



459-461 Chapel Road, Bankstown NSW Aboriginal Heritage Due Diligence Assessment

Prepared by AMBS Ecology & Heritage
for Sustainable Delivery Group Limited

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1 Introduction

This Aboriginal Heritage Due Diligence Assessment (ADD) has been prepared by AMBS Ecology and Heritage (AMBS) for submission to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) on behalf of the Anglican Church Property Trust Diocese of Sydney under Sydney Anglican Property (SAP) in support of a State Significant Development Application (SSDA) (SSD-79709963) for a mixed-use development, comprising social and affordable housing at 459-461 Chapel Road, Bankstown (the study area).

1.1 Project Background

SAP was formed on 1 January 2024 to provide a unified, co-ordinated approach to all diocesan property matters. A key objective of SAP is to put the Sydney Anglican Diocese's property on mission by delivering high-quality projects that provide much-needed community infrastructure, including upgraded ministry facilities, affordable housing and childcare.

As part of this mission, SAP, in partnership with Anglicare, is working with the Government to deliver a 23 storey 100% social and affordable housing development on its landholdings in the Bankstown City Centre. The affordable housing will be accompanied by community and renewed ministry facilities, childcare and retail and commercial uses within the podium.

1.2 The Study Area

The study area is located at 459-461 Chapel Road, Bankstown within the Canterbury-Bankstown Local Government Area (LGA). It is located 500m of the Bankstown Station and City Centre and as such, is located within the Bankstown TOD Accelerated Precinct.

The study area comprises three allotments, which are all owned by the Anglican Church Property Trust Diocese of Sydney and are legally described as Lots 26A, 27A and 28A in DP7058. Combined, the site has an approximate area of 2,179m². It is located on a corner and has a street frontage of 52m to French Avenue to the north and 43m to Chapel Road to the west. Figure 1-1 below provides an aerial map of the site.

The site currently comprises an existing 350 capacity church building, known as St Paul's Anglican Church, as well as an associated ministry building and an additional building containing a range of community uses.

1.3 The Proposed Development

This SSDA seeks approval for a new mixed-use affordable housing development. Specifically, the proposed development will comprise the following scope of works:

- Site preparation and excavation works, including demolition of all structures on the site.
- Construction of a new mixed-use 23 storey building, comprising the following:
 - Ground level retail and Level 1 commercial floor space located on the corner of Chapel Road and French Avenue.
 - storey dual use community facility and place of public worship.
 - A childcare centre with outdoor open space, which will be shared with the community facility and place of public worship after hours and on weekends.
 - Approximately 186 dwellings from Level 2 and above, which will be used for the purpose of affordable housing, with the exception of one four-bedroom dwelling located on Level 2, which will be allocated to the church and therefore, is proposed to be ancillary to the place of public worship.

- One storey basement, comprising approximately carparking spaces, plant and loading facilities, which will be accessed via French Avenue. An at-grade shared carpark will be provided along the eastern boundary.
- Associated landscaping and public domain works.
- Extension and augmentation of physical infrastructure and utilities as required.

For a detailed project description, refer to the Environmental Impact Statement prepared by Beam Planning and the Architectural Drawings prepared by Plus.

1.4 Relevant SEARs

This ADD addresses the following relevant Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) set out in the table below.

Table 1.1 SEARs Compliance Table (SEARs Issued 5 February 2025)

SEARs Request	Response / Location in Report
21. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage <i>Where there is known, or reasonably likely, to be Aboriginal cultural heritage on or near the site demonstrate that impacts have been adequately investigated and assessed by:</i> • Identifying that an appropriate prior planning process has already considered these impacts, e.g. a rezoning or development application, or • Providing an initial assessment of the potential impacts.	• Aboriginal heritage advice for the Bankstown Precinct State-led Rezoning Project (AMBS 2024) • Current due diligence assessment
<i>If potential impacts are significant, provide an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) which:</i> • Identifies, describes and assesses any impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage sites or values associated with the site. • Is prepared in accordance with relevant guidelines.	• This assessment was prepared in accordance with relevant guidelines. • There will be no impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage sites.

1.5 Methodology

This report has been prepared in accordance with current heritage best practice and the guidelines of Heritage NSW as specified in the *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales* (DECCW 2010). As such, the due diligence assessment has addressed the following requirements:

- Identification of any previously recorded Aboriginal sites in the study area;
- development a predictive model for local Aboriginal archaeological sites, including any landscape features within the study area which are likely to indicate the presence of Aboriginal objects; and
- determination of the potential for Aboriginal heritage objects to be present in the study area and impacted by the future project works, and identification of constraints arising from considerations of Aboriginal heritage and requirements for additional Aboriginal heritage investigations or permits.

The following tasks have been undertaken to fulfil the above requirements:

- a search and review of the Heritage NSW Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) database, to identify the location and type of any Aboriginal sites recorded within the study area or its vicinity;
- a review of relevant environmental information and the Aboriginal heritage context;
- a review of available relevant previous Aboriginal heritage reports, to determine the extent of past archaeological research into the local area;

- a visual inspection undertaken by an AMBS archaeologist; and
- preparation of a report outlining the results of the background research and the visual inspection; detailing whether proposed future development is likely to impact on identified Aboriginal sites or areas of potential archaeological sensitivity; identifying appropriate recommendations for avoidance of impacts to identified Aboriginal heritage sites and areas of archaeological potential; and, if required, identifying triggers for additional archaeological assessments and recommendations for Aboriginal heritage management within the study area.

This due diligence assessment does not include scope for the preparation of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment in accordance with the Heritage NSW guidelines as specified in the *Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in NSW* (DECCW 2010). The assessment also does not include formal consultation with representatives of the local Aboriginal community as per Heritage NSW's *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents 2010*, which would be required in the event further Aboriginal heritage assessment of the property is needed.

1.6 Authorship

This report has been prepared by AMBS Senior Heritage Consultant Tyler Beebe and Heritage Project Manager Matthew Byron and approved by AMBS Director Heritage Christopher Langeluddecke.

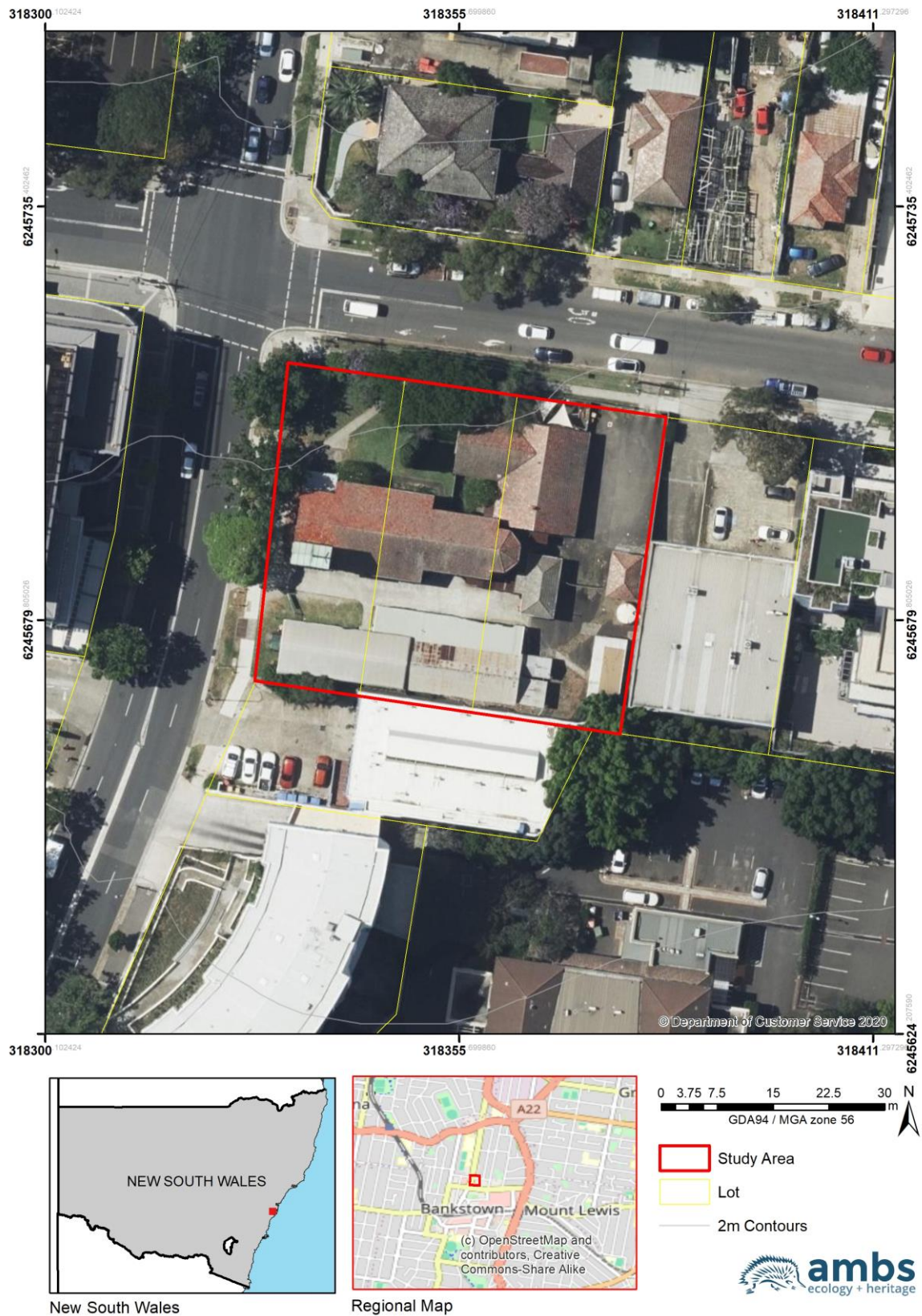


Figure 1.1 Location of the study area.

2 Statutory Context

The conservation and management of Aboriginal heritage items is undertaken in accordance with relevant Commonwealth, State, or local government legislation. Listings relevant to the study area are summarised below.

2.1 *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) aims to protect and manage places of national environmental significance. Several heritage lists, including the National Heritage List (NHL) and the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL), are addressed by the EPBC Act. The NHL lists places that have outstanding value to the nation, while the CHL includes items and places owned or managed by Commonwealth agencies. Ministerial approval is required for controlled actions which would have a significant impact on items and places on the NHL or CHL.

There are no Aboriginal heritage items or places listed on the NHL or CHL within the study area or its vicinity

2.2 *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 & National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Regulation 2019*

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act) specifies that the Director-General of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS; now Heritage NSW) is responsible for the care, control and management of various natural and cultural areas, including Aboriginal places and objects throughout NSW. Under this Act, all Aboriginal Objects are protected regardless of significance or land tenure. Such Aboriginal Objects include pre-contact features like scarred trees, middens and open camp sites, and post-contact features such as Aboriginal fringe camps. The Act also protects Aboriginal Places, which can only be declared by the Minister administering the NPW Act; these are defined as being a place that *is or was of special significance with respect to Aboriginal culture*.

There are no declared Aboriginal Places within the study area.

Under Section 90 of the NPW Act, it is an offence to destroy, deface, damage or desecrate an Aboriginal Object or Aboriginal Place, unless an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) has been issued by the Conservation and Regional Delivery Division and Communities and Greater Sydney Division of Heritage NSW. The Act requires that reasonable precautions and due diligence be undertaken to avoid impacts on Aboriginal Objects.

The *National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Regulation 2019* excludes activities carried out in accordance with the *Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in NSW* from the definition of harm in the NPW Act, meaning that test excavations may be carried out in accordance with this Code of Practice, without requiring an AHIP. The Regulation also outlines Aboriginal community consultation requirements as detailed in the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents 2019*, and a Due Diligence Code of Practice which specifies activities that are low impact, thus providing a defence to the strict liability offence of harming an Aboriginal object.

2.2.1 *Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System*

The Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) is part of the regulatory framework for the implementation of the NPW Act. Maintained by Heritage NSW, the AHIMS includes a database of Aboriginal heritage sites, items, places and other objects that have been reported to Heritage NSW, as well as site cards describing Aboriginal sites registered in the

database and associated Aboriginal heritage assessment reports. Section 89A of the NPW Act requires individuals and corporations to notify Heritage NSW of the location of Aboriginal sites identified during field investigations, regardless of land tenure or any likely impacts to such sites. Nevertheless, the AHIMS is not a comprehensive list of all Aboriginal heritage sites in NSW; it only includes information that has been reported to Heritage NSW. The accuracy of site co-ordinates in the database therefore varies depending on the method used to record locations.

No Aboriginal sites have previously been recorded in the study area on AHIMS. The results of a site search for the local area are presented in Section 4.2.1.

2.3 *Heritage Act 1977*

The *Heritage Act 1977* protects heritage places, buildings, works, moveable objects, precincts and archaeological sites that are important to the people of NSW. Items that have particular importance to the State of NSW are listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR). Such items can include those of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage significance.

There are no Aboriginal heritage items or places in the vicinity of the study area listed on the SHR.

2.4 *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) regulates land use planning and development in NSW, including the making of environmental planning instruments (EPIs). The two types of EPIs are State Environment Planning Policies (SEPPs), which cover areas of State or regional environmental planning significance; and Local Environmental Plans (LEPs), which cover LGAs. SEPPs and LEPs identify and provide for the protection of local heritage items and heritage conservation areas. The study area is located within the Penrith LGA.

2.4.1 *Canterbury-Bankstown Local Environmental Plan 2023*

Part 5, Clause 5.10 'Heritage Conservation' of the Canterbury-Bankstown LEP is consistent with current heritage best practice guidelines. It provides for the protection of environmental heritage of the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA, the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas (including associated fabric, settings, and views), archaeological sites, Aboriginal objects, and Aboriginal places of heritage significance. Schedule 5 'Environmental heritage' does not include any Aboriginal objects or places of heritage significance within the study area or its vicinity.

3 Environmental Context

Environmental factors of the local landscape can inform an understanding of past human occupation of an area. Analysing the nature of the local landscape, specifically factors which affect patterns of past human occupation including topography, geology, soils, hydrology and vegetation, contributes to predictive modelling of archaeological sites, contextualises archaeological material and enables the interpretation of past human behavioural patterns.

3.1.1 Soils and Geology

The study area is within the Blacktown Residual soil landscape (Figure 4.1). Blacktown soils are characterised by shallow to moderately deep (>100 cm) hardsetting mottled texture contrast soils, red and brown podzolic soils crests grading to yellow podzolic soils on lower slopes and in drainage lines. The underlying geology of Blacktown soils is the Wianamatta Group – Ashfield Shale consisting of laminite and dark grey siltstone, Bringelly Shale which consists of shale with occasional calcareous claystone, laminite and infrequent coal, and Minchinbury Sandstone consisting of fine to medium-grained quartz lithic sandstone (Chapman and Murphy 1989).

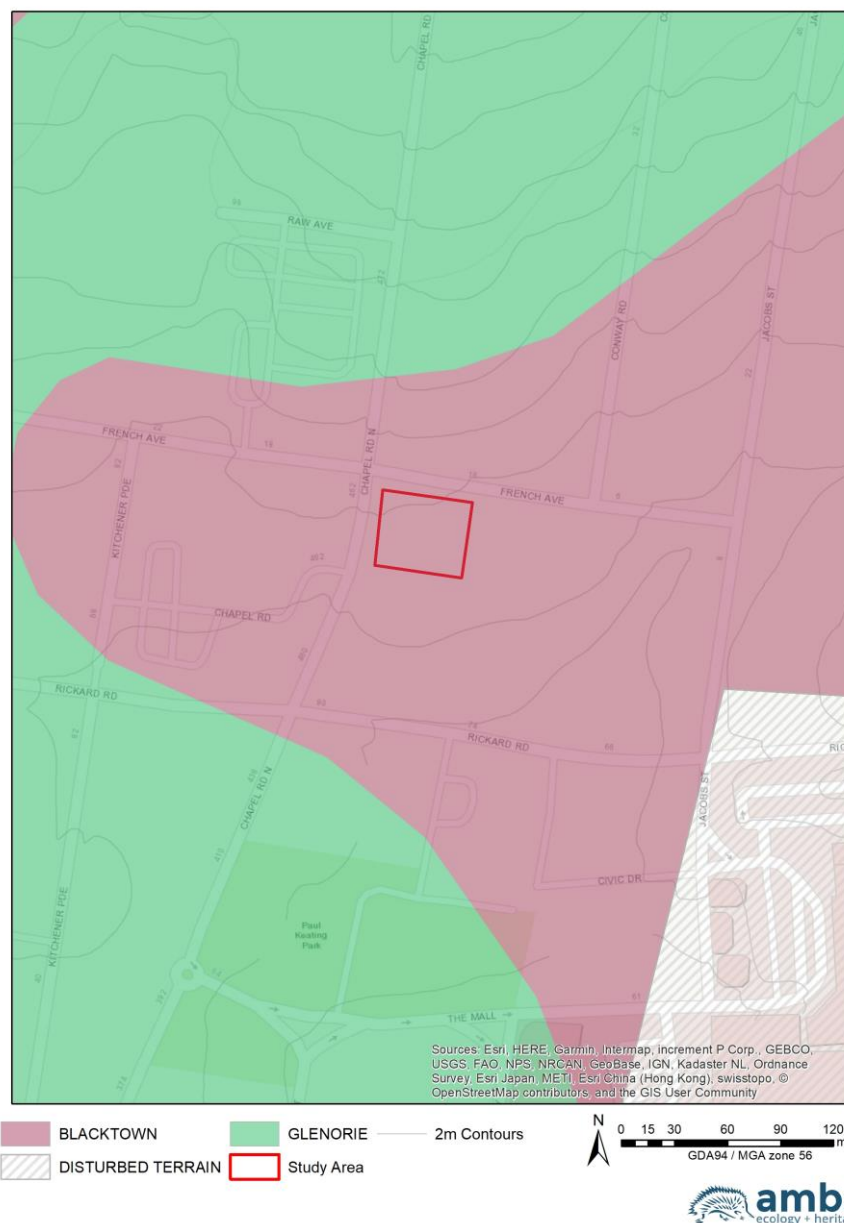


Figure 3.1 Soil landscape of the study area

3.1.2 Vegetation

Due to the significant development of the Bankstown area in the past, very little native vegetation remains and there is almost no vegetation located within the study area. However, native vegetation usually associated with the Blacktown soil landscape includes three vegetation associations based on *Eucalyptus fibrosa* (broad-leaved ironbark), *Angophora bakeri* (narrow-leaved apple) and *E. sclerophylla* (scribbly gum) (Murphy, 1973). *Melaleuca decora* and *M. nodosa* (paperbarks) often occur as a small tree layer.

The shrub understorey species are dominated by members of the families *Fabaceae*, *Papilionaceae*, *Sapindaceae*, *Proteaceae* and *Myrtaceae*. (Chapman and Murphy 1989)

The study area has been completely cleared of native vegetation. Such clearing of vegetation would have impacted the integrity of archaeological deposits.

3.1.3 Topography and Hydrology

The topography of the Blacktown soil landscape is generally described as Gently undulating rises on Wianamatta Shale with local relief 10–30 m and slopes generally >5% but occasionally up to 10%. Crests and ridges are broad (200–600 m) and rounded with convex upper slopes grading into concave lower slopes. Outcrops of shale do not occur naturally on the surface. They may occur, however, where soils have been removed (Chapman and Murphy 1989).

There is a distinct lack of available fresh water sources in the vicinity of the study area. The closest sources of water to the study area include unnamed drainage lines 3km to the north, Georges River 5.5km to the west, Salt Pan Creek 3.5 km to the south, and Cooks River 7.5km to the east.

3.1.4 Land Use and Disturbance

It should be noted all ethnographic information about Aboriginal people before European occupation has chiefly been written by European sources, most notably by early European settlers, and should be understood in that context. At the time of European contact, the Aboriginal people of the NSW were organised into named territorial groups. The region encompassing the study area were the traditional lands of the Darug speaking Aboriginal people. Kohen's review (Kohen 1986) of the ethnohistorical and environmental information suggests that the western Sydney Darug people moved with the seasons and were attracted to alluvial floodplain areas of the Hawkesbury and Nepean rivers, but also extending at least from the Nepean Gorge to Pitt Town.

St Paul's Anglican Church (the study area) was established in 1912. The initial church was built in 1913 and is now in use as the church hall. The current church building was built in 1938 with additions done in 1961 (GML Heritage 2024:60-61). The earliest available aerial photograph in 1943 shows that the Bankstown area had already begun to be significantly developed. There looks to be parkland to the immediate north west and a vacant lot to the south. The Sydney Train line is evident to the south. By 1950 the parkland and vacant lot to the north and south had begun to be developed and the Hume Highway/Remembrance Drive is visible to the north. A 1977 aerial shows further development within the Bankstown area including a light industrial development to the immediate south. A 2001 aerial shows increasing residential and industrial development across the area with no further development within the parkland to the north. No major change between the 2001 and 2024 aerial is visible, as the City of Bankstown area appears to have been developed to its current state by 2001.



Figure 3.2 1943 aerial photo with study area circled in red (Courtesy of six maps)



Figure 3.3 1950 aerial photo with study area circled in red (Courtesy of NSW Spatial Viewer)



Figure 3.4 1977 aerial photo with study area circled in red (Courtesy of NSW Spatial Viewer)

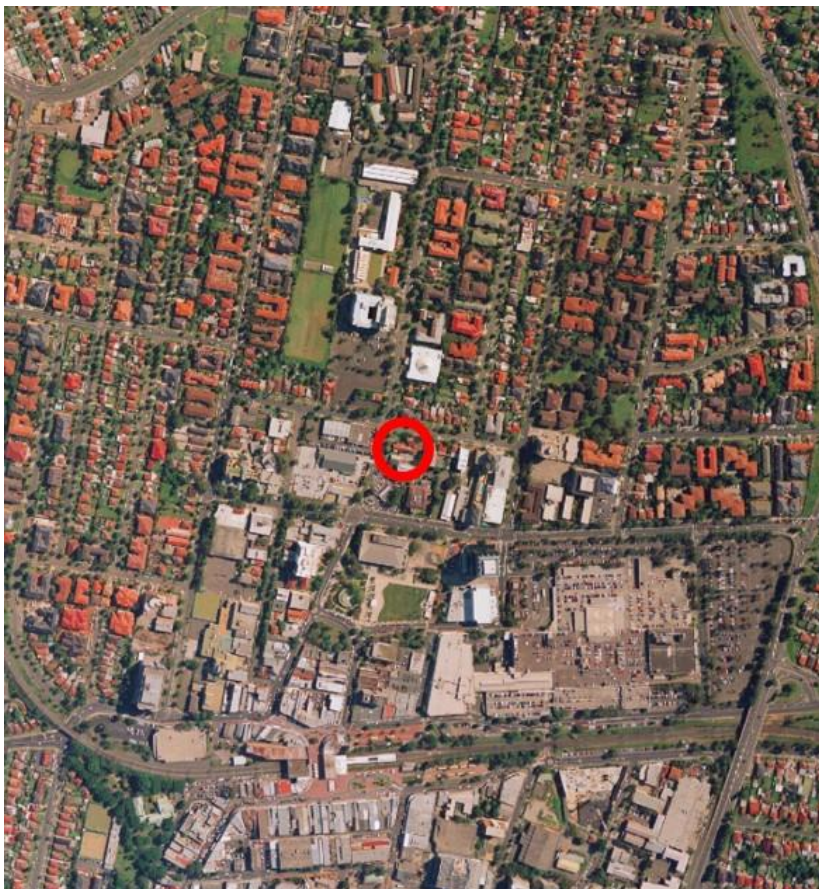


Figure 3.5 2001 aerial photo with study area circled in red (Courtesy of NSW Spatial Viewer)

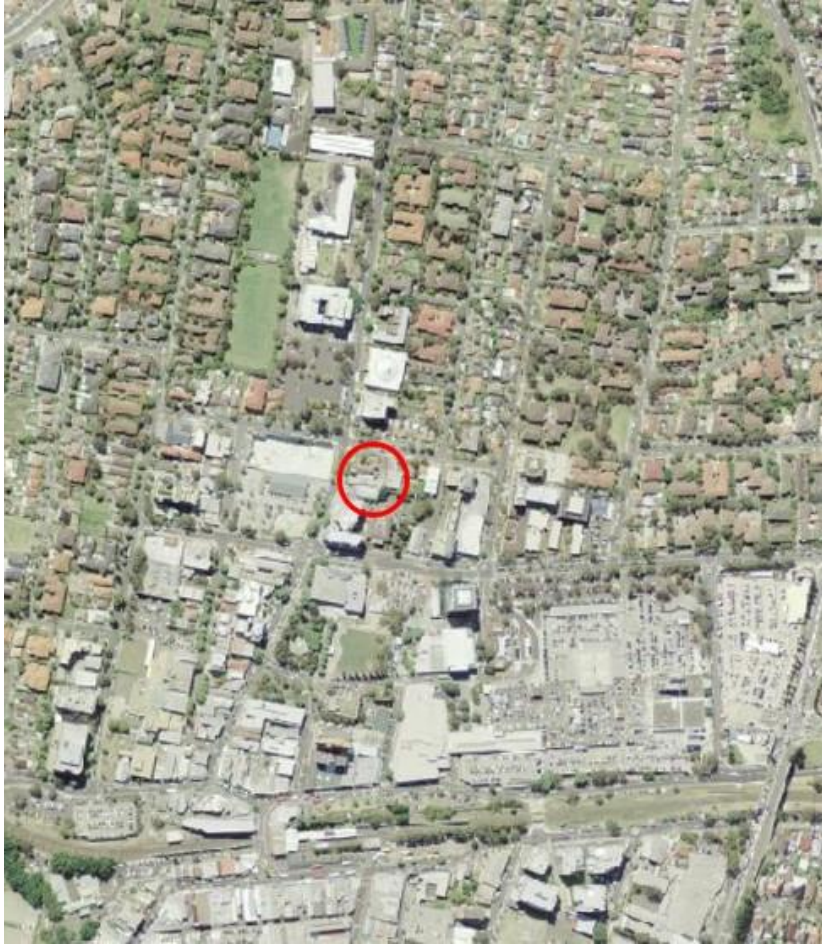


Figure 3.6 c.2024 aerial photo with study area circled in red (Courtesy of Six Maps)

4 Aboriginal Heritage Context

This section describes the nature of the known Aboriginal archaeology of the study area, based upon a review of relevant archaeological reports and publications, and a search and review of previously recorded sites in the Heritage NSW AHIMS database. This review and discussion allow for the development of a predictive model for potential Aboriginal sites within the study area. Summary descriptions of site features are provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Description of Aboriginal heritage site features (OEH 2012:8-10).

Site Type	Description
Aboriginal Ceremony and Dreaming	Spiritual/story places, which may not include physical evidence of previous use of the place, e.g., natural unmodified landscape features, ceremonial/spiritual areas, men's/women's sites, dreaming (creation) tracks, marriage places.
Aboriginal Resource and Gathering	Places related to everyday activities such as food gathering or hunting, or collection/manufacture of materials/goods for use or trade.
Artefact	Object(s) such as stone tools, and associated flaked material, spears, manuports, grindstones, discarded stone flakes, modified glass or shell, which provide evidence of Aboriginal use of the area.
Burial	Pre- or post-contact burial of an Aboriginal person, which may occur outside of designated cemeteries and may or may not be marked by stone cairns/carvings/mounds, e.g., in caves or sand areas, along creek banks etc.
Ceremonial Ring	Raised earth ring(s) associated with ceremony.
Conflict	Sometimes referred to as massacre sites, these are places where confrontations occurred between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, or between different Aboriginal groups.
Habitation Structure	Structures built by Aboriginal people for short- or long-term shelter. May include historic camps of contemporary significance. More temporary structures are commonly preserved away from the NSW coastline. Smaller structures may make use of natural materials such as branches, logs and bark sheets, or manufactured materials such as corrugated iron. May include archaeological remains of a former structure such as a chimney/fireplace, raised earth building platform, excavated pits, rubble mounds etc.
Modified Tree (Scarred or Carved)	Scarred trees show modification marks resulting from cutting of bark from the trunk for foot holds; for use in the production of shields, canoes, boomerangs, burials shrouds etc; or for medicinal purposes. Carved trees have had the heartwood of the tree intentionally carved to form a permanent marker, which may indicate ceremonial use/significance of a nearby area, or which may have functioned as territorial or burial markers.
Non-Human Bone and Organic Material	Object(s) found within Aboriginal cultural deposits such as fish or mammal bones, ochres, or cached objects which may otherwise have broken down such as resin, twine, dilly bags, nets etc.
Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD)	Area where Aboriginal objects are considered likely to occur below the ground surface.
Shell	Accumulation/deposit of shellfish from beach, estuarine, lacustrine or riverine species resulting from Aboriginal gathering and consumption, usually found in association with other objects like stone tools, fish bones, charcoal, fireplaces/hearths or burials. May vary greatly in size and components.
Stone Arrangement	Human-produced arrangements of stone usually associated with ceremonial activities; used as markers for territorial limits; or used to mark/protect burials.
Stone Quarry	Source of (usually) good quality stone, which is quarried and used in the manufacture of stone tools.
Waterhole	Source of fresh water for Aboriginal groups, which may have traditional ceremonial or dreaming significance, and which may also be used to the present day as a rich resource gathering area, e.g. waterbirds, eels, clays, reeds etc.

4.1 Regional Archaeological Context

Aboriginal occupation of the greater Sydney region is likely to have spanned at least 20,000 years, although dates of more than 50,000 years have been claimed for artefacts found in gravels of the Cranebrook Terrace on the Nepean River (Nanson et al. 1987; Stockton 2009; Stockton & Holland 1974). Late Pleistocene occupation sites have been identified on the fringes of the Sydney basin and from rock shelter sites in adjoining areas. Dates obtained from these sites were 14,700 Before

Present (BP) at Shaws Creek in the Blue Mountain foothills (Kohen et al. 1984), c.15,000-c.11,000 BP at on a levee near Pitt Town near the Hawkesbury River (Williams et al. 2012), c.11,000 BP at Loggers Shelter in Mangrove Creek (Attenbrow 1981, 2004), and c.20,000 BP at Burrill Lake on the South Coast (Lampert 1971). The majority of sites in the Sydney region, however, date to within the last 5,000 years, with some researchers proposing that occupation intensity increased from this period (Kohen 1986; McDonald 1994; McDonald & Rich 1993); although it has recently been argued that this is part of a longer trend in stepwise population growth and diversification of economic activity evident in south east Australia from the Early to Mid-Holocene (Williams 2013). This increase in sites may reflect an intensity of occupation that was influenced by rising sea levels, which stabilised around 6,500 years ago. Older occupation sites along the now submerged coastline would have been flooded, with subsequent occupation concentrating on and utilising resources along the current coastlines and in the changing ecological systems of the hinterland (Attenbrow 2010:55-56).

Creeks and other water resources were foci for Aboriginal occupation, providing fresh water, fish, eels, waterbirds and plant foods, in addition to terrestrial animals drawn to the water (Attenbrow 2010:70-71). Along the Nepean River in the western Cumberland Plain, freshwater mullet, bass, estuary perch, freshwater catfish, Macquarie perch, eels, white crayfish and freshwater mussels were eaten by Aboriginal people (Kohen 1986:53). An abundance of fragmented freshwater mussel shell (*Velesunio ambiguus*) was identified at the Shaws Creek K2 rockshelter site (Attenbrow 2010:70). Watkin Tench observed “some roots (a species of wild yam chiefly) which they dig out of the earth” were gathered along the banks of the Nepean River, along with quail and bird eggs (Tench cited in Leslie & Wheeler 2004:15; Kohen 1986:53). Edible plant species in the region included figs, yams, fern roots, cabbage tree palm hearts and some lilies (Leslie & Wheeler 2004:16). Trees provided shade, habitat for animals and birds, canoes, paddles, shields, baskets and bowls. Due to the lack of suitable stone outcrop associated with the Richmond fluvial soil landscape, shelter would have been sourced mostly from tree bark. Huts comprised “a piece of the bark of a tree, bent in the middle and set upon the ends, with a piece set up against that end on which the wind blows. This hut serves them for a habitation and will contain a whole family” (Hunter cited in Attenbrow 2010:105).

The spread of urban development across the Cumberland Plain, particularly over the last few decades, has meant that archaeological investigations have intensified with the need for environmental impact assessments. Most archaeological investigations conducted within this framework have been restricted by small study areas (as defined by individual developments) and limited project briefs. As a result, the Cumberland Plain has become the most intensively investigated archaeological landscape in Australia. The studies carried out over these decades of development in the west provide a broad picture of the archaeological context of the region.

4.2 Local Archaeological Context

There have been a number of archaeological investigations previously undertaken in the vicinity of the study area. The information summarised below is based on reports that have been registered with the Heritage NSW AHIMS, and which are most relevant and informative to the archaeological background of the current project.

In 2021 AMBS Ecology and Heritage was commissioned by the by Canterbury Bankstown Council to prepare an Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Study in support of the development of the *Bankstown City Centre and Campsie Town Centre Master Plans*. The study was conducted to allow Council to take better account of Aboriginal heritage knowledge and values in its planning and management of the City and in particular, the Bankstown and Campsie strategic centres. The study presented a thematic history of the Aboriginal people’s occupation of the greater Sydney region and within the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA. The study included the following recommendations:

- Confirmation of existing planning instruments and advice on how to further strengthen existing planning instruments in order to ensure the protection of Aboriginal heritage within the LGA;
- Confirmation as outlined in the *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan June 2020 - June 2022*, Council should continue its vision for reconciliation, to 'create a strong, harmonious and richer community by encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents to share their heritage and culture with people from other cultures to ensure different traditions, customs and stories are valued' (Canterbury Bankstown Council 2019a:2);
- Council should continue to encourage promotion and acknowledgement of the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal heritage values through interpretation and Welcome to Country/Acknowledgment of Country ceremonies;
- Council should consider implementing the GANSW *Designing with Country* cultural design principles in future development and design; and
- Outlined potential future research, strategies and planning which would assist Council in the management, promotion, and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage, but which were outside the scope of the study.

Following on from the 2021 study, in 2024 AMBS was commissioned by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) to provide Aboriginal heritage advice for the Bankstown Precinct State-led Rezoning Project. The advice would allow DPHI to take better account of Aboriginal heritage knowledge and values in its refining and implementation of the draft *Bankstown City Centre Master Plan* (BCC Master Plan), utilising the technical input provided to address Aboriginal heritage and Connecting with Country within the BCC Master Plan area. The project area was comprised of Bankstown City Centre, the strategic centre of the City of Canterbury Bankstown Local Government Area (LGA). The project area covered an approximate area of 2.2km².

The advice report concluded with a number of recommendations including:

- Changes should be made to the DCP outlining the requirements of the Heritage NSW Aboriginal heritage assessment process.
- Aboriginal heritage should be acknowledged and promoted in future interpretations works through drawing interpretation themes from the thematic history outlined in the *Bankstown City Centre and Campsie Town Centre Master Plans Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Study (AMBS 2021)*.
- An Aboriginal Heritage Interpretation and Public Art Strategy should be developed for the Bankstown area.
- An Aboriginal heritage assessment of the LGA should be commissioned and a detailed recording of each heritage place should be undertaken.

In 2019 Comber Consultants were commissioned by the Department of Education to undertake an Aboriginal heritage assessment in advance of future expansion of the Punchbowl Public School, located 4km south of the study area. No Aboriginal objects were observed during the archaeological survey. The site inspection confirmed that the landscape has no distinguishing features, such as ridgelines, rock outcrops, gullies with streams or wetlands that would be conducive to a regular occupation and accumulation of Aboriginal material culture. As the study area was not near fresh water or within a resource rich area or a landform that would have supported occupation, the predictive model indicated that it was highly unlikely that the study area contained evidence of occupation. No further heritage investigations were recommended.

In 2010 Jo McDonald Cultural Heritage Management (JMCHM) was commissioned by Discovery Point Ltd, to prepare an Aboriginal heritage impact for the Discovery Point precinct located approximately 15km east of the study area. Discovery Point is bounded by the Cooks River, the Princes Highway, Magdalene Terrace, and the Illawarra Rail Line, and is located approximately 400m south of the junction of the Cooks River and Wolli Creek.

As part of the assessment JMCHC identified four zones of archaeological potential within the precinct: high, moderate, low, and no potential. Earlier assessment and excavations done by JMCHM demonstrated that pockets of remnant archaeological deposit exist amongst the disturbed areas across Discovery Point. The Aboriginal heritage impact statement stated that the remains of the intact subsurface archaeological deposit that existed within the Discovery Point precinct have a high scientific potential to provide further information on a rare surviving example of prehistoric habitation in that type of coastal/estuarine environment.

Again in 2010, JMCHM was commissioned by Mithcell McLennan on behalf of TransGrid to provide a supplementary indigenous heritage assessment for the proposed substation, Rookwood Road, Potts Hill Bankstown, approximately 5km north of the study area. The 2010 assessment built upon a previous assessment of the Potts Hill Reservoir site conducted by JMCHM in 2007. The substation is located immediately to the east of the Potts Hill Reservoir. The 2007 JMCHM survey identified no Aboriginal material within the area of proposed development of the reservoir.

The 2010 JMCHM survey identified that the lands surrounding the reservoir which included the substation were highly disturbed and were assessed as having low archaeological scientific significance.

4.2.1 Registered Aboriginal Sites

An extensive search of the AHIMS database was undertaken on 28 November 2024 (AHIMS client service ID #955107), which identified 33 registered Aboriginal sites within the following coordinates: Datum: GDA94/MGA Zone 56, Eastings: 313000.0 – 324000.0, Northings: 6240000.0 – 6251000.0. However, one site was listed as 'not a site' reducing the number of valid sites to 32. No Aboriginal heritage sites have previously been recorded within the study area.

Table 4.2 AHIMS registered Aboriginal sites in the vicinity of the study area.

Site Type	Number of Sites Present	Percentage
Artefact	17	53.13%
Artefact Scatter	2	6.25%
Modified Tree	3	9.38%
PAD	7	21.88%
Resource and Gathering	1	3.13%
Shelter with Art, Deposit, Grinding Groove	2	6.25%
Total	32	100.00%

Artefact sites are the most frequent site types previously recorded in the local area, followed by PAD sites and then modified tree sites. No Aboriginal heritage sites have previously been recorded within the study area itself, three Aboriginal heritage sites have previously been recorded in the local area within 4km surrounding the study area. These consist of AHIMS Site #45-6-3748 (PAD site), site #45-6-2546 (artefact site), and Site #45-6-3252 (modified tree site).

AHIMS Site #45-6-3748 is a PAD site located approximately 2.3km to the south east. This site card was recorded by Artefact Heritage in 2019 during an archaeological investigation for the Sydney Metro City and Southwest: Sydenham to Bankstown upgrade. The site is located adjacent to Punchbowl station, between Punchbowl Road and Uranga Parade, Punchbowl. The PAD site is situated on a gentle slope landform and intact A horizons were observed in a cutting to the north of Punchbowl station. Based on aerial photography from 1943 and the past ten years, Artefact Heritage concluded that little disturbance had occurred at the site. The closest water source is located approximately 350m away.

AHIMS Site #45-6-2546, is an artefact site, approximately 2.3km south east of the study area. The site was recorded by Michael Guider in 1996 during a personal investigation. The open camp site comprises red silcrete, indurated mudstone and quartz flakes. The stone artefacts are eroding from

the soil bank just below Viola Street. Although the area has been disturbed by vegetation clearing and development of the park, there is a portion of soil where artefacts may still be found in situ. Also identified at the site were small pieces of Sydney cockle (*Anadara trapezia*) and Sydney Rock Oyster (*Saccostrea culcullata*). A small tributary of Salt Pan Creek is located within 30m of the site.

Two culturally modified tree sites (AHIMS sites #45-6-3252 and #45-6-3253) are currently registered on the AHIMS database and located within the local area. The sites were recorded by Dr Paul Wynn in 2017 and are situated in Wiley Park Open Space, Wiley Park, approximately 3.7km south east of the study area. An assessment of these sites was undertaken by Extent and UTM in 2018 which found that they had not been culturally modified and that the scars had occurred from abrasion impact events, branch tears and/or borer damage. However, this is yet to be updated on the AHIMS database.



Figure 4.1 Figure 5.1 AHIMS sites within vicinity to the study are

4.3 Discussion and Aboriginal Heritage Site Prediction Modelling

Artefact sites are the most frequent site types previously recorded in the local area, followed by PAD sites. No Aboriginal heritage sites have previously been recorded within the study area itself.

The study area is located within a significantly developed residential and commercial landscape. The closest source of water are unnamed 1st order drainage lines 3km to the north, with the closest source of reliable water being the Georges River 5.5km to the west.

St Paul's Anglican Church (the study area) was established in 1912. Based on available aerial photography it appears that by 1943 significant residential development had begun in the vicinity, with residential and commercial development increasing throughout the years to Bankstown's current level of development. The level of disturbance associated with development within and around the study area would be considered high due to significant modifications to the landscape through urban development

Table 4.3 Categories of disturbance

Level of Disturbance	Type of Disturbance	Impact on Archaeological Resource
None	No effective disturbance of natural ground surface	<i>In situ</i> archaeological deposits may be present
Low	Limited vegetation clearance; stock grazing	Archaeological material should retain some spatial integrity although localised displacement may be expected
Moderate	Complete vegetation clearance; pasture/cultivation (ploughing); minor to moderate erosion	Archaeological materials may be present, although localised spatial displacement and artefact damage are likely; <i>in situ</i> deposits may remain below plough zone
High	Removal of topsoil for urban and industrial development; irrigation; Road works; infrastructure construction; landscaping; landfill; and severe erosion	While archaeological sites may be destroyed, remnant dispersed archaeological material may survive; the context of such material may be unknown.

On the basis of the lack of archaeological sites within the region, a review of previous archaeological studies, and a review of the environmental and historic context of the area, the following conclusions can be drawn regarding the potential presence and location of Aboriginal sites in the study area:

- The number of surviving midden sites in Sydney has most likely decreased since European contact, due to land clearing, construction and urbanisation as well as impacts from lime burning to provide building mortar. Due to residential and commercial development, and the study area's distance from water, it is unlikely that midden sites would have been present, or to have survived within the study area if they were.
- Stone artefact sites are found in all environmental contexts but are most readily identified through surface survey in areas where vegetation is limited, and ground surface visibility is high;
- Stone artefact scatters may occur in all landform contexts throughout the local area, although water is often the defining characteristic in distribution patterns. From the body of research throughout the region and within the broader state context, it is generally accepted that people tended to camp in proximity to water, resources or vantage points, with camping occurring more frequently the more permanent the water source. The study area's distance from a reliable source of water and the levels of past disturbance makes it unlikely that this site type would be found within the study area.
- The level of land disturbance of the study area is considered high due to the modification of the natural landform and through urban development, resulting in the likely removal

and/or burial of natural soil deposits, as such, it is unlikely that Aboriginal cultural sites remain present in the study area.

- Rock shelters, stone quarry sites, axe grinding grooves, stone engravings/art and shelter sites are highly unlikely to be found in the study area because of the lack of suitable stone outcrops or overhangs.
- Scarred or carved trees are not present in the study area because it has been cleared of mature vegetation in the past through urban development.

5 Visual Inspection

A visual inspection of the study area was conducted on 6 February 2025 by AMBS archaeologist Tyler Beebe. The inspection involved a pedestrian survey of the study area and surroundings, focusing on identifying levels of disturbance and assessing the landforms. The inspection aimed to assess the study area's current condition and to identify whether landscape features likely to indicate the presence of Aboriginal objects are present within the study area.

Currently the study area consists of St Paul's Anglican Church, associated outbuildings, areas of hardstand, and a separate church hall. The church was established in 1912 and based on available earliest aerial photograph from 1943 the study area appears largely unchanged as the City of Bankstown developed around it.

The entire study area was accessible and surveyed using a meander approach. The study area had low ground surface visibility due to the existing buildings and areas of hardstand. All areas of ground exposure were inspected for Aboriginal objects however none were observed. The few trees existing within the study area were not only too young to have been culturally modified in the past, but were also non-native species.

The study area has been largely impacted by the development of the church, associated outbuildings and the areas of observed hardstand. It was evident that the original land surface had been altered, and soils had been disturbed from past and ongoing church maintenance. Given the results of the visual inspection, the predictive model for Aboriginal sites, and the observed level of disturbance within the study area, it is considered unlikely that *in situ* Aboriginal archaeological deposits are present within the study area, and therefore further archaeological assessment of the site is not likely to increase the current scientific understanding of the local region.



Figure 5.1 St Paul's Anglican Church, view to the north.



Figure 5.2 Area of ground surface exposure.

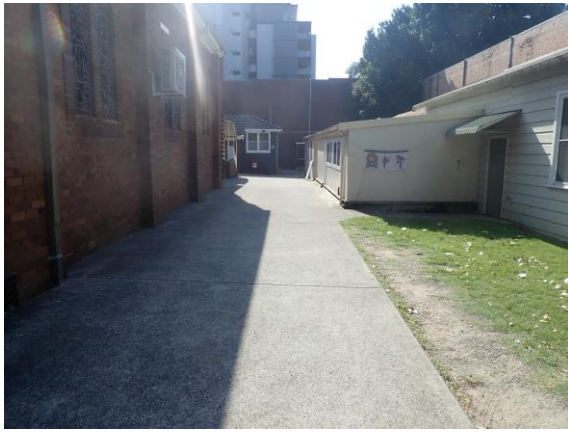


Figure 5.3 Area of concrete hardstand within the study area.



Figure 5.4 Exposed ground along French Avenue.



Figure 5.5 Area of hardstand with exposed gravels.



Figure 5.6 Area of hardstand with amenities block.

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

The due diligence assessment process is intended to allow initial determination of the likely presence of Aboriginal heritage objects which may be impacted by an activity. Where a due diligence assessment determines that there are, or are likely to be, Aboriginal heritage objects present in an area of activity, more detailed investigation and impact assessment is required in the form of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA), regardless of their significance or context.

Given the results of the visual inspection, the predictive model for Aboriginal sites, proximity to water and landforms present, and the observed level of disturbance, it is considered that it is unlikely for subsurface Aboriginal heritage objects to be present within the study area as the natural soils have likely been significantly disturbed.

The following recommendations are based on the statutory requirements, a review of the environmental, historic, and Aboriginal heritage context of the study area, the results of the visual inspection, and current heritage best practice, in accordance with the Heritage NSW *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW*. A summary of this assessment's compliance with the Code of Practice is presented in Table 6.1.

No Aboriginal heritage sites, objects, places or remaining natural landscape features likely to indicate the presence of Aboriginal objects, were identified within the study area. The study area has been significantly impacted by the development of the City of Bankstown. As such it is considered unlikely that evidence of previous occupation of Aboriginal people remains within the study area. There are no previously identified Aboriginal heritage sites recorded on AHIMS within the study area, and no previously registered Aboriginal heritage sites will be directly impacted by the proposed development.

Recommendation

The study area is unlikely to retain Aboriginal objects; however, should any Aboriginal objects be exposed during any future works, disturbance of the area should cease, and Heritage NSW should be informed in accordance with Section 89A of the NPW Act. Works should not continue without the written consent of Heritage NSW.

Table 6.1 Due diligence process and results summary (after DECCW 2010:10-13).

Due Diligence Assessment Process	Response
Step 1. Will the activity disturb the ground surface or any culturally modified trees?	Any future development will disturb the ground surface (see Section 1.1) No trees old enough to be culturally modified are currently present in the study area or immediate surrounds (see 3.1.2). Proceed to Step 2a.
Step 2a. Are there any relevant confirmed site records or other associated landscape feature information on the AHIMS database?	No Aboriginal heritage sites have previously been recorded within the study area. Proceed to Step 2b.
Step 2b. Are there any other sources of information of which a person is already aware? Other sources of information can include previous studies, reports or surveys which you have commissioned or are otherwise aware of.	A number of archaeological assessments have been undertaken in the local area; however no assessment has been undertaken in or near the study area itself (see Section 4.2). Proceed to Step 2c.
Step 2c. Are there landscape features present likely to indicate presence of Aboriginal objects?	The study area has been significantly impacted by the development of the property and wider Bankstown area. The study area is not in close proximity to water sources or other landform features likely to indicate the presence of Aboriginal objects. It is therefore unlikely for Aboriginal objects to be present within the study area in an archaeological context (see Section 3 and 5). Proceed to Step 3.
Step 3. Can harm to Aboriginal objects listed on AHIMS or identified by other sources of information be avoided, and/or can the carrying out of the activity at the relevant landscape features be avoided?	No Aboriginal heritage site has previously been recorded within the study area. There are no landscape features that are likely to indicate presence of Aboriginal objects in the study area (see Sections 4 and 5). Proceed to Step 4.
Step 4: Does a desktop assessment and visual inspection confirm that there are Aboriginal objects or that they are likely?	The assessment has confirmed that it is unlikely for Aboriginal objects to exist within the study area, due to the observed levels of disturbance to the landform present.

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