 1 which outlines the project, Section 2 presents the environmental and archaeological context, Section 3 provides the results and discussion and Section 4 presents the Impact Assessment, Section 5 discusses the mitigation measures and Section 6 provides the management recommendations.

2 ENVIRONMENTAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The archaeological due diligence process and assessment requires that the available knowledge and information in relation to the environmental and archaeological contexts are considered. The purpose of this is to assist in identifying whether Aboriginal objects, sites or places are likely to be present within the project area based on archaeological predictive modelling and in what condition they may be found in given the environmental impacts, both natural and anthropogenic.

2.1 LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Past site location and land use are closely linked to the environment including the landform, geology, geomorphology, soils, waterways and associated resources. The environmental context is important to identify potential factors relating to past Aboriginal land use patterns.

Story et al (1963) divided the Hunter Valley into eight main sub-regions including the Southern Mountains, Central Goulburn Valley, Merriwa Plateau, Liverpool and Mt Royal Ranges, Barrington tops, North-Eastern Mountains, Central lowlands and the Coastal Zone. The project area is situated in the Central Lowlands (a broad lowland belt of lowlands approximately 15 kilometres wide) which lies at the centre of the region extending from Murrurundi to Newcastle. Consisting of quaternary gravel, sand, silt, "Waterloo Rock" and marine and fresh water deposits, the absence of suitable raw materials for stone tool manufacturing indicates that any stone artefacts in the project area would have been transported into the project area.

Consisting of low-lying flat landform, the project area consists of the Hunter Soil Landscape which covers the floodplains of the Hunter River and its Tributaries. The parent material is alluvium (stream laid deposits) and the flood plains area include 10-80cm of friable brown loam (A horizon) that overlays >150cm of brownish-black silty to medium-heavy clay (B horizon). In well drained areas, there is 20-30cm of the A horizon that overlays >90cm of brown loam (B horizon), whilst on back-plains and back-swamp areas, the soils consist of 10-65cm of brownish black clay (A horizon) that overlays >80cm of brownish black silty clay to medium clay (B horizon). Ox-bows, levee deposits and recent over-bank deposits include 60->160cm of brown sandy clay loam (A horizon) that may overlay either >50cm dark brown brownish black loam (B horizon) or >110cm of loose dark brown sand (B horizon), (Matthei 1995).

The geomorphology of the Hunter Valley is complex and include texture contrast soils that mantle the undulating to hilly landscapes on Permian and Carboniferous rocks and the older alluvial terraces and valley fills. These soils consist of an upper soil Horizon A and underlying B (Galloway 1963; Hughes 1984). Unit A and Unit B are interpreted as being Holocene and Pleistocene in age respectively. Within the region, sites tend to occur on or within soil Horizon A or are often present at the interface of the A and B horizons. Within the A horizon the lowermost (in terms of vertical positioning) artefact assemblages tend to contain artefacts that are typically attributed to the mid-Holocene, as characterised by an increase in the number of backed artefacts.

In terms of fresh water sources, the project area is located approximately 250 metres south of the Hunter River, a major source of reliable fresh water and resources. Whilst camping along the Hunter River was favoured, locations such as the project area, would have utilised for more transitory activities such as hunting and gathering. Evidence of such landuses manifests in the archaeological record as a background of discarded artefacts across the landscape.

In relation to land uses and associated impacts, Heritage NSW (DECCW 2010) defines disturbed lands as land that has been the subject of human activity that has changed the lands' surface and, or subsurface, these changes being changes that remain clear and observable. This definition is based on the types of disturbances classified in The Australian Soil and Land Survey Field Handbook

(CSIRO 2010) and Table 2.1 provides a scale formulated by the CSIRO of the levels of disturbances and their classification, which will assist in determining the level of disturbance across the project area and its impact on potential cultural material that may be present.

Table 2.1 Land use scale (CSIRO 2010)

Minor disturbance		Moderate disturbance		Major disturbance	
Cleared and/or grazed at some time, but apparently never ploughed		Cleared and/or grazed at some time, with ploughing also attested		Severe disturbance to natural soil profiles; complete-to-near complete topsoil loss/disturbance	
0	No effective disturbance; natural	3	Extensive clearing (e.g., poisoning and ringbarking)	6	Cultivation: grain fed
1	No effective disturbance other than grazed by hoofed animals	4	Complete clearing: pasture native or improved, but never cultivated	7	Cultivation: irrigated, past and present
2	Limited clearing (e.g., selected logging)	5	Complete clearing: pasture native or improved, cultivated at some stage	8	Highly disturbed: e.g., quarry, road works, mining, landfill, urban

Regionally, following European settlement of the area in the 1820s, the regional landscape has been subjected to a range of different modifactory activities including extensive logging and clearing, agricultural cultivation (ploughing), pastoral grazing, residential developments and other construction works. The associated high degree of landscape disturbance has resulted in the alteration of large tracts of land and the cultural materials contained within these areas.

Based on aerial photography (Nearmap 2010 – 2021), the current project area has been subject to a range of both moderate and high landuses disturbances and impacts. The project area has been cleared and primarily used for pastoral purposes (grazing), would likely to have been ploughed at least once for the introduction of pasture grass, the construction of the existing buildings located in the west of the project area, basketball hard courts, sports fields and cricket practice pitches and a car park north of the building. These landuses and how they impact on the landscape and deposits are discussed below.

Early vegetation clearing included the uprooting of trees by chaining which disturbed or destroyed that may be present near, or underneath trees and vegetation (Wood 1982). Farming and agricultural activities also disturbed the landscape. Pastoralism activities result in disturbances due to vegetation clearance and the trampling and compaction of grazed areas which accelerate the natural processes of sheet and gully erosion, which in turn can cause the horizontal and lateral displacement of artefacts. Furthermore, grazing by hoofed animals can affect the archaeological record due to the displacement and breakage of artefacts resulting from trampling (Yorston et al 1990). Pastoral land uses are also closely linked to alterations in the landscape due to the construction of dams, fence lines and associated structures. As a sub-set of agricultural land use, ploughing typically disturbs the top 10-12 centimetres of topsoil (Koettig 1986) depending on the method and machinery used during the process. Ploughing increases the occurrence of erosion and can also result in the direct horizontal (up to 18 metres per plough run) and vertical movement of artefacts, thus causing artificial changes in artefact densities and distributions (e.g., Roper 1976; Odell and Cowan 1987; Lewarch and O'Brien 1981). Ploughing activities are typically evidenced through 'ridges and furrows'

however a lengthy cessation in ploughing activities dictates that these features may no longer be apparent on the surface.

Excavation works required for developments, including but not limited to business, residential, industrial, works depots and associated infrastructure and utilities, require excavation, cut and fill methods. These direct impacts to the land and associated cultural materials that may be present are easy to see and understand. Any form of construction or resource exploitation that involves the removal of, relocation of or compaction of soils sediments or minerals, requires the modification of the topography, thus displacing and/or destroying any cultural materials that may have been present (Wood 1982). These significant disturbances have results in none of the original topsoils remaining in situ.

Additional disturbances would have derived from natural processes. The patterns of deposition and erosion within a locality can influence the formation and/or destruction of archaeological sites. Within an environment where the rate of erosion is generally high, artefacts deposited in such an environment will be eroded downslope after being abandoned (Waters 2000; Waters and Kuehn 1996). If erosion occurs after cultural material is deposited, it will disturb or destroy sections, or all of, archaeological sites even if they were initially in a good state of preservation. The more frequent and severe the episodes of erosional events the more likely it is that the archaeological record in that area will be disturbed or destroyed. Additionally, bioturbation processes such as the redistribution and mixing of cultural deposits occurs as a result of burrowing and mounding by earthworms, ants and other species of burrowing animals. Artefacts can move downwards through root holes as well as through sorting and settling due to gravity, and translocation can also occur as a result of tree falls (Balek 2002; Peacock and Fant 2002; Canti 2003; Stein 2003:).

The project area is located within an environment that provided limited resources. Without a fresh water supply to enable camping, the project area may have been utilised for more transitory activities such as travel and hunting and gathering on the way to reliable water and associated subsistence resources. Such past Aboriginal land uses are evidenced in the archaeological record as a background scatter of discarded artefacts (such as isolated artefacts and/or very low-density artefact scatters). In relation to modern alterations to the landscape, the previous large-scale clearing, at least one plough event, ploughing, grazing, building construction, basketball hard court and cricket pitches can be expected to have had moderate to high impacts upon the archaeological record at those locations.

2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

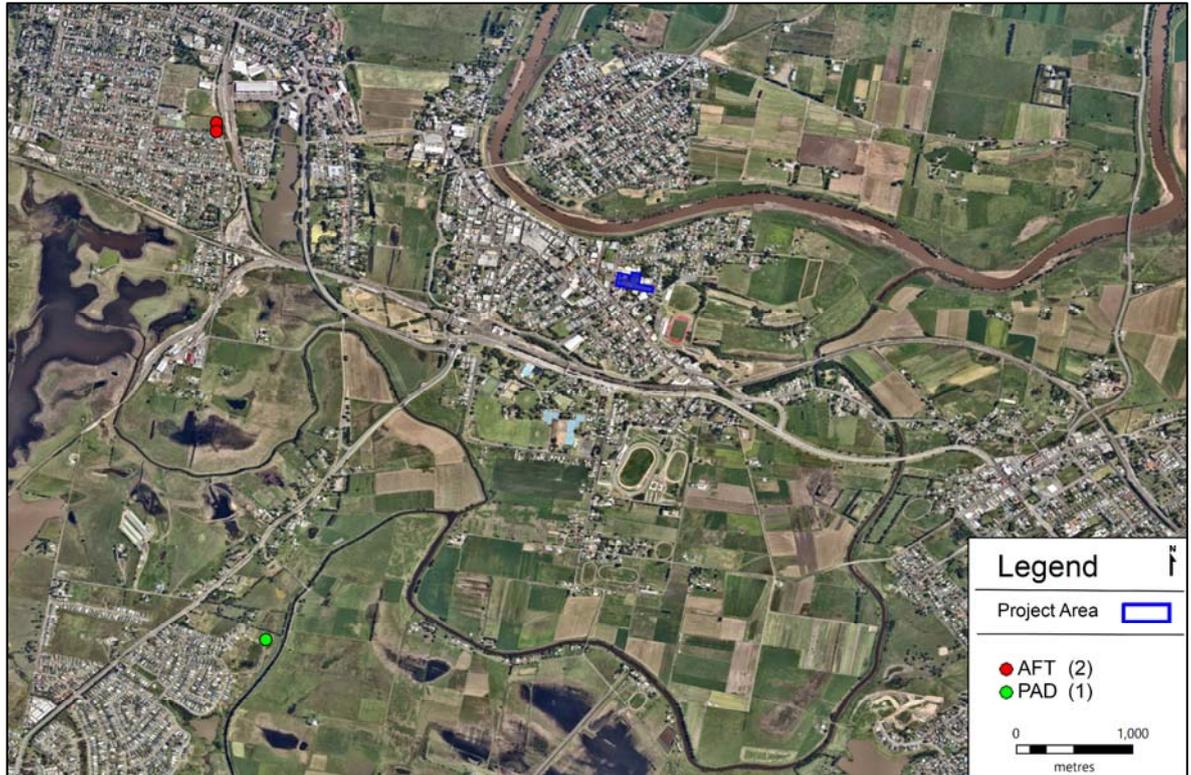
A review of the archaeological literature of the region, and more specifically the local area and the results of an AHIMS search provide essential contextual information for the current assessment.

2.2.1 ABORIGINAL HERITAGE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (AHIMS)

It must be noted that there are many limitations with an AHIMS search including incorrect site coordinates due to errors and changing of computer systems at AHIMS over the years that failed to correctly translate old coordinate systems to new systems. Secondly, AHIMS will only provide up to 110 sites per search, thus limiting the search area surrounding the project area and limiting a more comprehensive analysis and finally, few sites have been updated on the AHIMS register to notify if they have been subject to a s87 or s90 and as such what sites remain in the local area and what sites have been destroyed, to assist in determining the cumulative impacts, is unknown.

A search of the AHIMS register (Appendix A) has identified three known Aboriginal sites currently recorded within two kilometres of the project area and includes two artefact sites and one PAD (Figure 2.1). There are no registered sites or Aboriginal Places within the project area.

Figure 2.1 Location of AHIMS sites



2.2.2 HERITAGE REGISTER LISTINGS

The National Heritage List, the Commonwealth Heritage List, the Australian Heritage Database, Australia's National Heritage List, The National Trust Heritage Register State Heritage Inventory and the relevant Local Environmental Plan have no Aboriginal objects, sites or places listed.

2.2.3 SUMMARY OF THE REGIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The majority of archaeological surveys and excavations throughout the region have been undertaken in relation to environmental assessments for various developments, including but not limited to, residential and industrial, infrastructure, utilities, mining and quarrying. A review of the most relevant investigations (Davidson et al 1993; Dean-Jones and Mitchell 1993; Koettig and Hughes 1984; McDonald 1997; Haglund 1999; Kuskie 2000; HLA-Envirosciences 2002; AMBS 2002; MCH 2004a, b) provides a regional archaeological context in terms of site location and distribution.

Based on the available information it is possible to identify a number of trends in site location and patterning within the regional area. Open campsites are by far the most common site type with isolated finds also comparatively well represented. A variety of other site types have been identified in far lower concentrations and include grinding grooves, scarred trees, rock shelters, shelters with art and burials. The high representation of sites containing stone artefacts is to be expected due to the durability of stone in comparison to other raw materials. Raw materials used for tool

manufacture include mudstone (also called tuff by some) which is the most common lithic artefactual material found in the region, followed by silcrete and in lesser quantities chert, quartz, quartzite, petrified wood, porcellanite, basalt, limestone, sandstone, rhyolite, basalt, European glass and other non-specific lithic types also occur in smaller quantities. The most common stone artefacts include flakes, flake fragments and flaked pieces. Cores, edge ground axes, millstones, grindstones, hammer stones and backed artefacts including backed blades, bondi points, geometric microliths and eloueras also occur though in lower frequencies. In general, the stone artefact assemblage in the area has been relatively dated to what was previously known as the Small Tool Tradition (10,000 years BP). On the basis of stone tool technology, the overwhelming majority of Aboriginal open sites within the region are attributed to the Holocene period. However, at Glennies Creek, north of Singleton, based on radiocarbon dated charcoal and geomorphological evidence it is suggested that artefacts found in the B-horizon may have been deposited between 10,000 and 13,000 BP (Koettig 1986a, 1986b).

2.2.4 SUMMARY OF THE LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

All archaeological surveys throughout the local area have been undertaken in relation to environmental assessments for developments. The most relevant investigations indicate differing results and observations based on surface visibility and exposure, alterations to the landscape, proximity to water sources and geomorphology.

Previous assessments of the local area (Dallas 2007, MCH 2001a, b, Umwelt 2011) have identified that artefact scatters and isolated finds are the most prominent site type. These assessments have also identified that both landform and distance to water were important factors in past Aboriginal land use with elevated landforms within 50 metres of reliable water to have been the most favoured. The higher the stream order (and more reliable water source) the higher the numbers of sites and site densities, and both decrease with distance from the water source, and a decrease in stream order. A number of sites were also found on slopes; however, it is likely they were eroded down slope and not found in their original location. All sites were noted to have been disturbed through past landuses including but not limited to clearing, agricultural and pastoral activities, residential developments, utilities, infrastructure and erosion.

The following is a summary of the previous investigations and it is noted that there are various factors which will have skewed the results. Therefore, the summary provides an indication of what may be expected in terms of site location and distribution.

- a wide variety of site types are represented in the project area with open campsites and isolated artefacts by far the most common;
- lithic artefacts are primarily manufactured from mudstone and silcrete with a variety of other raw materials also utilised but in smaller proportions;
- sites in proximity to ephemeral water sources or located in the vicinity of headwaters of upper tributaries (1st order streams) have a sparse distribution and density and contain little more than a background scatter;
- sites located in the vicinity of the upper reaches of minor tributaries (2nd order streams) also have a relatively sparse distribution and density and may represent evidence of localised one-off behaviour;
- sites located in the vicinity of the lower reaches of tributaries (3rd order creeks) have an increased distribution and density and contain evidence that may represent repeated occupation or concentration of activity;

- sites located in the vicinity of major tributaries (4th and 5th order streams/rivers) have the highest distribution and densities. These sites tend to be extensive and complex in landscapes with permanent and reliable water and contain evidence representative of concentrated activity; and
- sites located within close vicinity at the confluence of any order stream may be a focus of activity and may contain a relatively higher artefact distribution and density.

These findings are consistent with models developed for the area.

2.3 SYNTHESIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

When assessing sites in terms of distance to water, in the Hunter Valley there is a clear pattern of past land uses whereby the majority of high-density sites are situated within 50 metres of reliable fresh water (high order) and reduce in both numbers and densities with a decrease in stream order. Thus, it is apparent that open campsites/isolated finds are most concentrated in number and size within 50 metres of reliable fresh water.

As is to be expected, the majority of sites within 50 metres of water are present on elevated landforms in association with creek lines whilst slopes and crest/ridge formations are also common site locations, although with an absence of reliable fresh water, were used for more transitory activities. The frequent presence of sites on crest/ridges and slopes is also noticeable for sites located over 50 metres from water. Due to the importance of water in the grinding process, it is not surprising that sites of this type are situated close to water. Based on information gained from previous studies, both regionally and locally, and the environmental context, within a two-kilometre radius of our project area, it can be expected that:

- the likelihood of locating sites increases with proximity to available water;
- the likelihood of finding large sites of high densities increases markedly with proximity to reliable water and decreases with a reduction in stream order;
- grinding grooves may be located along or near water sources within sandstone formations;
- a variety of stone artefact types will be located though the majority will be flakes, flaked pieces and debitage;
- a variety of raw materials utilised in stone tool manufacture will be represented, though the majority of sites will be predominated by mudstone and silcrete;
- the likelihood of finding scarred trees is dependent on the level of clearing in an area; and
- the majority of sites will be subject to disturbances including human and natural.

2.4 MODELS OF PAST ABORIGINAL LAND USE

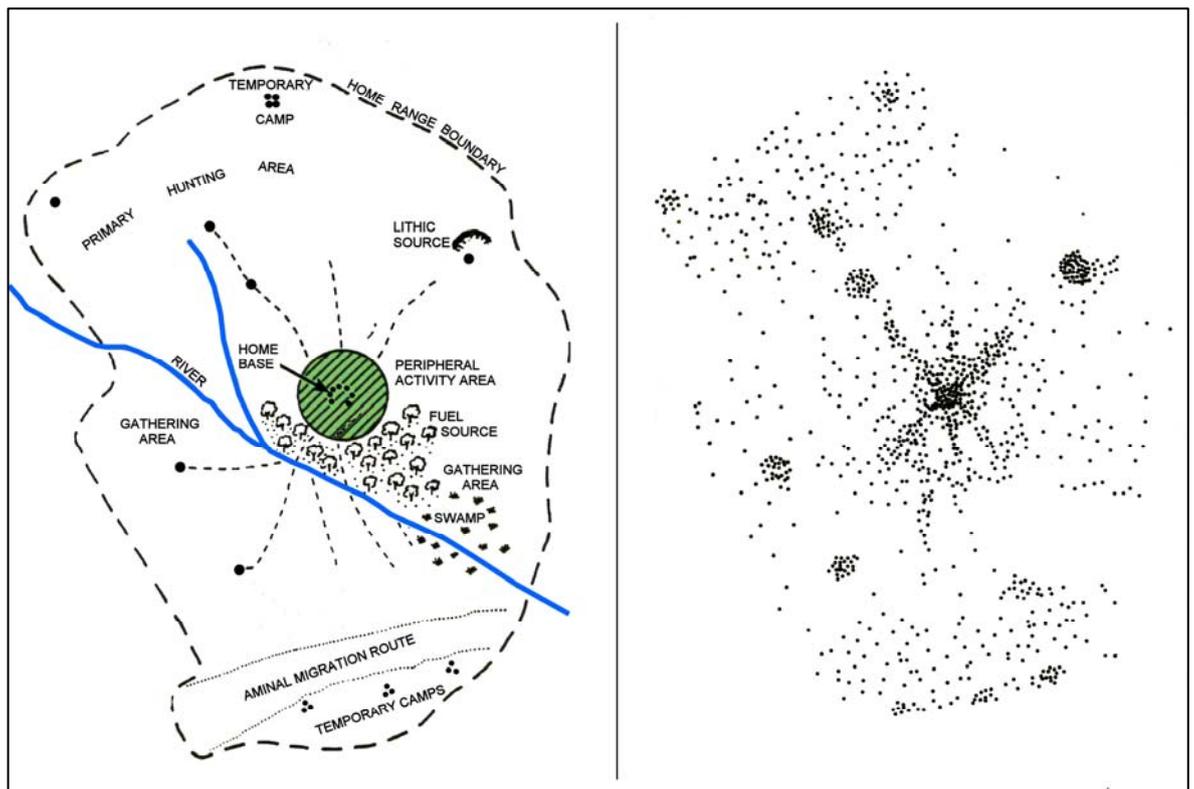
The main aim of this project is to attempt to define both the nature and extent of occupation across the area. As a result, the nature of the analysis will focus on both the landform units and sites. The purpose of this strategy is to highlight any variations between sites and associated assemblages, landforms and resources across the area treating assemblages as a continuous scatter of cultural material across the landscape. In doing this, it is possible to identify variation across the landscape, landforms and assemblages that correspond with variation in the general patterns of landscape use and occupation. Thus, the nature of activities and occupation can be identified through the analysis of stone artefact distributions across a landscape. A general model of forager settlement patterning

in the archaeological record has been established by Foley (1981). This model distinguishes the residential 'home base' site with peripheral "activity locations".

Basically, the home base is the focus of attention and many activities and the activity locations are situated away from the home base and are the focus of specific activities (such as tool manufacturing). This pattern is illustrated in Figure 2.2. Home base sites generally occur in areas with good access to a wide range of resources (reliable water, raw materials etc). The degree of environmental reliability, such as reliable water and subsistence resources, may influence the rate of return to sites and hence the complexity of evidence. Home base sites generally show a greater diversity of artefacts and raw material types (which represent a greater array of activities performed at the site and immediate area). Activity locations occur within the foraging radius of a home base camp (approximately 10 km); (Renfrew and Bahn 1991).

Based on the premise that these sites served as a focus of a specific activity, they will show a low diversity in artefacts and are not likely to contain features reflecting a base camp (such as hearths). However, it is also possible that the location of certain activities cannot be predicted or identified, adding to the increased dispersal of cultural material across the landscape. If people were opting to carry stone tools during hunting and gathering journeys throughout the area rather than manufacturing tools at task locations, an increased number of used tools should be recovered from low density and dispersed assemblages.

Figure 2.2 Foley's model (L) and its manifestation in the archaeological record (R), (Foley 1981).



2.5 MODEL OF OCCUPATION FOR THE LOCAL AREA

Work throughout NSW has aimed to understand the nature of Aboriginal occupation and to identify the nature of past Aboriginal land uses. This theme often aims to identify and explain archaeological

patterning in site type, content and distribution. General theories have been developed outlining the relationship between land use patterns and the resulting archaeological evidence. A number of models developed for the region have been reviewed (McBryde 1976; Koettig 1994; Dean-Jones and Mitchell 1993; Rich 1995; Kuskie and Kamminga 2000). All models state that the primary requirements for repeated, concentrated or permanent occupation is access to reliable fresh water. Brief and possible repeated occupation may be represented in areas that have unreliable access to ephemeral water sources, however, these areas will not contain high archaeological evidence or potential (Goodwin 1999).

Kuskie and Kamminga (2000) established a general model of occupation strategies based primarily upon ethnographic research. Used as a starting point, it makes a general set of factors that are consistent with other studies (e.g., McDonald and White 2010, Nelson 1991). The model distinguishes between short-term or extended long-term occupation and makes some predictions about the likely location of different foraging and settlement activities. Combining this information with a review of assemblage contents from a sample of excavated sites within the region, a baseline of settlement activities may be determined (Barton 2001).

The model provides a number of archaeological expectations that may be tested. For example, the presence of features requiring a considerable labour investment (e.g., stone-lined ovens or heat-treatment pits) are likely to occur at places where occupation occurred for extended periods of time. The presence of grindstones is also a reliable indicator of low mobility and extended occupation as seed grinding requires a large investment of time and effort (Cane 1989). In most ethnographic examples, seed grinding is an activity that takes place over an entire day to provide adequate energetic returns (Cane 1989; Edwards and O'Connell 1995).

Where group mobility was high and campsites frequently shifted throughout the landscape, artefact assemblages are not expected to contain elements such as grindstones, heat-treatment pits, ovens and the diversity of implements frequently discarded at places of extended residential occupation. It may also have been the case that the location of particular activities could not be predicted by tool users, adding to the increased low-density scattering of artefacts over the landscape. Also, if individuals were opting to carry a number of stone tools during hunting and gathering activities and maintaining these tools rather than manufacturing new tools at each task location, the ratio of used tools to unworn flakes in these assemblages should be high. Table 2.2 has been adapted from Kuskie and Kamminga (2000).

Table 2.2 Site descriptions (Kuskie & Kamminga 2000).

Occupation Pattern	Activity Location	Proximity to water	Proximity to food	Archaeological expectations
Transitory movement	all landscape zones	not important	not important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assemblages of low density & diversity evidence of tool maintenance & repair evidence for stone knapping
Hunting &/or gathering without camping	all landscape zones	not important	near food resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assemblages of low density & diversity evidence of tool maintenance & repair evidence for stone knapping high frequency of used tools
Camping by small groups	associated with permanent & temporary water	near (within 100m)	near food resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assemblages of moderate density & diversity evidence of tool maintenance & repair evidence for stone knapping & hearths
Nuclear family base camp	level or gently undulating ground	near reliable source	near food resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assemblages of high density & diversity evidence of tool maintenance, repair, casual knapping evidence for stone knapping

		(within 50m)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heat treatment pits, stone lined ovens • grindstones
Community base camp	level or gently undulating ground	near reliable source (within 50m)	near food resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assemblages of high density & diversity • evidence of tool maintenance, repair, casual knapping • evidence for stone knapping • heat treatment pits, stone lined ovens • grindstones & ochre • large area >100sqm with isolated camp sites

2.6 PREDICTIVE MODEL FOR THE PROJECT AREA

An archaeological predictive model is established to identify areas of archaeological sensitivity so it can be used as a basis for the planning and management of Aboriginal heritage. It involves reviewing existing literature to identify basic site distribution patterns. These patterns are then modified according to the specific environment of the project area to form a predictive model for site location within the current project area. A sampling strategy is then used to test the model and the results of the survey used to confirm, refute or modify the model.

Land-systems and environmental factors are commonly used factors in predictive modelling based on the assumption that they provide distinctive sets of constraints and opportunities that influenced past Aboriginal land use patterns. As land use patterns may differ between zones (due to different environmental conditions), this may result in the physical manifestation of different spatial distributions and forms of archaeological evidence. The predictive model presented here is based on landform units, previous archaeological assessments conducted within the region, distribution of known sites and site densities and traditional Aboriginal land use patterns. Also taken into consideration are land use impacts (both natural and anthropomorphic) that may have resulted in a disturbed landscape and associated archaeological record.

Considering the AHIMS results, local and regional archaeological investigations as well as the environmental context, given that fresh water was necessary for survival and the project area is located 250 metres from the Hunter River and its resources, the absence of fresh water indicates the project area and immediate surrounds may have been used no more than hunting and gathering opportunities rather than large-scale long-term camping. Evidence of such past Aboriginal land uses manifest in the archaeological record as low-density artefact scatters and isolated finds.

Non-indigenous settlement and land uses have significantly impacted the investigation area, most noticeably from excavation works associated with the buildings, car park, sports fields, basketball hardcourts and cricket pitches. These land uses would have impacted on the archaeological record by disturbing/destroying any cultural materials that may have been present in the project area.

The presence of past Aboriginal people and their use of the landscape are undeniable and evidence is seen in the cultural materials that have survived both natural and human land uses since colonisation of the area in the 1800's. Whilst it is clear Aboriginal people lived across the landscape, the evidence will have been impacted and/or destroyed through such land uses.

The site types that may have been present within the project area prior to previous works for the buildings, car park, sports fields, basketball hardcourts and cricket pitches, include very low-density artefact scatters and, or isolated artefacts, both of which are described below.

- **Artefact scatters**

Also described as open campsites, artefact scatters and open sites, these deposits have been defined at two or more stone artefacts within 50 metres of each other and will include archaeological remains such as stone artefacts and may be found in association with camping where other evidence may be

present such as shell, hearths, stone lined fire places and/or heat treatment pits. These sites are usually identified as surface scatters of artefacts in areas where ground surface visibility is increased due to lack of vegetation. Erosion, agricultural activities (such as ploughing, grazing) and access ways can also expose surface campsites. Artefact scatters may represent evidence of;

- Large camp sites, where everyday activities such as habitation, maintenance of stone or wooden tools, manufacturing of such tools, management of raw materials, preparation and consumption of food and storage of tools has occurred;
- Medium/small camp sites, where activities such as minimal tool manufacturing occurred;
- Hunting and/or gathering events;
- Other events spatially separated from a camp site, or
- Transitory movement through the landscape.

Artefact scatters are a common site type in the locality and the broader region. There is potential for very low-density artefact scatters to occur within the project. However, there is also the potential for such sites to be impacted on through past land uses including construction works associated with the buildings, car park, sports fields, basketball hardcourts and cricket pitches.

- **Isolated finds**

Isolated artefacts are usually identified in areas where ground surface visibility is increased due to lack of vegetation. Erosion, agricultural activities (such as ploughing) and access ways can also expose surface artefacts. Isolated finds may represent evidence of;

- Hunting and/or gathering events; or
- Transitory movement through the landscape.

Isolated finds are a common site type in the locality and the broader region. There is potential for isolated artefacts to occur across the project area and across all landforms. However, there is also the potential for such sites to be impacted on through past land uses including construction works associated with the buildings, car park, sports fields, basketball hardcourts and cricket pitches.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To comply with the due diligence requirement that a visual inspection of the project area be undertaken, an archaeological survey across the project area was undertaken by MCH archaeologist Penny McCardle on 15th February 2022. The survey focused on areas of high ground surface visibility and exposures (erosional features, cleared areas).

3.1 SURVEY UNITS

The project area, consisting a disturbed low-lying landform was surveyed as one survey unit based on landform elements (following McDonald *et al* 1984). The survey identified that the project area had been previously cleared, and during the time of the survey the buildings, car park, sports fields, basketball hardcourts and cricket pitches were present with fill used for the basketball courts and part of the northern field. Ground surface visibility (GSV) was hindered by the buildings, car park and hard courts, but exposures were high due to the construction works across the project area from past land uses. Examples of the project area are provided in Figures 3.1 and 3.2.

Figure 3.1 Western end basketball courts facing east



Figure 3.2 South eastern corner of basketball courts facing north west



Figure 3.3 Behind the building facing west



As shown in Table 3.1 the total effective coverage for the project area was 2,025 m², or 15% reflecting the low surface visibility due to grass cover, hard courts and buildings.

Table 3.1 Effective coverage for the investigation area

SU	Landform	Area (m ²)	Vis. %	Exp. %	Exposure type	Previous disturbances	Present disturbances	Limiting visibility factors	Effective coverage (m ²)
1	slope	13,500	15%	100%	erosion, previous construction	clearing, construction	school	grass, car park, buildings	2,025
Totals		13,500							2,025
Effective coverage %									15.00%

The level and nature of the effective survey coverage is considered satisfactory to provide an effective assessment of the project area. The coverage was comprehensive for obtrusive site types (e.g., grinding grooves and scarred trees) but somewhat limited for the less obtrusive surface stone artefact sites by surface visibility constraints that included vegetation cover and minimal exposures.

In relation to land uses and the associated impacts on the landscape and any cultural materials that may have been present, the project area has been subject to clearing, likely ploughing and grazing, construction works associated with the buildings, car park, sports fields, basketball hardcourts and cricket pitches, all of which have impacted on the landscape and any cultural materials that may have been present prior to such works. As indicated in Table 3.2, these disturbances range from moderate to high.

Table 3.2 Land use scale (CSIRO 2010) and land uses in the project area

Minor disturbance		Project area	Moderate disturbance		Project area	Major disturbance		Project area
0	No effective disturbance; natural		3	Extensive clearing (e.g., poisoning and ringbarking)		6	Cultivation: grain fed	

1	No effective disturbance other than grazed by hoofed animals		4	Complete clearing: pasture native or improved, but never cultivated		7	Cultivation: irrigated, past and present	
2	Limited clearing (e.g., selected logging)		5	Complete clearing: pasture native or improved, cultivated at some stage	yes	8	Highly disturbed: e.g., quarry, road works, mining, landfill, urban	yes

3.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY

No archaeological sites or Potential Archaeological Deposits (PADs) were identified during the survey and this is likely due to a number of factors including:

- Distance from reliable water and subsistence resources indicates the project area was unlikely to have been utilised for camping;
- The project area may have been used for travel and/or hunting and gathering which manifest in the archaeological record as very low-density artefact scatters and/or isolated finds; and
- Past and present land uses would have displaced and/or destroyed any evidence of past Aboriginal land use.

In view of the predictive modelling and the results obtained from the effective coverage and disturbance rating, it is concluded that the survey provides a valid basis for determining the probable impacts of the proposal and formulating recommendations for the project. The survey results demonstrate the absence of Aboriginal objects within the project area. The results are consistent with those obtained from other studies in the local area. The results indicate a number of possible past Aboriginal land use within the project area;

- No Aboriginal occupation
- Ground disturbances having disturbed or removed evidence

3.3 CONCLUSION

It is well established that proximity to water was an important factor in past occupation of the area, with sites reducing in number significantly away from water with most sites located within 50 metres of the tributaries. The project area is located approximately 250 metres from the Hunter River and associated subsistence resources. A lack of fresh water availability in the project area indicates that the project area was unsuitable for camping but may have been utilised for transitory movement or hunting/gathering activities only.

In relation to modern alterations to the landscape, previous large-scale clearing, grazing and construction works associated with the buildings, car park, sports fields, basketball hardcourts and cricket pitches can be expected to have had significant impacts upon the archaeological record. Natural factors such as erosion would also have impacted on the archaeological record, all of which would have displaced cultural materials and the likelihood of in situ cultural materials is very low to nil.

4 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

The archaeological record is a non-renewable resource that is affected by many processes and activities. As outlined in Section 2 and Section 3, the various natural processes and human activities have impacted on archaeological deposits through both site formation and taphonomic processes.

4.1 IMPACTS

The Heritage NSW Code of Practice for the Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales (2010:21) describes impacts to be rated as follows:

- 1) Type of harm: is either direct, indirect or none
- 2) Degree of harm is defined as either total, partial or none
- 3) Consequence of harm is defined as either total loss, partial loss, or no loss of value

As no sites or PADs were identified, there are no impacts on the archaeological record.

5 MITIGATION AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Specific strategies, as outlined through the Heritage NSW Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales (DECCW 2010b), the Guide to Investigating, Assessing and Reporting on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in NSW (OEH 2011), and the Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW (DECCW 2010c), are considered below for the management of the identified site(s) within the project area.

5.1 CONSERVATION/PROTECTION

Conservation is the first avenue and is suitable for all sites, especially those considered high archaeological significance and/or cultural significance. Conservation includes the processes of looking after an indigenous site or place so as to retain its significance and managed in a way that is consistent with the nature of peoples' attachment to them.

As no sites or PADs were identified conservation/protection is not required.

5.2 FURTHER INVESTIGATION

An Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) is no longer required to undertake test excavations (providing the excavations are in accordance with the Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigations in NSW). Subsurface testing is appropriate when a PAD has been identified, and it can be demonstrated that sub-surface Aboriginal objects with potential conservation value have a high probability of being present, and that the area cannot be substantially avoided by the proposed activity.

As no sites or PADs were identified further investigations are not justified.

5.3 AHIP

If harm will occur to an Aboriginal object or Place, then an AHIP should be sought from Heritage NSW, Department of Premier & Cabinet as a defence to that harm. If a systematic excavation of the known site could provide benefits and information for the Aboriginal community and/or archaeological study of past Aboriginal occupation, a salvage program, and, or community collection, may be an appropriate strategy to enable the salvage of cultural objects.

As no sites or PADs were identified an AHIP is not required.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 GENERAL

- 2) The persons responsible for the management of onsite works will ensure that all staff, contractors and others involved in construction and maintenance related activities are made aware of the statutory legislation protecting sites and places of significance. Of particular importance is the National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2019, under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974; and
- 2) Should any Aboriginal objects be uncovered during works, all work will cease in that location immediately and the Environmental Line contacted.

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APPENDIX A

AHIMS Search Results

Penny Mccardle

Date: 14 February 2022

Po Box 166

Adamstown New South Wales 2289

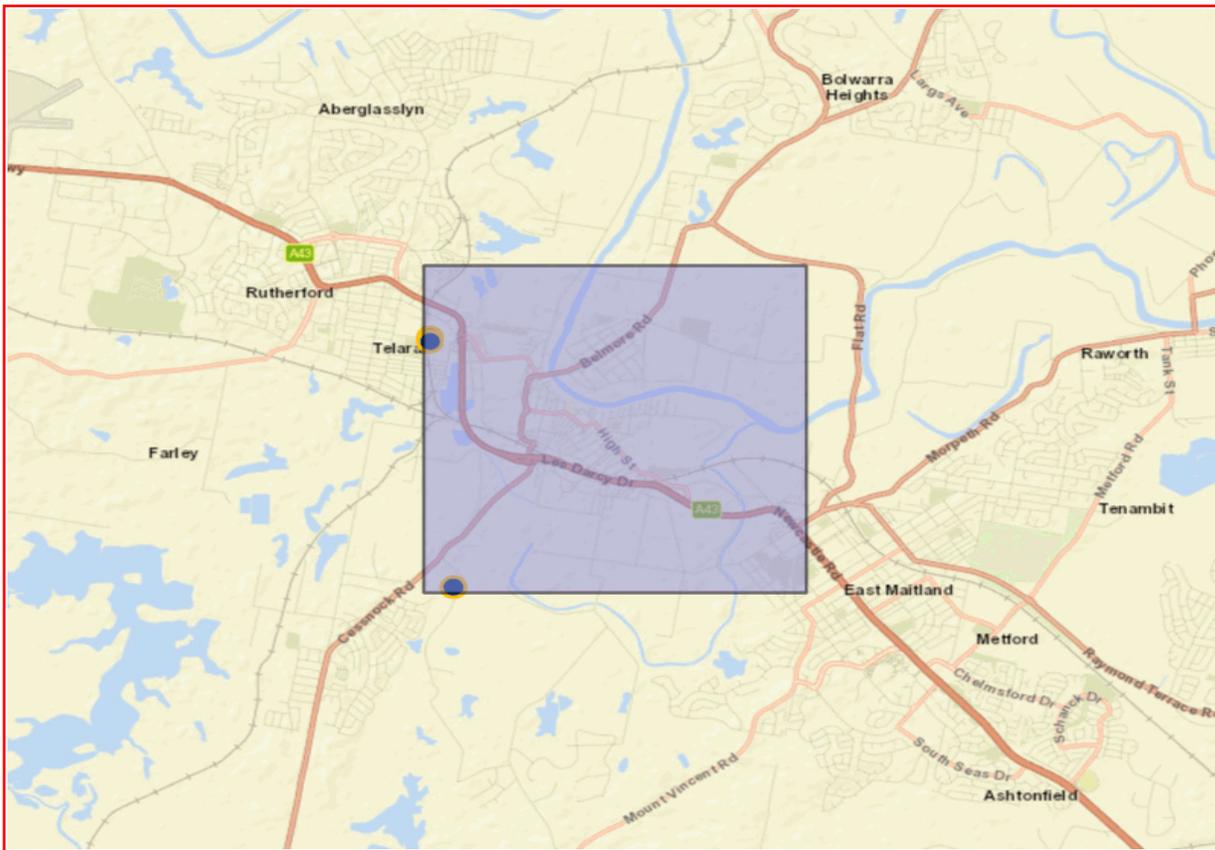
Attention: Penny Mccardle

Email: penny@mheritage.com.au

Dear Sir or Madam:

AHIMS Web Service search for the following area at Datum :GDA, Zone : 56, Eastings : 363180.0 - 367180.0, Northings : 6375100.0 - 6379100.0 with a Buffer of 0 meters, conducted by Penny Mccardle on 14 February 2022.

The context area of your search is shown in the map below. Please note that the map does not accurately display the exact boundaries of the search as defined in the paragraph above. The map is to be used for general reference purposes only.



A search of Heritage NSW AHIMS Web Services (Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System) has shown that:

3	Aboriginal sites are recorded in or near the above location.
0	Aboriginal places have been declared in or near the above location. *

If your search shows Aboriginal sites or places what should you do?

- You must do an extensive search if AHIMS has shown that there are Aboriginal sites or places recorded in the search area.
- If you are checking AHIMS as a part of your due diligence, refer to the next steps of the Due Diligence Code of practice.
- You can get further information about Aboriginal places by looking at the gazettal notice that declared it. Aboriginal places gazetted after 2001 are available on the [NSW Government Gazette \(https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/gazette\)](https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/gazette) website. Gazettal notices published prior to 2001 can be obtained from Heritage NSW upon request

Important information about your AHIMS search

- The information derived from the AHIMS search is only to be used for the purpose for which it was requested. It is not to be made available to the public.
- AHIMS records information about Aboriginal sites that have been provided to Heritage NSW and Aboriginal places that have been declared by the Minister;
- Information recorded on AHIMS may vary in its accuracy and may not be up to date. Location details are recorded as grid references and it is important to note that there may be errors or omissions in these recordings,
- Some parts of New South Wales have not been investigated in detail and there may be fewer records of Aboriginal sites in those areas. These areas may contain Aboriginal sites which are not recorded on AHIMS.
- Aboriginal objects are protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 even if they are not recorded as a site on AHIMS.
- This search can form part of your due diligence and remains valid for 12 months.

