

Pymble Ladies College


Grey House Precinct

Non-Aboriginal (Historic)
Archaeological Assessment

Report to NBRS Architecture

June 2021



 artefact

Artefact Heritage
ABN 73 144 973 526
Level 4, Building B
35 Saunders Street
Pymont NSW 2009
Australia

+61 2 9518 8411
office@artefact.net.au

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Author: Michael Lever

Project manager: Sandra Wallace

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Non-Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment is submitted to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) in support of a State Significant Development Application (SSD-17424905) for the development of 0.301 hectares of the Grey House Precinct (Lot 1 DP69541) within the grounds of Pymble Ladies College at Pymble, NSW.

Pymble Ladies College (the proponent) proposes to redevelop a section within the Grey House Precinct grounds. The development will replace existing temporary (demountable) teaching spaces, designed to provide a better environment for students and teachers. This development (the proposal) will see the construction of a multi-storey complex, to accommodate the following facilities:

- Junior School classrooms,
- Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) labs,
- Health and Wellbeing facilities,
- Dance academy,
- Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) facilities,
- Early Learning Centre (ELC), and
- A range of outdoor learning spaces.

Artefact Heritage has been engaged by NBRS Architecture to complete a non-Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment for the proposal. In accordance with section 4.12 (8) of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), Schedule 2 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for SSD-17424905 were issued on 17 May 2021. This report has been prepared to respond to the following SEARs:

SEAR	Relevant section of report
<p>Requirement 7: Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify any archaeological potential or archaeological significance on and adjacent to the site and the impacts the development may have on this significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section 4.5: Assessment of archaeological significance• Section 4.6 Summary of areas of archaeological potential and significance

Conclusions

The non-Aboriginal archaeological assessment concluded that:

- No former structures were identified within the study area
- There is nil potential that significant archaeological remains are present within the study area.

Recommendations

Prior to commencement of on-site construction activities, it is recommended that:

- An Unexpected Finds Policy is developed and implemented prior to commencement of ground disturbing works to guide management in the event that relics are identified during ground disturbing works. At minimum this Unexpected Finds Policy would consist of the following points:
 - In the event that archaeological relics are identified in the study area during proposed works, all works in the area must cease. The area must be cordoned off and contact made with a suitably qualified archaeologist so that the archaeological remains can be adequately reported, assessed and managed. If these remains are determined to be of archaeological significance, Heritage NSW must be advised and further investigation and reporting must be carried out in keeping with the NSW *Heritage Act 1977* and best practice as outlined in The Burra Charter 2013.
 - In the event that human remains are identified in the study area, all works in the area must cease. The area must be cordoned off and NSW police must be immediately contacted. If these remains are determined to be Aboriginal ancestral remains, Heritage NSW and the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council must be notified. A suitably qualified archaeologist must be engaged to provide management, mitigation and reporting relating to the site.
 - All relevant staff, contractors and subcontractors should be made aware of their statutory obligations for heritage under the NSW *Heritage Act 1977* and best practice as outlined in The Burra Charter 2013. This may be implemented as a heritage induction.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and study area location

This Non-Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment is submitted to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) in support of a State Significant Development Application (SSD-17424905) for the development of 0.301 hectares of the Grey House Precinct (the study area) (Lot 1 DP69541) within the grounds of Pymble Ladies College at Pymble, NSW.

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1.1.1 Study area

The Grey House Precinct (study area) is located within the south east portion of Pymble Ladies College, Avon Road Pymble (Figure 1). The study area is located between Goodlet House (to the west), private residence to the east and The Pavilion, directly south. The study area sits within the Ku-ring-gai Council LGA. The proposed development within the study area is shown in Figure 2.

1.2 Report limitations

This report assesses non-Aboriginal (historical) archaeological resources only and does not provide a review of the heritage significance of built heritage items within the study area or a review of the potential for Aboriginal archaeological evidence in the area.

1.3 Authorship and acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by Michael Lever (Heritage Consultant). Michael is a full member of both the Professional Historians Association of Australia (NSW) and the Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists Inc. Management input and review was provided by Dr Sandra Wallace (Director).

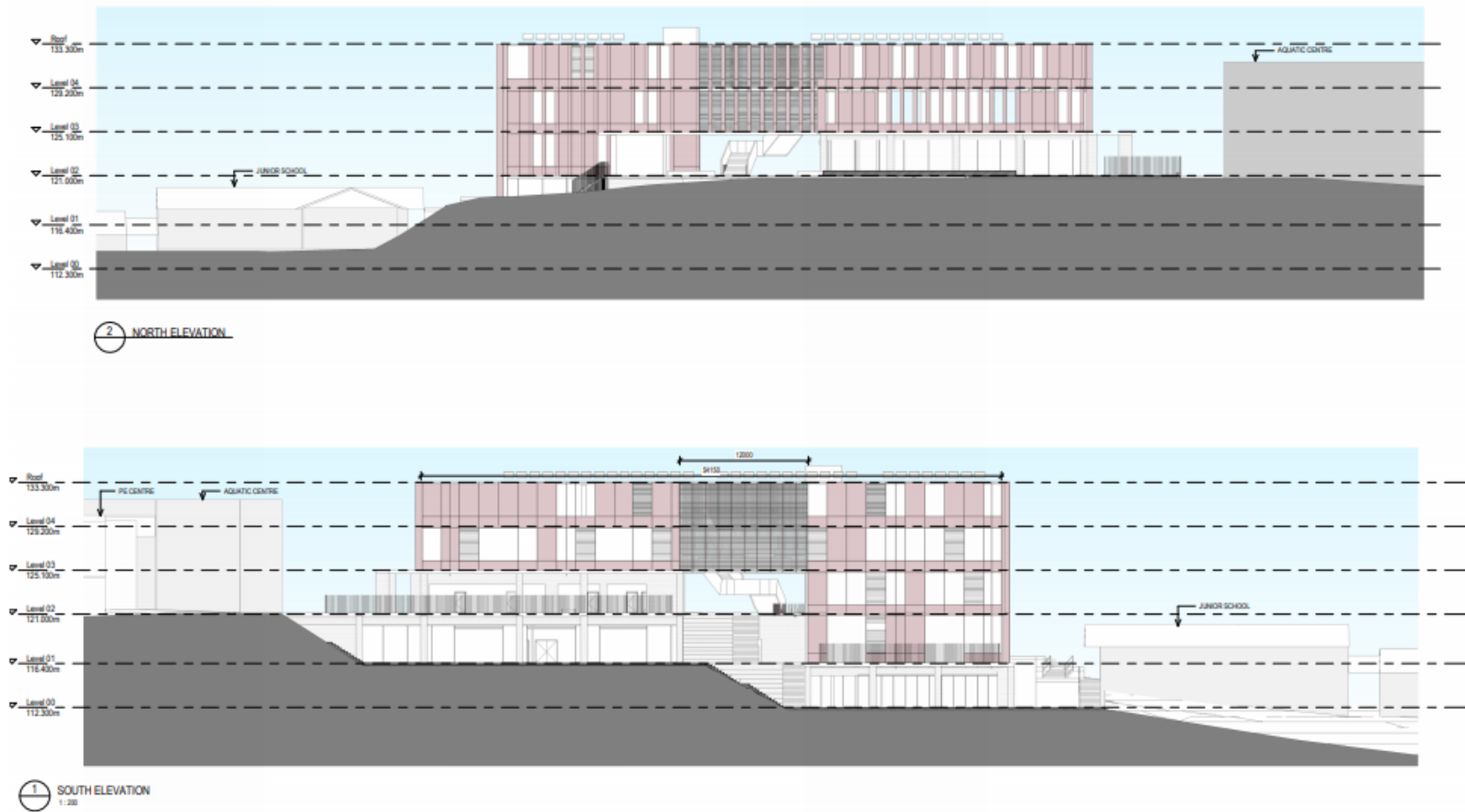
Figure 1: Location of the study area



	<p>Grey House Study Area 21064 Grey House Precinct - PLC LGA: Ku-ring-gai Council</p>	<p>SCALE 1:3,000</p>	<p>SIZE @A4</p>	<p>DATE 27/04/2021</p>	<p>0 50 100 200 Metres</p>	 artefact
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Figure 2: Proposed Development. Courtesy of Willow Tree Planning 2021



2.0 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

2.1 Heritage Act 1977 (NSW)

The NSW *Heritage Act 1977* (*Heritage Act*) provides protection for items of 'environmental heritage' in NSW. 'Environmental heritage' includes places, buildings, works, relics, movable objects or precincts considered significant based on historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic values. Items considered to be significant to the State are listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR) and cannot be demolished, altered, moved or damaged, or their significance altered without approval from the Heritage Council of NSW.

2.1.1 State Heritage Register

The SHR was established under Section 22 of the *Heritage Act* and is a list of places and objects of particular importance to the people of NSW, including archaeological sites. The SHR is administered by Heritage NSW of the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and includes a diverse range of over 1500 items, in both private and public ownership. To be listed, an item must be deemed to be of heritage significance for the whole of NSW.

The study area for the current assessment does not contain any items listed on the SHR and is not within 500m of any items listed on the SHR.

2.1.2 Section 170 Registers

Under the Heritage Act all government agencies are required to identify, conserve and manage heritage items in their ownership or control. Section 170 (s170) requires all government agencies to maintain a Heritage and Conservation Register that lists all heritage assets and an assessment of the significance of each asset. They must also ensure that all items inscribed on its list are maintained with due diligence in accordance with State Owned Heritage Management Principles approved by the Government on advice of the NSW Heritage Council. These principles serve to protect and conserve the heritage significance of items and are based on NSW heritage legislation and guidelines.

The study area for the current assessment does not contain any items listed on Section 170 Registers.

2.2 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) establishes the framework for cultural heritage values to be formally assessed in the land use planning and development consent process. The EP&A Act consists of three main parts of direct relevance to Aboriginal cultural heritage; Part 3 which governs the preparation of planning instruments, Part 4 which relates to development assessment processes for local government (consent) authorities, and Part 5 which relates to activity approvals by governing (determining) authorities.

Planning decisions within LGAs are guided by Local Environmental Plans (LEPs). Each LGA is required to develop and maintain a LEP that includes Aboriginal and historical heritage items which are protected under the EP&A Act and the *Heritage Act 1977*.

(c) disturbing or excavating an archaeological site while knowing, or having reasonable cause to suspect, that the disturbance or excavation will or is likely to result in a relic being discovered, exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed

(d) disturbing or excavating an Aboriginal place of heritage significance.

The project has been approved as an SSD by the Minister of Planning in line with requirements set out in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000* (EP&A Regulation).

2.2.1 Kuringai LEP 2015

The study area is located within the Kuringai Council LGA and is administered under the Kuringai LEP 2015. Each LGA is required to develop and maintain an LEP that includes Aboriginal and historical heritage items which are protected under the EP&A Act and the Heritage Act.

The study area is within 100m of the Pymble Avenue Conservation Area on the Kuringai LEP 2015 (item C11)

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

3.1 Environmental Context

The Pymble Ladies College is situated on a ridgeline which falls a steeply towards Avon Road in the north west and Pymble Avenue to the south east. The study area at Grey House Precinct is situated in the lower south east parts of the Pymble Ladies College, facing Pymble Avenue. The study area is located 2.29 (km) north of Lane Cove River and 350m east of a tributary of Avondale Creek.

3.2 Aboriginal land use

The northern side of Port Jackson is rich in exposed sandstone outcrops. These sandstone outcrops retain evidence of Aboriginal occupation. The types of cultural material associated with sandstone outcrops include rock shelters rock art sites, engravings and remnant middens camps. It is estimated that there are more than 1500 rock shelters across the northern Sydney harbour area.

The proximity to fresh and salt water enabled the Cammeray people, the Aboriginal people of the area, to have a rich and diverse marine and terrestrial diet. An excavated midden site in middle harbour, documented human occupation for over 6,000 years including a profile of the foods consumed there. ¹ Over 90% of this midden contained cockles, oysters, mussels, and a small proportion of mammal and fish bones.²

3.2.1 Early land grants

³The suburb of Pymble was named after Robert Pymble, who acquired a land grant of 243 hectares in 1823.⁴ Robert Pymble arrived as a free settler in 1821 and in a short period of time, he was successful in acquiring land and using convict labour to clear large stands of forests. Robert Pymble together with other settlers across the district were able to turn a profit for the demand of lumber across the colony as it grew and required building materials. Pymble built his residence slightly south of Pymble Rail Station, and is also credited with founding the first orchard in the area. Other orchardists followed his lead. The fruit growing industry was a lucrative sector for this relatively new district and eventually replaced the timber industry. ⁵ Initial access to the area was via the Lane Cove Road, which now comprises the Pacific Highway.

3.2.2 School lands and reversion to agriculture

The Presbyterian Ladies College is located in land that was once part of a 100 acre property owned by William Wright in 1835 (Figure 3), and still in Wright's property in 1843 (Figure 4). Mapping dated to 51 years later in 1893 (Figure 5) still shows the majority of the future site of the Presbyterian Ladies College, including the study area as within the holding of William Wright. Parts of W. Wright's original holding have been subdivided to two Porter brothers - local orchardists. Both of these subdivided blocks face the Pacific Highway. No information is evident in this map as to whether buildings were present on the property at this date and it is most likely that any residential or significant constructed infrastructure they may have once contained would have been located towards their access points to

¹ Currie J (2008). Bo-ra-ne Ya-goo-na Par-ry-boo-go. Yesterday Today Tomorrow. An Aboriginal History of Willoughby. Willoughby City Council and the Aboriginal Heritage Office Northern Sydney Region

² Currie (2008) p 14

³ Pollon, F (1988) *The Book of Sydney Suburbs*. Cornstalk, Sydney

⁴ Edwards, Z (2010). Pymble. In *The Dictionary of Sydney* <https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/pymble> accessed 15 June 2021

⁵ Pollon (1988) *ibid*

the Pacific Highway. William Wright is shown as still in ownership of much of the surrounds, including the study area in mapping dated to 1897 Figure 6. Also visible in Figure 6 is 'Porters Estate' - a largely unsuccessful effort at subdivision which created Avon Street. Mapping dated to 1917 (Figure 7) shows the study area in similar subdivision and street layout to that currently present. The Presbyterian Ladies College is not yet shown.

Throughout this time the study area at Grey House Precinct appears to have remained at the far end from the Pacific Highway of an agricultural block of land, with no mapped direct road access to the Pacific Highway or other local roadways. It is considered highly unlikely that the study area ever contained significant built structure prior to its development in the twentieth century.

Figure 3: Parish Map of Gordon, Country of Cumberland, dated 1835 (NSW Land Registry Services)



Figure 4: Map of the Parish of Gordon c. 1843 (Trove NLA)



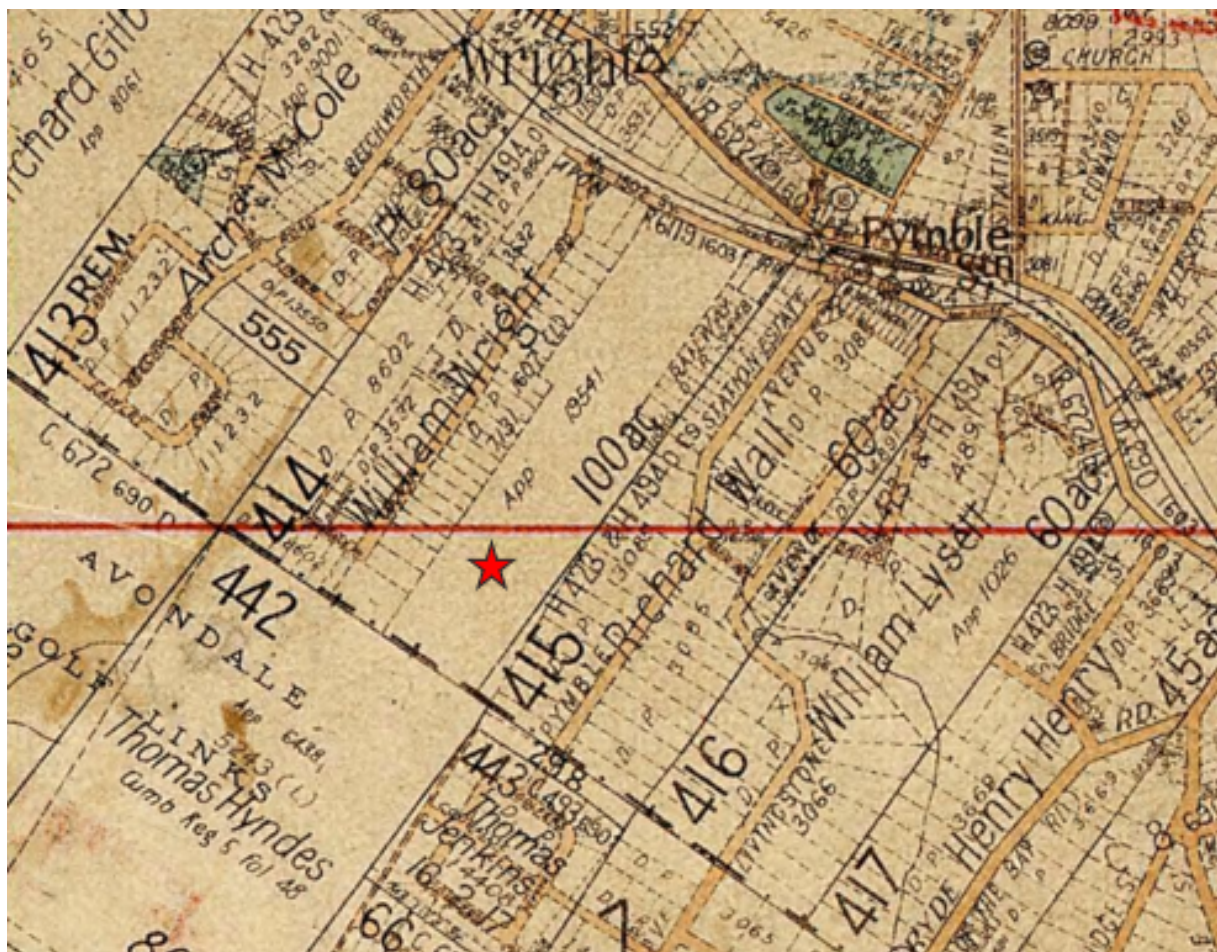
Figure 5: 1893 map (Trove NLA)



Figure 6: 1897 map (Trove NLA)



Figure 7: 1917 Map (Trove NLA)



3.2.3 Late nineteenth and early Twentieth-century development

Public transport to the area commenced by horse-drawn bus in 1879, however it was not until the North Shore railway opened in 1890 that residential and wider commercial development of the area commenced. Pymble represented an attractive residential location to early settlers, enjoying elevated heights and commanding views of Sydney Harbour. A post office was opened in 1890.

The orchardists Michael Porter and T. Porter mentioned above were living on Avon Road, off Lane Cove Road past Pymble Avenue by 1905.⁶ On 30 September 1913, Michael Porter transferred his property, including an existing cottage, to the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales.⁷ The site contained 35 acres 1 rood and 20 perches.

A Presbyterian Ladies College had been opened at Croydon in the inner west of Sydney in 1888. On 7 May 1914 a Presbyterian Assembly was held which discussed the founding of a Ladies College at Pymble. It was announced that 50 acres of land had been purchased for £15,000, separate residences had been located, and the whole cost of the enterprise would come to £50,000 which the Assembly was asked to commit to pay. Despite some objections at the scale of this undertaking, the motion was passed by the Assemblage, it having been pointed out that the Croydon Presbyterian

⁶ City of Sydney Archives, *Sands Sydney Directory*, (1905) Pymble – Avon Road

⁷ NSW Land Registry Services (LRS), Parcel 19541

Ladies College not only managed to repay its mortgage at a healthy rate, but generally ran at 'a considerable surplus'.⁸

The current Pymble Ladies College opened as the Presbyterian Ladies College in 1916 with purpose-built buildings constructed on what is fairly certain to have been previously undeveloped land. The open and generally undeveloped surrounds of the Pymble Ladies College can be seen in Figure 8 below – a panorama of the College taken from Avon Road facing south east towards the main gates, visible in the centre of the photograph.

In 1918 the college purchased Grey House, set in one acre of land along Pymble Avenue. The site had been transferred to its previous owner in 1914 and the residence there constructed in 1917. Based on the history of subdivision of the area, the site of Grey House was most likely divided in 1897 and is highly unlikely to have been the site of a residence constructed in the 20 years between subdivision and construction of Grey House. As the grounds of Grey House, the study area is similarly highly unlikely to have been the site of a significant structure between 1917 and 1930 from which time aerial images provide an unbroken chain of evidence that development has not taken place there. Grey House functioned as the headmaster's residence for many years until its recent sale and division from school grounds.⁹

⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald* (8 May 1914, p7), 'Presbyterian Assembly'

⁹ NBRSArchitecture.Heritage.2021. Historical report on Grey House Precinct, Pymble Ladies College

Figure 8: Panorama of the Presbyterian Ladies College on Avon Road, Pymble Sydney 1927 (Trove National Library of Australia)



3.2.4 20th Century - Evidence from Aerial Imaging

This section focuses on evidence for the potential presence of historical structures within the study area that may have been demolished but which may still be associated with archaeological remains. The images reproduced below range from 1930, only 14 years after the establishment of the College, to 1994. The study area is outlined on them, with some skew needed to allow for varying angles of photography. Throughout these images, the study area is evident as a vacant location, containing no structures.

Figure 9: Study area in 1930 (Historical Imagery NSW)



Figure 10: Study area in 1941 (Historical Imagery NSW)



Figure 11: Study area in 1951 (Historical Imagery NSW)



Figure 12: Study area in 1961 (Historical Imagery NSW)



Figure 13: Study area in 1978 (Historical Imagery NSW)



Figure 14: Study area in 1986 (Historical Imagery NSW)

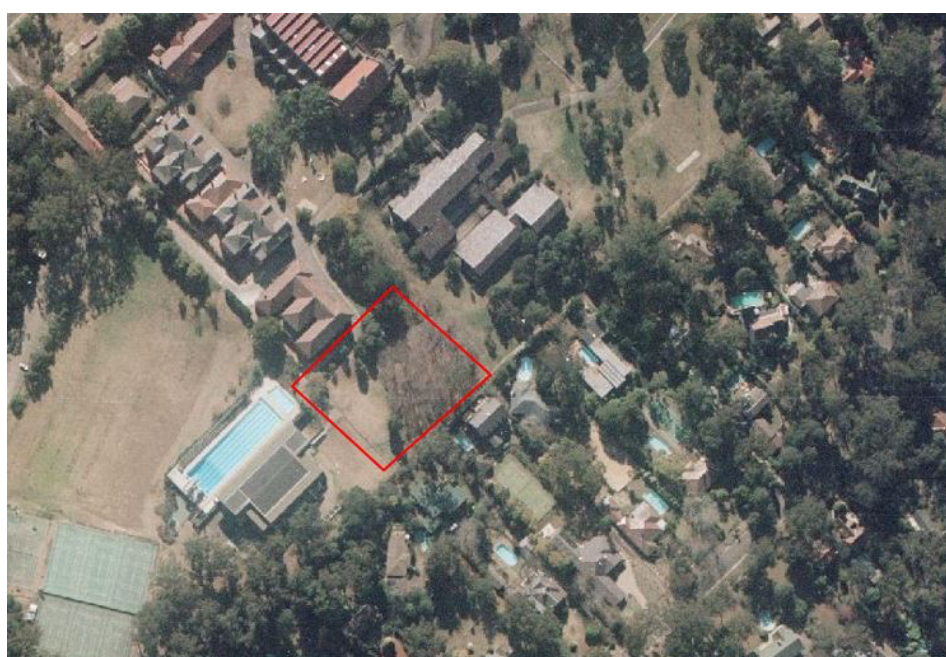


Figure 15: Study area in 1994 (Historical Imagery NSW)



4.0 NON-ABORIGINAL (HISTORIC) ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

4.1 Methodology

Historical archaeological potential is assessed by identifying former land uses and associated features through historical research and evaluating whether subsequent actions (either natural or human) may have impacted on evidence for these former land uses.

Consideration of archaeological research potential is required when undertaking a significance assessment of an historical archaeological site. Bickford and Sullivan developed three questions to assess the research potential of an archaeological resource (Bickford & Sullivan 1984: 23 – 24).

- Can the site contribute knowledge that no other site can?
- Can the site contribute knowledge that no other resource can?
- Is this knowledge relevant to general questions about human history or other substantive questions relating to Australian history, or does it contribute to other major research questions?

The Heritage Division of the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) issued a new set of guidelines in 2009: *Assessing Significance for Historical Archaeological Sites and 'Relics'*. These guidelines call for broader consideration of multiple values of archaeological sites beyond their research potential. The following section presents a discussion of the potential archaeological resource's research potential and an assessment against the NSW heritage significance criteria.

4.2 Physical site description

The study area is flanked on the north west and north by Avon Street, on the south east by residences facing Pymble Avenue and on the south west by the Avondale Golf Club.

A site visit was not undertaken prior to the production of this Archaeological Assessment.

4.3 Land use summary

European occupation of the study area has been divided into three general phases of historical activity, which are summarised below:

- Phase 1: Early Land Grants and Agriculture (1820-1893)
- Phase 2: Subdivision and Development (1893-1916)
- Phase 2: Construction of Grey House and the Presbyterian Ladies College (1916-1930)
- Phase 3: 20th Century to present (1930-Present)

4.4 Assessment of archaeological potential

4.4.1 Phase 1: Early Land Grants and Agriculture (1820-1893)

There is no evidence that the study area was formally occupied by European settlement prior to the 1840's and there is no evidence of historical structures within it during this period. Land use is likely to have been wholly agricultural including orchardry and two cottage residences fronting the Pacific Highway. No evidence is to hand of any development of the study area during this period.

The archaeological potential for recovering remains related to this historical phase is considered **nil**.

4.4.2 Phase 2: Subdivision and Development (1893 -1916)

The surrounds of the study area were subject to subdivision during this period. This subdivision although largely unsuccessful, did result in the establishment of Pymble Avenue adjoining the study area, and the allotment that became the site and grounds for Grey House. No evidence is to hand of any development of the study area during this period.

The archaeological potential for recovering remains related to this historical phase is considered **nil**.

4.4.3 Phase 3: Construction of Grey House and the Presbyterian Ladies College (1916-1930)

Mapping from 1893 (Figure 5), 1897 (Figure 6) and 1917 (Figure 7) indicates that the location of the Presbyterian Ladies College was agricultural land at the time of its purchase. Grey House is unlikely to have had significant structures such as residences constructed in its grounds between this time and 1930 when aerial photography demonstrates no presence of such infrastructure.

The archaeological potential for recovering remains related to this historical phase is considered **nil**.

4.4.4 Phase 4: 20th Century to present (1930-Present)

Aerial imaging obtained at regular intervals between 1930 (Figure 9) and 1994 clearly demonstrates that there have been no significant episodes of construction and demolition at the study area, although ground disturbance has taken place.

The archaeological potential for recovering remains related to this historical phase is considered **nil**.

4.5 Assessment of archaeological significance

4.5.1 Introduction

This section assesses the heritage significance of the known or potential archaeological remains outlined in Section 4.4. As with other types of heritage items, archaeological remains should be managed in accordance with their significance. Assessing the heritage value of archaeological remains is complicated by the fact that their extent and nature is often unknown. Judgement must therefore be based on expected or potential attributes.

The *NSW Heritage Manual* provides the framework for the following significance assessment of the study area. These guidelines incorporate the aspects of cultural heritage value identified in the *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS 2013). The Heritage Branch (now Heritage Division) has also issued the 2009 *Assessing Significance for Historical Archaeological Sites and 'Relics'*.¹⁰ and the 1996 *Archaeological Assessment Guidelines*.¹¹ The assessment of historical archaeological sites requires a specialised framework in order to consider the range of values of an archaeological site.

4.6 Summary of areas of archaeological potential and significance

No areas of archaeological potential and significance have been identified in the study area

Due to the nil potential for recovering archaeological resources from the study area the impact from the proposed development to significant archaeological remains is also considered to be nil.

¹⁰ NSW Heritage Branch 2009

¹¹ NSW Heritage Office 1996: 25 – 27

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The non-Aboriginal archaeological assessment concluded that:

- No former structures were identified within the study area
- There is nil potential that significant archaeological remains are present within the study area.

5.2 Recommendations

Prior to commencement of on-site construction activities, it is recommended that:

- An Unexpected Finds Policy is developed and implemented prior to commencement of ground disturbing works to guide management in the event that relics are identified during ground disturbing works. At minimum this Unexpected Finds Policy would consist of the following points:
 - In the event that archaeological relics are identified in the study area during proposed works, all works in the area must cease. The area must be cordoned off and contact made with a suitably qualified archaeologist so that the archaeological remains can be adequately reported, assessed and managed. If these remains are determined to be of archaeological significance, Heritage NSW must be advised and further investigation and reporting must be carried out in keeping with the NSW *Heritage Act 1977* and best practice as outlined in The Burra Charter 2013.
 - In the event that human remains are identified in the study area, all works in the area must cease. The area must be cordoned off and NSW police must be immediately contacted. If these remains are determined to be Aboriginal ancestral remains, Heritage NSW and the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council must be notified. A suitably qualified archaeologist must be engaged to provide management, mitigation and reporting relating to the site.
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artefact

Artefact Heritage

ABN 73 144 973 526
Level 4, Building B
35 Saunders Street
Pyrmont NSW 2009
Australia

+61 2 9518 8411
office@artefact.net.au
www.artefact.net.au