

Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct

Chief Mechanical Engineers Building

Aboriginal Due Diligence

Assessment



Document Information

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Curio Projects Pty Ltd
5 Blackfriars Street
Chippendale NSW 2008



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Executive Summary

Curio Projects Pty Ltd (Curio) have been commissioned by Transport for NSW (TfNSW) on behalf of Transport Asset Holding Entity (TAHE) to prepare an Aboriginal Due Diligence Assessment (DD) to support a State Significant Development (SSD) Development Application (DA) No. SSD-39971796 for the heritage conservation and adaptive reuse of the former Chief Mechanical Engineers Building (CME Building) in North Eveleigh, which is submitted to the Minister for Planning pursuant to Part 4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).

The purpose of this DD is to identify whether or not Aboriginal cultural heritage site/s or objects are likely to be present within the study area, and whether or not ground disturbance would be likely to harm Aboriginal objects (if present).

Environmental and Archaeological Context

An extensive search of the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) database was undertaken on 5 August 2022, centred on the study area and returned 7 results. One registered site was located within the study area.

For Aboriginal archaeological deposits to remain in situ, they require the retention of natural soil profiles. Areas that may have the highest potential for natural soils to be present (and corresponding potential for intact Aboriginal archaeological deposits), are areas where the lowest levels of historical impact and development have been undertaken.

The study area is located approximately 200m from Blackwattle Creek, 1.5km from the historical shoreline of Blackwattle Bay, and 1.6km from the historical shoreline at Cockle Bay. Whilst not located in immediate proximity to any major water sources, the study area would likely have been used as a transitory location for access to more reliable marine resources at Cockle Bay or Blackwattle Bay or for short-term occupation.

The study area has undergone various disturbances, including widespread surface levelling, development and demolition in relation to the construction and use of the CME Building, as well as the wider Locomotive Precinct.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage, the proposed works have the potential to impact to Aboriginal objects and cultural values within the study area. As there is a registered Aboriginal site situated within the site, a comprehensive assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the form of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) is recommended.

Aboriginal archaeology and cultural heritage values should be considered when developing the proposed works for the CME Building. Especially taking into consideration the registered Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD) site situated within the boundary of the study area. Below are the conclusions and recommendations in terms of Aboriginal archaeology:

Conclusions

- The study area is located within the Blacktown soil landscape.

- The study area has one known registered Aboriginal site within its boundary.
- PAD and low-density artefact sites are the most common site types within the boundaries of the AHIMS search.
- The wider area does not consist of large numbers of previously registered Aboriginal sites, with the closest registered site being a PAD within the boundaries of the study area, east of the CME study area.
- The site has been subject to varying levels of ground disturbance, significantly reducing archaeological potential.
- The study area has nil to low potential to contain subsurface Aboriginal objects within the footprint of the CME Building, but has with localised potential in the location of the registered PAD site

Recommendations

- As per the recommendations of Artefact 2022, an ACHAR will be required to assess potential impact to the RNE-PAD01 (AHIMS ID 45-6-4050) area
- An unexpected finds procedure should be developed for works within the CME building footprint, and implemented for use throughout the life of the Project.
- Should any suspected Aboriginal objects be identified during development, works should cease immediately, and the unexpected finds procedure be implemented.

1. Introduction

1. 1. Introduction

1.1. The Purpose of this Report

Curio Projects Pty Ltd (Curio) have been commissioned by Transport for NSW (TfNSW) on behalf of Transport Asset Holding Entity (TAHE) to prepare an Aboriginal Due Diligence Assessment to support a State Significant Development (SSD) Development Application (DA) No. SSD-39971796 for the heritage conservation and adaptive reuse of the former Chief Mechanical Engineers Building (CME Building) in North Eveleigh, which is submitted to the Minister for Planning pursuant to Part 4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).

The purpose of this DD is to identify whether or not Aboriginal cultural heritage site/s or objects are likely to be present within the study area, and whether or not the proposed works would be likely to harm Aboriginal objects (if present).

1.2. Background

The Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct, including the CME Building, is the subject of an approved Part 3A Concept Plan (MP08_0015) which continues to apply to the land pursuant to Schedule 2 of Environmental Planning and Assessment (Savings, Transitional and Other Provisions) Regulation 2017.

TfNSW is currently preparing a SSP Study for the Paint Shop Sub-Precinct within the wider Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct, which was exhibited between 26 July and 25 August 2022. It is noted that the SSP Study indicates that the Concept Approval would be surrendered should rezoning of the Paint Shop Precinct occur.

1.3. Site Identification

The site comprises the former CME Building (Figure 1.1) and its immediate surrounds (Figure 1.2). The site is identified as 505 Wilson Street and forms part of Lot 5 in Deposited Plan 1175706.

Originally constructed in 1887 and subsequently extended to keep pace with the expansion of the NSW railways and demand for engineering services, the CME Building is of State heritage significance. The CME Building is listed on the NSW Heritage Register (SHR No. 5014147) and Transport for NSW's s170 Register.

The CME Building is located within the Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct. The Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct is located within the wider Redfern-Waterloo Authority Sites SSP. The Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct is 10 hectares of land owned by Transport Asset Holding Entity (TAHE) at the southern edge of Redfern Station, located between the rail corridor and Wilson Street.



Figure 1.1: Chief Mechanical Engineers Building viewed from Wilson Street.
Source: Ethos Urban, 2022.

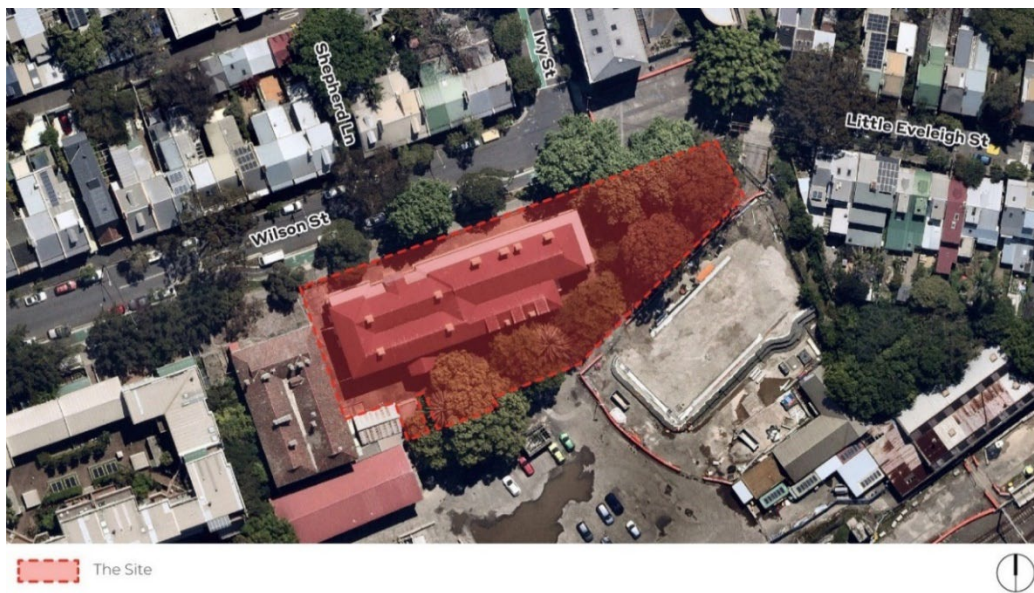


Figure 1.2: Aerial showing the study area boundaries.
Source: Nearmap/Ethos Urban, 2022

1.4. Statutory Controls

1.4.1. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

The *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act), administered by the Aboriginal Heritage Planning Section of Heritage NSW within the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), is the primary legislation that provides statutory protection for all 'Aboriginal objects' (Part 6, Section 86, Section 90) and 'Aboriginal places' (Part 6, Section 84) within NSW.

An Aboriginal object is defined through the NPW Act as:

Any deposit, object or material evidence (not being a handicraft made for sale) relating to the Aboriginal habitation of the area that comprises New South Wales, being habitation before or concurrent with (or both) the occupation of that area by persons of non-Aboriginal extraction, and includes Aboriginal remains.

The NPW Act provides the definition of 'harm' to Aboriginal objects and places as:

...any act or omission that:

- (a) Destroys, defaces or damages the object or place, or*
- (b) In relation to an object – moves the object from the land on which it has been situated, or*
- (c) Is specified by the regulations, or*
- (d) Causes or permits the object or place to be harmed in a manner referred to in paragraph (a), (b), or (c)*

The NPW Act also establishes penalties for 'harm' to Aboriginal objects and declared Aboriginal places, as well as defences and exemptions for harm. One of the main defences against the harming of Aboriginal objects and cultural material is to seek an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) under Section 90 of the NPW Act, under which disturbance to Aboriginal objects could be undertaken, in accordance with the requirements of an approved AHIP.

1.4.2. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) is the primary land use planning statute in NSW. The Act requires that environmental and heritage (including Aboriginal heritage) impacts are considered by consent authorities prior to granting development approvals. The relevant sections of the EP&A Act are:

- Part 3 of the EP&A Act relates to the preparation and making of Environmental Planning Instruments (EPI), State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP) and Local Environmental Plans (LEP).
- Part 4 of the EP&A Act establishes the framework for assessing development under the 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 5 of the EP&A Act establishes an assessment process for activities undertaken by Public Authorities and for developments that do not require development consent but approval under another mechanism.

1.4.3. Heritage NSW (former OEH) Guidelines

To best implement and administer the protection afforded to Aboriginal objects and places through the NPW and EP&A Acts, the (former) NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (now part of Heritage NSW) has prepared a series of guidelines with regard to Aboriginal heritage. These guidelines are designed to assist developers, landowners, and archaeologists to better understand their statutory obligations with regard to Aboriginal heritage in NSW and implement best practice policies in their investigation of Aboriginal heritage values and archaeology in relation to their land and/or development. These guidelines include the *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW* (DECCW 2010) (The Due Diligence Code of Practice).

The purpose of the Due Diligence Code of Practice is to “assist individuals and organisations to exercise due diligence when carrying out activities that may harm Aboriginal objects and to determine whether they should apply for consent in the form of an AHIP”. This current report has been prepared in accordance with the Due Diligence Code of Practice

1.5. Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements

The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) has issued Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) to the applicant for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed development. This report has been prepared to respond to the heritage-related SEARs, as set out in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: SEARs – Heritage

SEAR	Response
<p>19. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage</p> <p><i>Provide an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report prepared in accordance with relevant guidelines, identifying, describing and assessing any impacts for any Aboriginal cultural heritage values on the site.</i></p>	<p>This Due Diligence report does not fulfill this requirement.</p> <p>As outlined in Section 4 of this document, an ACHAR with a program of Aboriginal community consultation is recommended prior to any works within the PAD RNE-PAD01 (AHIMS ID 45-6-4050) area.</p>

1.6. Due Diligence Assessment Process

The Aboriginal Heritage Due Diligence process, in accordance with the Heritage NSW Due Diligence Code of Practice guidelines (Figure 1.3), is a step-by-step process that provides proponents with a reasonable method to follow to determine whether their proposed activity has the potential to harm Aboriginal objects, and to identify reasonable constraints and opportunities of the activity, relating to Aboriginal heritage in the activity location. The primary steps of the Due Diligence process are:

- **Step 1** – Determine whether the activity will disturb the ground surface or any culturally modified trees.

- **Step 2a** – Database search of the Heritage NSW Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS), and other known sources to determine whether any registered sites are located within/near the study area.
- **Step 2b** – Environmental and Landscape Assessment.
- **Step 3** – Impact Avoidance Assessment.
- **Step 4** – Desktop Assessment and Visual Inspection.

Following this process, should the assessment determine that Aboriginal objects are likely to be present and have the potential to be impacted, the Due Diligence Code of Practice advises further investigation and impact assessment (**Step 5**). Should the assessment determine that Aboriginal objects are unlikely to be present/unlikely to be harmed through the proposed activity, then the activity may proceed with caution.

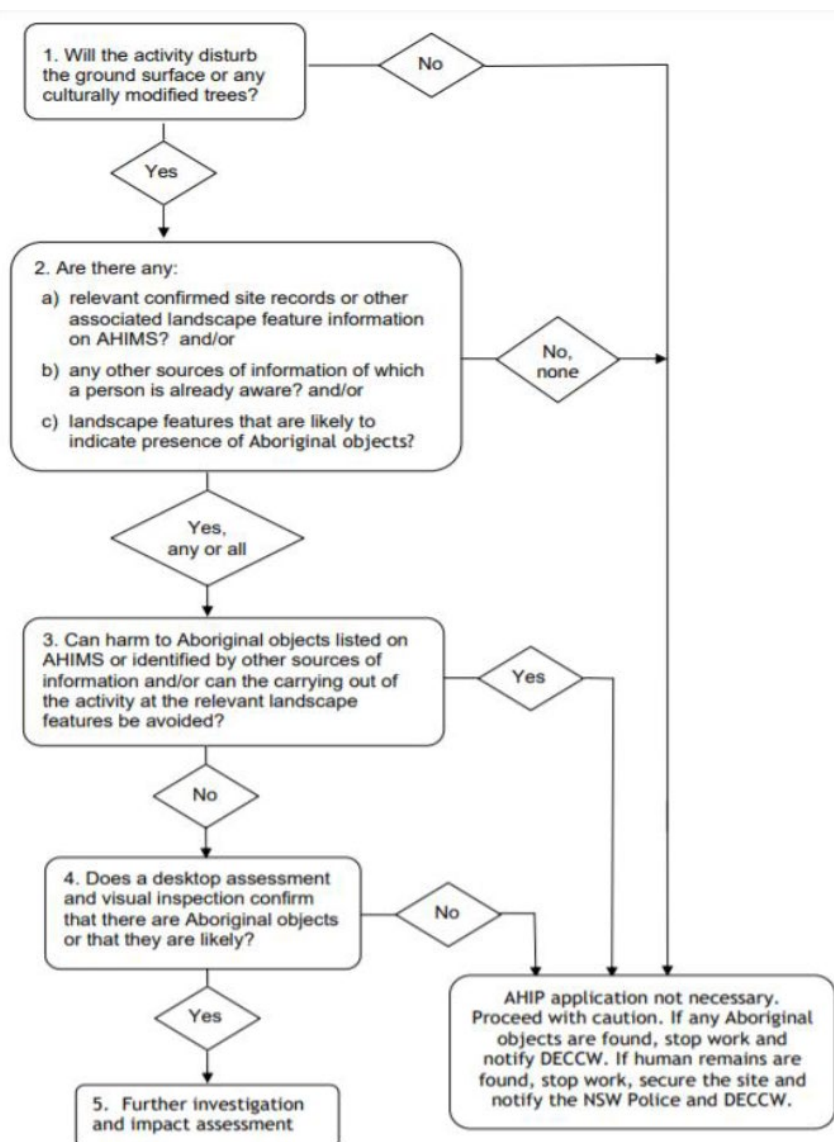


Figure 1.3: Outline of the Due Diligence Process. Source: OEH 2010a

1.7. Limitations & Constraints

This report is an assessment of the environmental, Aboriginal archaeological context, and Aboriginal archaeological potential only. No consultation with the local Aboriginal community has been undertaken as part of this assessment, and therefore no social or cultural assessment of Aboriginal heritage values has been undertaken at this time. The Heritage NSW (Former OEH) Due Diligence Code of Practice states that 'consultation with the Aboriginal community is not a formal requirement of the due diligence process', however, as the determinants of their own heritage, only Aboriginal people are able to provide information regarding Aboriginal cultural and social values and significance.

This DD provides only a high-level assessment for the study area and does not fulfill the relevant SEAR.

1.8. Authorship

This report has been prepared by Rebecca Agius, Archaeologist and Heritage Specialist, with review by Sarah McGuinness, Senior Archaeologist and Cultural Heritage Specialist, both of Curio Projects Pty Ltd. GIS mapping was prepared by Rebecca Agius, and Joshua Godino, GIS Specialist, of Curio Projects Pty Ltd.

2. Due Diligence Assessment

2. Due Diligence Assessment

2.1. Proposed Development and Potential Impacts

The following questions provide the introductory parameters to establish whether an Aboriginal Due Diligence assessment is required for a project or site. In the case of the study area, a Due Diligence is required (as provided in the following sub-sections of this report).

2.1.1. Is the proposed activity low impact for which there is a defence in the National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2019?

No. The proposed works do not meet the threshold of low impact to the study area.

2.1.2. Will the proposed activity disturb the ground surface?

Yes. The proposed scope of works will impact the ground surface. The proposed activities have the potential to cause disturbance of Aboriginal objects, should they be present in the study area.

2.1.3. Proposed Development

This application seeks consent for the heritage conservation and adaptive reuse of the CME Building, which includes:

- Internal and external heritage conservation works to make the building suitable for adaptive reuse, including painting, repairs and refurbishment of the existing building (primarily internally) and installation of services to support future usage for offices or the like
- Building upgrades to ensure compliance with the Building Code of Australia, including accessibility and fire safety requirements
- Removal of any hazardous building materials
- Minor landscaping works

No significant additions (except those necessary to facilitate the introduction of new services, amenities and equitable access) or substantive demolition of external heritage fabric is envisaged as part of the project. Internal changes comprise the removal of some internal walls and alterations to building fabric to create suitable spaces and compliant paths of travel.

The scope relevant to this DD is outlined in the following sections, with all technical scope documents provided in Appendix B. A summary of subsurface impact is outlined in Table 2-1 and on Figure 2-6.

Table 2-1: Summary of subsurface impacts

Impact	Depth of Subsurface Impact	Location of Impact
Removal of existing piers	600mm	Building footprint, excluding Rooms G3C, G8, G9, G18, G19 and G20
New footings	600mm	Building footprint, excluding Rooms G3C, G8, G9, G18, G19 and G20
Termite Protection	300mm	Building footprint, excluding Rooms G3C, G8, G9, G18, G19 and G20
Accessible Ramp	300mm	Wilson Street main entry

Impact	Depth of Subsurface Impact	Location of Impact
Garden and new fence along Wilson Street	300mm	Wilson Street
In ground water tank	2000mm	South-eastern corner
Tree removal	1000mm	Wilson Street
Various services	800mm	Across study area

2.1.4. Architectural Works

The relevant scope of works for architectural works comprises:

- Removal of existing piers below floor level
- New footings at 600m excavated depth across ground floor (excluding Rooms G3C, G8, G9, G18, G19 and G20) (Figure 2-1)
- 300mm depth excavation of ground surface below floor level for termite protection (excluding Rooms G3C, G8, G9, G18, G19 and G20)

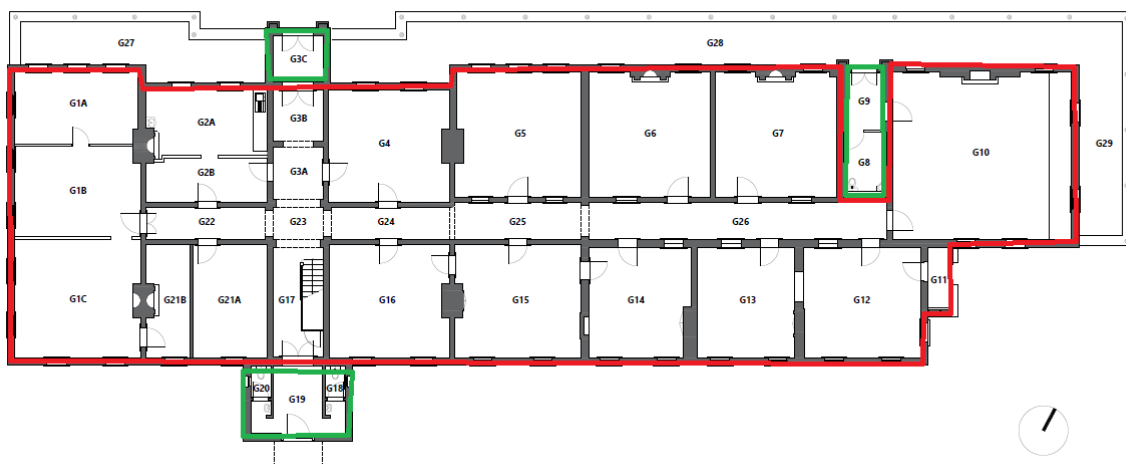


Figure 2-1: Architectural scope of works, with rooms to have subsurface reduction indicated in red and rooms with concrete floors and no impact in green. Source: Curio 2022 with markup

2.1.5. Landscaping

The scope of works for landscaping (Figure 2-2) comprises:

- Accessible ramps and walkway to main CME front entry, 2nd front entry and rear lobby entry with automated doors
 - Will include slight grading of existing ground surface
- Garden works east of CME building
- Gardening and new fence along Wilson Street
- In-ground water tank on south-eastern corner
- Removal of small *Celtis australis* (European Hackberry) tree north-east of CME building
- Excavation for stormwater pits

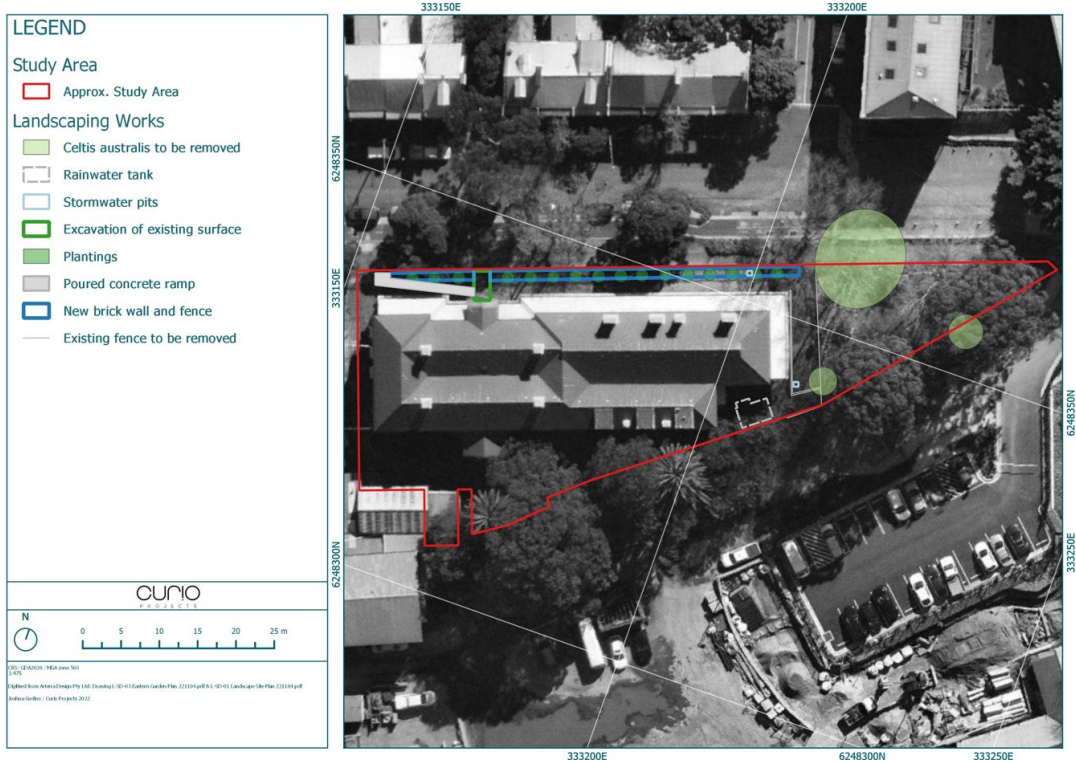


Figure 2-2: Landscaping scope of work

2.1.6. Fire Services

The scope of work for fire services comprises:

- Excavation of service lines for hydrants (6-800mm depth) (Figure 2-3)

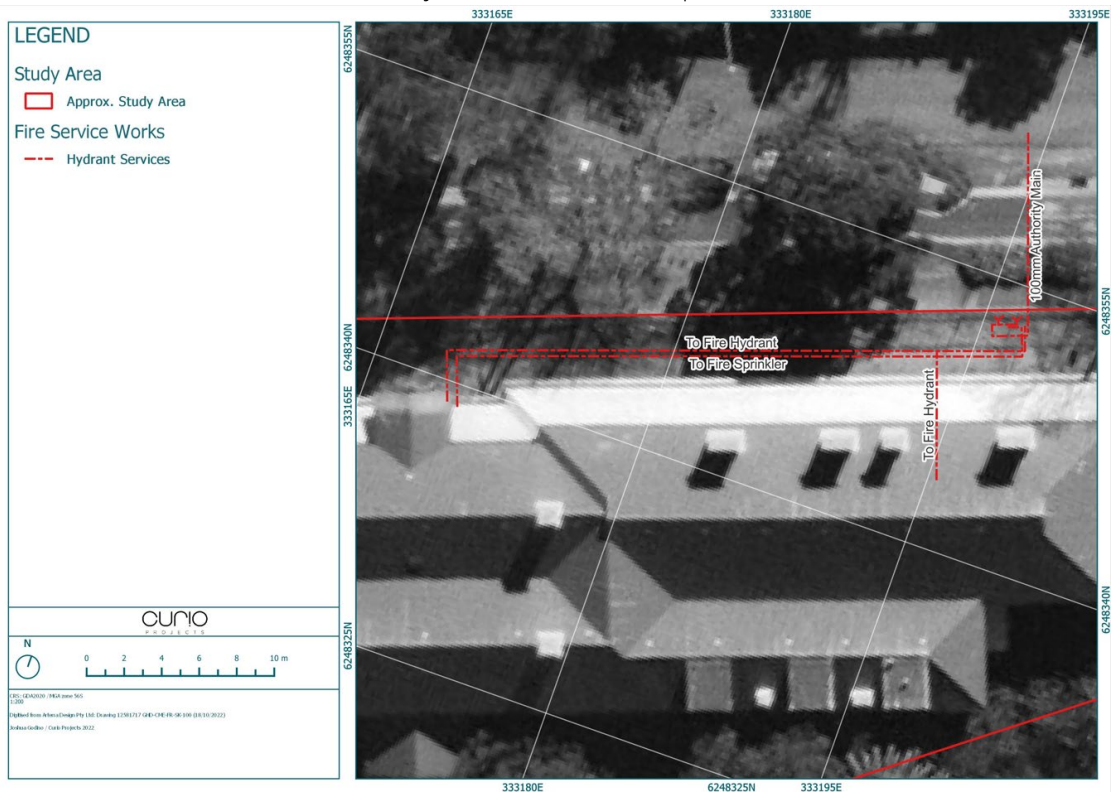


Figure 2-3: Fire services scope of work

2.1.7. Hydraulic Services

The scope of work for hydraulic services (Figure 2-4) comprises:

- Service excavation for:
 - Sewer
 - Stormwater
 - Potable water
 - Rainwater
 - Inground sanitary drainage

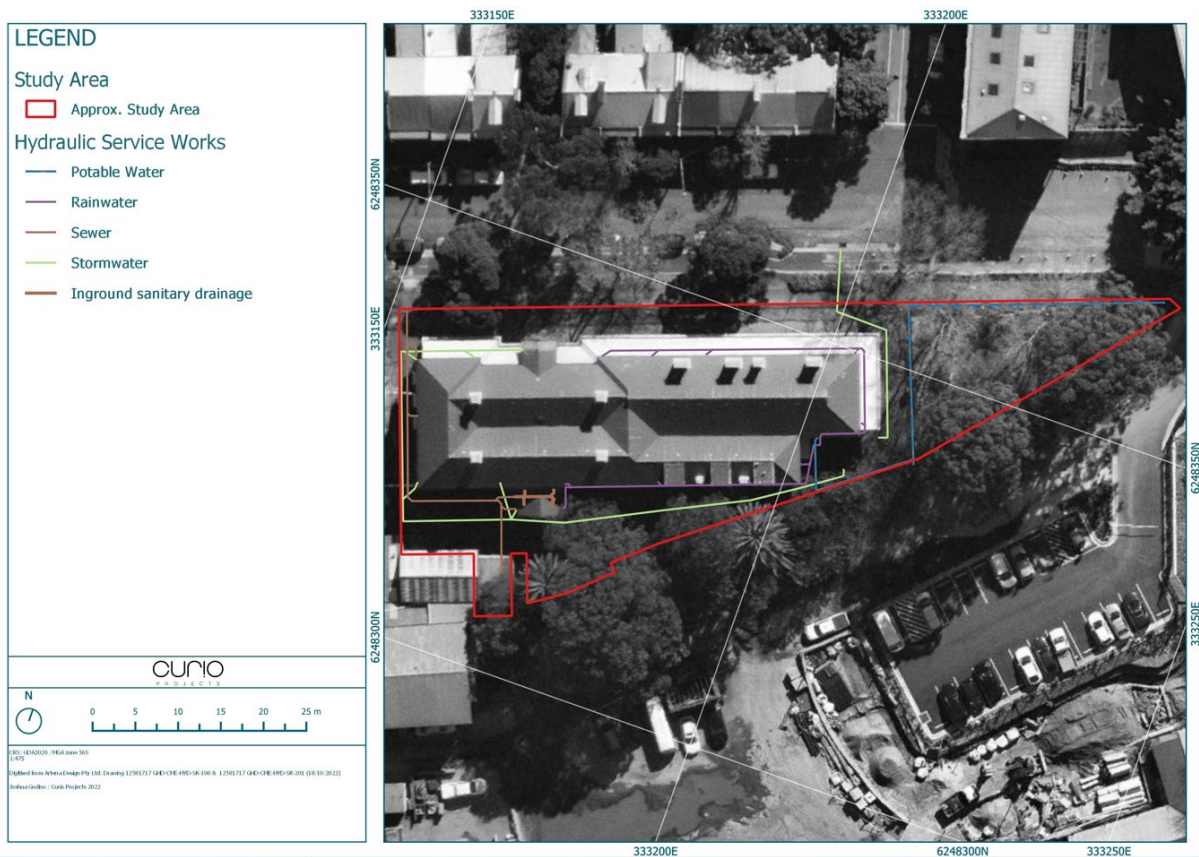


Figure 2-4: Hydraulic services scope of work

2.1.8. Mechanical Services

The scope of work for mechanical services (Figure 2-5) comprises:

- Leveling of asphalt to allow building air vents to be exposed along western and southern sides of CME building
- Trench for refrigerant pipework
- Outside air duct work



Figure 2-6: Summary of Proposed Works

2.2. Database Search

2.2.1. AHIMS Search

An extensive search of the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) database was undertaken on 5 August 2022, centred on the study area from Lat, Long -33.9032,151.1779 to Lat, Long -33.8854,151.2088 (client service ID: 706164), and returned 7 results. The extensive AHIMS search is attached to this report as Appendix A. One registered site was located within the study area.

AHIMS search results always require a certain amount of scrutiny in order to acknowledge and accommodate for things such as inconsistencies in the coordinates (differing datums between years of recording), the existence of and impact to registered sites (impact to a registered site technically requires the submission of a Heritage Impact Recording form to be submitted to Heritage NSW, however, these forms are not always submitted), and other database related difficulties. It should also be noted that the AHIMS database is a record of archaeological work that has been undertaken and registered with Heritage NSW in the region.

Summary descriptions of Aboriginal site features registered on AHIMS, as relevant to the study area, are presented in Table 2.2. The 7 registered sites from the AHIMS search included 4 site types (Artefact, Potential Artefact Deposit (PAD), Shell and Aboriginal Resource and Gathering sites), as summarised in Table 2.3. The general distribution of each of these registered sites in relation to the study area is also depicted in Table 2.3. The most common AHIMS site types in the area are PAD sites (n=3), followed by Artefact sites (n=2). The closest registered site is a PAD that is located within the boundary of the study area (AHIMS ID# 45-6-4050 RNE-PAD01).

The AHIMS database is a reflection of recorded archaeological work, the need for which is usually triggered by development, and therefore an AHIMS search alone is not a representation of the actual archaeological potential of the search area. AHIMS searches should be used as a starting point for further research and not as a definitive, final set of data.

Table 2.2: Description of Site Features Found in the Area.

Site Feature	Description
Aboriginal Resource and Gathering	A location or area that would have been a rich source of resources for Aboriginal communities to gather from and archaeological evidence is found in an accumulation or deposit.
Artefact	Artefact sites consist of objects such as stone tools, and associated flaked materials, spears, manuports, grindstones, discarded stone flakes, modified glass or shells demonstrating physical evidence of use of an area by Aboriginal people. Registered artefact sites can range from isolated finds to large extensive open camp sites and artefact scatters. Artefacts can be located either on the ground surface or in the subsurface archaeological context.
Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD)	An area where Aboriginal cultural material such as stone artefacts, hearths, middens etc. may be present in a subsurface capacity.
Shell	A shell midden site is an accumulation or deposit of shellfish resulting from Aboriginal gathering and consumption of shellfish from marine, estuarine or freshwater environments. A shell midden site may be found in association with other objects like stone tools, faunal remains such as fish or mammal bones, charcoal, fireplaces/hearth, and occasionally burials. Shell midden sites are often located on elevated, dry ground close to the environment from

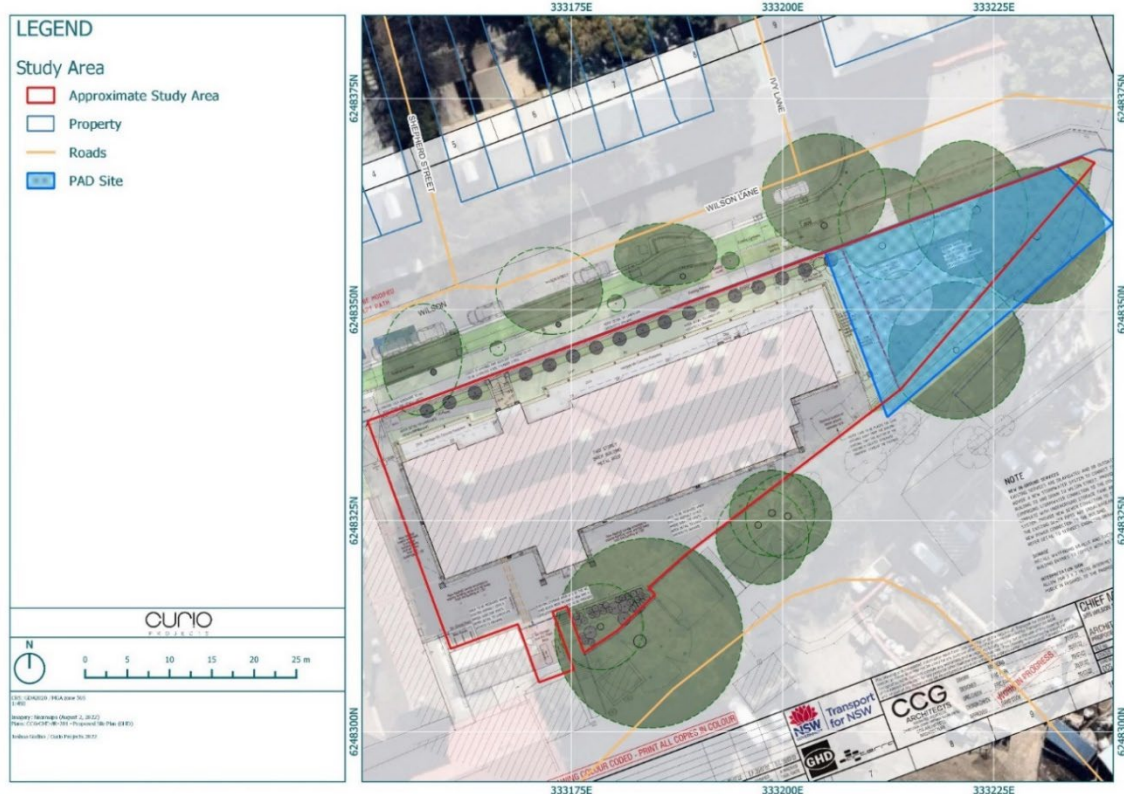


Figure 2.8: Close up of RNE-PAD01 within the study area
Source: Curio 2022

2.3. Environmental Context

The physical setting of an area, including its natural resources, landforms, and wider landscape setting, has a significant influence on the nature, location, and form of Aboriginal occupation, usage patterns and interactions with the land. The physical context, therefore, dictates and influences the locations and forms of tangible values and physical sites that main remain across the landscape. The physical setting of a location also provides meaningful landscape context for intangible heritage and connection to Country.

2.3.1. Geology and Soils

The geology and soils of a locale can provide information for the prediction and modelling of the nature and positioning of potential Aboriginal sites. For example, soil types capable of supporting vegetation/flora resources of importance to Aboriginal people (and the corresponding faunal resources that would utilise the vegetation), may provide clues to indicate Aboriginal use and occupation across the landscape.

The study area is situated within the large geological feature known as the Sydney Basin, which spans from Batemans Bay to the south, Newcastle to the north and Lithgow to the west. The geology of this feature consists of Quaternary units (250 million years ago to present) overlying sandstone and shale. The study area is underlain by Hawksbury Sandstone, which is capped by Ashfield Shale (a part of the Wianamatta Group) and consists of black to dark grey shale and laminate. One of the varieties of soils found across the Ashfield Shale includes the Blacktown soils landscape, in which the study area is situated.

Soils on the Blacktown landscape are generally shallow to moderately deep (>100cm) hard-setting clay loam on plastic, mottled clay¹. Soils within this landscape can be subject to moderate erodibility where they have higher fine sand and silt content. Figure 2.9 shows a cross-section of the Blacktown soil landscape, with shallower soils on the hillcrests grading to deeper soils on the slopes. They generally have poor fertility and are poorly drained. Potential archaeological material is typically located within the upper friable dark brown loamy A1 unit (bt1) of the Blacktown soil, as deeper layers are made up of denser clays and are generally sterile of archaeological material.

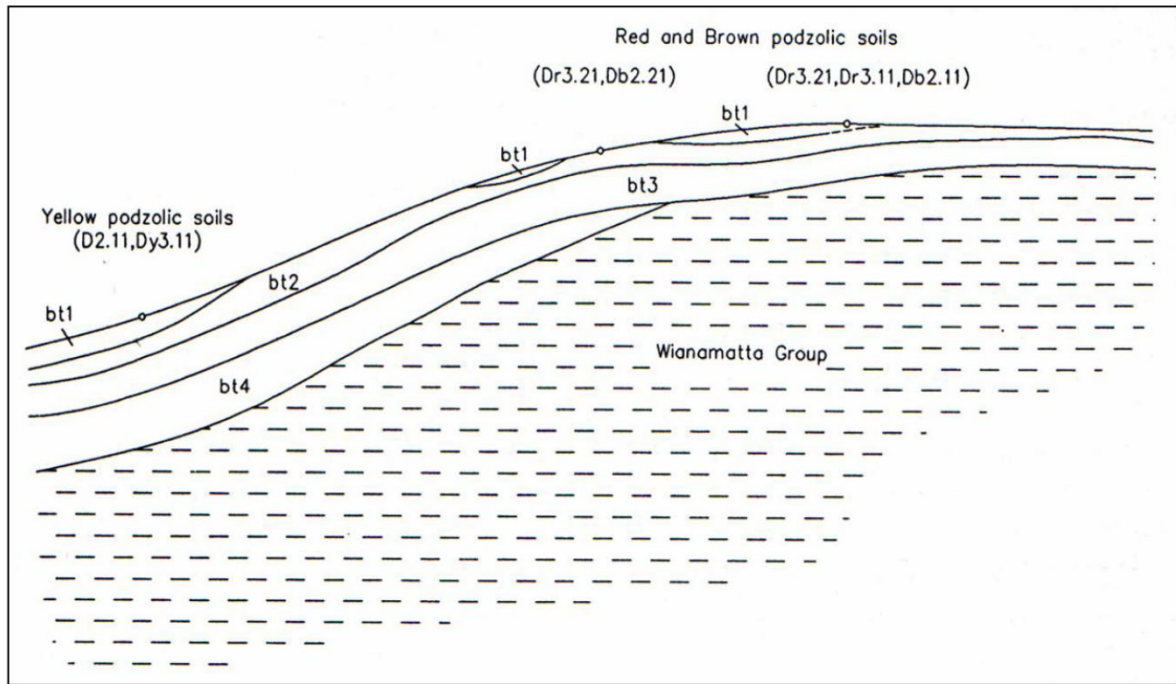


Figure 2.9: Distribution of the Blacktown soil landscape showing the occurrence and relationship of dominate soil materials
Source: eSPADE

¹ Bannerman & Hazelton, 1990.



Figure 2.10: Map and Soils Landscapes
Source: Curio 2022

2.3.2. Hydrology, Landscape and Landforms

Water availability and topography are recognised factors that can aid in the predictive modelling of the patterns of life and movement of Aboriginal communities prior to the invasion. An understanding of natural hydrology, landscapes and landform patterning can provide information regarding potential resources that would have been available in the local area.

The study area is a predominantly level or gently sloping landform at the base of a very mild rise to the northwest. Due to the higher ground/ridgeline that runs north-south from Central Station to Eveleigh, it is believed this may have been used as a natural Aboriginal walking track between locations across the landscape.²

The general landscape in which the study area is situated would have most likely been a rich source of natural resources. Several swamps and lesser waterways were present within the low-lying areas of the dune landscape around the Redfern and North Eveleigh areas. One such source was the Boxley's Lagoon swampland, thought to be located to the east of the study area, where Redfern Park is today. The study area is also located approximately 1.5km from the historical shoreline of Blackwattle Bay and 1.6km from the historical shoreline of Cockle Bay.

² Daniel, S., 2018, *Walking in their tracks: How Sydney's Aboriginal paths shaped the city*, ABC News, accessed at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-17/curious-sydney-aboriginal-pathways/9676076>

The closest watercourse to the study area would have been Blackwattle Creek within the Blackwattle Creek swamplands:

Historical mapping dated to 1865 shows one water course, the 'Black Wattle Swamp Creek' flowing slightly more than 200m northwest of the subject site. The Blackwattle Creek fed into the mouth of Blackwattle Bay and appears to have been a slow flowing waterbody with numerous ponds or marshes along its course.³

It is possible that the swampy Blackwattle Creek line in its clayey poorly drained Blacktown Soil surrounds may have acted as a deterrent for both long term Aboriginal residence and also against the choice of colonial settlement, particularly when the alternative of sandy dunes or rocky geology was available nearby.⁴

2.3.3. Vegetation and Fauna

An understanding of the original vegetation of an area provides information about the resources that such vegetation would have provided to Aboriginal people in the area, and would have influenced how different locations were accessed, used and visited. Vegetation can itself be a direct resource, such as tree bark for canoes, shields etc. or edible plants, or it can be an indirect resource, creating habitats for different animals for hunting.

Artefact's report (2022) notes that:

The local area was rich in natural resources due to its location at the intersection of several geomorphological features. To the south, across the current rail lines, a number of swamps and small waterlines were located within the low-lying areas of the undulating dune landform that extended southwards to the coast and Botany Bay. To the north, freshwater was abundant as several creeks fed into the natural coastline of both Blackwattle Bay and Cockle Bay. Cockle Bay was greatly utilized by Aboriginal people as a resource gathering location for shellfish and seafood as evidenced by the large shell middens encountered there by early colonists. Where these streams flowing into Cockle Bay met the littoral zone near the current site of Paddy's Market, a large freshwater swamp provided abundant waterfowl and fish. The Blackwattle Creek also flowed through Blackwattle Swamp into Blackwattle Bay, and the rocky foreshores of Blackwattle Bay likely also provided a rich source of shellfish. Historical sources suggest there was also a large swamp to the east, where Redfern Park is today, known as Boxley's Lagoon.

The landscape around the subject site would have included vegetation such as the Sydney red gum, red bloodwood and Sydney peppermint, brown stringybark, broadleaved scribbly gum, grass trees and banksia. Various plant species within the area supplied food, seeds, nectars, fruits, roots and tubers to the local Aboriginal community. Species of native lilies with small tuberous roots were collected and eaten. The flower-cones of the banksia were soaked in water in bark or wooden containers to extract the nectar to make sweet drinks. The hearts of the grass trees stems were eaten and the nectar from the spike flowers was also collected and eaten. They could also be utilised for making tools such as spears, shafts and handles for stone implements, as well as carrying vessels of bark and woven fibre, digging sticks

³ Artefact Heritage, 2022, Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study.

⁴ Artefact Heritage, 2022, Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study.

and a variety of other items utilitarian and non-utilitarian. The dry flower-stems of the grass trees were used for spears.

An abundance of native animals also occupied the subject site, utilised by the Gadigal for food and resources. Materials sourced from mammals such as kangaroos, wallabies and possums were eaten and processed for tool making. For example, tail sinews are known to have been used as a fastening cord, whilst 'bone points' which would have functioned as awls or piercers are an abundant part of the archaeological record.¹³ Ethnographic observations from early colonists noted that Aboriginal people used animal claws, talons, bone, skin, teeth, shell, fur and feathers for tools and non-utilitarian functions

2.3.4. Modern Land Use and Disturbance

Early sources of the study area such as a map from 1865, indicate that it was an undeveloped area but was located immediately adjacent to the grounds of the large 'Calder House' Estate.

Two decades later, by the 1880s, the site had been significantly developed with built rail infrastructure. Several large solid brick and iron and brick structures were built across the RNE precinct during this time, with the CME Building listed as being constructed in 1887.

The following information about the history and development of the CME building has been drawn from the previous Curio 2022 RNE Non-Aboriginal Heritage Study for the precinct:⁵

The Chief Mechanical Engineer's Office (CME Building) was constructed in 1887 along Wilson Street in the north-eastern corner of the Eveleigh Carriage Workshops site. The CME building housed the offices of the Chief Mechanical Engineer, under whose supervision the entire ERW operated. Eveleigh's first 'Chief Mechanical Engineer' was William Thow, appointed in 1889. Initially known as the "Locomotive Engineer's Offices', the CME building was described in the 1881 Annual Report as:

"On the western side of the main lines will be situated- Locomotive Engineers' Offices, a two-storey building, 100 feet x 50 feet, containing offices for the Locomotive Engineer, Locomotive Overseer, Locomotive Inspector and the professional and clerical staff, in connection with the department. From the position of the building, it commands a good view of the whole of the yard."⁶

The original 1887 form of the CME Building was as a large two storey brick building surrounded by a bull-nosed verandah on three sides supported by cast-iron columns with iron lace friezes for the capital brackets and iron lace balustrades. The 1887 building had a hipped single gable corrugated iron roof, sandstone window sills, and an entrance portico to Wilson Street with a triangular pediment inscribed with the date '1887'. In the early function of the CME Building, the Building itself was used as the offices of the Chief Mechanical Engineer and staff, while the nearby remnant Calder House was used as a residence for the Chief Mechanical Engineer.⁷

Figure 3.15 displays the three main stages of construction of the CME building. The first being the initial stage of construction in 1887 with the main entrance way facing

⁵ Curio, 2022, *RNE Precinct Renewal – Paint Shop Sub-Precinct Non-Aboriginal Heritage Study*. Prepared for Transport for NSW

⁶ Railways and Tramways of NSW Annual Report, 1881

⁷ Godden 1990

Wilson Street, followed by a north eastern extension in 1900. By 1920, the last main stage of construction of the building had been completed, consisting of an addition to the south eastern corner of the building and a more established back exit along the southern façade of the building.

The CME building continued to house and provide offices for the engineers, overseers, inspectors and professional clerical staff of ERW until its closure with the workshops in 1989.⁸ The CME building underwent numerous modifications, likely keeping up with the Eveleigh Workshops growth and continued expansion. Externally, the original structure was mostly unaltered since the 1920s and still includes the original 1887, 1900 and 1920 structural phases.

Modifications undertaken to the CME building as outlined in the 1997 CMP have included:

- Modifications to ceilings*
- Introduction of partition walls*
- Balcony enclosures subsequently reversed*
- Fireplaces boarded up and surrounds removed*
- Original office joinery removed*
- Original sanitary fittings removed (not all)*
- Addition of sundry electrical items and chasing*
- Internet and external paint colours modified*
- Internal floor finishes modified*
- Introduction of reverse cycle air conditioning units*
- Introduction of fluorescent lighting*
- Introduction of hydraulic fixtures including laboratory equipment*

Internally, although the buildings have been altered a number of times with new offices and modern ceilings, some original elements remain.

The original external heritage fabric has been maintained except for an addition to the building in 1900 which was grafted onto the eastern wall of the building meaning partial demolition of the brickwork, roof and balcony.

The gardens to the east of the building were well maintained during the mid to late 20th century. The 1997 CMP quotes Chris Betteridge's 1997 report describing the condition of the garden east of the CME building in 1997 as:

The present garden at the Chief Mechanical Engineer's Building is a triangular area approximately 375 square metres, laid down to lawn, with garden beds around its periphery. The space tapers towards its north eastern corner where an entrance drive from Wilson Street enters. The street side of the garden is boarded with a recent steel picket fence in heritage green.

Along the street side of the garden are (sic) planted London Plan trees at 5 metre centres. These trees have been bollarded and are underplanted with various shrubs including hydrangeas, Michelia figo (Portwine Magnolia),

⁸ Rappaport & Caldis Cook Group 1997

variegated Celtis sp. And seedlings of Canary Island Date Palm (Phoenix canariensis). The row of planes extend westwards along the northern façade of the building and there are planes also planted in Wilson Street.

There is a narrow garden bed along the edge of the area under the eastern balcony of the CME building which has been paved with interlock pavers. This bed has haphazard planting of Nandina domestica, Chlorophytum sp. And a self- sown loquat.

Along the southern edge of the triangular lawn is a bed planted with Agapanthus africanus at 50cm centres and irregular plantings of native shrubs e.g., Grevillea cultuivars and of Cordyline sp. To the south of this bed is a pedestrian path leading to the rear of the CME building. Adjoining this path is a embankment planted with eucalyptus, acacias, a Silky Oak (Grevillea robusta) and Celtis sp. Under these trees are shrubs of Nerium oleander (Oleander), Hibiscus rosa-senensis (Hibiscus, Ochna serrulate (Micky Mouse Plant) and Westringia sp.

In the centre of the lawn area is a circular bed edged with volcanic rock and planted with an unidentified tree about 5 metres high with variegated leaves, a Murraya paniculate 3-4 metres high, a bottlebrush, a white cedar, albizzia, a pomegranate and an azalea, all canariensis probably planted in the 1920s, a large camphor Laurel (Cinnamomum camphora) and several self-sown camphor laurel and a Celtis.

East of the CME building, leading to Redfern No.1 Platform, a path winds between an assortment of buildings. A steep bank to the north of these buildings is densely clothed with loquat, Moreton Bay Fig, Jacaranda sp., Casaurina sp. And Plumbago sp. The environs of these disused buildings are infested heavily with weeds including Conyza sp., Hedera helix (English Ivy), Tradescantia sp., Araujia sp., Parietaria sp. (Allergy Weed), Saffron Thistle.⁹

A toilet block/outhouse is shown in the original 1887 drawings is located south of the CME Building. The toilet block underwent modifications and additions during the 1920s and the original toilet block was potentially demolished during this period. The structure served occupants at both the CME Building and the Scientific Services Buildings.

The various phases of development across the study area as illustrated above indicate that the natural soil landscape, particularly within the CME building footprint is likely to have been subject to significant disturbances.

⁹ Musecape Pty Ltd, 1997, *The Railway Gardens of Sydney- An Inspirational Visit to Redfern Station and Eveleigh*



Figure 2.11: Eastern elevation – CME Building, entrance driveway and gardens c.1950
Source: Rappaport 1997



Figure 2.12: Ground floor plan of the CME Building showing the three main phases of construction.
Source: Curio 2022

2.3.5. Summary of Environmental Context

The environmental context of an area is an important asset when it comes to understanding site formation processes and archaeological potential. The key points that describe the environmental context of the CME study area are summarised as follows:

- The study area is located within the Blacktown soil landscape overlying Ashfield Shale geology. Blacktown soils are typically shallow to moderately deep duplex residual soils consisting of hard-setting clay loam overlaying plastic, mottled clay.
- Blacktown soils typically don't contain rock shelters or softer sands and become swamped with water after heavy rainfall.
- The study area is located 1.5km from the historical shoreline of Blackwattle Bay, and 1.6km from the historical shoreline at Cockle Bay.
- The study area is not located in immediate proximity to any major water sources and would likely have been used only as a transitory location for access to more reliable marine resources at Cockle Bay or Blackwattle Bay or for short-term occupation.
- The study area has undergone various disturbances, including widespread surface levelling, development and demolition in relation to the construction and use of the CME Building, as well as the wider Locomotive Precinct.

2.4. Aboriginal Archaeological Context

A review of relevant previous archaeological work is a highly informative and necessary step in identifying the likely nature of the potential archaeology at a site. An investigation of previous work undertaken in the region, or on similar landscapes or landforms can inform our understanding of a site by providing a proxy against which a newly investigated site can be measured (albeit with caution). That is to say, understanding the archaeological record at a general location can provide an indication of the nature and level of potential of archaeology that may be present at a site, prior to any subsurface investigation. As archaeology is by its very nature a destructive discipline, it is important to acquire as much information and understanding of a site as possible prior to undertaking fieldwork (as once evidence has been excavated, its context is effectively destroyed), and also to avoid any unnecessary fieldwork at a site.

Research into archaeological investigation in proximity to the current study area has the ability to indicate the types of archaeology that may survive in the area and the environment that has allowed it to survive.

While no known Aboriginal archaeological excavations have been undertaken previously within the study area or immediate surrounds, information regarding the likelihood and potential nature of archaeology that may be present within the study area can be extrapolated from results of archaeological assessments and excavations previously undertaken across the wider region. The following section discusses several key previous assessments of relevance that have been undertaken within the wider region.

2.4.1. Past Investigations

Broadway and Mountain Street Development Site, Sydney (Dominic Steele 2001)¹⁰

A block bounded by Broadway and Mountain Streets, and Smail and Blackwattle Lanes (approximately 990m from the study area), and adjacent to the Blackwattle sewer and stormwater system was assessed for its archaeological potential due to being located nearby to the original Blackwattle Creek. Previous geotechnical investigations revealed 1.7 to 3.1m of fill across the site

¹⁰ Steele, D., 2001, *Broadway and Mountain Streets Sydney*.

estimated to have been deposited there around 1910. It was determined that historical impacts would have likely affected the potential of the area, resulting in low potential. The site is located on the border of the Blacktown soil landscape and Disturbed Terrain. The geotechnical study and desktop assessment of the site are consistent with the soil landscape of the area.

Quadrant Development Site, Broadway and Mountain Streets, Sydney (Steele & Czastka 2003)¹¹

Archaeological investigations were undertaken at the Broadway and Mountain Streets site, named 'the Quadrant Site', in 2003 (desktop assessment referenced above). Several 1mx1m test pits were dug along the estimated creek bank of the old Blackwattle Creek and surrounding upslope. Remnant topsoil was found during the excavation and a 5mx15m was further tested, with 14 non-diagnostic Aboriginal flaked stone artefacts recovered. It was suggested that the low quantities of archaeological material found were due to the poorly drained nature of the Blackwattle Creek landscape. Based on the evidence found at the site, it was predicted that the area would have unlikely been an area for long-term Aboriginal occupation due to its lower-lying and poorly drained nature. It would be more likely that higher elevations around the site on Hawkesbury Sandstone away from the creek line and swamp would be more favourable for Aboriginal occupation and use.

The site is located approximately 990m from the study area and at a lower topography in comparison. The Quadrant site is situated at 5m above sea level while the CME study area is situated at 30-35m. Both are located within the Blacktown soil landscape.

Sydney University Campus, Maze Green Test Excavations (JMCHM 2005)¹²

The Maze Green within the Sydney University Campus was identified as having moderate archaeological potential due to its proximity to Blackwattle Creek and apparent low levels of disturbance. A test excavation program was conducted and several test pits were dug to a depth of approximately 0.5m. A single flaked stone artefact was uncovered from the excavation, and it was concluded that the site was unlikely to have been a densely occupied space for Aboriginal communities. This site is located on the Blacktown soil landscape and situated approximately 464m from the study area.

Sydney University Campus, Central Site Test Excavations (JMCHM 2006)¹³

The proposed new Central Building on the southern side of the University of Sydney required a test excavation program prior to its construction due to its identification of holding low to moderate archaeological potential due to it being located within the upper reaches of the Blackwattle Creek drainage catchment. Like the CME study area, the proposed Central Building sits upon the same Ashfield Shale (within the Blacktown soils) geological context. The original land surface was uncovered beneath 0-0.5m of fill and building material. The excavation revealed that the A horizon had been significantly disturbed by past activities, and only one silicified tuff stone artefact was recovered at the site. It was recommended that no further archaeological works were required for the site. This site is located on the Blacktown soil landscape and situated approximately 480m from the study area.

¹¹ Steele, D. & Czastka, J., 2003, *Final Aboriginal Archaeological Excavation Report, Quadrant Development Site, Broadway and Mountain Streets Sydney NSW*.

¹² JMCHM, 2005, *Sydney University Campus 2010: Test Excavations at the Law Building Site, Camperdown Campus; and at Maze Green, the Old Darlington School, Darlington Campus*. Prepared for Capital Insight.

¹³ JMCHM, 2006, *Sydney University Campus 2010: Test Excavations at the university of Sydney, Central Site, Darlington Campus*. Prepared for Capital Insight.

North Eveleigh Site (Paul Irish 2008)¹⁴

A portion of the North Eveleigh precinct, towards the southern side of Wilson Street and between two residential buildings, had never been subject to significant bulk excavation during the construction of the railway. An archaeological testing program revealed that the area was still significantly disturbed regardless of the lack of past bulk earthworks. The horizon A soils of the Blacktown soil landscape that contains Aboriginal cultural material had already been removed during the historical development of the area. No potential for subsurface artefacts remained. This investigation does not include the CME study area.

Central Station Main Works (Artefact Heritage 2019-2020)¹⁵

Artefact Heritage ran an archaeological test excavation program at Central Station across areas where geotechnical testing indicated that there were remnant sand deposits. Fourteen artefacts were located during the excavation, with 4 being retrieved from an intact archaeological context and the other 10 from disturbed contexts. Central Station is located approximately 1.4km from the study area and situated on the border of Blacktown, Deep Creek and Lucas Heights soil landscapes.

Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal (Artefact 2022)¹⁶

Artefact prepared an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Report (ACHAR) for the RNE precinct, focusing on the Paint Shop Sub precinct, with the CME Building present within the report's study area of the site. As a part of the study, the report identified a PAD site (AHIMS ID 45-6-4050 RNE-PAD01) within the boundary of the CME study area. The report states:

RNE-PAD001 does not appear to have been subject to impacts other than possible landscaping, and it is likely that this landscaping has been additive in nature.

The Chief Mechanical Engineer's Building was constructed in 1887 at a time when excavation for footings of a Victorian structure such as this would certainly have been undertaken manually and almost certainly been constrained to the footprint of foundations and service trenches.

There does not appear to be sufficient evidence to state that construction of the Chief Mechanical Engineer's Building will have resulted in significant disturbance let alone soil removal to the majority of RNEP-PAD001. Rather, the only likely soil disturbance present in RNEP-PAD001 is the "garden landscaping east of the Chief Mechanical Engineers Building. No evidence was observed to suggest that this landscaping was of a reductive nature that would significantly disturb local soils. The current ground surface in RNEP-PAD001 is approximately 400mm higher than the adjacent paving of Wilson Street. If it is the case that landscaping in RNEP-PAD001 has entailed building up natural ground surfaces, then the potential exists for natural and archaeologically sensitive local soils to be preserved beneath these introduced soils.

2.5. Desktop Assessment

2.5.1. Aboriginal Archaeological Predictive Model and Potential

¹⁴ Irish, P., 2008, *Preliminary Aboriginal Heritage Assessment: Two Portions of the North Eveleigh Site (Part Lot 4 in DP 862514) Redfern NSW*.

¹⁵ Artefact Heritage, 2020, *Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study*.

¹⁶ Artefact Heritage, 2022, *Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study*.

Predictive modelling plays an important role in understanding the remnant archaeological potential of a site, and thus factors into the development of appropriate management recommendations and mitigation strategies. Archaeological predictive modelling integrates information about environmental context, previous historical activities and ground disturbance, and known locations of surrounding sites (excavations and registered AHIMS sites) to assess and predict the nature of archaeology that may be present within the study area.

The following assessment of Aboriginal archaeological potential within the study area is based on a combination of the environmental assessment, including original landform, possible levels of disturbance across the site, and original resources that would have been favourable to, or sustained local Aboriginal populations of the area prior to European settlement, in combination with known previous archaeological research in the vicinity of the study area, or on comparable sites across Sydney and NSW. Consideration of these above factors determines the likelihood for Aboriginal archaeological deposits, artefacts or sites to remain within the study area.

For Aboriginal archaeological sites to be present in situ, they require the retention of natural soil profiles prior to 1788. Portions of the study area that may have the highest potential for natural soils to be present (and corresponding potential for intact Aboriginal archaeological deposits) are areas where the lowest levels of historical development and excavation have been undertaken.

In consideration of all these above factors across the study area, the following predictive model has been developed:

- Landforms within the Blacktown soil landscape have the potential to contain Aboriginal archaeological deposits, however, this greatly diminishes when urbanisation and development have occurred.
- The most likely site type in the area would be PADs or low-density artefact sites.
- The study area is not considered to be situated in an area likely to be directly favoured for resources as locations in comparison to locations closer to the coast, although it may still have been utilised by Aboriginal people for transitory or sporadic use.
- The Blacktown soils in this area are deemed to be shallow, so historical disturbances associated with land clearance and building construction are likely to have impacted any potential subsurface archaeological resources.

2.5.2. Summary of Desktop Assessment

This desktop assessment has concluded that:

- The study area has one known registered PAD site within its boundary.
- The wider area does not consist of large numbers of previously registered Aboriginal sites, but this may be representative of limited archaeological survey or investigations rather than scarcity of sites.
- PAD and low-density artefact sites are the most common site types within the boundaries of the AHIMS search.
- The study area is not considered to be situated in an area likely to be favoured for resources used by Aboriginal communities and therefore is less likely to be a place of continuous or high-density use or occupation.

- The site has been subject to varying levels of ground disturbance, significantly reducing archaeological potential.
- The study area has nil to low potential to contain subsurface Aboriginal objects within the footprint of the CME Building, but has with localised potential in the location of the registered PAD site

3. Physical Analysis

3. Physical Analysis

3.1. The Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct

The RNE Precinct is delineated to the north by Wilson Street and to the south by the railway corridor.

3.2. The Chief Mechanical Engineers Building

The CME building is located along Wilson Street in the north-western corner of the Paint Shop Sub-Precinct and immediately to the east of the Scientific Services Building No. 1 (Figure 3.1).

The CME Building is a two-storey brick building with a bullnose verandah on three sides with cast-iron columns, iron lace friezes and iron lace balustrades (Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4). The building has been modified and extended numerous times since its initial construction in 1887.

To the east of the CME Building is an area originally reserved for gardens, which is currently unkempt and contains several mature trees in association with the CME Building (Figure 3.9, Figure 3.10, Figure 3.14 and Figure 3.19). The eastern garden area ground surface is 20-30cm higher than the Wilson Street level (Figure 3.11 and Figure 3.12) which appears to have been cut down during the road construction.

Located along the eastern boundary of the CME building gardens is a private vehicular accessway which would have been one of the main pedestrian thoroughfares for the Eveleigh railway workers moving north to south across the site and connected to the bridge (Figure 3.13).

Modern security fencing has been constructed around the perimeter of the CME Building, dividing the original garden area from the building along its eastern elevation (Figure 3.7, Figure 3.11, Figure 3.12 and Figure 3.17).

A below-floor inspection underneath the CME building was conducted in 2017 by Timber Inspection.¹⁷ This identified that there is limited clearance below the ground-floor level and the soil surface and that the original ground level was largely unimpacted by the construction of the CME (Figure 3.16 and Figure 3.18).



Figure 3.1: The study area in red, with the CME building in green and the Scientific Services building indicated in blue.
Source: EthosUrban 2022 with Curio markup

¹⁷ Timber Inspection, 2017, *Termite Inspection Chief Mechanical Engineers Building*, Report for OCP Architects



Figure 3.2: View south-west of the Chief Mechanical Engineer's office from Wilson Street



Figure 3.3: Front door of CME Building along Wilson Street



Figure 3.4: Western corner of CME Building including western façade and northern first level terrace (Source:



Figure 3.5: View southeast of the northern façade and verandah of the CME Building along Wilson Street and CME gardens



Figure 3.6: CME Exterior view north of the southern and western building façades



Figure 3.7: Southwestern view along southern façade, modern security fence along the CME curtilage in left of image



Figure 3.8: View west across the southern façade of the CME Building. Scientific Services Building No.1 visible in the background



Figure 3.9: Area east of the CME Building, once associated gardens were originally located

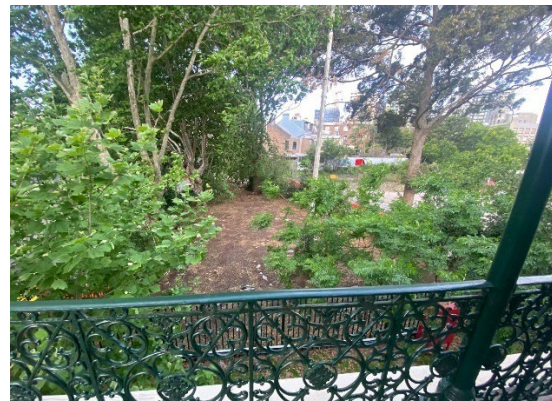


Figure 3.10: North-eastern view of CME gardens and flag pole from the first-floor verandah



Figure 3.11: Southern view of the CME Building Gardens along Wilson Street



Figure 3.12: The north-eastern corner of the Paint Shop Sub-Precinct at the corner of Wilson and Eveleigh Streets, view north

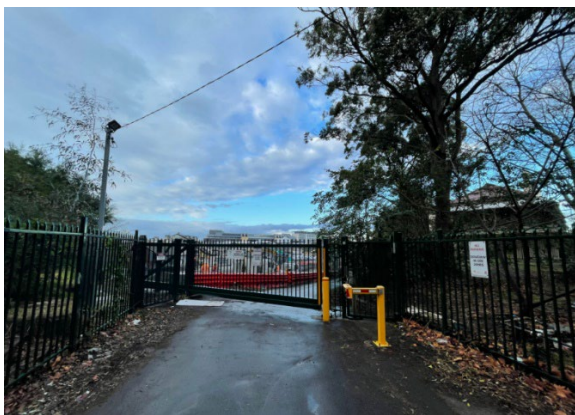


Figure 3.13: Driveway and vehicular access point to the CME Building at the eastern boundary of the Paint Shop Sub-Precinct



Figure 3.14: North-western view facing towards the CME building from railway level

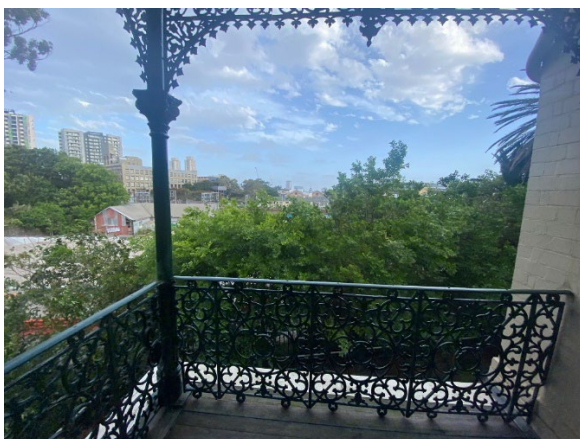


Figure 3.15: View from CME Building level one verandah along eastern façade facing south toward South Eveleigh



Figure 3.17: Northern view of security fence between the CME Building and gardens



Figure 3.16: Detail of underfloor. (Source: Timber Inspection 2017)



Figure 3.18: Detail of underfloor. (Source: Timber Inspection 2017)



Figure 3.19: View to eastern elevation of CME Building, area of original gardens now mostly bare in foreground

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage, as well as the proposed plans, the proposed works have been found to have the potential to impact to Aboriginal objects and cultural values within the study area. As there is a registered Aboriginal site situated within the study area, a comprehensive assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the form of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) is recommended.

Aboriginal archaeology and cultural heritage values should be considered when developing the proposed works for the CME Building. Especially taking into consideration the registered Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD) site situated within the boundary of the study area. Below are the conclusions and recommendations in terms of Aboriginal archaeology:

Conclusions

- The study area is located within the Blacktown soil landscape.
- The study area has one known registered Aboriginal site within its boundary.
- PAD and low-density artefact sites are the most common site types within the boundaries of the AHIMS search.
- The wider area does not consist of large numbers of previously registered Aboriginal sites, with the closest registered site being a PAD within the boundaries of the study area, east of the CME study area.
- The site has been subject to varying levels of ground disturbance, significantly reducing archaeological potential.
- The study area has nil to low potential to contain subsurface Aboriginal objects within the footprint of the CME Building, but has with localised potential in the location of the registered PAD site

Recommendations

- As per the recommendations of Artefact 2022, an ACHAR will be required to assess potential impact to the RNE-PAD01 (AHIMS ID 45-6-4050) area
- An unexpected finds procedure should be developed for works within the CME building footprint and implemented for use throughout the life of the Project.
- Should any suspected Aboriginal objects be identified during development, works should cease immediately, and the unexpected finds procedure be implemented.

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