



# 93–107 Cecil Avenue and 9–10 Roger Avenue, Castle Hill

Historical Archaeological Assessment

Report prepared for Alton Property, December 2024

**GNL**  
HERITAGE

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

We respect and acknowledge the First Nations of the lands and waterways on which we live and work, their rich cultural heritage and their deep connection to Country, and we acknowledge their Elders past and present. We are committed to truth-telling and to engaging with First Nations to support the protection of their culture and heritage. We strongly advocate social, cultural and political justice and support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

# Report register

The following report register documents the development of this report, in accordance with GML’s Quality Management System.

Project	Issue No.	Notes/Description	Issue Date
24-0308	1	Draft Report	7 November 2024
	2	Final Report	6 December 2024

## Quality management

The report has been reviewed and approved for issue in accordance with the GML quality assurance policy and procedures.

It aligns with best-practice heritage conservation and management, *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* and heritage and environmental legislation and guidelines relevant to the subject place.

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## Cover image

View toward 101A Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill.  
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# Executive summary

This historical archaeological assessment has been prepared to accompany a detailed State Significant Development Application for the residential development proposal located at 93–107 Cecil Avenue and 9–10 Roger Avenue, Castle Hill.

Documentary evidence suggests that the site was largely undeveloped until the construction of the extant properties during the twentieth century, and largely from the mid-twentieth century until present. Overall, there is a low potential for historical archaeological remains prior to the development of the individual allotments in the early twentieth century. Potential archaeological remains are not considered to meet the threshold for local significance.

The proposed development includes bulk excavation and ground disturbing activities across almost the entire site. Given the low potential for significant historical archaeological remains within the site, these works are unlikely to impact archaeological 'relics'. No further historical archaeological investigations are recommended, and the implementation of an Unexpected Heritage Finds procedure would be appropriate for the proposed development.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Project background

A mixed use residential and commercial development is proposed for the site located at 93–107 Cecil Avenue and 9–10 Roger Avenue, Castle Hill. A State Significant Development Application (SSDA) is being prepared and development consent is sought for:

- site establishment and enabling works;
- excavation and ground works including retention, bulk excavation and in ground services works;
- construction of four separate mixed commercial/retail towers;
- construction of three basement levels across the whole site, with primary vehicular access for residents and visitors from lower Cecil Avenue; and
- associated landscaping across the site and streetscape improvements.

This historical archaeological assessment (HAA) has been prepared in response to the standard Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements and to accompany the SSDA. It assesses the site’s potential for archaeological ‘relics’ and the impact of the proposed development.

## 1.2 The site

### 1.2.1 Site location and context

The site is located within the Hills Shire local government area at 93–107 Cecil Avenue and 9–10 Roger Avenue, Castle Hill, and comprises a total area of 17623.60m<sup>2</sup>. The site is bounded by Cecil Avenue to the north, and Roger Avenue to the South. The site is located just over 500m to the south of Castle Hill Metro station. The surrounding local context of the site is shown in Figure 1.1.

### 1.2.2 Site description

The site is located at the corner of the intersection of Cecil Avenue and Terminus Street, along Cecil Avenue at the north side, with a frontage to the end of Roger Avenue at the south. The site is surrounded by residential lots, as well as the St Paul’s cemetery abutting part of the western perimeter. The site has a primary street frontage of 160m to Cecil Avenue to the north. The site comprises 18 existing properties, which are arranged in a mostly north-south configuration, except for the two properties fronting Roger Avenue. The legal description for each of these properties is provided in Table 1.1.

The configuration of properties within the site is shown in Figure 1.2. The topography of the site is characterised by a northwest to southeast sloping landform that declines by approximately 16.5m from the northwestern site boundary (RL 133) to the southeastern site boundary (RL 116.5).

Table 1.1 Legal description of the site.

Address	Legal description	Area (approx.)	Map reference (refer to Figure 1.2)
93 Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 27 DP 15399	1610m <sup>2</sup>	1
95 Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 22 DP 778595	800m <sup>2</sup>	2
95B Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 21 DP 778595	770m <sup>2</sup>	3
95A Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 6 DP 29141	1160m <sup>2</sup>	4
97 Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 6 DP 705913	815m <sup>2</sup>	5
97B Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 5 DP 705913	695m <sup>2</sup>	6
97A Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 5 DP29141	1180m <sup>2</sup>	7
99 Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 1 DP 581293	900m <sup>2</sup>	8
99A Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 3 DPP 581293	875m <sup>2</sup>	9
101 Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 2 DP581293	855m <sup>2</sup>	10
101A Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 4 DP 581293	850m <sup>2</sup>	11
103 Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 1 DP547897	780m <sup>2</sup>	12
103A Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 2 DP 547897	960m <sup>2</sup>	13
105 Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 1 DP 591676	790m <sup>2</sup>	14
105A Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 2 DP 591676	900m <sup>2</sup>	15
107 Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 20 DP 15399	1700m <sup>2</sup>	16
9 Roger Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 1 DP 531559	810m <sup>2</sup>	17
10 Roger Avenue, Castle Hill	Lot 4 DP531559	970m <sup>2</sup>	18

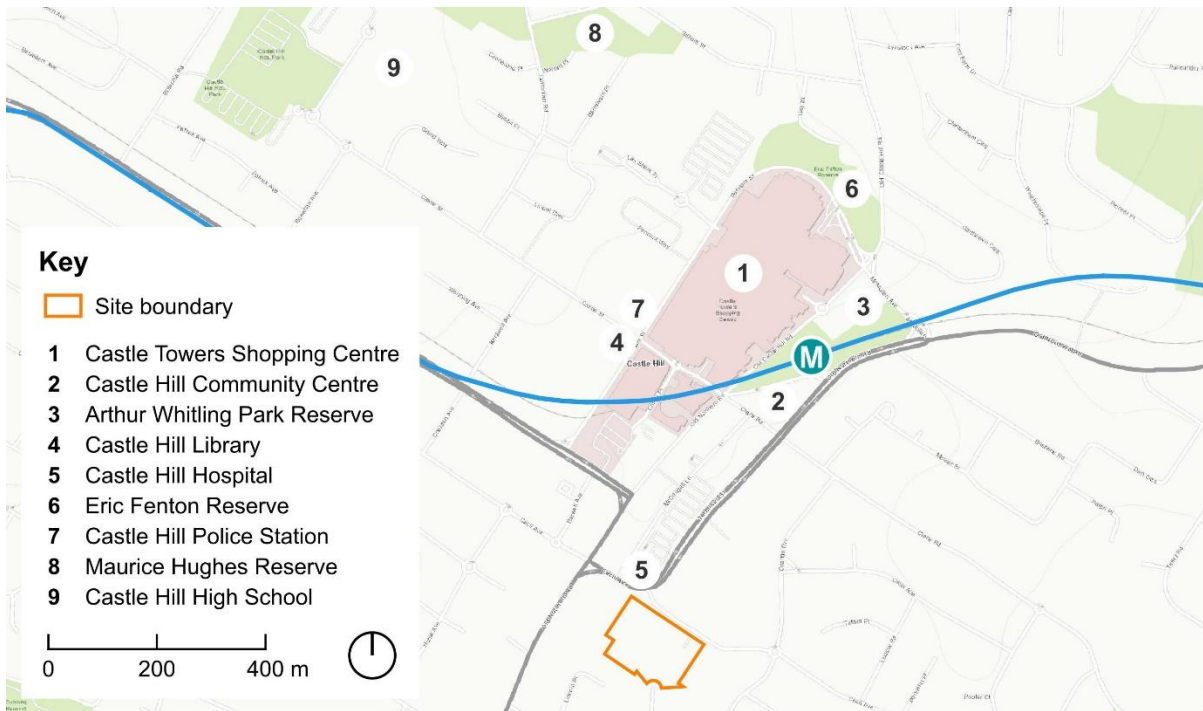


Figure 1.1 Local context. (Source Australian National Basemap with GML overlay)

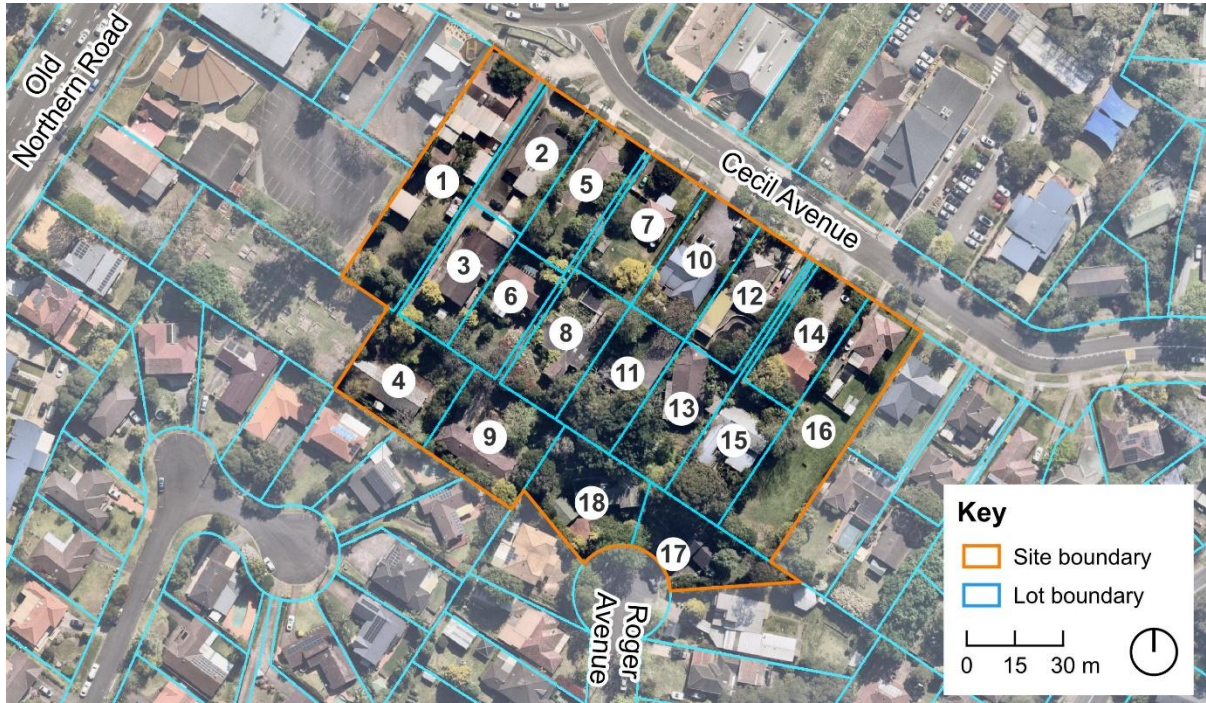


Figure 1.2 Site aerial. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)

## 1.3 Methodology

The following HAA identifies the potential historical (non-Aboriginal) archaeological resources of the site and assesses the significance of these remains. The report also provides recommendations to manage the development's potential impact to historical archaeology.

The aims of this report are to:

- understand the site's history from readily available historical sources;
- understand the current site conditions from a review of existing documentation;
- identify the archaeological context and comparative studies relevant to the site;
- identify the potential for historical archaeological remains within the site;
- assess the significance of the potential historical archaeological resources;
- assess the impact of the proposed development on that resource and identify mitigation measures;
- identify if any further archaeological investigations are required; and
- make recommendations regarding the management of archaeological resources for the proposed development.

The report has been prepared in accordance with a methodology and terminology that is consistent with the following documents and best practice guidelines:

- *Archaeological Assessments*;<sup>1</sup>
- *Assessing Significance for Historical Archaeological Sites and 'Relics'*; <sup>2</sup> and
- *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013* (the Burra Charter).<sup>3</sup>

## 1.4 Statutory context

In New South Wales (NSW), historical archaeological remains (referred to as 'relics' or 'objects') are afforded protection under the follow statutory controls:

- *Heritage Act 1977* (NSW) (the Heritage Act);
- *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NSW) (the NPW Act); and
- *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW) (the EPA Act).

### 1.4.1 NSW Heritage Act 1977 (NSW)

#### State Heritage Register

The State Heritage Register (SHR) was established under Section 22 of the Heritage Act. It comprises a list of identified heritage items determined to be of significance to the people of NSW. The SHR includes items and places such as buildings, works, archaeological relics, movable objects or precincts.

The site is not listed on the SHR.

## **Relics provisions**

Archaeological relics outside SHR curtilages are protected under the 'relics provisions' (Sections 139 to 146) of the Heritage Act.

The Heritage Act defines a 'relic' as any deposit, object or material evidence that:

- (a) Relates to the settlement of the area that comprises New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement, and
- (b) Is of State or local heritage significance.

Sections 139 to 145 of the Heritage Act prevent the excavation of a relic, except in accordance with an excavation permit (or an exemption from the need for a permit) issued by the Heritage Council of New South Wales.

Section 139 [1] of the Heritage Act states that:

A person must not disturb or excavate land 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 unless the disturbance or excavation is carried out in accordance with an excavation permit.

Approval under these provisions is required to impact or harm archaeological relics.

### **1.4.2 National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW)**

All Aboriginal objects and places receive statutory protection under the NPW Act. The NPW Act defines an Aboriginal object 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.

Under the Act, applicants must seek approval prior to disturbance of a site with the potential to contain Aboriginal objects or cultural material. Harming Aboriginal objects and harming or desecrating Aboriginal places is also a liability offence under the NPW Act. 'Harm' includes to destroy, deface, damage or move an Aboriginal object or declared Aboriginal place.

An assessment of the potential for the site to contain Aboriginal objects and places as defined by the NPW Act is not included in this report. This has been subject to a separate assessment (prepared by others).

### **1.4.3 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)**

The EPA Act provides a statutory framework for the determination of development proposals. It is administered by the NSW Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure and provides for the protection of local heritage items and conservation areas through listings on Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) which guide local councils in making planning decisions. The EPA Act requires that appropriate measures be taken for the management of archaeological resources and meet the requirements of the Heritage Act and NPW Act.

#### **The Hills Local Environment Plan 2019**

The Hills LEP 2019 is the principal environmental planning instrument applying to the land. Schedule 5 of the LEP identifies heritage items and heritage conservation areas. The objectives of Clause 5.10 are as follows:

- (a) to conserve the environmental heritage of the Hills,
- (b) to conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings and views,
- (c) to conserve archaeological sites,
- (d) to conserve Aboriginal objects and Aboriginal places of heritage significance.

The site is not currently listed as a heritage item, nor is it within a heritage conservation area. There are several heritage items in the immediate vicinity of the site that are included in The Hills LEP (Figure 1.3): The former 'St Paul's Anglican Church' located to the south of the site, listed on the SHR (00332) and LEP (Item I59); 'St Paul's Cemetery' located adjacent to the west of the site (Item I61); 'Christadelphian Church', located to the west of the site, fronting the east side of the Old Northern Road (Item I62); 'Wansbrough House', located to the southwest of the site (Item I60); 'Castle Hill House', located to the south of the site (Item I50); and, 'The Old Parsonage', also located to the south of the site (Item I58).

The impact assessment of the proposed development on these listed heritage items is subject to a separate report (prepared by others).

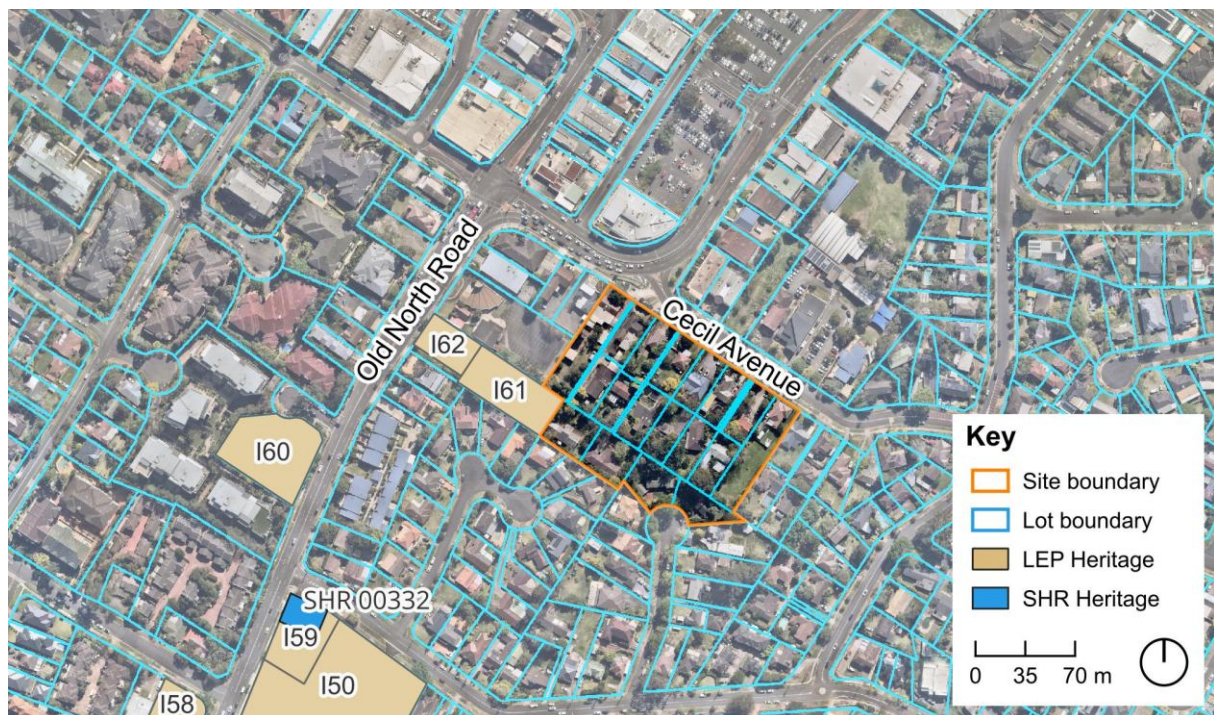


Figure 1.3 Heritage items in the vicinity of the site. (Source: Nearmap GML overlay 2024)

### 1.4.4 State significant development

The proposed mixed use residential development at 93–107 Cecil Avenue and 9–10 Roger Avenue, Castle Hill, is to be submitted as an SSDA. Projects declared SSD under Part 4 Division 4.7 of the EPA Act require heritage and archaeology to be managed in accordance with the project approval documents prepared as part of the application process, including Conditions of Approval (CoA) and Environmental Mitigation Measures. Archaeological permits under the Heritage Act are not required once development approval has been given for SSD projects.

## 1.5 Limitations

This report assesses the potential historical archaeological resources of the site only. It does not include an assessment of the built heritage or potential Aboriginal heritage sites or values. These are subject to separate assessments.

## 1.6 Authorship

This report has been prepared by Jacob Gwiazdzinski (GML Heritage Consultant) and reviewed by Abi Cryerhall (GML Principal).

## 1.7 Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 1996, *NSW Heritage Manual*, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, Sydney.
- <sup>2</sup> Heritage Branch, December 2009, *Assessing Significance for Historical Archaeological Sites and 'Relics'*, Heritage Branch of the Department of Planning, Sydney.
- <sup>3</sup> Australia ICOMOS Inc, *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013*, Australia ICOMOS Inc, Burwood, VIC.

## 2 Historical background

This section provides an overview of the post-1788 history of Castle Hill and contains information relevant to the current site that has helped to assess the potential for historical archaeological remains.

### 2.1 Aboriginal cultural background

Castle Hill is on Blaxlands Ridge on the northern periphery of the Cumberland Plain. Aboriginal people have lived in the Cumberland Plain region for at least 40,000 years.<sup>1</sup> Evidence of Aboriginal people living around Castle Hill dates back to at least 5,000 years ago, based on knapped artefacts found in Rouse Hill, but almost certainly dates back much further based upon the earlier occupation of the nearby Cumberland Plain.<sup>2</sup>

The area was part of an extensive forest typically made up of ironbark gums that covered the plains and surrounding hills.<sup>3</sup> These woods formed a hinterland in the hills where Aboriginal groups known as the 'woods tribes' lived, whose names were recorded as the Bediagal, Tugagal and Boorobirronggal.<sup>4</sup> Not much is known about the Tugagal and Boorobirronggal, as records generally focus on the Bediagal as the main Aboriginal group of the area. Further afield were the Buruberongal, a group who lived by the Hawkesbury River.

Following the arrival of British colonists, the Aboriginal groups of the Castle Hill region experienced severe dislocation and disruption. Land seizures would have compounded this disruption. These were initially around the Parramatta region and further north around the Hawkesbury River, beyond the area associated with the Bediagal and other groups. They later extended into this region with the creation of the Castle Hill Government Farm in 1801.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.2 Development of Castle Hill

#### 2.2.1 Government Farm (1801–1819)

In 1791 the Castle Hill area was first seen by Europeans, as Governor Phillip and Watkin Tench, in a large party of 21 including the guides Colbee and Boladeree, explored the country northwest of Parramatta to determine if the Nepean and Hawkesbury River was the same river. The party traversed through the Castle Hill area in April, but it was not until 1801, when Governor King established a Government Farm there, that any major European development started. The Castle Hill farm was an area that covered over 34,500 acres taking in what is now Dural, Glenorie and Glenhaven.

Situated around the junction of a series of creeks in undulating land, the farm was worked by a large workforce of convicts, who clear felled the blue gum forest back to stumps, before then burning the stumps from the ground.<sup>6</sup> Its establishment was in response to the need to secure a reliable food supply for the growing colony separate to the private farms around the Hawkesbury and Toongabbie areas. By the end of 1802, over 200 acres were under cultivation, and by 1804 over 700.

By 1803 a large brick barracks had been erected at the farm to house the convict workforce. With increasing numbers of Irish convicts assigned there, the farm was the centre of a convict uprising in March 1804. Despite this, the farm continued in operation until 1810 when Governor Macquarie closed the establishment, converting one of the barns into an asylum, with 30 patients admitted in 1811.

## **2.2.2 Farming and rural development (1819–1890)**

In 1818 the first land grants were made around the Castle Hill area, with 71 grants occupied by 1823. Once taken up by the new owners, the land was quickly cleared and turned into farmland. Some fledging industry developed in the area, mainly logging and quarrying, but this was associated with temporary roadworks or land-clearing for farm land.<sup>7</sup> In general, the pattern of land use in Castle Hill did not change for most of the nineteenth century and the area became known for its agriculture.<sup>8</sup> Although 200 acres had been set aside near the asylum as a township reserve in 1822, the genesis of a small village was instead forming along what would become the route of the Northern Road, which was officially surveyed in 1825.

An undated map likely from before 1843 (Figure 2.1) shows the subject site as straddling grants made out to an Andrew and Thomas McDougal, with each grant indicated at 100 acres. Andrew appears to have had numerous other holdings in the area around Baulkham Hills, including one which was 700 acres in size, and so there is no indication that he lived at the present site. Thomas McDougal did not appear to have any other grants in the vicinity of the site by at least 1843. A notice in the Sydney Gazette dated to 1822 mentions a grant of 100 acres to Thomas McDougal, so it can be presumed that the land was first taken up by then.<sup>9</sup> A newspaper listing in 1826 lists Thomas McDougal of 'Baulkham Hills' rather than Castle Hill as having died, which may relate to an earlier delineation of the boundaries of the two districts, particularly as the pre-1843 plan shows the property as being closer to the former than the latter (Figure 2.2). This would also suggest that he was living at the property at the time.<sup>10</sup> Thomas' grant was purchased in 1838 by Christopher Crane, with Crane only commissioning a survey of his new landholding in 1843, which still shows it being owned by Thomas (Figure 2.3). The survey notes only mention that in the adjacent Andrew McDougal's grant (which the subject site is mostly located on) there is 'a heap of stones near a crooked dead tree'.



Figure 2.1 Detail from an undated (pre-1843) plan of Castle Hill showing early land grants that the subject site was located on. The location of the site is indicated in orange. (Source: SLNSW M Z/M2 811.13/1840/1 with GML overlay)



Figure 2.2 Detail from an undated (pre-1843) plan of Castle Hill showing location of the subject site located approximately halfway between Castle Hill and Baulkham Hills. The location of the site is indicated in orange. (Source: SLNSW M Z/M2 811.13/1840/1 with GML overlay)

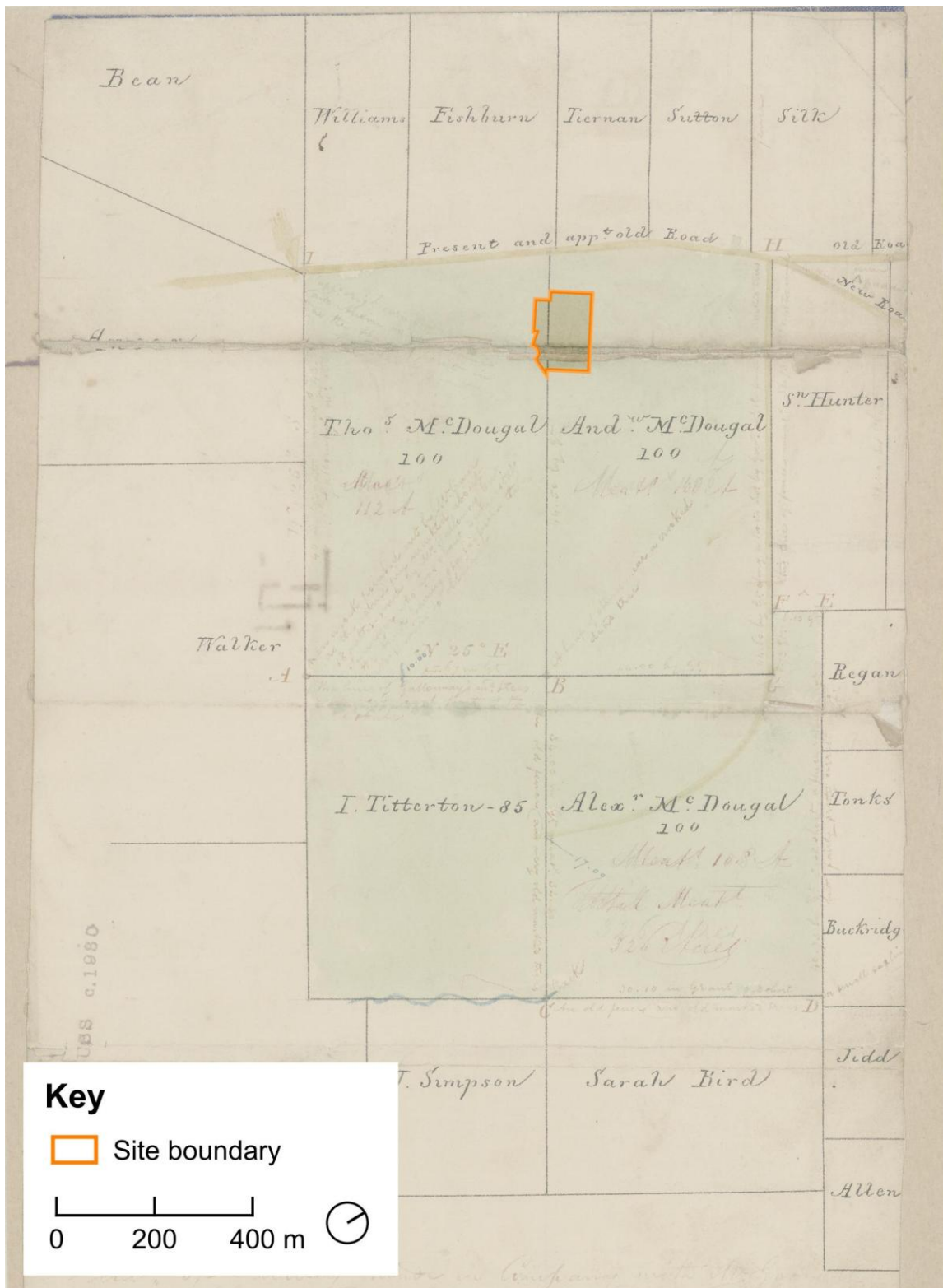


Figure 2.3 Survey of the late Thomas McDougal's 100 acre grant prepared for Christopher Crane, showing location of subject site. (Source: SLNSW Z/M2 811.1319/1843/1, M2 811.1319/1843/1 with GML overlay)

Documentary evidence supports that the grants around Castle Hill were intensively used from the early nineteenth century. Initially the grants were cleared to graze cattle and sheep and to grow wheat and maize, but fruit-growing proved to be more lucrative.<sup>11</sup> Oranges and other citruses were the most popular crops, having been first grown nearby in Baulkham Hills by George Suttor in 1807.<sup>12</sup> The Castle Hill area became known for fruit-growing in the nineteenth century like much of northern Sydney. The standard of the earliest houses in the area was generally quite poor, with Governor Macquarie remarking during a tour of the area in 1810 that the farms were ‘... in general, in good order and well cultivated but the crops did not look well, and the habitations of the Settlers were in general miserably bad’.<sup>13</sup> An 1838 sales notice for a grant in Castle Hill describes it as containing a slab hut as well as outbuildings for sawyers and tradesmen, with activities on the farm including tree felling, oat farming and brick making.<sup>14</sup> The grants around Castle Hill were subject to intensive farming and industry, so it is quite likely that numerous buildings were constructed on various grants to support this activity, despite no specific evidence of their construction surviving. This would be even more likely the case if the standard of construction of these early buildings persisted from what Governor Macquarie first observed in the area—as these buildings likely deteriorated rapidly once they were no longer being used.

In 1856 Dr Richard Greenup, who owned the Darcey Hey Estate on Castle Hill Road, donated a corner of his land for the establishment of a new church and in 1863 for the establishment of a cemetery, Castle Hill’s first—which lies directly to the east of the present site. The cemetery was to be marked out with paths according to a plan presented, with a seven foot (2m) wide path along the top and down the centre, and four foot (1.2m) paths between every double row of graves. The cemetery was set back from the road, on the downward side of the slope. The first burial in the cemetery was recorded as Alfred Charles Tuckwell of Castle Hill, who died on 9 January and was buried on the eleventh of the same month. Alfred was only eight years old. The earliest surviving headstone appears to be for John Thomas Black, who died in May 1864.

By the 1890s the Castle Hill district was considered to boast splendid orchards, model farms and houses.<sup>15</sup> Larger farm plots began to be subdivided around Castle Hill from this period, precipitating changes in the use of land in the area. In 1889 the Castle Hill Township subdivision set around the junctions of Castle Hill Road and Castle Street, advertised a selection of 74 quarter acre house blocks and a mix of one, two and four acre blocks and was followed in 1890 and 1893 by two more sales of residential and orchard allotments including the Harford Estate of George Thorne, and in 1894 the Darcey Hey Estate subdivision. The smaller plots bought in these sales continued to be used to grow citrus fruits, but increasingly stone fruits, poultry, eggs and milk replaced them. The arrival of European migrants in the early twentieth century also resulted in the rise of market gardening in the area, which focused on vegetables and flowers as the main crops.<sup>16</sup>

As much of the development remained for orchards and farm blocks, the area remained sparsely populated well into the twentieth century.

### 2.2.3 Increased urbanisation (1890–present)

A tramway to Baulkham Hills opened in 1902 and was extended to Castle Hill in 1910. While this made it easier for agriculturalists to get their products to the city and elsewhere, it also made it much easier for people to move in and out of the area. Subdivisions of farming estates accelerated after the tramway was built through the area, often becoming a selling point for the land which was put on offer.<sup>17</sup> The subdivisions of the early twentieth century advanced Castle Hill's transition from a rural to suburban community, a process which was later completed by suburban development in the second half of the twentieth century.

From the 1960s, Castle Hill and the surrounding areas became part of the NSW Government's plan to make residential land available in the expanding Sydney area.<sup>18</sup> Residential developments quickly replaced small farms and market gardens. Between 1956 and 1978, the area surrounding the Showground experienced this transition, at which time the suburb came to reflect its current character.

A 1943 aerial photograph of Castle Hill shows that the site was still situated within a predominantly rural setting, with a few houses fronting Castle Hill Road (Old Northern Road), which is surrounded by trees and open paddocks.

There is no documentary evidence to suggest that any development took place on the site until at least the early twentieth century. The earliest evidence for the presence of houses on the property is the 1943 aerial (Figure 2.6), with a consistent increase in the density of housing from then until present (Figure 2.6–Figure 2.11). Figure 2.12 indicates that the majority of houses constructed on the site since 1943 remain extant, with most demolished structures being small, apparently ancillary buildings or features.

Complicating the issue of what may have been present on the site prior to 1943, a parish map from as late as 1959 does not appear to show any buildings on the site by this time, in spite of structures known to be present at least at 97, 99 and 107 Cecil Avenue, as well as the since demolished house at number 105. An 1893 subdivision plan shows the adjacent St Paul's cemetery and church buildings, but does not indicate smaller residences which only appear on the inset map for an area to the west of the site (Figure 2.4). These serve to reinforce that the historical plans cannot be relied upon to indicate the past presence of buildings located on the site. Unfortunately none of the properties appear in the Sands Directory.

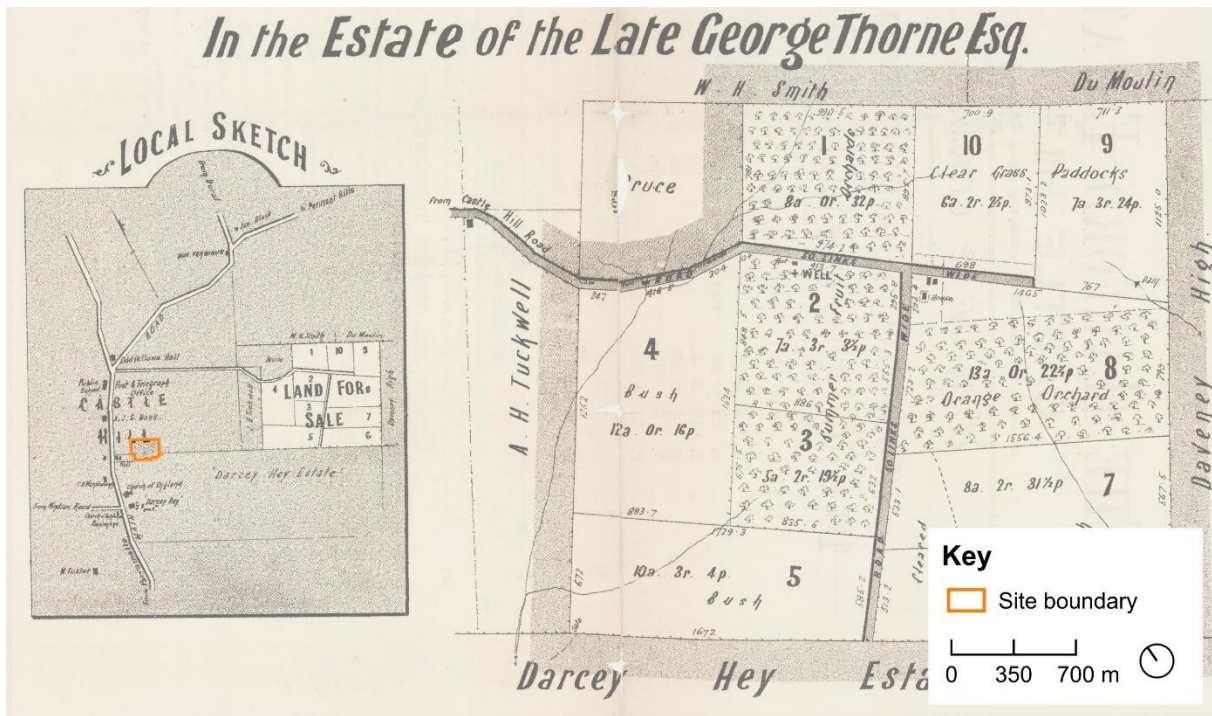


Figure 2.4 Detail of 1893 land subdivisions notice, showing the location of the site in relation to the graveyard. The church buildings are indicated on the 'local sketch plan' but not individual homes (and wells) which only appear on the inset plan. (Source: National Library of Australia with GML overlay)

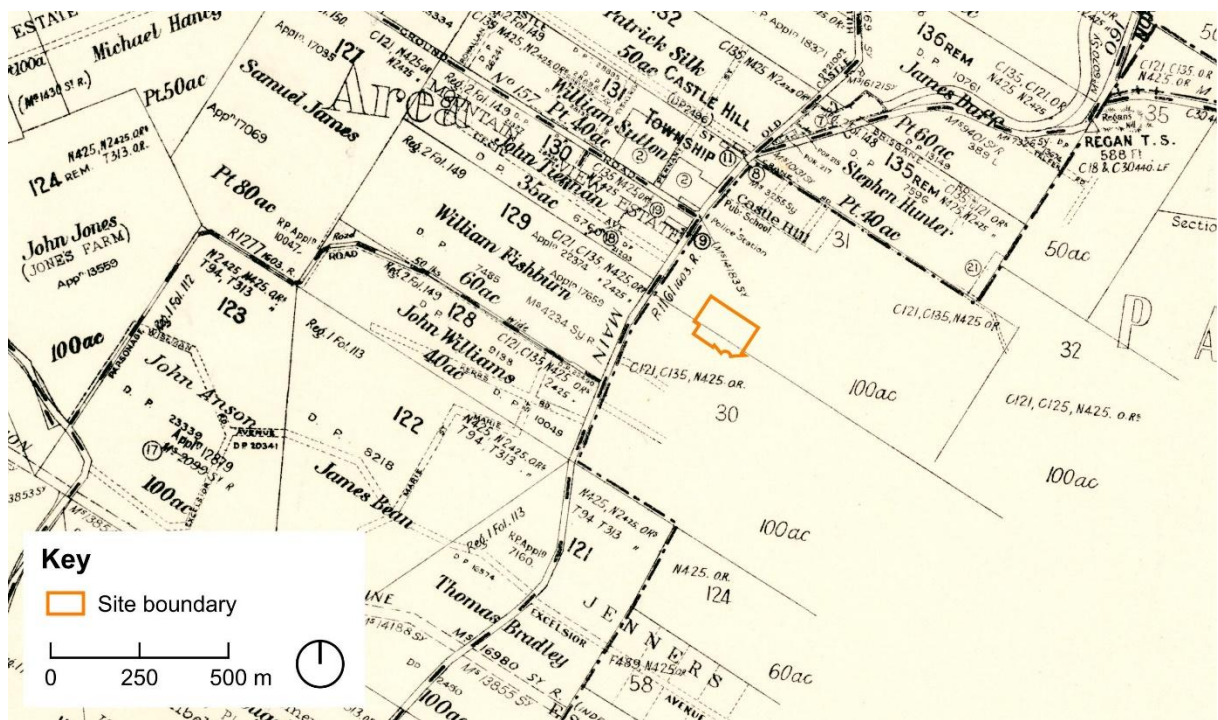


Figure 2.5 Detail of 1959 plan showing Parish of Castle Hill, County of Cumberland, with the location of the site boundary shown outlined in orange. (Source: NLA MAP G8971.G46 svar <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/3891833> with GML overlay)



Figure 2.6 1943 aerial showing houses with properties still being used for farming. Three of the four residences shown fronting Cecil Avenue are still extant. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)



Figure 2.7 1970 aerial showing rapid urbanisation of Castle Hill with additional infill housing. The rear of several properties is being maintained for orchard(?) farming. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)



Figure 2.8 1978 aerial showing the start of rear subdivisions to support additional infill housing. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)



Figure 2.9 1982 aerial showing gradual increase of infill housing from 1978. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)



Figure 2.10 1986 aerial showing gradual increase of infill housing from 1978. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)



Figure 2.11 1991 aerial showing increased infill housing. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)



Figure 2.12 Overlay showing approximate dates of residential construction as informed by historical aerals. This includes the dates of visible below-ground pools. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)

## 2.3 Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> GML Heritage, Parramatta Park George Street Gatehouse—Geomorphology and Aboriginal Archaeology Report, report prepared for Parramatta Park Trust, July 2018, p i.
- <sup>2</sup> JMcDCHM, Archaeological survey - Lots 5 and 6, Victoria Road, Castle Hill, vol. 5, June 2009, p 9.
- <sup>3</sup> JMcDCHM, Archaeological survey - Lots 5 and 6, Victoria Road, Castle Hill, vol. 5, June 2009, p 6.
- <sup>4</sup> Attenbrow, V 2010, *Sydney's Aboriginal Past: Investigating the Archaeological and Historical Records*, University of New South Wales Press, Kensington, NSW, p 27.
- <sup>5</sup> Rowland, J 2008, 'Castle Hill', Dictionary of Sydney, viewed 16 September 2019 <[http://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/castle\\_hill](http://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/castle_hill)>.
- <sup>6</sup> Karskens, G 2009, *The Colony*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, p 89.
- <sup>7</sup> Graham Edds & Associates 1995, 'Baulkam Hills Heritage Study 1993–1994', Richmond, NSW, pp 27–28.
- <sup>8</sup> Thirty four acres at Castle Hill, *The Sydney Morning Herald* 4 Jan 1839, p4.
- <sup>9</sup> Surveyor General's Office 5<sup>th</sup> July 1822, *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 12 July 1822, p 1.
- <sup>10</sup> In the Supreme Court, *The Australian*, 3 June 1826, p 1.
- <sup>11</sup> The Hills Shire, 'A brief history of the Shire', The Hills Shire Local Studies Library, viewed 17 September 2019 <<https://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/Library/Library-e-Resources/Local-Studies-Family-History/A-Brief-History-of-the-Shire#Settlement>>.
- <sup>12</sup> Hanna, K 2016, 'Oranges', Dictionary of Sydney, viewed 17 September 2019 <<https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/oranges>>.
- <sup>13</sup> Jervis, J. The Beginnings of the Settlement in the Parish of Castle Hill. In Royal Australian Historical Society 1929. Vol 15, part 5, p 255.
- <sup>14</sup> Sales by Auction–Lot 18, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 June 1938, p 4.
- <sup>15</sup> Jeans, D 1980, *An Historical Geography of NSW to 1901*, Sydney, Reed, p 209.
- <sup>16</sup> The Hills Shire, 'A brief history of the Shire', The Hills Shire Local Studies Library, viewed 17 September 2019 <<https://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/Library/Library-e-Resources/Local-Studies-Family-History/A-Brief-History-of-the-Shire#Settlement>>.
- <sup>17</sup> Graham Edds & Associates 1995, 'Baulkham Hills Heritage Study 1993–1994', Richmond, NSW, p 21.
- <sup>18</sup> Ashton, P and Freestone, R 2008, 'Planning', Dictionary of Sydney, viewed 17 September 2019 <<http://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/planning>>.

## 3 Historical archaeology assessment

### 3.1 Overview

The historical archaeological resources of the site relate to material remains, including features, artefact deposits and landscape evidence, that were generated during the occupation and use of the site over the past approximately 230 years. This section considers the site's potential for historical archaeological remains and assesses their significance.

#### 3.1.1 Terminology

The term 'archaeological potential' is the likelihood that a site may contain physical evidence related to an earlier phase of occupation, activity or development. This term is different to 'archaeological significance' and 'archaeological research potential', which are more subjective statements related to the value of the archaeological resource in terms of levels of significance.

**Archaeological potential** is usually described as low, moderate or high, and is assessed as follows:

- Nil—no known historical activities which would have left an archaeological signature. Previous construction, or other activities, have removed all archaeology.
- Low—it is unlikely that archaeological evidence associated with this historical phase or feature survives. Archaeological remains are likely to have been subject to a high level of previous disturbance.
- Moderate—it is possible that some archaeological evidence associated with this historical phase or feature survives. Archaeological remains may have been subject to some previous disturbance.
- High—it is likely that archaeological evidence associated with this historical phase or feature survives. Archaeological remains are likely to be intact as the level of site disturbance appears to be minimal.

**Archaeological significance** and 'relics' in NSW are defined as being of either local or state significance in Section 4A of the Heritage Act:

- Local—in relation to a place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct, means significance to the area in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of the item.
- State—in relation to a place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct, means significance to the state in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of the item.

## **3.2 Relevant archaeological studies**

To date there have been no archaeological investigations within the site and relatively few within the broader Castle Hill area. The results of several investigations undertaken within the vicinity of the site have helped to inform the current assessment and are summarised below.

### **3.2.1 Report on archaeological investigations of the Old Northern Road, Castle Hill**

As part of works to establish a new road link (Gilbert Road), two test trenches were excavated to establish the location, intactness and significance of an original section of the Old Northern Road.<sup>1</sup> The site was located in a redundant section of roadway that had been retained as a parking refuge off the modern road alignment. These conditions contributed to the survival of the archaeological record.

The report determined that in one of the trenches, the road was largely intact to a width of 2m, and across the entire 600mm length of the trench, surviving below 100mm of later road resurfacing. The assessment report had identified that because of the location at the time of construction, it would be unlikely that drains, retaining walls or culverts would be present. The excavation did not identify any archaeological relics or evidence of land use aside from the former roadway, which was assessed to be of local significance.

### **3.2.2 Historical and archaeological assessment of Kentwell Cottage, 244 Old Northern Road, Castle Hill**

As part of works to widen the Old Northern Road, a program of excavation was undertaken at the site of the state heritage listed Kentwell Cottage, following its disassembly. The cottage was one of the original slab homes constructed in Castle Hill and representative of the residential character of the area in the mid-nineteenth century. The floorboards in the original rooms of the building were identified as being butt-jointed, which is amenable to the build up of underfloor deposits. Numerous outbuildings were present on site; however, they were all identified as being constructed at more recent (modern) dates.

The report noted that of the few surveys and subdivision plans that show the area where Kentwell Cottage was located, many did not indicate that a building was present on the property.

### **3.2.3 Wansbrough House 226–230 Old Northern Road, Castle Hill**

AMAC Archaeological undertook monitoring and salvage excavations in 2013 at the site of the former Wansbrough House. Evidence of the agricultural use of the site in the form of a dry-pressed brick dish drain, postholes in the earlier fence alignment as well as twentieth-century rubbish pits were uncovered. It is unclear how deep these were located below the modern surface as the site had already been cut down to natural clay; however, it appears from the photos to have been shallow.

No structural remains or deep subsurface features were identified within the excavation area, aside from a relatively shallow twentieth-century redundant concrete sullage tank.

The rubbish pits and postholes were considered to be significant at a local level, owing to their association with the locally renowned Wansbrough family.

## **3.3 Previous disturbance and site inspection**

A site inspection was undertaken by GML on 29 October 2024 to observe the current site conditions and record any activities and development of the site that may have affected the survival of archaeological remains and their integrity. Access was limited to the exterior of the extant, vacant properties, including the rear yards of 93–107 Cecil Avenue and 9–10 Roger Avenue.

The landform was observed to slope down considerably from north to south (Figure 3.1–Figure 3.2) with fluctuations in the properties closest to the south of the site (Figure 3.3–Figure 3.4). The frontages of the properties along Cecil Avenue are set at street level with only a gradual slope to the rear. The properties with frontages to Roger Avenue contain terraced front yards and rear yards that appear to be cut into the landform to create a level platform. Properties located closer to the east of the site contain more variability in the elevation between lots, which was likely compensated for within each property by cutting and filling (Figure 3.6).

Most of the rear yards closest to Cecil Avenue have been minimally landscaped, which indicates a good survival of any potential archaeological deposits (Figure 3.5, Figure 3.7, Figure 3.10). This also included the front yard of 105 Cecil Avenue, which is likely to contain evidence of the pre-1943 house (Figure 3.9). A notable exception is that many of the properties contained below-ground pools (Figure 3.8) which would have removed any shallow subsurface archaeological deposits which may have been present.

99 Cecil Avenue (Figure 3.11) appears much older than the other extant houses identified as being pre-1943; however, a precise age is beyond the scope of this assessment.

Renovations including modern brick piers may obscure an earlier construction date. Like many of the other properties fronting Cecil Avenue, the rear yard of 99 Cecil Avenue appears minimally altered (Figure 3.12).

A Before You Dig Australia (BYDA) search was performed and several existing services were identified within the site. These include existing Telstra telecommunications cables into each of the properties off Cecil Avenue, a fibre optic cable into 95 Cecil Avenue that extends from the west of Cecil Avenue, as well as a pressure sewer that extends throughout the centre of the site from Roger Avenue.



Figure 3.1 A gentle slope can be observed on Cecil Avenue from the west (where the photo was taken) down toward the east. Taken facing southeast.



Figure 3.2 The slope of the whole landscape is visible from Lincoln Place with the western part of the site shown sloping toward the east. Taken facing north.



Figure 3.3 A more dramatic slope is visible from the St Paul's cemetery, facing toward the subject site. Taken facing southeast.



Figure 3.4 Landscaping visible at 10 Roger Avenue to account for slope on property. Taken facing north.



Figure 3.5 The rear yard of 93 Cecil Avenue, showing minimal modifications. A small structure constructed around 1970 was formerly located here. Taken facing south.



Figure 3.6 Landscaping shown by different levels of adjacent driveways, which is likely to have involved cutting and filling. Taken facing south.



Figure 3.7 A structure dating to 1947 at the rear of 97 Cecil Avenue. Minimal landscaping is visible in the rest of the property. Facing west.



Figure 3.8 Numerous properties contained pools, which are likely to have removed shallow archaeological deposits. Facing west.



Figure 3.9 The front yard of 105 Cecil Avenue shows minimal landscaping and is likely to contain evidence of the demolished pre-1943 structure. Facing south.



Figure 3.10 The rear yard of 107 Cecil Avenue only appears to have supported a small c1970 structure post 1943. Facing south.



Figure 3.11 99 Cecil Avenue appears much older than the other pre-1943 buildings extant on the site. Later modifications may obscure older fabric. Facing south.



Figure 3.12 The rear of 99 Cecil Avenue shows minimal modification. Facing west.

## 3.4 Geotechnical analysis

No geotechnical analysis has been undertaken at this stage of works.

## 3.5 Phases of historical development

The following phases of historical development are relevant in understanding the archaeological potential of the site:

- Phase 1: Government Farm—1801–1819;
- Phase 2: Farming and rural development—1819–1890; and
- Phase 3: Increased urbanisation—1890–present.

## 3.6 Assessment of archaeological potential

### 3.6.1 Phase 1: Government Farm—1801–1819

Castle Hill was originally part of a large tract of land assumed by the colonial government for the third government farm from 1801. The available documentary evidence suggests the site remained undeveloped until likely the end of the nineteenth century. Any archaeological remains dating to this period are most likely to be highly ephemeral and relate to timber felling (such as burnt tree roots or tree holes) caused by the convicts who worked the farm. Any artefactual remains relating to this period are likely to have very limited context and are unlikely to be able to be securely related to this phase. There is nil potential for archaeology associated with this phase within the site.

### **3.6.2 Phase 2: Farming and rural development—1819–1890**

There is a possibility that structures were built on the original land grants which were not captured as part of surveys, as it is known that the grants around Castle Hill were valued as productive farmland from the early nineteenth century. The position of the site straddling two 100-acre grants means that it is unlikely that if any structures were located on the grants, they would have been located in the area of the current site, and are more likely to have been more centrally positioned. This is particularly the case at the south of the site as reinforced by the heavily undulating terrain. Deeper subsurface features such as wells or tanks may have been located within this area; however, it is unlikely.

As such, there is limited potential for historical archaeological remains associated with this phase to survive within the site. Any archaeological evidence associated with nineteenth-century land use is likely to be ephemeral and related to land clearance or agricultural activities (ie early land modification, post holes associated with early fence lines, and informal rubbish disposal). Such remains are likely to have been disturbed by subsequent development of the site. There is some potential for isolated artefacts or rubbish dumps. Overall, there is a nil-low potential for evidence associated with early land use to survive within the site.

### **3.6.3 Phase 3: Increased urbanisation—1890–present**

The 1943 aerial photograph shows four property developments within the site and two appear to have orchards or similar activity in the rear gardens. Residential development increased during the latter half of the twentieth century. The construction of the extant properties between 1890 to present would have required minimal modification of the original landform for the properties along Cecil Avenue, with terracing required for the properties located at the south of the site. Historical image overlays (Figure 2.12) demonstrate a generally low level of redevelopment during the latter half of the twentieth century. Potential buried remains could include evidence of former structures, particularly the residence previously at the front of 105 Cecil Avenue (postholes or brick footings), former ancillary structures located in the rear of properties, as well as cuts and fills associated with the grading of individual properties.

Archaeological investigations within the surrounding area (Section 3.2) demonstrate that shallow levels of archaeological structures and deposits are present; however, this may be affected by the extent of more recent localised cuts/fills. Overall, there is a moderate potential for archaeological remains associated with the development of the site during the twentieth century.

### 3.7 Assessment of archaeological significance

The following significance assessment (Table 3.1 of the potential historical archaeology within the site is undertaken against the NSW heritage criteria. The 2009 guidelines have been used to inform the assessment.<sup>2</sup>

Table 3.1 Assessment of archaeological significance against the NSW heritage criteria.

Criterion	Response
<p><b>Criterion (a)—Historical</b>  <i>An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the local area)</i></p>	<p>The site was part of the early subdivision of Castle Hills—later Castle Hill—from 1819. No documentary evidence suggests that the site itself was ever developed until at least the end of the nineteenth century; however, it is clear that more farming buildings existed within the Castle Hill area than are shown on available plans. Most of the site was developed during the twentieth century with residential subdivisions, particularly from the mid-twentieth century onwards, with many of these houses remaining today.</p> <p>It is unlikely that archaeological remains associated with the early land grants or nineteenth-century development of Castle Hill exist within the site. There may be remnants of twentieth-century small farm holdings and residential development. However, this archaeology would not be of historical significance.</p>
<p><b>Criterion (b)—Associative</b>  <i>An item has a strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the local area)</i></p>	<p>The documentary evidence does not suggest that the site was ever owned by any significant landowners or frequented by significant individuals.</p> <p>Under this criterion, the potential historical archaeological resource is not considered to meet the threshold for significance.</p>
<p><b>Criterion (c)—Aesthetic or Technical</b>  <i>An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area)</i></p>	<p>The potential archaeological resource is unlikely to retain any aesthetic qualities or exhibit any technical achievements.</p> <p>Under this criterion, the potential historical archaeological resource is not considered to meet the threshold for significance.</p>
<p><b>Criterion (d)—Social</b>  <i>An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW for social, spiritual or cultural reasons (or the local area)</i></p>	<p>There are no known social or community associations with the site.</p> <p>Under this criterion, the potential historical archaeological resource is not considered to meet the threshold for significance.</p>
<p><b>Criterion (e)—Research Potential</b></p>	<p>There is no known use of the site during Phase 1 that is likely to have left an archaeological signature. Isolated artefacts and artefacts associated with periodic or</p>

Criterion	Response
<p><i>An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the local area)</i></p>	<p>opportunistic use of the site have limited potential to yield new information on the history of this site and are unlikely to meet the threshold for significance under this criterion.</p> <p>There is no documentary evidence to suggest any specific development of the site prior to the construction of the extant buildings during the twentieth century; however, more farming buildings existed within the Castle Hill area than are shown on available plans.</p> <p>Given the lack of historical data and twentieth-century residential development, there is nil-low potential for archaeological evidence relating to mid-late nineteenth century (Phase 2) activities. Farming activities are unlikely to have left a strong archaeological signature. Any agricultural-related remains are unlikely to be distinguishable from similar activities in the twentieth century. If present, such remains would unlikely meet the threshold for significance.</p> <p>The potential archaeological resource is anticipated to be largely associated with the construction of the extant properties during the twentieth century (especially the latter half of the century). These potential remains are not considered to meet the threshold for significance.</p>
<p><b>Criterion (f)—Rarity</b>  <i>An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the local area)</i></p>	<p>The potential archaeological resource is neither rare nor uncommon in the context of early nineteenth-century farms, or early twentieth-century residential sites in Castle Hill.</p> <p>Under this criterion, the potential historical archaeological resource is not considered to meet the threshold for significance.</p>
<p><b>Criterion (g)—Representative</b>  <i>An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s cultural or natural places or cultural or natural environments (or the local area)</i></p>	<p>The potential archaeological resource is anticipated to be largely structural and is not considered to be representative in the context of the development of Castle Hill.</p> <p>Under this criterion, the potential historical archaeological resource is not considered to meet the threshold for significance.</p>

### 3.8 Summary of potential and significance

The assessment of archaeological potential and significance is summarised (by phase) in Table 3.2 and mapped in Figure 3.12. Although there is a moderate potential for historical archaeological remains associated with the construction of the extant dwellings (Phase 3: 1890–present), these remains are not considered to meet the threshold for archaeological significance and would not be ‘relics’ as defined by the Heritage Act.

Table 3.2 Summary of the site’s historical archaeological potential and significance.

Phase	Types of remains	Potential	Significance
<b>Phase 1:</b> <b>1801–1819</b> Government Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tree boles and patches of burning as evidence of land clearance, as well as evidence associated with the modification to the original landscape.</li> <li>Agricultural marks including till lines and hoe marks as a result of intensive farming activity.</li> <li>Postholes or other features associated with property divisions.</li> <li>Isolated or dumped artefacts or deposits.</li> </ul>	Nil	Nil
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structural remains of undocumented and demolished buildings and outbuildings, such as postholes and footings.</li> </ul>	Nil	Nil
<b>Phase 2:</b> <b>1819–1890</b> Farming and rural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tree boles and patches of burning as evidence of land clearance, as well as evidence associated with the modification to the original landscape.</li> <li>Agricultural marks including till lines and hoe marks as a result of intensive farming activity.</li> <li>Postholes or other features associated with property divisions</li> <li>Landscaping features including fences, paths, drains, retaining walls and gardens.</li> <li>Levelling, construction cuts and fills associated with initial residential development.</li> </ul>	Nil-Low	Nil
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remains of demolished undocumented outbuildings and buildings, such as postholes and footings.</li> <li>Artefact deposits such as rubbish pits and yard deposits.</li> </ul>	Nil-Low	Nil-Local
<b>Phase 3:</b> <b>1890–Present</b> Urbanisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Levelling and construction cuts and fills associated with the development of 93–107 Cecil Avenue and 9–10 Roger Avenue.</li> <li>Landscaping features including fences, paths, drains, retaining walls and gardens.</li> <li>Artefact deposits such as rubbish pits and yard deposits.</li> </ul>	Moderate	Nil

### 3.8.1 Statement of archaeological significance

The site has nil to low potential for archaeological evidence for activity associated with Government Farm and early land grants. Evidence for nineteenth-century farming and rural development, if present, is likely to be ephemeral and would not reach the significance threshold. The potential historical archaeological resource likely relates to the mid-late twentieth century residential development of the site. These potential archaeological remains would not be considered to meet the threshold of significance and would not be 'relics' as defined by the Heritage Act.

A visual summary of the potential historical archaeological resource with consideration to the likely significance of those archaeological remains is indicated in Figure 3.13.

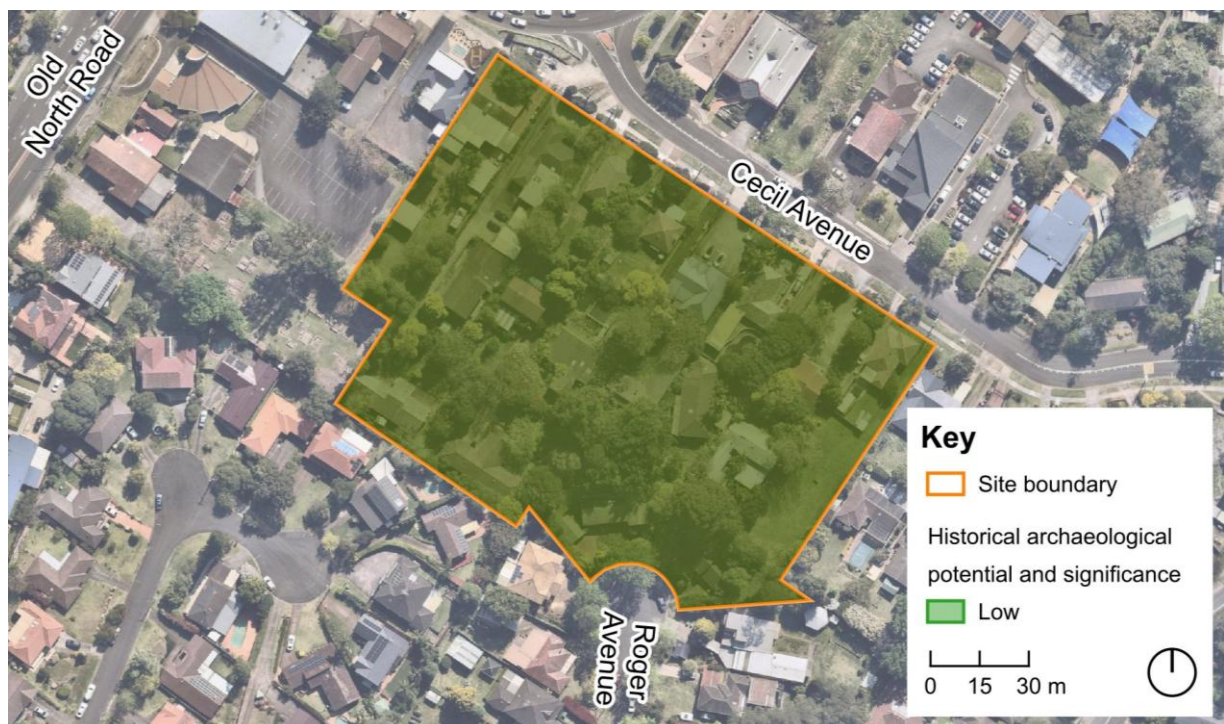


Figure 3.13 Historical archaeological sensitivity map showing the site has low potential for 'relics'. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay 2024)

## 3.9 Endnotes

- 1 Lavelle, S 1994, Report on archaeological investigations of the Old Northern Road, Castle Hill, NSW. Unpublished report to K R Stubbs and Associates, Landcom and Heritage NSW.
- 2 Heritage Branch, December 2009, Assessing Significance for Historical Archaeological Sites and 'Relics', Heritage Branch of the Department of Planning, Sydney.

## 4 Impact assessment

### 4.1 Proposed works

Development consent is being sought for a new mixed residential and commercial development at 93–107 Cecil Avenue and 9–10 Roger Avenue, Castle Hill site. The proposed development will involve the following:

- Site establishment and enabling works including:
  - services, including stormwater, sewer and electrical diversions;
  - Cecil Avenue kerb and gutter modifications as required to accommodate service diversions and new vehicular entrance;
  - removal of trees and existing vegetation;
  - demolition of all existing structures; and
  - disconnection and make-safe of existing services.
- Excavation and ground works including retention, bulk excavation and in ground services works.
- Construction of four separate mixed commercial/retail towers, which includes:
  - communal ground floor open space;
  - four levels of retail space across each tower, located from ground to level 2; and
  - 616 total units.
- Construction of three basement levels across the whole site, with primary vehicular access for residents and visitors from lower Cecil Avenue. The basement will accommodate 981 parking spaces, two loading bays as well as associated plant, utilities, and servicing.
- Associated landscaping across the site and streetscape improvements within the site.

The following assessment concerns only the potential historical archaeological impacts of the proposed development (Figure 4.1–Figure 4.4).

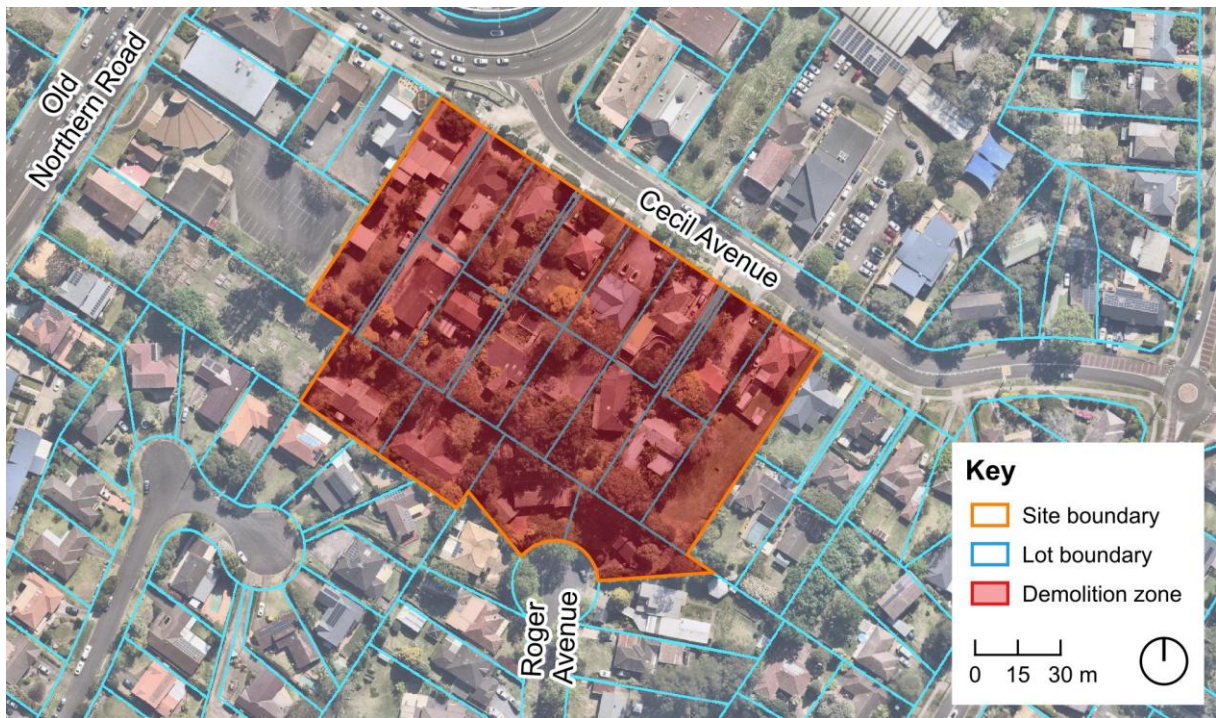


Figure 4.1 Area identified for demolition to enable the proposed development. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay)

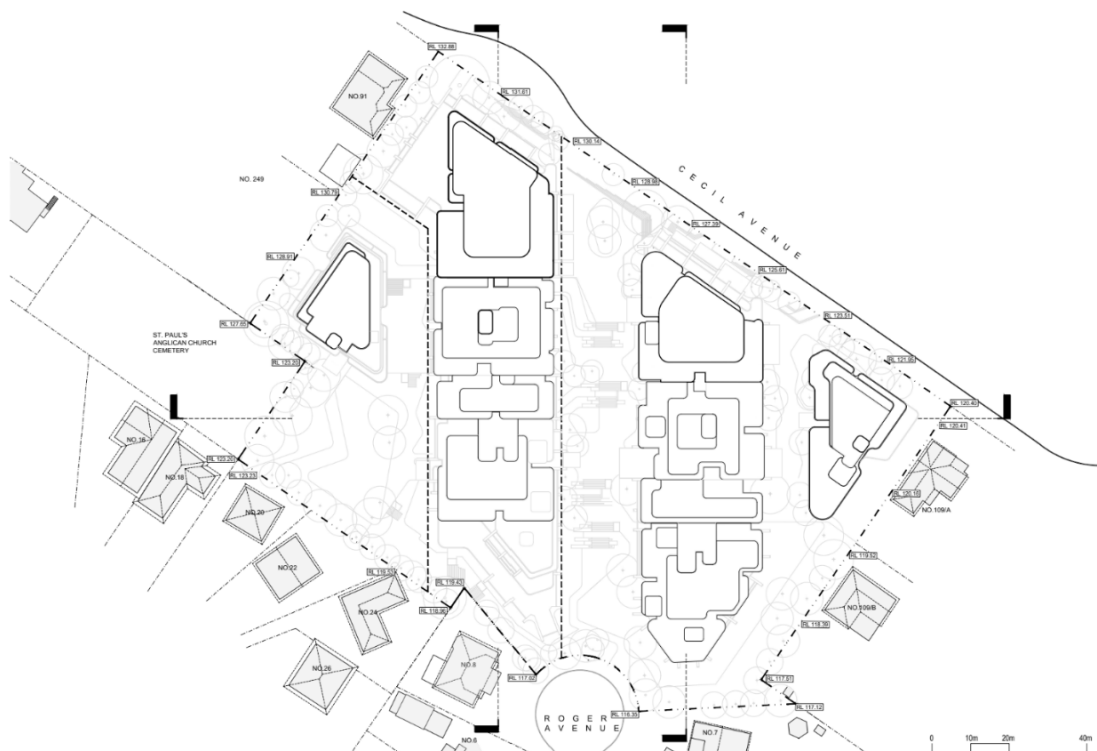


Figure 4.2 Plan view of the proposed development under the SEPP housing conditions. (Source: A Plus Design Group, A103 December 2024)



## 4.2 Archaeological impacts

The proposed development includes substantive excavation and ground disturbance for new basements that would extend across almost the entire site. Bulk excavation and other ground disturbance would result in the almost complete removal of any archaeological remains that may be present within the site.

The site is assessed as having low potential for significant historical archaeological remains and 'relics'. There is potential for remains of previously demolished twentieth-century buildings. However, these are not considered to meet the threshold for significance.

Therefore, the proposed works are not expected to result in impact to significant historical archaeology and 'relics'.

## 4.3 Cumulative impacts

As the proposed works are unlikely to impact any significant historical archaeological remains within the site, there is no cumulative impact to the potential archaeological resource of the Castle Hill region.

## 4.4 Mitigation measures

Given the overall low potential for significant historical archaeological remains within the site, the proposed development is assessed to be unlikely to impact archaeological 'relics'. Works should proceed under an Unexpected Heritage Finds (UHF) procedure. Should unexpected significant historical archaeological remains be uncovered during the works, works should cease in the affected area and Heritage NSW should be notified in accordance with Section 146 of the Heritage Act.

## 5 Conclusion

### 5.1 Assessment and findings

- Documentary evidence suggests that the site was largely undeveloped until the construction of the extant properties during the twentieth century, and largely from the mid-twentieth century until present.
- Overall, there is a low potential for historical archaeological remains prior to the development of the individual allotments in the early twentieth century. Potential archaeological remains are not considered to meet the threshold for local significance.
- The proposed development includes bulk excavation and ground disturbing activities across almost the entire site. These works are unlikely to result in impact to archaeological 'relics' as defined by the Heritage Act.
- Given the low potential for significant historical archaeological remains within the site, no further historical archaeological investigations are proposed.

### 5.2 Recommendations

- A heritage induction should be provided to all construction personnel. The induction should include information about any potential archaeology, the unexpected finds procedure, and obligations under the project approval and the Heritage Act.
- Works should proceed under an Unexpected Heritage Finds (UHF) procedure, which should be developed and implemented during the demolition and excavation stage of works. In brief:
  - if unexpected heritage finds are encountered, work in the affected area should cease and the nominated archaeologist must be contacted to assess the significance of the remains;
  - if the find is assessed as likely being of significance by the archaeologist, then the archaeologist will visit the site to inspect the find. Additional assessment and research may be required to establish the significance of the find; and
  - work in the affected area may recommence once the archaeological work is complete and the consent conditions have been met.
- Should significant historical archaeological remains ('relics') be unexpectedly uncovered and identified during the works, Heritage NSW should be notified in accordance with Section 146 of the Heritage Act.