

Results of Archaeological Testing

M7 Estate, Minchinbury



Remnant vine rows on Mt Capicure site

Report to

Macquarie Goodman

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Executive Summary

Background

Macquarie Goodman applied for a S140 excavation permit to allow testing of two sites that will be impacted by works associated with the development of the proposed Coles Myer Distribution Centre at the M7 Estate, Minchinbury. These sites were identified by Casey & Lowe, *Eastern Creek Strategic Land Use Study, Non-Indigenous Heritage Study* (2002).

The sites were Mt Capicure, an 1860s house site, and the Workers Cottage, a twentieth-century house site. It was envisaged that if testing of the sites identified substantial remains, a comparison of remains from the two sites could be made, as well as recording the sites prior to proposed development impacts.

Results

No substantial archaeological remains were identified in the areas tested. In terms of Mt Capicure, the 1860s house site, the area has been extensively disturbed by later agriculture and intact remains appear to have been removed or disturbed. No evidence for *in situ* remains was found. No substantial remains are expected elsewhere in this area. No further testing is considered to be warranted.

Testing at the Workers Cottage site did not reveal any substantial features. The presumably timber structures in this building group do not appear to have left significant remains. The extent of testing is regarded as being adequate to expose any existing remains in the vicinity. No further testing is regarded as being necessary.

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Results of Archaeological Testing M7 Estate, Minchinbury

1.0 Background

1.1 Permit Application

Macquarie Goodman applied for a S140 excavation permit to allow testing of two sites that will be impacted by works associated with the development of the proposed Coles Myer Distribution Centre at the M7 Estate, Minchinbury. These sites were identified by Casey & Lowe, *Eastern Creek Strategic Land Use Study, Non-Indigenous Heritage Study* (2002).

The archaeological testing of the sites was carried out on 22 and 23 March 2006 under permit 2006/S140/003. This report details the results of the testing program.

1.2 Personnel and Methodology

The testing was directed by Tony Lowe, Casey & Lowe Pty Ltd, and assisted by Franz Reidel and Glen Suey. The testing was carried out by Casey & Lowe's usual machine operator, Robert Stanton Excavations, using a 7-tonne excavator. The machine's 2m wide flat bucket was used to scrape areas clear of grass and topsoil with the intention of revealing any obscured features and evidence of the two house sites being tested.

1.3 Intent of Testing

The testing was to determine whether substantive remains are present at either of the sites. These remains would include wells and cisterns, both of which tend to be backfilled when no longer in use with deposits of artefacts. These types of deposit could provide information on the households of the occupants living on these properties.

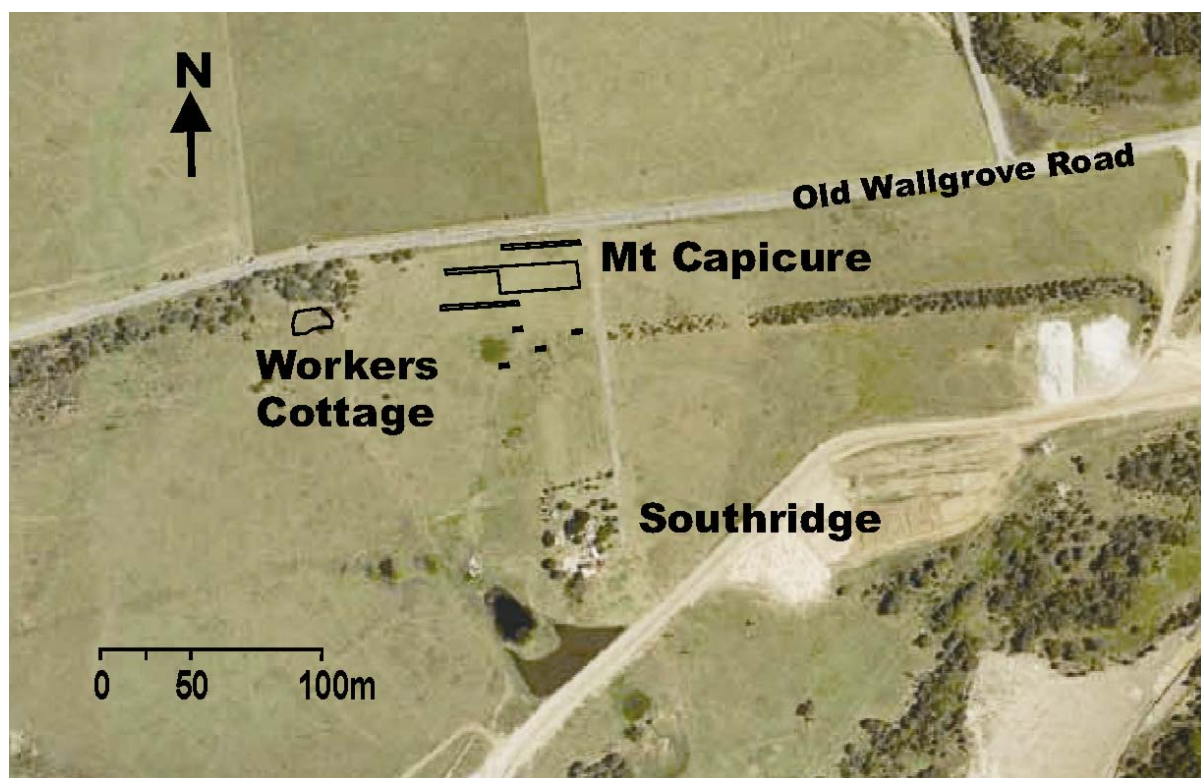


Figure 1: Location plan of M7 estate showing areas tested.

1.4 Research Design

Regarding the research design for the Worker's Cottage site and the Mt Capicure site, the intent was to establish whether there were substantial remains connected to the two houses in question. If substantial remains were present, a basic comparison could then be made between the archaeological nature of middle-class and workers' housing and households in what was a rural area. The type of research questions that might be applicable would be:

- Is there a discernible difference between the material culture evident on the two sites? Bearing in mind the rural nature of the area, is the site of the Worker's Cottage provided with less infrastructure such as cisterns or dams than the Mt Capicure site?
- What is the layout of the remains on the Worker's Cottage site? Is there evidence for the type of housing at the site and how does it compare with the Mt Capicure site?
- Are the remains on this site substantially intact, the land not have been subjected to continuous ploughing as has Mt Capicure, or has this type of site left very little in the way of cultural material.

2.0 Results of Testing

2.1 Mt Capicure

Mt Capicure is the site of a homestead built in the 1860s probably for Sarah Madeline Roussell and her husband Linus Perkins. This property was part of the land granted to William Hayes, an emancipist, in 1819. Roussell and Perkins and their children appear to have lived in the house from c. 1861 to about 1940 when the house and associated 40 acre property was sold to Frederick Bigg. Therefore the one family occupied this house for all or most of the 70 years of its life. By 1940 the old weatherboard house had fallen into disrepair and was demolished. This house is shown on various plans. Its statement of heritage significance read:

The archaeological remains associated with Mt Capicure have significance through their 70-year association with a single family, the Roussell/Perkins family. These remains, through archaeological recording, analysis and interpretation, have the ability to reveal information about the material culture of nineteenth-century life of the bourgeoisie or middle class. Because a single family with many children occupied this site the remains may shed light on attitudes to families, gender identities, religion, childhood and education. The long-term ploughing of the ground containing this site may have impacted on the site's integrity which may affect its significance. This site is considered to have a high level of local significance.

A site inspection in 2002 showed no evidence of building remains. The land had obviously been ploughed and examination of the land for this project showed definite planting rows as well as remnant grape vines. Extensive scraping of the area revealed no remains. An area containing a scatter of ceramic sherds was investigated but no *in situ* material was found. This area, and perhaps much of the surrounding area, had apparently been disturbed by rotary hoeing.



Figure 2: Looking south at Mt Capicure showing planting rows.



Figure 3: Looking north showing planting rows and remnant vine plantings.



Figure 4: Scrape parallel to Wallgrove Road (immediately right of fence). The discolourations mark vine rows.



Figure 5: Area scraped in vicinity of Mt Capicure. The track to Southridge runs from left to right just beyond car in centre.



Figure 6: Western end of Mt Capicure area. The area to the right was the location of some ceramic debris.



Figure 7: Area which contained some ceramic debris showing deep disturbance (darker lines).

2.2 Workers Cottage

This property was purchased in 1859 by Moyse Roussell whose family retained ownership of the land until it was sold to Frederick Bigg in 1940. The presence of a building in this area is first known from the 1947 aerial but is not present on the 1929 survey map. It is present on the aerial photos up to 1985 but was demolished sometime after this date. This house and associated buildings was probably a workers' cottage associated with the use of the site by the Perkins family and Bigg and was demolished sometime after Austral purchased this property. Various workers are known to have lived on the property.

Inspection of the site in 2002 showed a sealed bitumen road, bitumen surfacing and general building debris. The site appeared to be relatively undisturbed and it was thought likely to have the potential to contain archaeological remains associated with what appears to be a twentieth-century house. Its statement of heritage significance was:

(The) workers cottage associated with the twentieth-century occupation of the Perkins and Bigg property. It has some limited archaeological potential to contain archaeological remains. This site has a low level of Local heritage significance.

The archaeological testing was to determine whether there was any substantial archaeological features in the area where the housing group was located. The area is bisected by a bitumen road and a large area on either side was scraped by machine but no substantial features were located.



Figure 8: Eastern half of Workers Cottage site.



Figure 9: Eastern half of Workers Cottage site after removal of grass cover.



Figure 10: Rectangular-shaped area of bitumen.



Figure 11: Western half of the Workers Cottage site, looking east.



Figure 12: Road bisecting area tested, looking south.

2.3 Summary of Testing Results

No substantial archaeological remains were identified in the areas tested. In terms of Mt Capicure, the 1860s house site, the area has been extensively disturbed by later agriculture and intact remains appear to have been removed or disturbed. No evidence for *in situ* remains was found. No substantial remains are expected elsewhere in this area. No further testing or archaeological work is considered to be warranted.

Testing at the Workers Cottage site did not reveal any substantial features. The presumably timber structures in this building group do not appear to have left significant remains. The extent of testing is regarded as being adequate to expose any potential existing remains in the vicinity. No further archaeological work is considered to be necessary.

2.4 Artefacts

A small scatter of disturbed ceramic sherds was found near the Mt Capicure site. These were not retained.

3.0 Assessment of Significance

3.1 Response to Assessment of Significance

The original statements of significance for the sites can be reviewed in light of the results of the testing:

- **Mt Capicure**

The archaeological remains associated with Mt Capicure have significance through their 70-year association with a single family, the Roussell/Perkins family. These remains, through archaeological recording, analysis and interpretation, have the ability to reveal information about the material culture of nineteenth-century life of the bourgeoisie or middle class. Because a single family with many children occupied this site the remains may shed light on attitudes to families, gender identities, religion, childhood and education. The long-term ploughing of the ground containing this site may have impacted on the site's integrity which may affect its significance. This site is considered to have a high level of local significance.

While the site retains a level of significance because of the early date of its settlement and its connection to one family over much of its lifespan, it has been severely disturbed by later agricultural activities. The site's significance can probably only be realised through interpretation, rather than through any intact archaeological remains. It is considered to have no significant archaeological resource.

- **Workers Cottage**

Site 3 was a workers cottage associated with the twentieth-century occupation of the Perkins and Bigg property. It has some limited archaeological potential to contain archaeological remains. This site has a low level of Local heritage significance.

This site was already assessed as having limited archaeological potential. This was confirmed by the archaeological testing. The site is considered to have no heritage significance.

4.0 Research Questions

4.1 Response to Research Questions

The research questions were directed to the comparison between the archaeological nature of the two house properties, between middle-class and workers' housing and households in what was a rural area. The research questions posed were:

- Is there a discernible difference between the material culture evident on the two sites? Bearing in mind the rural nature of the area, is the site of the Worker's Cottage provided with less infrastructure such as cisterns or dams than the Mt Capicure site?

Based on the available evidence, this question cannot be addressed. Apart from the ceramic debris recovered from a disturbed area of the Mt Capicure site there was no cultural deposits to compare.

- What is the layout of the remains on the Workers Cottage site? Is there evidence for the type of housing at the site and how does it compare with the Mt Capicure site?

There was no evidence for the layout or type of housing at the Workers Cottage site. The remains cannot therefore be compared with the Mt Capicure site, where also no building remains were found.

- Are the remains on this site substantially intact, the land not have been subjected to continuous ploughing as has Mt Capicure, or has this type of site left very little in the way of cultural material.

No substantial remains were found at the Workers Cottage site. The Mt Capicure site has been substantially disturbed by agricultural activities.

5.0 Results and Recommendations

5.1 Results

Testing at the two sites revealed no substantial remains. The potentially more significant site, Mt Capicure, was found to have been severely disturbed by agricultural activities.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the testing results, no further archaeological work is considered necessary at either of the sites. Interpretation of the Mt Capicure site should be considered along with the interpretation of Southridge.