

18 January 2019

Ms Kate Tudehope
Associate Director – Planning
Ethos Urban
173 Sussex Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Ms Tudehope,

**RE : Advice on Potential Aboriginal Archaeological Impacts,
Australian Museum Project Discover (SSD 18_9452)**

Coast History & Heritage Pty Ltd have been asked to provide advice on the potential Aboriginal archaeological impacts relating to the current revised plans for the Australian Museum Project Discover, in order to determine whether any formal Aboriginal heritage assessment of the proposal is required. The Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the project, issued on 27/7/18, state in relation to Aboriginal heritage that:

If there is any ground disturbance, an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) is required to identify and describe Aboriginal cultural heritage values that existing across the area affected by the development.

This was based on advice from the Office of Environment & Heritage (letter of 25/7/18).

The initial design for the proposal included aspects which may have resulted in 'ground disturbance'; specifically the proposed realignment of an external stairway on William St, and a proposal to extend the Crystal Hall. For this reason, it was considered possible that an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report may have been required. However the current revised proposal (**Figures 1 & 2**) has removed these features and contains only the following minor impacts below current basement levels, all within the Still Addition building footprint:

- Excavation for the base of a new elevator shaft
- Excavation for the base of two new escalators

In order to determine whether these activities may result in 'ground disturbance', I have considered:

- A search of the Office of Environment & Heritage AHIMS Aboriginal Sites Register, which shows that no Aboriginal sites are currently recorded within 50 metres of the Australian Museum allotment (**Attachment 1**).
- A review of relevant construction plans, which suggests that the existing basement levels of the Still Addition building are cut deep into the natural slope down between College Street and Yurong Street (**Figure 3**).

- A site inspection on 16/1/19 of the plant room adjacent and below the level of the Still Addition basement area in which the elevator and escalator excavations are proposed, showing that this is clearly already excavated significantly into sandstone bedrock (**Figure 4**).
- A review of historical images, particularly during the 1988 construction of the Still Addition building within the former museum courtyard, which clearly confirm that excavation occurred deep into sandstone bedrock (for example, **Figure 5**).

Any Aboriginal archaeological remains which may once have been present within the footprint of the Still Addition building would have been located on the ground surface (e.g. scarred trees, the remains of campsites, or engravings carved into sandstone outcrops), as the slope in this area was not sufficient for sandstone overhangs to have formed. There is no likelihood for Aboriginal archaeological remains to be present within the underlying sandstone bedrock, as it formed many millions of years before the arrival of Aboriginal people in Australia.

It is quite clear from the evidence reviewed above, that the area has been grossly impacted by historical activities. Specifically, the construction of the Still Addition building in 1988 involved excavating basement levels deep into sandstone bedrock. The additional proposed impacts from the excavator shaft and escalator bases will merely extend that excavation further into existing bedrock, and have no potential to impact any Aboriginal archaeological remains. They do not represent 'ground disturbance', since that ground was long since disturbed (and removed) during the 1988 construction works, if not earlier.

In this advice, I have not consulted with local Aboriginal people about other potential cultural values associated with the museum site that could be impacted by the proposal (including to Aboriginal items stored within the museum), however I understand that the Australian Museum has consulted both the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and its internal Indigenous staff about the project, and that no concerns or issues of that nature have been raised.

In conclusion, according to the SEARs requirements for the project, it does not appear that an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report would be required in relation to the current revised plans, given that no 'ground disturbance' is proposed.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Paul Irish

Director

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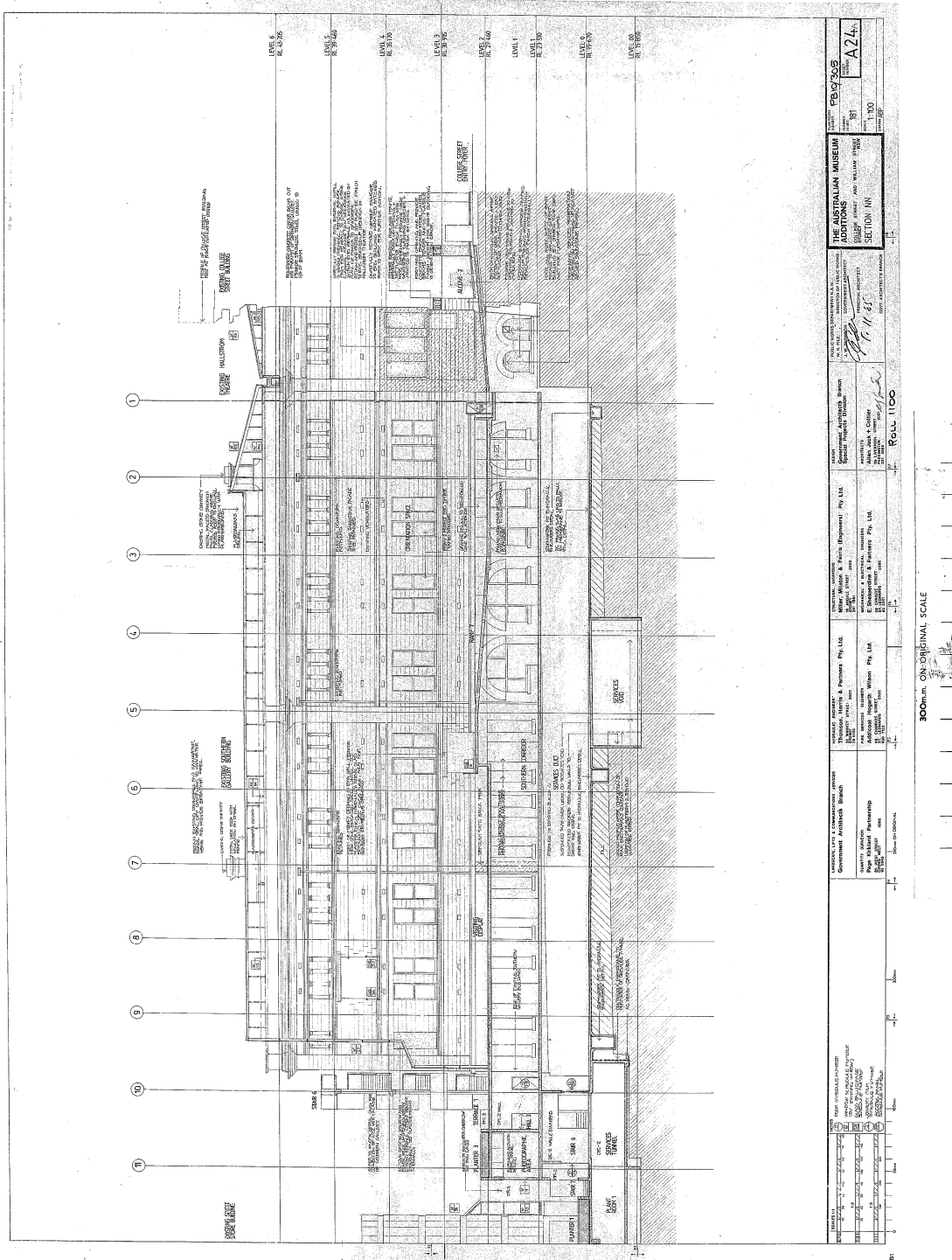


Figure 3. Current section across the museum site showing the slope of the ground down from College St on the right (west) towards Yurong Lane.



Figure 4. Photo from the site inspection of 16/1/19 from the plant room adjacent and below the current Still Additional basement, showing that the basement concrete slab (top of frame) currently rests on cut sandstone bedrock.



Figure 5. Photo from construction of the Still Addition basement in 1988, showing deep excavation of the concrete shell of the basement into existing sandstone bedrock (Photo courtesy of The Australian Museum).

Attachment 1

AHIMS Aboriginal Site Register Search Records

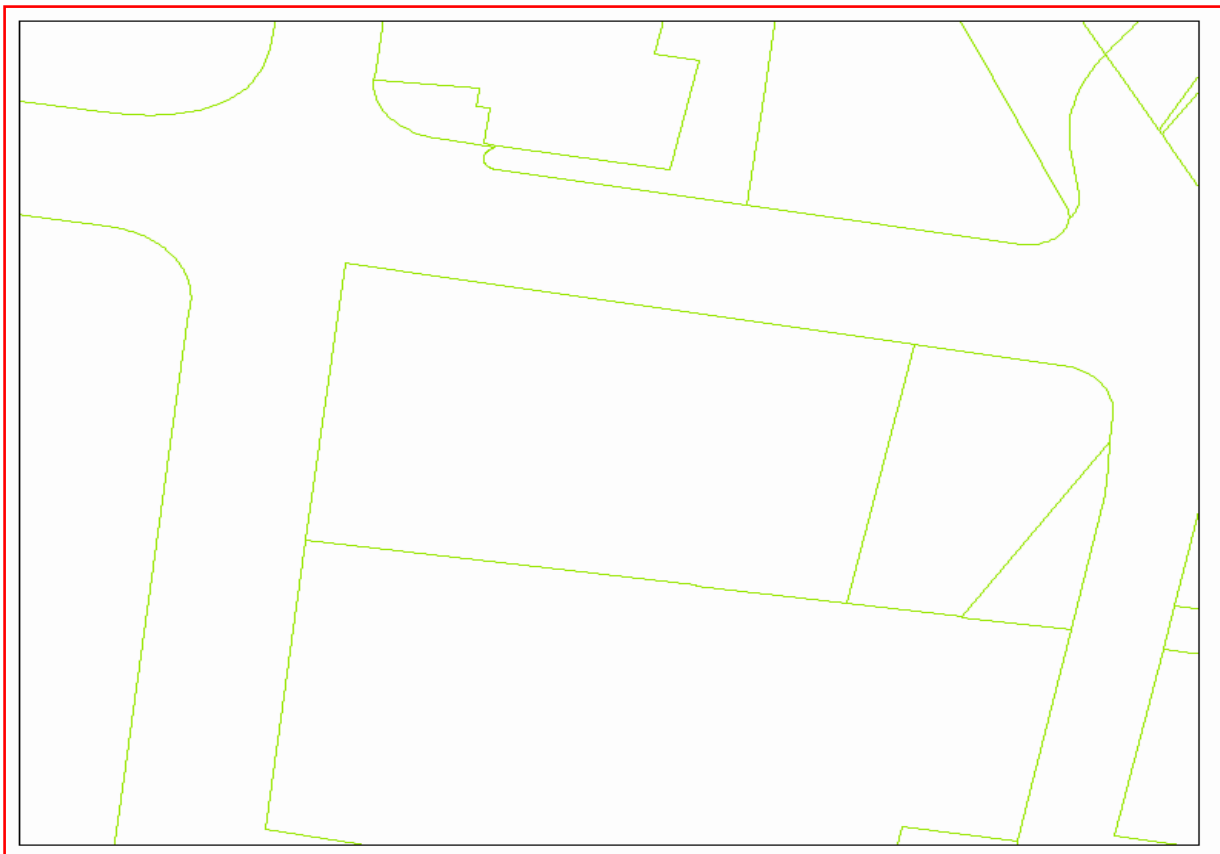
Coast History & Heritage
PO BOX A74 7 Mitchell Street
Arncliffe New South Wales 2205
Attention: Paul Irish
Email: paul@coasthistory.com.au

Date: 18 January 2019

Dear Sir or Madam:

AHIMS Web Service search for the following area at Lot : 1, DP:DP1157811 with a Buffer of 50 meters, conducted by Paul Irish on 18 January 2019.

The context area of your search is shown in the map below. Please note that the map does not accurately display the exact boundaries of the search as defined in the paragraph above. The map is to be used for general reference purposes only.



A search of the Office of the Environment and Heritage AHIMS Web Services (Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System) has shown that:

0	Aboriginal sites are recorded in or near the above location.
0	Aboriginal places have been declared in or near the above location. *

If your search shows Aboriginal sites or places what should you do?

- You must do an extensive search if AHIMS has shown that there are Aboriginal sites or places recorded in the search area.
- If you are checking AHIMS as a part of your due diligence, refer to the next steps of the Due Diligence Code of practice.
- You can get further information about Aboriginal places by looking at the gazettal notice that declared it. Aboriginal places gazetted after 2001 are available on the [NSW Government Gazette \(http://www.nsw.gov.au/gazette\)](http://www.nsw.gov.au/gazette) website. Gazettal notices published prior to 2001 can be obtained from Office of Environment and Heritage's Aboriginal Heritage Information Unit upon request

Important information about your AHIMS search

- The information derived from the AHIMS search is only to be used for the purpose for which it was requested. It is not to be made available to the public.
- AHIMS records information about Aboriginal sites that have been provided to Office of Environment and Heritage and Aboriginal places that have been declared by the Minister;
- Information recorded on AHIMS may vary in its accuracy and may not be up to date. Location details are recorded as grid references and it is important to note that there may be errors or omissions in these recordings,
- Some parts of New South Wales have not been investigated in detail and there may be fewer records of Aboriginal sites in those areas. These areas may contain Aboriginal sites which are not recorded on AHIMS.
- Aboriginal objects are protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 even if they are not recorded as a site on AHIMS.
- This search can form part of your due diligence and remains valid for 12 months.