



artefact

10 May 2021

Andrew Hollander
Assistant Development Manager
Corporate Property
Woolworths Group Limited
1 Woolworths Way, Bella Vista NSW, 2153, Australia

Dear Andrew,

Re: 250-266 Victoria St, Wetherill Park: Aboriginal Heritage Assessment

Woolworths Group limited (Woolworths) propose to develop a new distribution centre at 250-266 Victoria St, Wetherill Park. Artefact Heritage (Artefact) have been engaged by Woolworths to prepare an Aboriginal heritage assessment which has been developed to support a State Significant Development (SSD) application under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*.

Study area

The study area is located at 250-266 Victoria Street, Wetherill Park (Lot 1/ DP 832281 and Lot 7/ DP 1015294), approximately 37 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD and 11 kilometres southwest of Parramatta. The study area is situated between Redfern Street to the north, and Victoria Street to the south. Land to the east and west of the study area contains existing industrial facilities. The study area is shown in Figure 1.

The study area is currently used as a laydown area for a heavy vehicle transportation group (Lot 7 DP/ 1015294) and as an Austral bricks warehouse and storage facility (Lot 1/ DP 832281).

The study area is located within the City of Fairfield Local Government Area (LGA), the County of Cumberland and is within the boundaries of the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC).

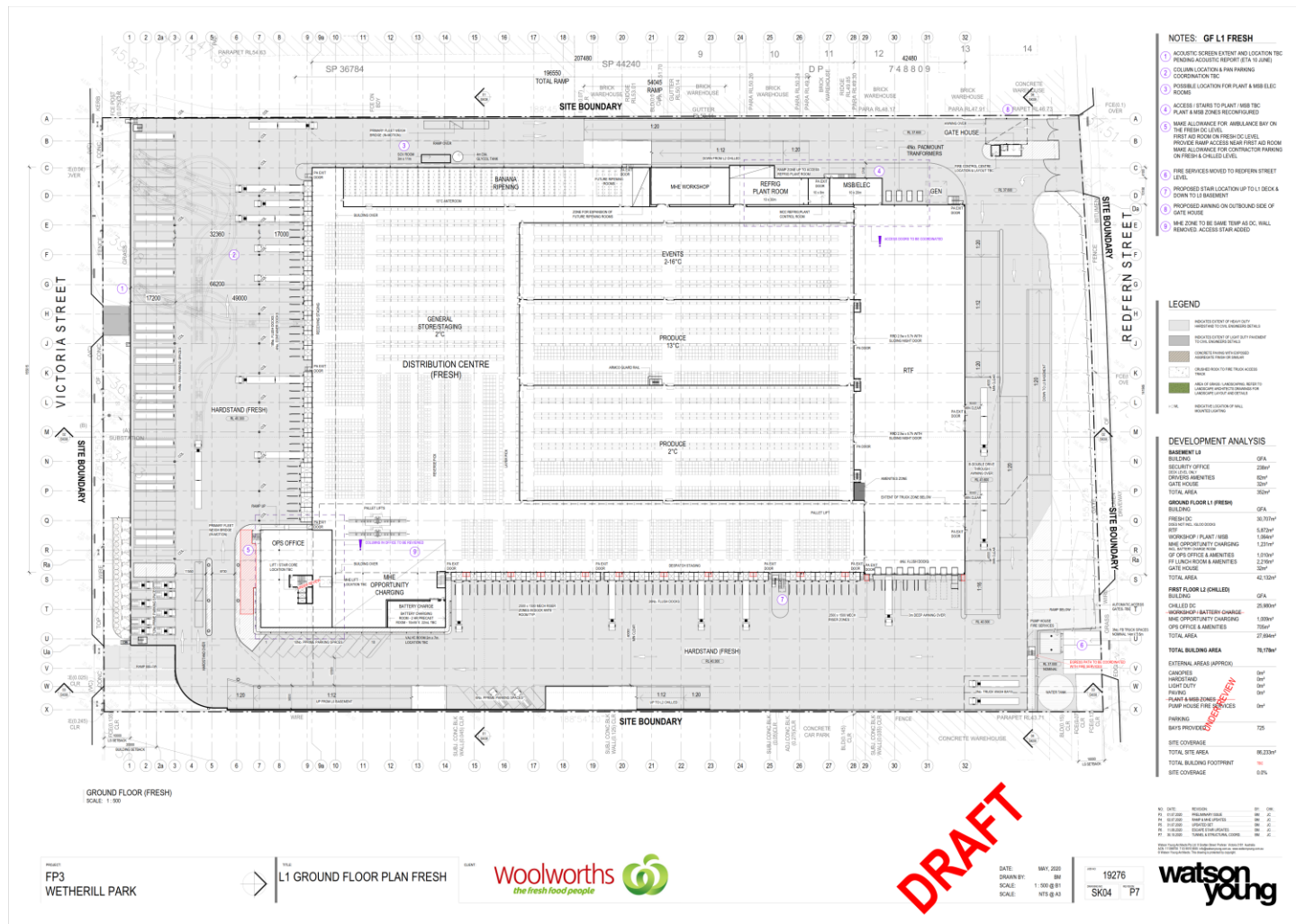
Proposal

Consent is sought for the construction and operation of a warehouse and distribution facility. The proposed warehouse and distribution facility would comprise storage and distribution of goods. The ground floor would contain the storage of produce and general storage and Level 1 would contain the storage of chilled and frozen goods. Both levels would include hardstand for loading bays for pick up and drop off of goods via rigid vehicles. Ancillary car parking has been provided on Site to facilitate operational phase of the proposed development. Ancillary offices, support space and staff amenities are provided at both ground floor and level 1 (see Figure 2).

Aboriginal consultation

A site visit was conducted with Steve Randall of the Deerubbin LALC. No archaeological or cultural values particular to the site were identified by the LALC.

Figure 2: Proposal



Legislative context

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

The National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974 (the NPW Act) provides statutory protection for all Aboriginal 'objects' (consisting of any material evidence of the Aboriginal occupation of NSW) and for 'Aboriginal Places' (areas of cultural significance to the Aboriginal community). A Section 90 Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) is the only permit available to impact identified Aboriginal objects and/or an identified Aboriginal place. An AHIP can only be issued by Heritage NSW. Under an SSD approval an AHIP is not required if the SEARs are followed during the EIS assessment and any conditions of approval are adhered to after determination.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The project will be determined as SSD under the EPA Act. SEARs for the project have been received a per below.

15 Cultural Heritage and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage – including:

evidence that Aboriginal cultural heritage values that exist across the development have been identified and documented in an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) for the proposed Council DA for the bulk earthworks/enabling works on the site

evidence that consultation with Aboriginal people must be undertaken and documented in ACHAR

a description of the impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

An Aboriginal heritage assessment was prepared for the bulk earthworks and referred to in the DA conditions provided by Council. The DA conditions

Deerubbin LALC attended the site survey and did not identify any archaeological or cultural heritage values.

It is noted that Artefact and the proponent met with Heritage NSW (Jackie Taylor) on 21 April 2021 where it was confirmed that the SSD did not require a full ACHAR as the bulk earthworks DA had been previously approved by Council with supporting Aboriginal heritage assessment.

Background Context

Historical Context

Non-Aboriginal exploration in the region began shortly after the landing of the first fleet in 1788, with Governor Philip leading a party up Prospect Hill in April that year. Prospect Hill became a significant landmark for settlers and a reference point for early exploratory parties including Watkin Tench in his journey west in 1789.

In 1791, Governor Philip made various land grants on the southern and eastern slopes of Prospect Hill. The study area was originally part of a 12,300 acre grant to the Orphan Institution by Governor

King in 1803. In 1827 2,118 acres of this land near Prospect Creek was purchased by James Chisholm.

By the 1850s with the construction of the Southern Railway line, land within the Fairfield LGA had developed with small towns, timber operations, market gardens, vineyards and orchards. Settlement within this area was also encouraged with the development and construction of the Prospect Reservoir (MDCA 2017).

Aerial photography from 1965 shows that at this time the study area was utilised for market gardening and had been completely cleared of native vegetation. At this time, a small first order tributary of Prospect Creek was located directly east of the study area.

By 1975 further development had occurred in the land surrounding the study area including additional land clearance and the canalisation of the watercourse to the east (Figure 3). By 1978, the study area had transitioned into an industrial hard stand/ storage area (Figure 4).

Figure 3: 1965 historical aerial, study area approximated in red



Figure 4: 1975 historical aerial, study area approximated in red



Figure 5: 1978 historical aerial, study area approximated in red



Environmental Context

The study area is located within the Cumberland Plain, a large low-lying and gently undulating landform in the Sydney Basin. The formation of the basin began between 300 to 250 million years ago when river deltas gradually replaced the ocean that had extended as far west as Lithgow (Pickett & Alder 1997).

The geology of the study area is characterised by the Triassic Wianamatta Liverpool Sub-Group. The Liverpool Sub-Group comprises Bringelly Shale over Minchinbury Sandstone and Ashfield Shale and consists of shale and some sandstone beds and outcrops. Local relief is between ten and fifty metres with undulating slopes to below ten per cent (Bryan 1966).

The soils in the study area are within the Blacktown soil landscape, which typically consists of a shallow duplex soil atop a clay base. The biomantle is characterised by a textured soil that is usually less than thirty centimetres deep (Espade 2020a).

Localised soil investigation has identified that land within the vicinity of the study area has been subject to substantial industrial disturbance with artefact bearing A horizon soils identified as heavily truncated or completely removed (Espade 2020b, 2020c).

The closest current watercourse to the study area is Prospect Creek located approximately 650m to the southwest. Historical aerals indicate that a first order tributary was formerly located immediately east of the study area.

Previous documentary and archaeological research indicate that archaeological evidence is likely to be found within certain landform contexts, largely as a result of the resources that were to be found within certain landform contexts, largely as a result of the resources that were associated with these landforms, or their suitability for long-term and/or repeated occupation. The due diligence guidelines list five such landforms:

- Within 200m of waters.
- Within a sand dune system.
- On a ridge top. Ridge line, or headland.
- Within 200m below or above a cliff face.
- Within 20m of or in a cave, rock shelter, or a cave mouth.

Historically the study area was located immediately west of the first order tributary of Prospect Creek.

Ethnohistorical Background

Prior to the appropriation of their land, the study area was the lands of the Cabrogal people (MDCA 2017). It is suggested that the Cabrogal people lands extended south to the Georges River and north to the greater Prospect area (MDCA 2017). Colonisation of the Fairfield and Liverpool areas resulted in the spreading of diseases, namely smallpox, which devastated not only the Cabrogal, but most Aboriginal populations across greater Sydney.

The Cabrogal people, linguistically spoke Darug, which is the predominate Cumberland Plains language group. Given their territory extended to the Georges River, it is likely that the Gabrogal would have also they would have also spoke the Dharawal language (MDCA 2017).

Early historical accounts of Aboriginal people are inevitably subject to the writer's bias; however, they do provide valuable observations of Aboriginal customs and life during the early period of European occupation. Language dialects varied across the Cumberland Plain, although early Europeans recorded observations of interaction and mutual intelligibility between Darug speakers from different regions. Captain Watkin Tench detailed an interaction between two Aboriginal men, one from the coast and one from inland, and noted the range of variability between dialects. Tench observed that though the men conversed on par and understood each other perfectly, many words for common things bore no similarities, yet other words were only slightly different (Tench 1793:122).

The existing archaeological record is limited to certain materials and objects that are able to withstand degradation and decay. As a result, the most common type of Aboriginal objects remaining in the archaeological record are stone artefacts, followed by bone and shell. The investigation area is located within an area rich with resources.

Archaeological Context

Limited archaeological investigation has been undertaken within the vicinity of the study area. Accessible reports within the vicinity of the study area are largely related to proposed industrial development within the Wetherill Park and Prospect area. Four reports within proximity to the study area are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of previous archaeological assessments

| Report | Assessment Type | Key Outcomes |
|--|--|---|
| Artefact for GHD (2020) | Aboriginal Heritage Due Diligence Assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artefact completed a due diligence assessment of the southern portion of Prospect Reservoir approximately 3.1 kilometres east of the study area. The assessment noted while the assessment area was in close proximity to a permanent water source that the damming of Prospect Reservoir in the 1880's had significantly altered to landscape and current shoreline. The assessment further noted that significant ground disturbance had reduced the archaeological sensitivity of the assessment area. The assessment area was noted to be located to be largely located on mid to lower slope landforms. One Aboriginal site was identified as being in close proximity to the study area on a crest landform. |
| Artefact for Aliro Group (2020) | Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artefact completed an assessment of existing industrial land immediately north of Prospect Hill approximately 3.3 kilometres north of the study area. The assessment predicted that Aboriginal occupation in region was likely to be associated with larger watercourses such as Prospect Creek. The assessment area was identified to have been heavily modified by former industrial use of the site which was considered likely to have removed by terracing across the site. A portion of Prospect Hill was located within the study area which was identified as containing Aboriginal cultural heritage values. |

| Report | Assessment Type | Key Outcomes |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Biosis for Charter Hall (2020). | Aboriginal archaeological advice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biosis provided an Aboriginal archaeological advice letter for several properties located on Cowpasture Road located 3.3 kilometres to the west of the study area. Biosis identified that Aboriginal sites within the region would be focused in close proximity to water, within natural rises in the landscape or in close proximity to resource gathering areas. Biosis identified that the distance of the site from a permanent watercourse would have made the study area unsuitable for long term occupation. Shallow top soils located within crest landforms which had been subject to further disturbance were unlikely to preserve Aboriginal sites. |
| MDCA for Fairfield City Council (2017) | Aboriginal Heritage Study | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MDCA completed an Aboriginal heritage study of the Fairfield LGA. The assessment focused on the identification, assessment and recording of culturally significant places to Aboriginal people. This report collated known records from the AHIMS register, Australian Business Museum and other archaeological heritage reports. The majority of these sites within the LGA were identified as being located within the Western Sydney Parklands or the Sydney Water lands. This was largely associated with limited development in these regions and the proximity to watercourses. The study area was not identified as having archaeological potential. The assessment noted that substantial disturbance had occurred within the LGA at a time when Aboriginal sites were not recorded. The assessment noted that many Aboriginal archaeological sites as well as cultural associations to Aboriginal places have been lost within the Fairfield LGA. |

Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System

Heritage NSW maintains the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) database, a register of Aboriginal sites that have been recorded in New South Wales. A search of the AHIMS database was undertaken on the 07 December 2020 for sites registered within the following coordinates:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| GDA 1994 MGA 56 | 305136 – 309310E 6250738 – 6255082N |
| Buffer | 0 metres |
| Number of sites | 22 |
| AHIMS Search ID | 555614 |

No recorded AHIMS sites are located within 200m of the study area. The majority of recorded sites within the AHIMS search area are comprised of artefacts (n=21, 95.4%) with one Potential Archaeological Deposit (PAD) (n=1, 4.5%) also recorded. AHIMS sites within the search area are focused along existing waterways including Prospect Creek and Orphan School Creek (Figure 6 and Figure 7).

Figure 6: Extensive AHIMS search

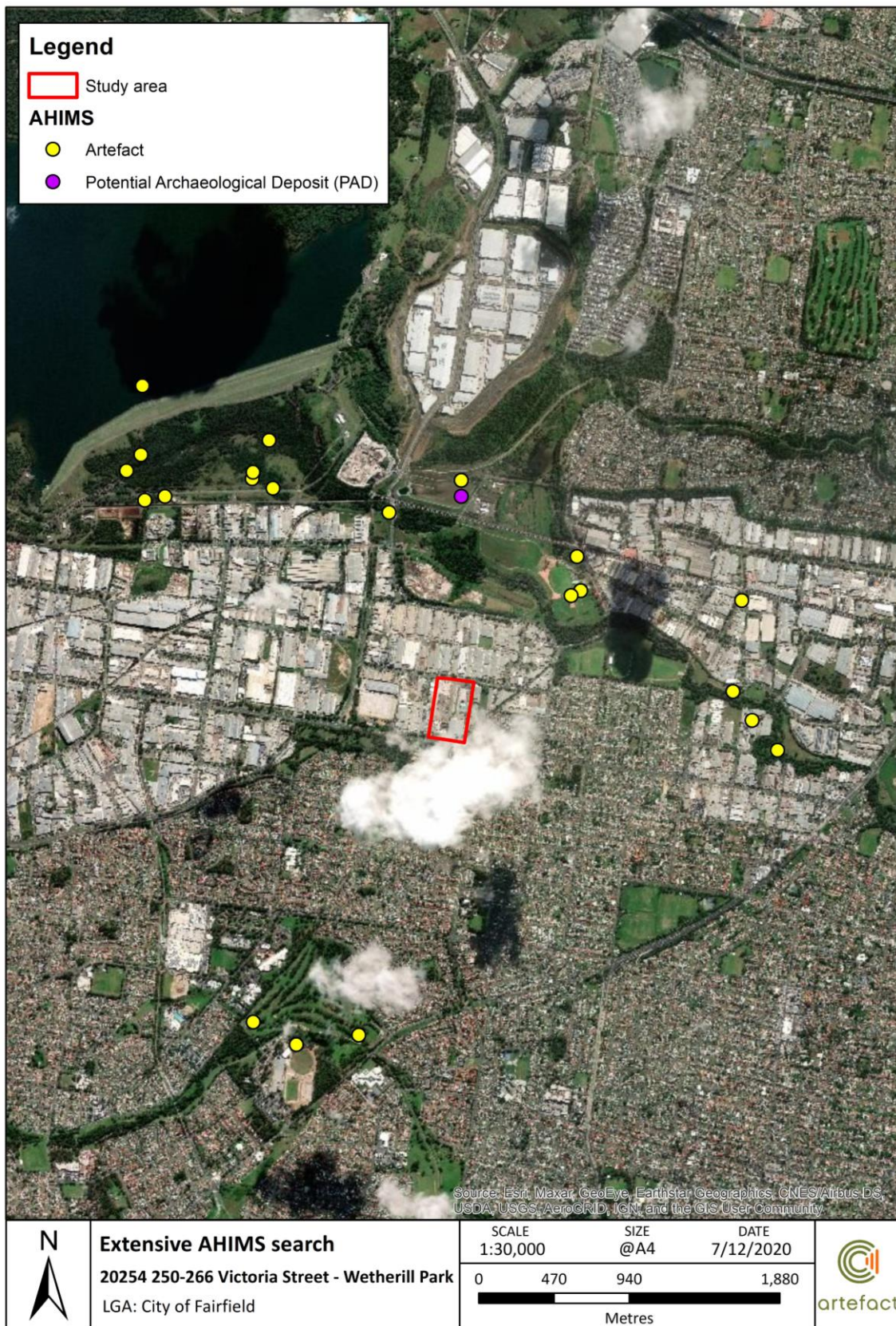


Figure 7: AHIMS sites within the vicinity of the study area



Site inspection results

A site inspection was undertaken on foot by Alyce Haast (Senior Heritage Consultant, Artefact Heritage) and Brye Marshall (Graduate Heritage Consultant, Artefact Heritage) on Tuesday 08 December 2020. A large proportion of the ground surface was obscured by existing development, which includes areas of concrete hardstand or open exposed compacted gravel and/or sandstone fill. The site inspection focused on understanding the extent of landform modification across the study area.

Lot 1/DP 83228 was located in the eastern portion of the study area and was comprised of a distribution centre for the loading and unloading of concrete blocks and steel framing. The landform within Lot 1 was comprised of modified flat and slope landforms which included multiple artificial terrace layers across the lot. Visibility was low within Lot 1 with a large proportion of the lot obscured by concrete and bitumen.

Lot 7/ DP 1015294 was located in the western portion of the study area and was largely utilised as a parking and laydown area for heavy vehicles. Lot 7/ DP 1015294 has been subject to a lower level of modification than Lot 1 with the majority of the terrace landform comprised of a gentle slope reminiscent of the former landform across the study area. As seen with Lot 1, Lot 7 has been subject to substantial modification associated with landform modification, concrete driveways and the presence of imported fills across the study area.

Surface visibility across both lots of the study area was less than 10%.

Vegetation was largely limited to the boundaries which were comprised of a combination of recent planting including exotic and native species. No old growth trees were observed.

No Aboriginal artefacts were observed during the site inspection. No areas of archaeological sensitivity were identified within the study area.

An additional site inspection was undertaken by Brye Marshall (Heritage Consultant, Artefact) and Steve Randall (Deerubbin LALC) on 28 April 2021.

Figure 8: Gradient of unsealed carpark within Lot 7



Figure 9: Erosion and exposure of clay soil within Lot 7



Figure 10: Surface exposure showing area is prone to flooding underlying crushed limestone, concrete, glass within Lot 7



Figure 11: Northern aspect of Lot 1, showing extent of modification of landform



Figure 12: Redfern St carpark access, showing existing hardstand within Lot 1



Figure 13: Victoria street carpark within Lot 1



Discussion

Archaeological sensitivity is closely related to levels of ground disturbance within a given area. However, other factors are also considered when assessing archaeological sensitivity, such as whether artefacts are located on the surface, and whether the area is within a sensitive landform context.

Although the study area was once located within 200m of a watercourse, this watercourse is comprised of a low order tributary of Prospect Creek which is unlikely to have formed a focus of Aboriginal occupation when compared to higher order watercourses in close proximity to the study area. Prior to historic landform modification the study area would have been comprised of a moderately sloped landform which is not identified as a sensitive landform in accordance with the Due Diligence Code of Practice.

Background research and the results of the site survey have indicated that the study area has been subject to substantial landform modification associated with the terracing of the study area for industrial use. Exposed soil profiles within the study area indicated that the majority of the study area had been truncated to the underlying clay B horizon. Based on this it is considered that landform modification would have removed any Aboriginal archaeological deposits which may have otherwise been present within the study area.

The study area has been assessed to have nil- low Aboriginal archaeological potential.

Recommendations

The following recommendations regarding Aboriginal heritage are based on consideration of:

- Statutory requirements under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.
- The results of background research, site survey and assessment.
- The likely impacts of the proposed development.

It was found that:

- No previously recorded Aboriginal sites are located within the study area.
- No previously unrecorded Aboriginal sites or areas of archaeological sensitivity were identified within the study area during the site inspection.
- The study area has nil-low Aboriginal archaeological potential.
- A bulk earthworks DA has previously been approved for the site which also found that there would be no impacts to Aboriginal heritage values.

The following recommendations are made:

- No Aboriginal heritage constraints have been identified for the proposed works and works may proceed with caution.
- An ACHAR is not required under the SSD in accordance with the findings of this report and the advice of Heritage NSW.
- If unforeseen Aboriginal objects are uncovered during construction, work should cease, and an archaeologist, Heritage NSW and Deerubbin LALC should be contacted to advise on the find.
- If changes are made to the project that may result in impacts to areas not assessed in this report, additional assessment may be required.

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