

14 October 2021

Richard Sheraton
Senior Associate
Ontoit

WEE WAA HIGH SCHOOL HISTORIC HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

Dear Richard,

OzArk Environment & Heritage (OzArk) was engaged by the NSW Department of Education to complete a heritage assessment for the proposed Wee Waa High School (the proposal). This letter assesses the historic heritage values that may be impacted by the proposal within the portion of land defined as the study area.

The visual inspection to inform this assessment was undertaken by OzArk Project Archaeologist, Taylor Foster on 31 March 2021. This inspection applied the Heritage Council *Historical Archaeology Code of Practice* (Heritage Council 2006) in the completion of the historical heritage assessment, including the field investigation. The assessment was also in accordance with the guidelines in the *NSW Heritage Manual* (Heritage Office and DUAP 1996) and *Assessing Heritage Significance* (OEH 2015).

Relevant SEARs conditions:

- Identify any archaeological potential or archaeological significance on and adjacent to the site and the impacts the development may have on this significance.
- Provide a statement of significance and an assessment of the impact on the heritage significance of the heritage items on and adjacent to the site in accordance with the guidelines in the NSW Heritage Manual (Heritage Office and DUAP, 1996) and Assessing Heritage Significance (OEH, 2015).

1 DESKTOP DATABASE SEARCHES CONDUCTED

A desktop search was conducted on the following databases to identify any potential previously recorded heritage within the study area. The results of this search are summarised in **Table 1-1**.

Table 1-1: Historic heritage: desktop-database search results.

Name of Database Searched	Date of Search	Type of Search	Comment
National and Commonwealth Heritage Listings	1/4/21	Narrabri LGA	No results
State Heritage Listings	1/4/21	Narrabri LGA	No items listed on the State Heritage Register, however, four results returned for state agency registered items in Wee Waa.

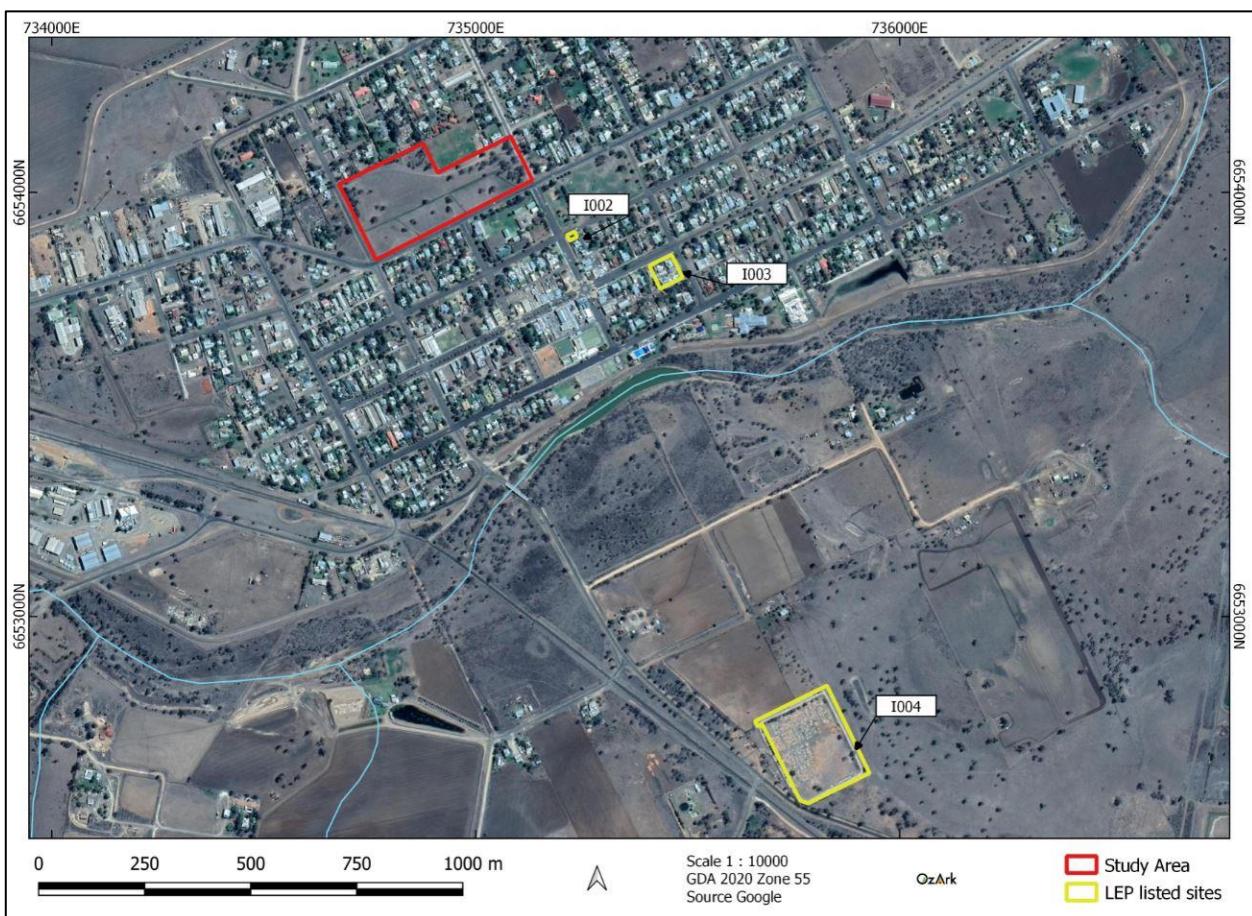
Local Environmental Plan (LEP)	1/4/21	Narrabri LEP 2012	Four results returned for LEP listed heritage items in Wee Waa.
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A search of the Heritage Council of NSW administered heritage databases and the Narrabri LEP 2012 returned eight records for historical heritage sites within the town of Wee Waa. Four of the sites listed are registered with state agencies on their s170 Heritage and Conservation Registers. These sites are not near the study area and will not be impacted by the proposed works. These sites include:

- Wee Waa Official Residence – a 19th century dwelling located on Rose Street. This item is important for its long and continuous associations with the police service in the local area
- Gunidgera Creek Regulator – constructed in 1975 soon after Jack G. Beale was the Minister for conservation. The item is of some significance as part of the Mollee, Gunidgera, and Weeta Weirs project
- Knights Regulator and Block Dam – an example of early water regulation structures dating to a period when artesian water was favoured over surface water. They represent an early effort to regulate the surface water and an early appreciation of its value. They are uncommon and good examples of their type
- Wee Waa Courthouse – also listed on the Narrabri LEP 2012.

Four of the returned results are listed on the Narrabri LEP 2012. These sites are not near the study area and will not be impacted by the proposed works (see **Figure 1-1**). Three of the sites are currently locally listed and the listing for Drildool Cemetery has lapsed. The sites include:

- Wee Waa Courthouse (I003) – the site is significant for its contribution to the character of the town and for its fine, modest design, constructed in 1880. Wee Waa Courthouse has been associated with the provision of justice in the town since 1880
- Pioneer Tree (I002) – a cultural tree on Cowper and George Streets, Wee Waa
- Wee Waa General Cemetery (I004) – on Culgoora Road, Wee Waa, the cemetery has been in use since 1859
- Drildool Private Cemetery (lapsed) – on Buglibone Road, Wee Waa.

Figure 1-1: LEP listed sites in relation to the study area.

2 RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

During the survey, several historic items were identified (see **Figure 2-1**). These include two older, dilapidated and unused electricity poles—one in the north of the study area and one in the south—a freestanding fence post in the north of the study area, and a freestanding wooden structure consisting of four wooden posts in the north of the study area. This last item appears to be a tank stand and pieces of corrugated iron have fallen from the structure and lie in the surrounding weeds. The wooden fence post is located to the west of the structure and one of the wooden electricity poles is located to the south. An iron drum is located just north of the structure. The location of these items is shown on **Figure 2-2**.

The tank stand and fence post are probably remnants of a structure that once existed in the study area. As seen on **Figure 2-3**, a 1965 aerial image of the study area shows that there is a structure, either a dwelling or sheds, located near the northern boundary of the study area in the same area as the location of several of the remaining historic items. While evidence of the structure is not visible, these remains, along with the location of tracks within the study area, preserve evidence of this former occupation.

Following the March 2021 inspection, the tank stand, fence post and other associated items were demolished. Following the demolition, it is concluded that there is little significant archaeological potential within the study area, as noted by the March 2021 inspection.

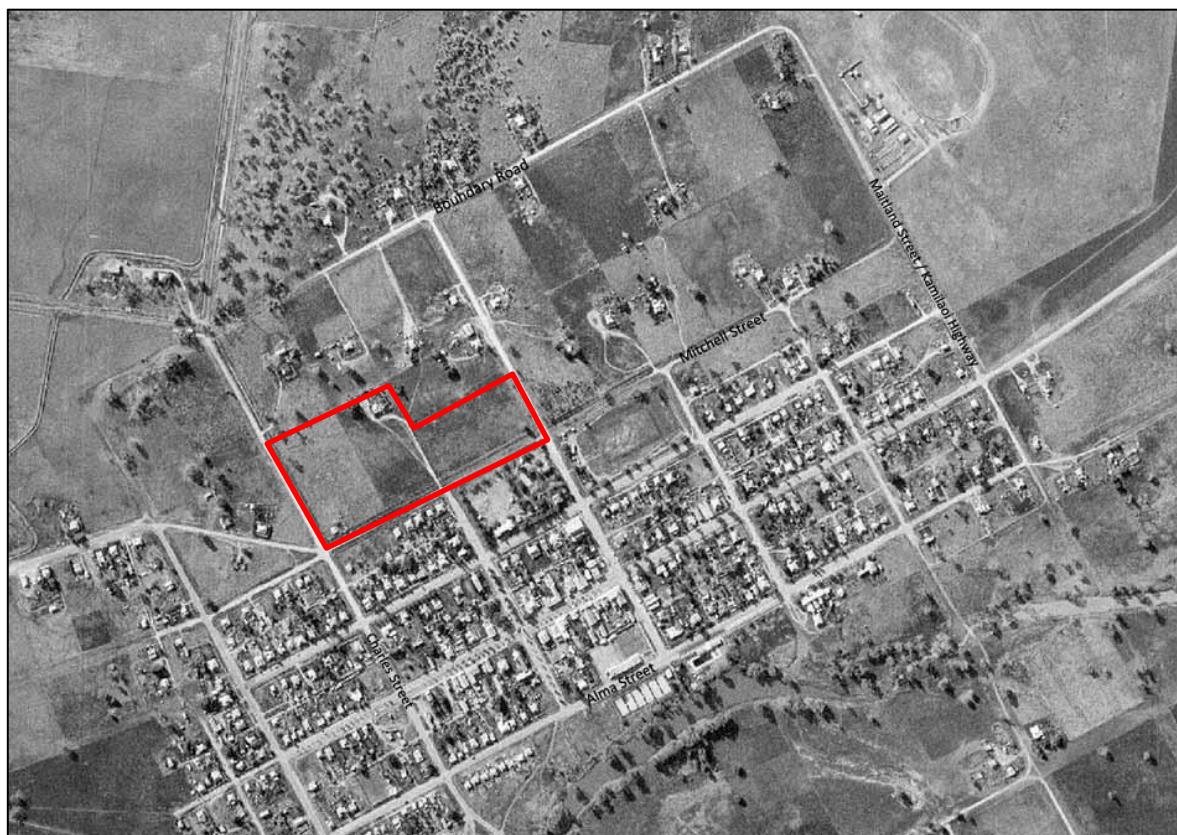
Figure 2-1: Images of historic items recorded.

	
1. View of one of the disused wooden electricity poles.	2. View of the wooden structure.
	
3. View of wooden structure with associated barrel and corrugated iron.	4. View of the disused fence post.

Figure 2-2: Aerial showing the location of historic items recorded.



Figure 2-3: 1965 aerial with study area in red (source: SS HIV 2021).



3 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The wooden structure and the wooden posts/poles are assessed as having no historic heritage significance. This assessment is derived from the fact that they are common, utilitarian objects without historic or aesthetic merit.

The proposal will not impact, dominate or exclude views to or from listed heritage items near the study area.

4 MANAGEMENT

As the recorded items do not have heritage significance, the items are not protected by the Heritage Act and no further management is required for these items.

Therefore, the proposed works may proceed without further investigation.

This assessment has concluded that there is a low likelihood that the proposed work will adversely harm historic heritage items or sites. However, following project approval, a heritage management plan should be developed to provide policies to manage unanticipated finds of historic heritage significance should they be noted during the construction of the proposal.