


**Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre
37 Fourth Avenue, Denistone**

Baseline Aboriginal Heritage Assessment

June 2011

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

City Plan Heritage has been engaged to prepare the following baseline Aboriginal Heritage Assessment for the subject site. This Report has been prepared to accompany a development application for the construction of the Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre at Denistone. The proposed development is to demolish existing buildings (5 existing buildings and car parks) and rebuild the Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre buildings within a subdivided allotment from the former existing Ryde Hospital grounds off Fourth Avenue. The proposal includes the construction of landscaping, access for an internal car park and provision of the required services. The proposed development is to be administered as a Project Application under Part 3A of the *NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. The Project is referred to as MP 10_0179.

The Director General's Requirements for this project stated:

9. Aboriginal Heritage

The EA shall address Aboriginal Heritage in accordance with the Draft Guidelines for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Community Consultation 2005.¹

This is the first report that assesses the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the property. It is a baseline archaeological assessment and has drawn on accessible resources and did not include a site inspection. The site is currently being assessed by City Plan Services Strategic Planning and Development team, who are preparing an Environmental Assessment of the Property. This assessment forms part of that overall report.

The overall subject site has been the subject of various Heritage reports. They consist of:

- *A Conservation Management Plan Former Denistone House Ryde Hospital*, prepared by Graham Brooks and Associates Pty Ltd in 1997.
- Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre, 37 Fourth Avenue, Denistone Heritage Impact Statement DRAFT May 2011, Graham Brooks & Associates Pty Ltd
- Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre Ryde Hospital Statement of Heritage Impact, March 2010 Graham Brooks and Associates Pty Ltd

The following project issues were accordingly advised and will be addressed within this report:

- An Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) search to be undertaken for the nominated Lots 1 and 2 in D 1137800
- An appraisal of the development history of the site
- An appraisal of the environment, including topography and geology.

¹ Final DGR's for Application number MP10_0179, Project Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre, 1.12.10.

- An appraisal of the types of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites likely to be in the area.
- A summary of any Aboriginal cultural heritage sites likely to be in the site and how to manage them.

1.2 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After completion of the above tasks, the recommendations that are the summary of this assessment are that:

- The AHIMS search for any previously recorded Aboriginal sites and places located within the two Lot numbers in Deposited Plan 1137800, and included a buffer zone of 200 metres, came up with no previous recordings.
- There is unlikely to be items of Aboriginal cultural heritage retained across the proposed development path for Graythwaite, fronting to Fourth Avenue within the Ryde Hospital Precinct. However, although this baseline assessment has not identified the specific site as an area of potential for Aboriginal cultural heritage, once ground clearance commences if something is discovered that could be an Aboriginal object, City Plan Heritage must be contacted. In that instance, advice would be sought from the Environment Protection and Regulation Group of the Office of Environment and Heritage relating to recording the finds and the appropriate management options. [N.B., Part 6 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act gives the Director General of the Office of Environment and Heritage only express powers to consent to the damage, destruction or defacement of Aboriginal objects by development activities.]
- It cannot be stated from this baseline study whether there are likely to be items of Aboriginal cultural heritage retained across the south western portion of the Ryde Hospital Site, which is part of Lot 2 of DP 1137800 and not included in the subject site. This area is undeveloped, sloping, rocky and covered with what appears to be remnant natural mature forest. The area is also bounded by Florence Avenue and Rydedale Road. While the AHIMS search did not find previously recorded sites for either Lot 1 or Lot 2, it is considered that further research, site inspection and possibly consultation would be required for an accurate assessment of that area.

1.3 SITE LOCATION

The subject site is identified as Lot 1 of DP 1137800. It is located on the southern side of Fourth Avenue, in between Ryedale and Denistone Roads, in Denistone. For a more detailed description of the site and its context, see Site Description and Context.

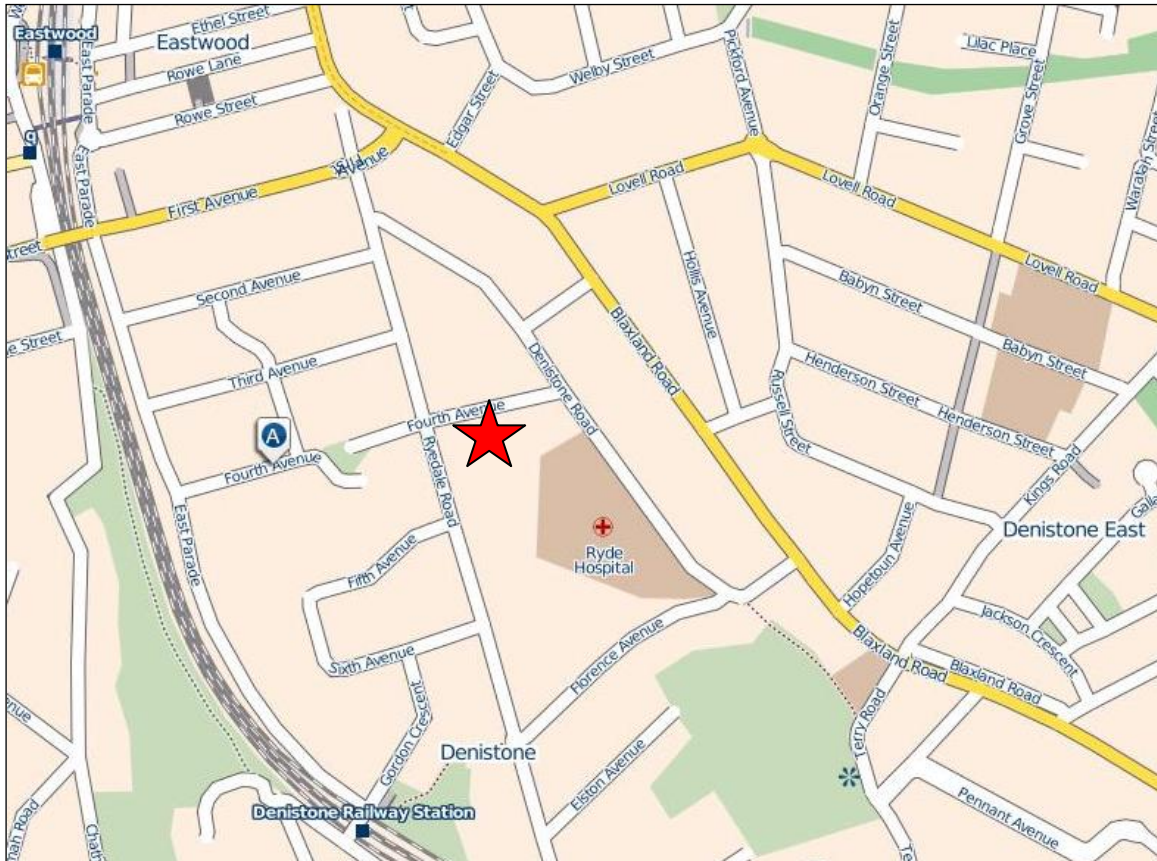


Figure 1: Location of the subject site, fronting to Fourth Avenue and previously part of the Ryde Hospital, indicated on Denistone Road.
(Source nearmap streetview www.nearmap.com)

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service (now incorporated in the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage) has prepared a number of documents, including the *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales*, which provide guidelines regarding the assessment and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage in New South Wales. This report has been prepared in accordance with these guidelines, the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* and the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act* (See Section 2.0 Statutory Controls).

This Aboriginal archaeological study has also included the following components:

- A NSW Office of Environment and Heritage Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) site search to determine whether or not previously

recorded sites are present on the proposal area and to give consideration to the type of sites known to be present within the local area.

- A review of local archaeological reports and other relevant documents in order to provide a contextual framework to the study and heritage management process.
- A site significance assessment, as applicable.

1.4.1 REVIEW OF EXISTING DOCUMENTATION

Background research has been conducted to determine if known Aboriginal archaeological sites are located in the vicinity of the development area and to facilitate site prediction on the basis of known regional and local site patterns in order to place the study area within an archaeological research and heritage management context.

The following information sources were accessed for this study:

- NSW Office of Environment and Heritage Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System.
- Relevant archaeological reports held in the Ryde Council online NSW DEC Cultural Heritage Unit.
- Previous reports prepared for the site, see bibliography
- Topographic maps and surveys of the site

1.5 AUTHOR IDENTIFICATION

The following report has been prepared by Gina Scheer (Heritage Consultant). Gina has a Bachelor of Arts with Honours degree in Archaeology and her resume has been included as an attachment to this report. Kerime Danis (Manager) has reviewed and endorsed its content.

2.0 STATUTORY CONTROLS FOR ABORIGINAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The following section relates to archaeology – both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal within New South Wales. The relevant legislation and clauses are listed below.

2.1 FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Other Acts that may be relevant to a particular site within NSW include the ***Federal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Heritage Protection) Act*** and ***Australian Heritage Commission Act***.

2.2 NEW SOUTH WALES LEGISLATION

In NSW the principle laws which deal with **Aboriginal heritage** are:

- National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 under the auspices of the Office of Environment and Heritage
- Heritage Act 1977
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act* provides statutory protection for all Aboriginal objects and places in NSW. Areas are gazetted as Aboriginal places if the Minister is satisfied that there is enough evidence to show the area is, or was, of special significance to Aboriginal culture.

The Heritage Act protects the State's natural and cultural heritage. Aboriginal places or objects that are recognized as having high cultural value are listed on the State Heritage Register.

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act* includes provisions for Aboriginal sites and objects. Although the NPW Act gives a high level of protection to known Aboriginal objects, recent court decisions have reinforced that Part 6 gives the Director General (Office of Environment and Heritage) express powers to consent to the damage, destruction or defacement of Aboriginal objects by development activities. The powers in Part 6 are not inconsistent with the objects of the NPW Act. Section 91 of the Act requires that the National Parks and Wildlife Service be informed if Aboriginal cultural material is found during an excavation. Excavation would then require a permit under section 90 of the Act. If Aboriginal related archaeology is discovered, work is to cease and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Heritage Office will be informed for further instructions.

It must be noted that for projects assessed under Part 3A, the Environment Protection and Regulation Group (EPRG) have to follow certain procedures under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*, such as providing expert advice to the Department of Planning (DoP) on major projects because Part 3A suspends the need for an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) application which is necessary under the NPW Act for impacts to Aboriginal objects and places.

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* provides protection by considering impacts on Aboriginal heritage in land use and planning decisions.

The three main areas are:

- planning instruments allow particular uses for land and specify constraints. Aboriginal heritage is a value which should be assessed when determining land use;
- section 90 of the Act lists impacts which must be considered before development approval is granted. Aboriginal heritage is one of these possible impacts;
- State government agencies act as the determining authority on the environmental impacts of proposed activities and must consider a variety of community and cultural factors, including Aboriginal heritage, in their decisions.²

There are three key sections (along with associated regulations, schedules and guidelines) in the EP&A Act, which are relevant to Aboriginal Heritage:

EP&A Act - Part III

Part III governs the preparation of the following three planning instruments:

- State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP's);
- Regional Environmental Plans (REP's); and
- Local Environmental Plans. (LEP's)

These planning instruments cover permissible uses and potential constraints on the land use. When assessing potential uses and constraints during the preparation of a planning instrument, guidelines produced by the Department of Planning New South Wales must be followed. These guidelines specify that Aboriginal sites and places of significance should be assessed as part of the process. Once developed, the planning instruments, such as LEP's, may specify the level of assessment required in relation to environmental assessment or more specifically Aboriginal heritage investigations for development applications.

EP&A Act - Part IV

This section of the legislation governs the decision making process by local government (consent) authorities during a development application. Section 79C, under Part IV, describes types of impact which must be considered before development approval is granted. It states that consideration must be given for the impact of that development on the environment. It is legally understood that this should be taken to include Aboriginal sites and heritage.

Part IV also covers the **integrated development approvals (IDA)** process whereby the approvals of State government agencies are linked to the development consent process. If an Aboriginal site will be impacted by a development, requiring an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit under s.90 of the NPW Act, then the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water becomes an approval body.

² Heritage Branch of the Dept of Planning NSW, Aboriginal Heritage - www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/06_subnav_01.htm

EP&A Act - Part V

This section of the legislation governs the decision making process by State government (determining) authorities related to activity approval. In the decision making process, under Section 111, it is the State government agencies' duty to consider environmental impacts; and then under Section 112, determine whether the level of impact is sufficient to require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

As mentioned in Part IV, 'environmental impacts' under the law should be taken to include Aboriginal sites and places. Furthermore, the Department of Planning New South Wales have developed a set of guidelines for interpretation of Section 112 which requires that Aboriginal heritage is assessed as part of the process.³

The Due Diligence Code of Practice states that: If your activity is a declared Part 3A project under s.75B of the EP&A Act you should refer to the 2005 (draft) *Part 3A EP&A Act Guidelines for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Community Consultation*.⁴

Discussion:

1. Is the activity which is the subject of this assessment a Part 3A project declared under s.75B of the EP&A Act?

Yes

In that case, follow Part 3A of the EP&A Act and Part 3A Guidelines for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Community Consultation. In that case also, note that an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) is not required: proceed with caution.⁵

³ <http://www.aboriginalheritage.org/sites/legislation.php>

⁴ Office of Environment and Heritage Due Diligence
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/cultureheritage/ddcop/10798ddcop.pdf>

⁵ Office of Environment and Heritage Due Diligence,
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/cultureheritage/ddcop/10798ddcop.pdf>

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

3.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is located within the Ryde Local Government Area. The subject site, at 37 Fourth Avenue, Denistone, is located on the southern side of the street between Ryedale Road and Denistone Road. This site, within the Ryde Hospital Campus, has been subdivided from the overall Ryde Hospital site and is identified as the **Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre**. It is described in the NSW Land and Property Management Authority (LPMA) as Lot 1 of Deposited Plan 1137800. An AHIMS search to identify any previously recorded Aboriginal sites and places was also undertaken for Lot 2 of DP 1137800, however, that allotment has not been fully assessed as it is outside the scope of this report, see total site area in the figure below.



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph of the Ryde Hospital site, outlined in red. The location of the subject site is indicated in the blue area, fronting to Fourth Street.
(Source nearmap aerial photograph dated 14 May 2011, www.nearmap.com)

The Ryde Hospital site is located in the Inner North Sydney region and is located within the suburb of Denistone, approximately 15 kilometres north-west of the Sydney CBD and within the Ryde LGA. The site is bounded by Fourth Avenue to the north, Ryedale Road to the west, Florence Avenue to the south, Denistone Road to the east and has an area of approximately 3995m². The site is characterised by a mix of buildings of varying condition and located in the north and north-eastern part of the site. The south-western part of the site is characterised by

dense bushland. Graythwaite, the proposed rehabilitation centre will be constructed in the northern part of the site with frontage to Fourth Avenue.

3.1.1 NATURAL HERITAGE

The Geology and landscape of Ryde is characterised as follows: The ridge top landscapes on the Ashfield Shale with soils that were suitable (historically) for the establishment of market gardens and orchards. The steeper parts of this landscape south of Blaxland Road are identified as part of the West Pennant Hills soil landscape and still carry patches of original Blue Gum and Blackbutt forests.

Ecology and biodiversity: Estuarine and sandstone slope communities in the Field of Mars Wildlife Refuge and turpentine/ironbark forest in Wallumatta Nature Reserve.⁶

The tree report carried out for this project assessed the subject site for Graythwaite and the following summary of species is taken from their report:

The most dominant trees onsite consist of White Mahoganies, Narrow-leaved Black Peppermints, Paperbarks, heavily lopped River She-oaks and a range of typical landscape species. The current landscaping has placed trees and shrubs in locations to break up the stark hard edged walls of existing buildings and to soften the existing car park.

Many of the larger specimens are likely to have been planted onsite such as the Narrow leaved Ironbarks and clearly have been present onsite for some time given their large size. Existing White Mahogany's are likely to have been original trees onsite given their large size, natural form and they are located within natural distributions of this species. Various historical plantings are found onsite such as Jacaranda mimosifolia (Jacaranda Trees) and Cupressus leylandii (Pencil Tree), Illawarra Flame tree and Silky Oak which are typical of landscaping during the early history of the site.⁷

The site is therefore not the location for Blue Gum, Blackbutt and Ironbark species associated with the original plantings in the Ryde Area.

3.1.2 ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

Identified within the Ryde LGA are a number of previously recorded sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance. They are located around the banks of the Parramatta River, where there are Rock engravings in Glades Bay, the location of the graves of Bennelong and Nanbaree at Kissing Point, and a number of rock shelters and shell midden sites.

⁶ Ryde Council and Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water studies, <http://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/environment/bushland.htm>

⁷ John Travers / Michael Sheather-Reid, Tree Assessment Report Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre, Fourth Avenue, Denistone, May 2011, p3

There are no previously identified Aboriginal site or places within the boundaries of the subject site. This was the result of the AHIMS search, which was undertaken for Lots 1 and 2 of DP 1137800 and included a 200 metre buffer zone for each allotment.

3.2 SITE CONTEXT

The subject site was, until very recently, a part of the overall Ryde Hospital precinct. It fronts on to Fourth Avenue. The Ryde Hospital precinct comprises buildings mostly from the second half of the twentieth century grouped around the historic Denistone House. The buildings are one to three storey in height, with predominantly red face brick exteriors and terracotta-coloured tiled roofs. Opposite the subject site, are single storey late-twentieth century residential dwellings. The precinct is characterised by mature trees. The Denistone House building (B4), located in the distance to the southeast of the site, is scarcely visible, due to the presence of trees, in general views from the site.

Immediately to the east of the site along Fourth Avenue is a metal clad single storey structure very similar to the adjacent building located within the subject site. The streetscape along the south side of Fourth Avenue is dominated by trees, and the later Hospital constructions on either side of the subject site. See the survey plan overleaf for an understanding of the site and the structures.



Figure 3: A close up of the previous aerial photograph showing Graythwaite (shaded in red) in relation to the streetscape of Fourth Avenue and Denistone and Ryedale Roads. (Source: City Plan Strategy and Development draft Environmental Assessment, June 2011)

4.0 HISTORY

Aboriginal people had occupied the Ryde region for thousands of years prior to the arrival of European settlement. Middens and rock shelters have been identified in Glades Bay near Kissing Point on the banks of the Parramatta River. The indigenous inhabitants of the area were known as the Wallumedegal, part of the Dharug language group.

The Ryde region provided a number of different environments that supported a diverse range of plant and animal species. The change in the river (Parramatta River) from fresh to salt water provided a focus for the exploitation of both freshwater and estuarine species, including fish, shellfish, tortoise and water fowl. The open forest supported animal life. A number of tree species were also capable of supplying bark used in the construction of shelters, canoes and twine. The presence of a permanent water supply would also have contributed to the significance of the wider area as a focus for Aboriginal settlement.

The presence of the well known, during European times, of the Aboriginal individuals Bennalong and Nanbaree located on James Squire's property in Ryde has been documented elsewhere. Neither were local to Kissing Point. However, their graves are located near the banks of Kissing Point on the Parramatta River and commemorated in the location and naming of Bennelong Park.

The land in the Ryde municipality is principally shale country, which supported mainly Turpentine-Ironbark Forest. Parts of this land, where the shale soils were deeper, supported high rainfall Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus saligna*) High Forest. Blue Gum High Forest used to grow on deeper clay soils derived from Wianamatta Shales on upper slopes and gullies in the high rainfall areas (1100 – 1200mm) associated with the Hornsby Plateau. Due to severe felling of this forest for timber, and for land clearing, only 0.9% of this forest is left. The most significant Blue Gum High Forest remnants can be found in Brush Farm Park, Darvall Park and Denistone Park in the Ryde LGA, where rainforest species occur in sheltered moist gullies.

The bushland identified for the subject site did not include Blue Gum but did include three large *Eucalyptus acmenoides* (White Mahogany) trees which are visually prominent from Fourth Avenue.⁸ This bushland was open land and prone to firing by the Aboriginal groups in order to ensure either the fruiting of particular plants, and the growth for which animals such as the kangaroos could graze, thus ensuring a food supply.⁹

⁸ John Travers / Michael Sheather-Reid, Tree Assessment Report Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre, Fourth Avenue, Denistone, May 2011, p8

⁹ Val Attenbrow, Sydney's Aboriginal Past, 2002,p42

The following description has been obtained from the landscape and archeology assessment for Brush Farm Archaeological Report as it is considered relevant for a discussion of Aboriginal cultural heritage for the subject site.¹⁰ Brush Farm was a large historic property within the Ryde LGA. It was one of the first established and originally encompassed an area from Shaftsbury Road in the east to just beyond King Street in the west, Terry Road to the north and Victoria Road to the south. (The land west of Marsden Road is within the Parramatta City Council local government area.) Brush Farm House is regarded as a remarkable and rare survivor from one of the earliest formative periods of the Australian colony and, together with rare extant evidence of early intensive agriculture, remaining distant view prospects and a likely significant historical archaeological resource, is of exceptional cultural significance.

The archaeological evidence for the Sydney region indicates that Aboriginal occupation commenced by at least 13,000 years ago and possibly much earlier (perhaps 20-25,000 years before present). Low levels of occupation appear to have been followed by more intensive occupation and activity over the past few thousand years and increasing in the centuries immediately prior to 1788. (Kohen and Lampert, 1987). In the Sydney district the distribution of Aboriginal site types has been found to strongly relate to environmental factors such as underlying geology and other resources. This work has not been completed to the point where it is possible to accurately predict the presence of Aboriginal site types or locations within very specific small areas.

For the Brush Farm Estate the following points should be made. The site is situated near the top of a ridge. Ridge lines were important features of the pre-European landscape and a likely focus of Aboriginal activity and travel routes. Camps would have been established on suitable sites, especially any sheltered places adjacent to creek-lines such as those found in modern day Brush Farm Park and Kilpack Park. Once European occupation commenced increased soil mobility due to erosion resulting from the clearing of natural vegetation, and the other activities necessary for construction of Brush Farm House, cultivation of the Estate grounds and layout of the extensive gardens associated with the early property would probably have disturbed and possibly removed any pre-existing Aboriginal sites. Some of the material needed to build the House and ancillary buildings was probably obtained from the Estate during the early phases of European occupation.

Given the long period of building and other developments such as the layout and cultivation of the grounds, the later period of intensive subdivision of the Estate, and erection of new buildings during the twentieth century, it is considered that intact

¹⁰ Geoffrey Britton, Brush Farm Landscape & Archaeology Assessment Final Report for the City of Ryde, December 2004, p32-33

Aboriginal sites would be a rare survival within the immediate area of the main Brush Farm House and the Estate generally.¹¹

4.1 POST 1794 LAND GRANTS¹²

Land was granted by the Crown to nine soldiers and ex-convicts in the area known as the Field of Mars. Some settlers farmed their land and some sold their grants to John Macarthur, Simeon Lord and D'Arcy Wentworth. The land on which the Hospital now stands was part of a 1795 grant to three soldiers of the NSW Corps, William Ternan, Humphrey Evans and John Parnice. They made no (documented) use of the land and it soon passed into the hands of Reverend Richard Johnson. In 1800 the land was sold to Michael Connor, as was sold a number of times during the next thirty years. At the time it was known as 'Porteous Mount.'

By 1830 it was owned by Doctor Thomas Foster, surgeon to the 46th Regiment and son-in-law of Gregory Blaxland. Foster owned the property for some 26 years, and built an eight roomed house which he called *Deniston*, in memory of his English birthplace. During the 1840s the house and property were leased to Major Edward Darvall.

In December 1872, the property, which by then comprised 48 hectares and enjoyed fine views over the Parramatta River, and west to the Blue Mountains, was purchased by Richard Rouse Terry, grandson of Samuel Terry, the former convict who prospered in the early Colony. Terry built a new *Deniston House* in 1874. It was an impressive two-storey stone residence, with a two-storey rear wing and is now incorporated into the Ryde Hospital. The property included stone stables block, set to the north of the main house. By the 1890s, Terry's property had expanded to more than 100 hectares; however, after his death in 1898, the estate was let to a number of tenants and gradually subdivided as the surrounding neighbourhood experienced a property boom associated with development encouraged by the opening of the Northern Railway in 1886, and the arrival of a tramway in 1910. In 1913, 6.8 hectares, including the building now called *Denistone House*, was purchased by the New South Wales Government for use as a convalescent hospital for men, complementing the *Carrara* convalescent hospital for women at Vaucluse. Despite the success of the property as a convalescent hospital, the local community lobbied the NSW Government steadily between 1918 and 1928 to have the buildings and grounds become a Soldiers' Memorial Hospital, as a mark of remembrance for those who gave their lives in the Great War.

Finally, on 15 March 1928, the Government confirmed that it would be prepared to hand over the full 7.3 hectare property to the Ryde Soldiers' Memorial Hospital Committee. New buildings were soon planned.

¹¹ Brush Farm Landscape & Archaeology Assessment FINAL REPORT December 2004 Geoffrey Britton for the City of Ryde, p32-33

¹² The following section has been obtained from the Histories contained within the Statements of Heritage Impact, May 2011 and March 2010, see Bibliography for details.

In 1934 a new building, providing accommodation for 34 beds was completed and the old Denistone House was converted to a nurses' home. The old Stables building were used for domestic staff. Within only a short time there were accommodation pressures on the hospital and a decision was taken to restructure the entire complex. In the early 1960s a series of new buildings were erected in the hospital grounds. One of these, the Patients Services Block, opened in 1969, was located immediately in front of Denistone House, on the site of the old 1830s house. In the late 1970s additional works to the Hospital included extensions to Denistone House with a major two storey wing to the east of the old building, and installation of the external escape stairs to the main elevation.

In June 1985, a series of redevelopments took place including the upgrading of the accident and emergency department. In June 1987, a further series of facilities were opened, including a Geriatric and Rehabilitation Unit, the Ward 3 complex, a new Paediatric Unit, and Stage I of the redeveloped Accident and Emergency Department. In the mid 1990s, the now Northern Area Health Service examined a series of development and redevelopment options for the hospital. The work proposed to Denistone House, that was covered in the 1997 Conservation Management Plan was a part of this strategy.

In summary, the development history of the area including the subject site, Graythwaite, has seen landscape modifications and intensive building documented between the 1830s up to and including the present. The history of development of the site includes Foster's construction of the original house in the 1830s and its subsequent development by Terry and its ongoing use and phases of development as a hospital site.

5.0 ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE POTENTIAL

The above historical overview has been provided as the background to this discussion of Aboriginal cultural heritage potential for the subject site. It must be noted that of course Aboriginals would have been associated with the subject site during the thousand of years of history preceding European settlements. However, the remnants of their use, whether that be transport tracks, burning it, short term campsites, or tool working sites can be difficult to assess. For an area to be identified as an 'Aboriginal place' it would have to be identified as being of special significance to Aboriginal culture. An area can have spiritual, natural resource usage, historical, social, educational or other type of significance.

Aboriginal objects are physical evidence of the use of an area by Aboriginal people. They can also be referred to as 'Aboriginal sites', 'relics' or 'cultural material'. They include:

- physical objects, such as stone tools, Aboriginal-built fences and stockyards, scarred trees and the remains of fringe camps, rock art sites
- material deposited on the land, such as middens
- the ancestral remains of Aboriginal people

In addition to the development history, the factors that generally affect site formation processes for Aboriginal sites and places of cultural heritage fall into the following categories and were introduced in Section 4.0 of this report.

- **Topography**

The subject site (Graythwaite area only, Lot 1 of DP 1137800) is located on a relatively flat plateau area which extends to the north, east and west. The surveyed bushland adjacent to the site, and located in the south eastern section of the overall area, bounded by Florence Street has a southerly aspect and is relatively steep, on slopes of around 15 degrees. A flat plateau may have been a transport area, but there is nothing significant about the topography that would signify it could be a special place.

- **Waterways**

There are no waterways or historic waterways or drainage lines that have been identified or documented for the subject site (Graythwaite area only). The subject site is defined as being within the Parramatta River catchment and drainage area. The river is located approximately 2.5km to the south of the site. There is a creek, Shrimptons Creek located north east of the site at a distance of some 1.2km. Unless there is the presence of a waterway across the site, it would be unlikely for campsites, rockshelters, and art sites to be located there.

- **Plants**

The only native bushland identified for the subject site included open forest plantings, with no mention of other vegetation or sub storey plantings. There were three large *Eucalyptus acmenoides* (White Mahogany) trees visually prominent from Fourth Avenue. There are also other tall open forest trees, identified as the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest,¹³ which are located adjacent to the south of the proposed car park in the south eastern section of the overall area, bounded by Florence Street. Reference should be made to the Flora and Fauna Reports undertaken as part of this project, see Bibliography. Currently the fauna habitats present throughout the site include:

- Vegetated areas of forest within disturbed remnant bushland areas to the immediate south of the proposed car park site
- Nectar producing tree species, principally *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia*
- Sparse to dense shrublayers
- Sparse to moderate density ground cover
- Fallen logs, hollow sections and branches
- Loose soil suitable for foraging
- Sparse to dense litter layer
- Exfoliated bark on trunks and piles at the base of smooth-barked *Eucalyptus* species
- Artificial debris and refuse

It is difficult to say given the known history of the site whether the specific open forested areas would have seen Aboriginal use and impact. It does not appear to be an area where objects would be located. As noted, there have been no previous Aboriginal sites or places recorded within the site or the wider area and there is nothing special that has been noted in its landscape qualities that would warrant further research into the area.

- **Animals**

Animals associated with open tall forests are no longer located in the area. Kangaroos, possums, bandicoots, snakes, lizards would have inhabited these areas. There would have been an abundance of birds. Reference should be made to the Flora and Fauna Reports undertaken as part of this project, see Bibliography, where the following summary is noted: *The vegetation within the subject site is so sparse, artificial and degraded, it does not form part of any wildlife corridor.*¹⁴

- **Geology and the availability of stone used as raw material for tool manufacture**

The geology consists of Wianamatta Group Shales, probably over sandstone. The soils are described as part of the West Pennant Hills Soil Landscape which is a shale colluvium, is deep soils, and usually tall open forest on steep slopes. Stones such as

¹³ John Travers / Michael Sheather-Reid, Tree Assessment Report Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre, Fourth Avenue, Denistone, May 2011, p8

¹⁴ Travers Bushfire and Ecology, Flora and Fauna Assessment – Proposed Car Park; Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre, Denistone (Ref: A11017), p36

quartz and flake-able stone materials such as silcrete, quartzite and silicified wood occur as pebbles and the occasional boulders.¹⁵ White ochre is also found in banks of creeks flowing through Wianamatta Group shales. As the subject site was part of a flat plateau, with open forests, no waterways and a shale soil over sandstone with no identified outcrops, there is nothing to suggest that stone tools were made in the area of the subject site.

In summary, these landscape descriptions for the subject site describe an area that, while we cannot say it never had an Aboriginal history, there do not appear to be sites or places that could be located within it relating to Aboriginal cultural heritage significance. It does not appear to be an area where objects would be located. As noted, there have been no previous Aboriginal sites or places recorded within the site or the wider area. This was indicated by the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management Systems (AHIMS) search. There is nothing special or significant that has been noted for any of the site specific historical landscape qualities that would warrant further research into the area.

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The findings of this assessment have concluded that there is no potential for sites or places of Aboriginal Heritage Cultural Significance likely to remain within the subject site, identified as Lot 1 of DP 1137800. Therefore, an assessment of significance is not necessary in this instance.

However, due to the scope of this baseline study, it cannot be stated whether there are likely to be sites or places of Aboriginal Heritage Cultural Significance retained across the undeveloped, sloping, tree covered parts of the Ryde Hospital site, (which until recently was the overall subject site, prior to sub-division), which is bounded by Florence Avenue and characterized by mature forest. As noted, this area is outside of the subject Lot 1 DP 1137800.

¹⁵ This description is not site specific but is for the Cumberland Plains and the western half of the Sydney region, V. Attenbrow, *Sydney's Aboriginal Past*, 2002, p43

7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, in addressing Aboriginal Heritage in accordance with the legislation and guidelines and in fulfillment of the Director General's Requirements, it is considered by City Plan Heritage that there is no potential for sites or places of Aboriginal Heritage Cultural Significance to be located within the nominated subject site of the Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre.

The required AHIMS search for any previously recorded Aboriginal sites and places located within the advised lots numbers for the site, which were Lot numbers 1 and 2 in Deposited Plan 1137800, also included a buffer zone of 200 metres. The subject site of Graythwaite is located within Lot 1 of this DP. The results of the searches– see Attachment A – were for **no previous sites or places recorded**. The assessment of the development history of the site, combined with an appraisal of the environment and landscape, and an appraisal of the types of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites likely to be in the area also resulted in the area not being considered a likely location for sites or places relating to Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.

Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

- There is unlikely to be sites or places of Aboriginal cultural heritage retained across the proposed development path for Graythwaite, which is Lot 1 of DP 1137800 and its extended curtilage and formerly part of the Ryde Hospital Precinct. It is considered that there is nothing special or significant in any of its historical landscape qualities that would warrant further research.
- However, although this baseline assessment has not identified the subject allotment and its extended developed curtilage as an area of potential for Aboriginal cultural heritage, once ground clearance commences if something is discovered that could be an Aboriginal object, City Plan Heritage must be contacted. In that instance, advice would be sought from the Environment Protection and Regulation Group of the Office of Environment and Heritage relating to recording the finds and the appropriate management options. [N.B., Part 6 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act gives the Director General of the Office of Environment and Heritage only express powers to consent to the damage, destruction or defacement of Aboriginal objects by development activities.]
- It cannot be stated from this baseline study whether there are likely to be items of Aboriginal cultural heritage retained beyond the subject allotment and its extended developed curtilage in Lot 2 across the undeveloped, sloping, tree covered parts of the site, bounded by Florence Avenue and characterized by mature native forest.

CITY PLAN HERITAGE

JUNE 2011

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8.0 ATTACHMENT A - AHIMS SEARCH RESULTS

9.0 ATTACHMENT B - RESUME