

ARMIDALE SECONDARY COLLEGE UPGRADE

ARMIDALE, NSW

ABORIGINAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Report to NBRS Architecture on behalf of The Department of Education

Armidale Regional Council LGA

October 2018





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Apex Archaeology has been commissioned by NBRS Architecture to undertake an Aboriginal archaeological assessment for the upgrade of the Armidale Secondary College (ASC). It is a requirement to prepare an archaeological assessment considering the Indigenous archaeological values of the area. Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) have been issued for the project and this report addresses the Aboriginal heritage assessment requirements of the SEARs.

This report details the results of the Aboriginal heritage due diligence assessment of the study area, and has been produced in accordance with the OEH 2011 *Guide to Investigation, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW* and the OEH 2010 *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales* (the Due Diligence Code of Practice).

The ASC is located in Armidale, to the south west of the town centre. Armidale is located within Armidale Regional Council Local Government Area (LGA). The ASC is bounded by Mann Street to the north, Butler Street to the east, Kentucky Street to the south and Barry and Stephens Streets to the west. The study area comprises approximately 19.4ha in total.

A search of the AHIMS database was undertaken for the study area with a 1km radius. No previously recorded Aboriginal sites were identified on the AHIMS database for this project within this area.

A site visit was conducted on 12 November 2017. No newly identified archaeological material was identified during the survey. Ground surface visibility (GSV) was low throughout the study area. GSV was rated at <5% overall. No raw material sources were identified within the study area.

The site inspection identified that the study area was highly disturbed and modified due to previous construction works, including construction of existing school buildings, and benching and levelling to create playing fields.

This report was initially released in November 2017 to support a request for SEARs. Subsequent to the issuing of the SEARs, consultation with the relevant Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) undertaken in accordance with the SEARs. This report has been revised to include details of the consultation undertaken with the Armidale LALC. No comments were received from the Armidale LALC.

It is recommended that:

- This report has been prepared to meet the requirements of the SEARs for the project, and as a result of the assessment process no further Aboriginal archaeological assessment is required prior to the commencement of upgrade works as described in this report.



- The results of this assessment fulfil the requirement for Due Diligence in accordance with the *Guide to Investigation, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW* and the *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales*. Works may proceed with caution.
- The proposed works must be contained to the area assessed during this due diligence assessment, as shown on Figure 2. If the proposed location is amended, further archaeological assessment may be necessary to determine if the proposed works will impact any Aboriginal objects or archaeological deposits.
- Should unanticipated archaeological material be encountered during site works, all work must cease and an archaeologist contacted to make an assessment of the find. Further archaeological assessment and Aboriginal community consultation may be required prior to the recommencement of works. Any objects confirmed to be Aboriginal in origin must be reported to the OEH under Division 1, Section 89A of the NPW Act.



Apex Archaeology would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal people who are the traditional custodians of the land in which this project is located. Apex Archaeology would also like to pay respect to Elders both past and present.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

The following register documents the development and issue of the document entitled “Armidale Secondary College Upgrade, Armidale, NSW – Aboriginal Due Diligence Assessment”, prepared by Apex Archaeology in accordance with its quality management system.

Revision	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Comment	Issue Date
1 – Draft	Jenni Bate	Leigh Bate	Initial preparation	17 November 2017
2 - Draft	Jenni Bate	Kirk Osborne/ Andrew Duffin	Client Review	29 November 2017
3 – Final	Jenni Bate		Report finalisation	30 November 2017
4 – Final	Jenni Bate		Aboriginal consultation inclusion	14 June 2018
5 – Final	Jenni Bate	Alice Steedman	NBRS comments	18 June 2018
6 – Final	Jenni Bate	Macella Salzmänn	NBRS amendments	4 July 2018
7 – Final	Jenni Bate	Macella Salzmänn	NBRS amendments	10 October 2018



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aboriginal Object	An object relating to the Aboriginal habitation of NSW (as defined in the NPW Act), which may comprise a deposit, object or material evidence, including Aboriginal human remains.
AHIMS	Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System maintained by OEH, detailing known and registered Aboriginal archaeological sites within NSW
AHIP	Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit
ATER	Aboriginal Test Excavation Report
ASC	Armidale Secondary College
BP	Before Present, defined as before 1 January 1950.
Code of Practice	The DECCW September 2010 <i>Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales</i>
Consultation	Aboriginal community consultation in accordance with the DECCW April 2010 <i>Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010</i> . Consultation is not a required step in a due diligence assessment; however, it is strongly encouraged to consult with the relevant Local Aboriginal Land Council and to determine if there are any Aboriginal owners, registered native title claimants or holders, or any registered Indigenous Land Use Agreements in place for the subject land
DA	Development Application
DCP	Development Control Plan
DECCW	The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water – now OEH
Disturbed Land	If land has been subject to previous human activity which has changed the land's surface and are clear and observable, then that land is considered to be disturbed
Due Diligence	Taking reasonable and practical steps to determine the potential for an activity to harm Aboriginal objects under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> and whether an application for an AHIP is required prior to commencement of any site works, and determining the steps to be taken to avoid harm
Due Diligence Code of Practice	The DECCW Sept 2010 <i>Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales</i>
GCP	Growth Centres Precinct
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GSV	Ground Surface Visibility
Harm	To destroy, deface or damage an Aboriginal object; to move an object from land on which it is situated, or to cause or permit an object to be harmed
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LGA	Local Government Agency
NPW Act	NSW <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i>
OEH	The Office of Environment and Heritage of the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
SEARs	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements. Refers to conditions for SSD 9095, Armidale High School Redevelopment, Butler Street Armidale as reissued 27 March 2018.
RAPs	Registered Aboriginal Parties



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Apex Archaeology has been commissioned by NBRS Architecture to undertake an Aboriginal archaeological assessment to support the upgrade of the Armidale High School to create the Armidale Secondary College (ASC). It is a requirement to prepare an archaeological assessment considering the Indigenous archaeological values of the area. This report details the results of the Aboriginal archaeological assessment of the study area, and has been produced in accordance with the OEH 2010 *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales* (the Due Diligence Code of Practice) and the OEH 2010 *Guide to Investigation, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW*. This report will accompany a request for Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the project, which will be State Significant Development (refer Section 1.3).

1.1 STUDY AREA

The ASC is located in Armidale, just south west of the centre of town (Figure 1). It is located within the Armidale Regional Council Local Government Area (LGA).

The ASC is bounded by Mann Street to the north, Butler Street to the east, Kentucky Street to the south and Barry and Stephens Streets to the west. The study area comprises approximately 18.38ha in total. Further details of the study area can be seen in Figure 2.

1.2 INVESTIGATORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

This report has been prepared by Leigh Bate, Director and Archaeologist with Apex Archaeology, and Jenni Bate, Director and Archaeologist with Apex Archaeology. Both have over nine years of consulting experience within NSW.

Name	Role	Qualifications
Jenni Bate	Primary Report Author, Project Manager, Review	B.Archaeology; Grad. Dip. CHM
Leigh Bate	GIS, Field inspection	B.Archaeology; Grad. Dip. Arch; Dip. GIS

1.3 NSW HERITAGE LEGISLATION

Protection for Aboriginal heritage in NSW is provided primarily under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act). Although cultural heritage is protected by other Acts, the NPW Act is the relevant Act for undertaking due diligence assessments. Protection for Aboriginal sites, places and objects is overseen by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.



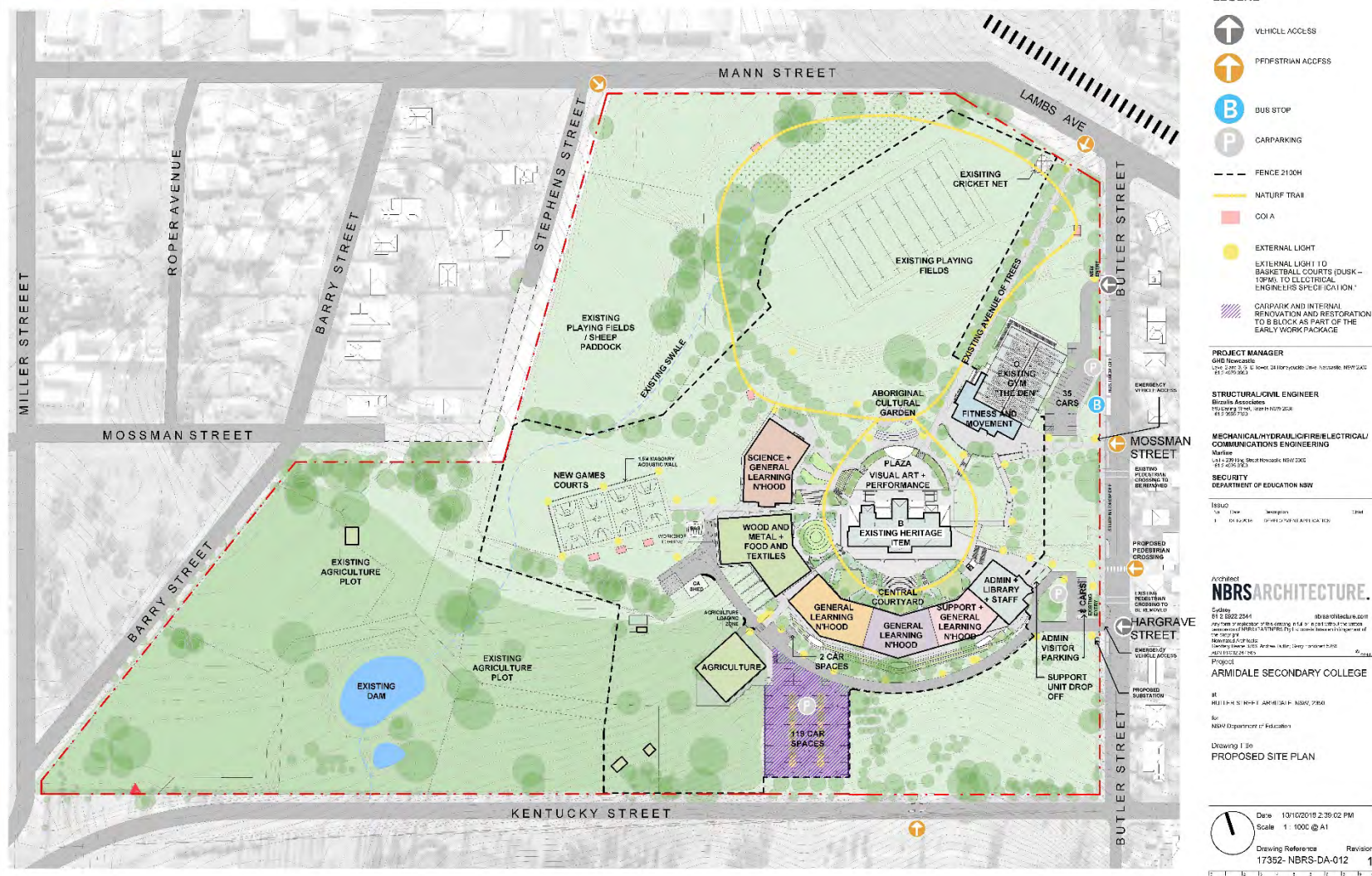


Figure 2: Proposed layout of the Armidale Secondary College upgrade. (Source: NBRs Architecture)



Changes to the NPW Act with the adoption of the *NPW Amendment (Aboriginal Objects and Places) Regulation 2010* in October 2010 led to the introduction of new offences regarding causing harm to Aboriginal objects or declared Aboriginal places. These offences included destruction, defacement or movement of an Aboriginal object or place. Other changes to the NPW Act included:

- Increased penalties for offences relating to Aboriginal heritage for individuals and companies who do not comply with the legislation;
- Introduction of the strict liability offences, meaning companies or individuals cannot claim 'no knowledge' if harm is caused to Aboriginal objects or places; and
- Changes to the permitting process for AHIPs – preliminary archaeological excavations can be undertaken without the need for an AHIP, providing the excavations follow the *Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales*.

A strict liability offence was introduced, meaning a person who destroys, defaces or moves an Aboriginal object without an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) is guilty of an offence, whether they knew it was an Aboriginal object or not. Exercising due diligence (as described in Section 1.4) provides a defence against the strict liability offence.

The project will be State Significant Development (SSD) under the *State Environmental Planning policy (State and Regional Development) 2011* (SRD SEPP). Schedule 1 of the SRD SEPP identifies alterations and additions to existing educational establishments in excess of \$20m as SSD.

SSD applications are determined by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE). As part of the environmental assessment for SSD, an environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared for the project. In order to prepare the EIS, the applicant must request SEARs to be issued for the project. The SEARs detail the requirements for all aspects of environmental assessment for the project, including the assessment of cultural heritage within the site. This report has been prepared to support the EIS for the project.

1.3.1 SEARs

The SEARs requirements for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage are:

- *Identify and describe the Aboriginal cultural heritage values that exist across the whole area that would be affected by the development, which may include the need for surface survey and test excavation. The identification of cultural heritage values should be guided by the Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in NSW (DECCW, 2011) and consultation with the Office of Environment and Heritage regional officers.*



- *Where Aboriginal cultural heritage values are identified, consultation with Aboriginal people must be undertaken and documented in accordance with the Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010 (DECCW). Detail the significance of cultural heritage values for Aboriginal people who have a cultural association with the land.*
- *Assess impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage values and demonstrate attempts to avoid impact upon cultural heritage values and identify any conservation outcomes. Where impacts are unavoidable, outline measures proposed to mitigate impacts. Any objects recorded as part of the assessment must be documented. Please note the Due Diligence assessment process is not appropriate to address the requirements for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage assessment.*

1.4 OEH GUIDELINES

The OEH 2011 *Guide to investigation, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW* provides guidelines for the assessment of Aboriginal heritage. It states that if it is not known whether the site contains Aboriginal cultural values, it is appropriate to follow the Due Diligence Code of Practice (see Section 1.4.1) to determine if the site possesses Aboriginal cultural values and determine if further assessment is required. This archaeological assessment report has been prepared in accordance with the Due Diligence Code of Practice to determine if the site possesses archaeological and/or Aboriginal cultural values.

1.4.1 NSW DUE DILIGENCE CODE OF PRACTICE

The Due Diligence Code of Practice was introduced in September 2010. It outlines a method to undertake ‘reasonable and practical’ steps to determine whether a proposed activity has the potential to harm Aboriginal objects within the subject area, and thereby determine whether an application for an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) is required. When due diligence has been correctly exercised, it provides a defence against prosecution under the NPW Act under the strict liability clause if Aboriginal objects are unknowingly harmed without an AHIP.

The Code of Practice provides the ‘reasonable and practicable’ steps to be followed when determining the potential impact of a proposed activity on Aboriginal objects. Due diligence has been defined by OEH as “taking reasonable and practical steps to determine whether a person’s actions will harm an Aboriginal object and, if so, what measures can be taken to avoid that harm” (DECCW 2010:18).

These steps include:

- Identification of whether Aboriginal objects are, or are likely to be, present within the subject area, through completing a search of the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS);
- Determine whether the proposed activity is likely to cause harm to any Aboriginal objects; and
- Determine the requirement for an AHIP.



Should the conclusion of a due diligence assessment be that an AHIP is required, further assessment must be undertaken, with reference to the following guidelines:

- DECCW, April 2010, *Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010*. Part 6 National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974;
- DECCW, Sept 2010, *Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects In New South Wales*;
- OEH, April 2011, *Guide to Investigation, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW*; and
- OEH, May 2011, *Applying for an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit: Guide for Applicants*.



2.0 ABORIGINAL CONSULTATION

As the project is SSD, SEARs have been issued for the project. As per the SEARs, consultation was undertaken with OEH regarding consulting with the Aboriginal community. Given the assessment of the site as having minimal archaeological potential, made prior to the issuing of the SEARs, OEH advised that full consultation in accordance with the *Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010* would not be necessary and instead the Armidale LALC should be contacted to identify if the site contained any Aboriginal cultural heritage values. Therefore, the final report was provided to the Armidale LALC, along with an invitation to comment on the project. 28 days was allowed for these comments to be made.

The report was provided via email and also in hard copy via Australia Post to the Armidale LALC on 9 May 2018. An attempt to contact the LALC via phone was also made this day, but there was no answer and there was no voicemail option.

Further phone calls were made on 11, 16, and 21 May 2018, with no answer and no voicemail option.

On 29 May 2018 the original email was forwarded to the LALC along with a reminder that comments would be appreciated on or before 6 June 2018. A call from Armidale LALC was missed and a voicemail was left by Tom Briggs, stating that he had received the report and would respond via email. This phone call was immediately returned but unfortunately was not answered. A further email was sent explaining that the call had been returned but had not received an answer, but no further response was received.

Another two phone calls were made on 30 May 2018 and 4 June 2018, and a reminder email was also sent on 4 June 2018. No response was received.

Copies of all consultation, including a consultation log, can be found in Appendix B.

The consultation undertaken to date has been above and beyond the requirements of the Consultation Guidelines, with multiple attempts in a variety of formats (email, phone, post) sent. No comments were received. This is not uncommon for projects considered to be of low scientific significance. Generally, the Aboriginal community will comment on projects they feel are important, and if they do not provide comment, it is due to limited interest in the site.



3.0 THE DUE DILIGENCE CODE OF PRACTICE PROCESS

In accordance with the OEH *Guide to Investigation, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW*, when it is not known if an area contains Aboriginal cultural values, it is appropriate to follow the Due Diligence Code of Practice. This provides a specific framework to guide the assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage. The following section presents the results of this process.

3.1 STEP 1: WILL THE ACTIVITY DISTURB THE GROUND SURFACE?

The proposed works will disturb the ground surface. The proposed upgrade of the ASC will result in new teaching facilities and 30 teaching spaces to accommodate a total student number of approximately 1,580 students. Construction of these new facilities would include excavation and trenching for new foundations and services, which would disturb the ground surface.

3.2 STEP 2A: AHIMS AND AVAILABLE LITERATURE SEARCH

OEH is required to maintain a register of Aboriginal sites recorded during archaeological assessments and other activities within NSW. This is known as the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS). This register provides information about site types, their geographical location, and their current status. It is the requirement for the recorder of a newly identified site to register this site with OEH to be placed onto the AHIMS register. It is a requirement of the Code of Practice to undertake a search of this register as part of undertaking a due diligence assessment.

OEH also maintains a register of archaeological reports relating to archaeological investigations throughout NSW. These reports are a valuable source of information regarding investigations previously completed and their findings, and can inform the assessment process regarding the potential for Aboriginal cultural material and archaeological potential within a study area.

3.2.1 AHIMS RESULTS

A search of the study area with a 1km buffer was conducted on 28 August 2017. No Aboriginal sites were identified within the study area. These results are likely to reflect the limited archaeological assessment within the area, rather than a lack of actual sites.

3.2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of previous archaeological work within the surrounding region of the study area was undertaken. Few recent reports were identified from background research and the AHIMS database, with most dating to the 1980s and 1990s. None were within close proximity of the study area.

SUTTON 1988

Stephen Sutton was engaged by Armidale City Council to complete an assessment of Aboriginal heritage within the city limits. Seven artefact locations were identified,



comprising four low density artefact concentrations, and three isolated artefacts. Silcrete was the dominant raw material type identified.

PIPER 1989

Appleton (1994) reports that Adrian Piper investigated and identified a silcrete quarry within the north east of the Armidale city limits, and confirmed that it had been utilised by Aboriginal people in the past. Appleton further identified this as the most significant source of silcrete in the Armidale district.

BECK AND APPLETON 1990

Beck and Appleton recorded an additional 33 artefacts at 13 separate locations within Armidale. Six of these were located along creeks. The biggest artefact concentration included 16 artefacts, while most included isolated finds. Most of the items were identified within areas of erosion and 31 of the 33 were formed on silcrete.

MARY DALLAS CONSULTING 1991

A survey was completed by Mary Dallas Consulting in 1991, during which no artefacts were identified. No report was produced as part of the project, but the results are mentioned in Brayshaw 1996.

BRAYSHAW 1996

This assessment focussed on the base of the escarpment located to the south and west of Hillgrove, and no archaeological material was identified.

DURKIN 2000

In advance of construction of a tailings dam south of Hillgrove, Durkin undertook a cultural heritage assessment of the area. The study area was located on a plateau above the Baker's Creek Gorge escarpment. No archaeological material was identified.

REMNANT ARCHAEOLOGY 2014

Remnant Archaeology were commissioned to undertake a cultural heritage due diligence assessment of an additional area at Hillgrove Mines, with the aim of identifying the exact location of a registered Aboriginal site within the area. It was determined that the AHIMS coordinates for the site were incorrect and the site was located elsewhere.

REMNANT ARCHAEOLOGY 2015

A full cultural heritage assessment of the additional area at Hillgrove Mines was completed, with seven isolated finds (mostly flakes) including an axe and an axe blank identified. eight scarred trees were also identified and a ceremonial location was recorded.

REMNANT ARCHAEOLOGY 2016

Armidale Regional Council commissioned Remnant Archaeology to complete an archaeological investigation in advance of the upgrade of three roads within the



Armidale area. No artefacts were identified, although one scarred tree was identified within one of the road corridors.

REMNANT ARCHAEOLOGY 2017

Remnant Archaeology was engaged to complete a cultural heritage assessment of Bayley Park, located 18km east of Armidale, prior to the construction of the proposed Metz Solar Farm Project. Three low density artefact concentrations (each with three or fewer artefacts present) and a total of 38 isolated artefacts were identified within the study area. Two scarred trees and a stone arrangement were also recorded within the study area. Raw material types included silcrete, mudstone and quartz, while artefact types included axes, cores, retouched flakes and a grindstone. Flakes were the most common artefact type.

3.3 STEP 2B: LANDSCAPE FEATURES

An assessment of landscape features is required to determine whether Aboriginal objects are likely to be present within the proposed activity area. Certain landscape features are more likely to have been utilised by Aboriginal people in the past and therefore are more likely to have retained archaeological evidence of this use. Focal areas of activity for Aboriginal people include rock shelters, sand dunes, water courses, waterholes and wetlands, as well as ridge lines for travel routes.

The presence of specific raw materials for artefact manufacture, as well as soil fertility levels to support vegetation resources, are also factors to be considered in the assessment of the environmental context of a study area. Geomorphological factors, such as erosion and accretion of soils, affect the preservation of potential archaeological deposits and therefore need to be considered when making an assessment of the potential for archaeological material to be present within a study area. This assessment is predominantly a desktop exercise.

3.3.1 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

The study area slopes to the south and a wetland area is present in the south west portion of the site, with an unnamed ephemeral watercourse running through the site.

HYDROLOGY

The nearest named water course is Martins Gully, located approximately 900m to the west of the study area. This watercourse would constitute a second order watercourse. Watercourse classification ranges from first order through to fourth order (and above) with first order being the lowest, ie a minor creek or ephemeral watercourse.

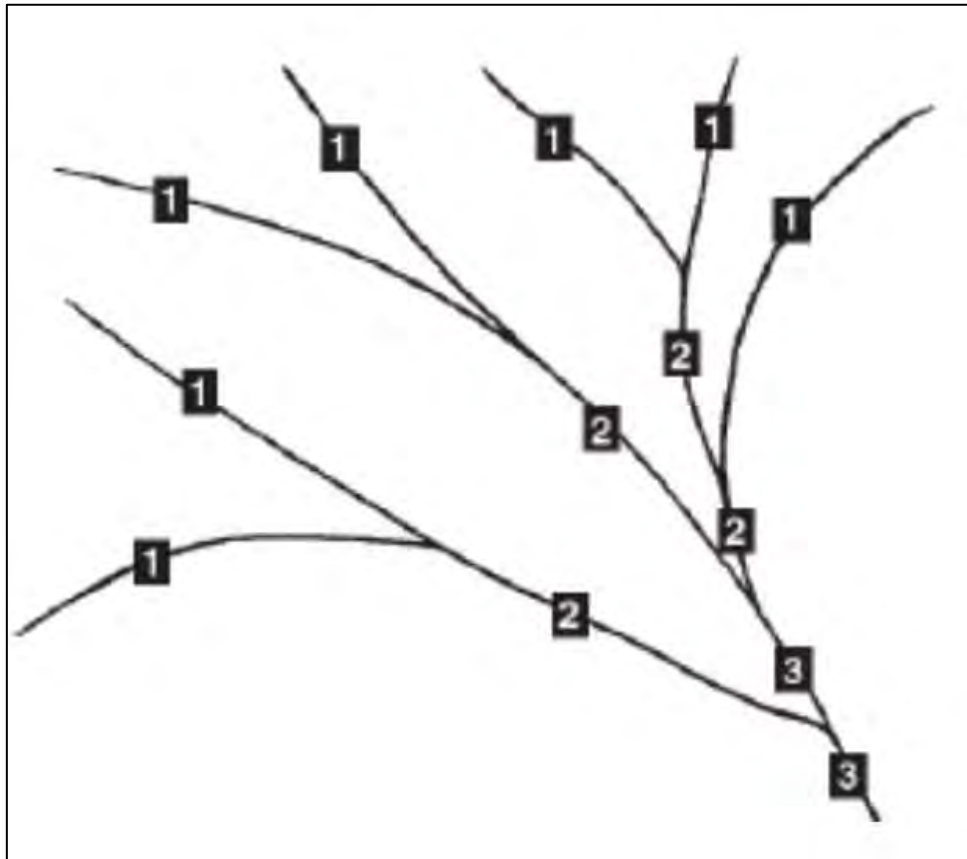


Figure 3: The Strahler system (Source: Department of Planning and Environment 2016).

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Armidale is located within the New England Tableland, a plateau of undulating hills and plains, including broad valleys, gorges and escarpments. Three main landforms are common across the area, comprising gentle undulating slopes, undulating plains and creek environments. The study area falls within the gentle undulating slopes.

The plateau is formed on extensive volcanic rock beds, particularly basalts and granites overlying Carboniferous and Permian sandstones. Sedimentary rocks such as greywacke were formed during tectonic activity during the Tertiary period. These caps have weathered, exposing sedimentary rocks such as siltstones, cherts, greywacke and jasper which were commonly used for artefact manufacture.



3.3.2 ETHNOHISTORY

The Armidale area was originally inhabited by the Anaiwan, Gumbaynggirr and Dhunghatti people. The arrival of European settlers in the area and the pestilence they brought with them, as well as the lack of trained anthropologists and ethnohistorians at the time, meant much information regarding the Aboriginal people of the Armidale area and their customs and traditions was lost.

Estimations of the Aboriginal population of the Armidale area are between 600 and 1000 at the time of European settlement. In the early 1980s, Bowdler argued that occupation of the area was transitory. Early records from settlers suggested that Aboriginal occupation of the Armidale area was seasonal, with people moving to different areas depending on resource availability, and some records of abandoned bark huts suggesting temporary occupation. Later archaeological assessments by Godwin in the mid-1980s suggested that occupation was more likely to be year-round.

The arrival of Europeans in Australia wreaked havoc on the Aboriginal people, and decimated their populations through a combination of illness and aggravated interactions. The writings of early colonists allow a limited reconstruction of elements of traditional Aboriginal society.

The traditional lifestyles of Aboriginal groups such as the Anaiwan, Gumbaynggirr and Dhunghatti depended largely on the environment in which they lived. Their economy and subsistence were based on a hunter gatherer society. Animals such as kangaroos, wallabies, possums, gliders, bandicoots, wombats, quolls, fruit bats, echidnas, native rats and mice, emus, ducks, tortoises, snakes and goannas (Attenbrow, 2010), played a major role in the subsistence of Aboriginal people.

3.3.3 PREDICTIVE MODEL

Based on the results of previous archaeological investigations within the wider area, a number of predictions regarding Aboriginal use of the area can be made. These predictions focus on the nature, extent and integrity of the remaining evidence.

The landscape characteristics of the area influence the prediction of the nature of potential sites within the landscape itself. Isolated finds and small artefact scatters are the most common site type identified within the wider area, and are predicted to be the most likely site type to be identified in future.

Site types associated with sandstone country, such as grinding grooves, rock art sites, petroglyph (rock engravings) and sandstone rockshelters with art/and or archaeological deposit are not considered likely to occur within the study area. Scarred trees are also not considered likely within the study area due to the high levels of historical clearing which have occurred within the landscape.

Distribution of sites is related to the landforms on which sites are known to be located. Generally, sites are focused on elevated landforms and reduce with



increasing distance from high order watercourses. This includes both artefact (isolated finds and artefact scatters) and areas of PAD.

Site disturbance and post-depositional processes heavily influence the integrity of archaeological sites. An assessment of these impacts must be considered when predicting the likelihood of Aboriginal sites being present within an area. Consideration of both natural and cultural ground disturbance must be made, and past land use must also be considered. Results of this assessment assist in the prediction of the integrity of potential sites within the study area.

Surface sites are likely to have been impacted by agricultural processes and urban expansion within the area over the historic period. Flooding events are also likely to have impacted the area through the disturbance or wholesale removal of archaeological deposits. Natural actions such as bioturbation are likely to have impacted at least the upper levels of archaeological deposits, as are cultural activities such as excavation, construction, ploughing, clearing and planting. Whilst these actions may impact the integrity of stratigraphy within the deposit, this does not necessarily mean associated archaeological objects will also be disturbed.

In general, Aboriginal use of an area is based on a number of factors, such as:

- Proximity to permanent water sources – generally permanent or areas of repeat habitation are located within approximately 200m of permanent water;
- Proximity to ephemeral water sources – generally sites near ephemeral water sources were utilised for one-off occupation;
- Ease of travel – ridgelines were often utilised for travel during subsistence activities, including trade and cultural activities; and
- The local relief – flatter areas were more likely to be utilised for long term or repeat habitation sites than areas of greater relief, especially if the slopes are at a distance from water.

In terms of the study area, sites are considered more likely to comprise:

- Isolated finds, which may occur anywhere across a landscape; and
- Open sites, in areas of high relief in close proximity to ephemeral or permanent water sources.

3.4 STEP 3: AVOID HARM

Given the result of previous studies within the area, it was considered necessary to undertake a visual inspection of the land parcels to identify any surface objects or landforms with potential archaeological deposits (PAD). This inspection would allow conclusions to be made regarding the probability of archaeological objects occurring within the proposed development areas. This would assist in determining if there was any archaeological potential within the study areas which could potentially be harmed by the proposed works, and in turn, assist in determining if harm to the archaeological resource could be avoided.



The proposed development may impact the entirety of the study area through building upgrade activities, although works are likely to be in the vicinity of the existing buildings in the south eastern quadrant of the study area. There are no recorded Aboriginal sites within the study area, and many years of the site being used as a school including associated infrastructure have erased any potential for subsurface archaeological material to be present.

3.5 STEP 4: VISUAL INSPECTION

A visual pedestrian inspection of the ASC was undertaken on 12 November 2017 by Leigh Bate, Archaeologist with Apex Archaeology.

3.5.1 SURVEY COVERAGE

The entire study area was inspected by pedestrian survey to identify any surface artefacts or any areas with potential for intact subsurface deposits to be present.

3.5.2 RESULTS

A thorough inspection of the area was undertaken. No newly identified archaeological material or sites were identified during the survey.

Ground surface visibility (GSV) was low throughout the study area. GSV was rated at >5% overall. No raw material sources were identified within the study area. The majority of the study area had been modified through levelling and benching for playing fields, construction of existing school buildings and associated services, and clearing, farming and associated agricultural activities.

The site comprises a gentle simple slope to the north east and this has necessitated levelling for creation of playing fields and building pads.



Plate 1: General view of Armidale High School looking north west along Butler Street.



Plate 2: General view of Armidale High School main buildings looking north west within the school grounds.



Plate 3: General view looking west along the main driveway into the high school grounds.



Plate 4: General view looking north east from the central building area of the high school grounds.



Plate 5: Looking south across the northern playing field.



Plate 6: General view south looking over the Oxley Wetlands within the north western portion of the high school grounds.



Plate 7: View looking north west along a walking track within the Oxley Wetlands. The track has been made using imported material.



Plate 8: View looking south east along the western border of Armidale High School.



Plate 9: View looking south over a modified soccer field being utilised for agricultural activity.



Plate 10: View looking north west across a dam within the south west portion of the school grounds.



3.5.3 DISCUSSION

The areas were noted to be consistently disturbed through the construction of the existing school and various excavated services throughout the grounds. A dam was also noted within the study area. All the works within the area have modified the original ground surface to the point that no archaeological potential is likely within the area.

The wetlands in the north western precinct of the school have been created as a 'mini model catchment' for the existing high school and as such are considered to be a modified landscape. Material has been imported to create pathways within the area and it appears that an ephemeral drainage line was dammed several times to create the wetlands and several dams within the area.

The topography of the site is not considered an attractive location for habitation sites for Aboriginal people and if cultural material were to be present, it would be very low density in nature and impossible to predict its location.

Basic consultation with the Aboriginal community completed in accordance with the requirements of the SEARs did not identify any Aboriginal cultural values for the site, although it should be noted that the consultation was undertaken with the Armidale LALC only and did not constitute full consultation in accordance with the *Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010*.



4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

- No previously recorded Aboriginal sites are located within the study area.
- No archaeological material was identified on the ground surface within the study area.
- The study area is assessed as having very low potential for subsurface archaeological deposits and this is confirmed by the site inspection.
- No specific Aboriginal cultural values have been identified to date.
- This archaeological assessment was based on identification of landform elements, previous archaeological work undertaken within the wider region, and a visual inspection of the study area. No response was received as a result of consultation with the Armidale LALC.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- This report has been prepared to meet the requirements of the SEARs for the project, and as a result of the assessment process no further Aboriginal archaeological assessment is required prior to the commencement of upgrade works as described in this report.
- The results of this assessment fulfil the requirement for Due Diligence in accordance with the *Guide to Investigation, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW* and the *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales*. Works may proceed with caution.
- The proposed works must be contained to the area assessed during this due diligence assessment, as shown on Figure 2. If the proposed location is amended, further archaeological assessment may be necessary to determine if the proposed works will impact any Aboriginal objects or archaeological deposits.
- Should unanticipated archaeological material be encountered during site works, all work must cease and an archaeologist contacted to make an assessment of the find. Further archaeological assessment and Aboriginal community consultation may be required prior to the recommencement of works. Any objects confirmed to be Aboriginal in origin must be reported to the OEH under Division 1, Section 89A of the NPW Act.



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APPENDIX A: AHIMS RESULTS

Apex Archaeology

Date: 10 November 2017

PO Box 291

Macarthur Square New South Wales 2560

Attention: Leigh Bate

Email: leigh@apexarchaeology.com.au

Dear Sir or Madam:

**AHIMS Web Service search for the following area at Lot : 704, DP:DP755808 with a Buffer of 1000 meters,
conducted by Leigh Bate on 10 November 2017.**

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 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.



APPENDIX B: CONSULTATION RECORDS

9/5/2018

Email sent to Armidale LALC with cover letter and report attached

Report and cover letter posted via Australia Post

Called but no answer and no voicemail option

11/5/2018

Called but no answer and no voicemail option

16/5/2018

Called but no answer and no voicemail option

21/5/2018

Called but no answer and no voicemail option

29/5/2018

Emailed cover letter and report again, with a request for comments by 6 June 2018 as per the cover letter.

Phone call received from Armidale LALC. I answered the phone but no one was on the line. I immediately called back but the call was not answered and there was no voicemail option.

Received a voicemail from Tom Briggs stating that he has received the report and will respond. I attempted to call back on the same number that called me but no answer.

30/5/2018

Called but no answer and no voicemail option

4/6/2018

Called but no answer and no voicemail option

Reminder email sent requesting comments. No response received.

9 May 2018

CEO
Armidale Local Aboriginal Land Council
PO Box 1837
Armidale NSW 2350
Via email: ceo@alalc.org.au

Re: Armidale Future School, Armidale, NSW – Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment

To whom it may concern,

Apex Archaeology was engaged by NRBS Architecture on behalf of the Department of Education to undertake an archaeological assessment in advance of the proposed development at the Armidale Future School site. The project is State Significant Development and as a result, Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) have been issued to direct the environmental assessment for the project.

The archaeological assessment prepared by Apex Archaeology accompanied a request for SEARs. The assessment identified that the study area was highly disturbed and modified due to previous construction works, including construction of existing school buildings, and benching and levelling to create playing fields. No archaeological material was identified on the ground surface. As a result of the assessment, the study area was considered to have no archaeological potential for intact subsurface deposits to be present. No further Aboriginal archaeological investigations were recommended for the site prior to the commencement of the proposed development.

The SEARs requirements for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage were issued subsequent to the preparation of the Apex Archaeology archaeological assessment for the site, and are:

- *Identify and describe the Aboriginal cultural heritage values that exist across the whole area that would be affected by the development, which may include the need for surface survey and test excavation. The identification of cultural heritage values should be guided by the Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in NSW (DECCW, 2011) and consultation with the Office of Environment and Heritage regional officers.*
- *Where Aboriginal cultural heritage values are identified, consultation with Aboriginal people must be undertaken and documented in accordance with the Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010 (DECCW). Detail the significance of cultural heritage values for Aboriginal people who have a cultural association with the land.*

- *Assess impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage values and demonstrate attempts to avoid impact upon cultural heritage values and identify any conservation outcomes. Where impacts are unavoidable, outline measures proposed to mitigate impacts. Any objects recorded as part of the assessment must be documented. Please note the Due Diligence assessment process is not appropriate to address the requirements for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage assessment.*

Following consultation with OEH, Apex Archaeology and NRBS Architecture has been advised to consult with the relevant Local Aboriginal Land Council to provide an opportunity for Aboriginal people to provide comments on the proposal. Therefore, we are contacting you, the Armidale LALC, and providing a copy of the archaeological assessment report completed in accordance with the *Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in NSW* (DECCW, 2011) and the *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales* (DECCW, 2010).

Please review the attached report and provide any comments you may have within 28 days of the date of this letter, being Thursday 6 June 2018. Comments are welcomed via email to jenni@apexarchaeology.com.au, via phone on 0422 229 179, or via post to Apex Archaeology, PO Box 291, Macarthur Square, NSW 2560.

Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Kind Regards,

Jenni Bate



Director/Archaeologist

Apex Archaeology

E: jenni@apexarchaeology.com.au

M: 0422 229 179

From: alalcouncil@gmail.com
To: ["Jenni Bate"](#)
Subject: Read: Armidale Future School Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment
Date: Tuesday, 29 May 2018 11:44:41 AM
Importance: High

Your message

To: ceo@alalc.org.au
Subject: FW: Armidale Future School Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment
Sent: 29/05/2018 10:53 AM
was read on 29/05/2018 11:35 AM.

From: Jenni Bate
To: ["ceo@alalc.org.au"](mailto:ceo@alalc.org.au)
Subject: FW: Armidale Future School Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment
Date: Monday, 4 June 2018 3:03:00 PM
Attachments: [1739 Armidale Future School ADD.pdf](#)
[1809 Armidale Future School.pdf](#)
Importance: High

Dear Tom,

I'm sorry I haven't been able to reach you via phone. Please feel free to give me a call or you can send through an email if you prefer. If possible, could you please send any comments by Wednesday 6 June 2018? Thank you.

Kindest regards,



From: Jenni Bate <jenni@apexarchaeology.com.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 29 May 2018 10:53 AM
To: 'ceo@alalc.org.au' <ceo@alalc.org.au>
Subject: FW: Armidale Future School Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment
Importance: High

Dear CEO,

I hope you are well. We have tried to call a number of times to discuss this project but have not been able to reach anyone. Please find attached a cover letter and a copy of an archaeological assessment report for your review and comment. We would appreciate receiving any comments you may have by Wednesday 6 June 2018 (next week).

Please feel free to give me a call and I will also try to call again.

Kindest regards,



Jenni Bate
DIRECTOR - ARCHAEOLOGIST

0422 229 179

JENNI@APEXARCHAEOLOGY.COM.AU

WWW.APEXARCHAEOLOGY.COM.AU

From: Jenni Bate <jenni@apexarchaeology.com.au>

Sent: Wednesday, 9 May 2018 3:29 PM

To: 'ceo@alalc.org.au' <ceo@alalc.org.au>

Subject: Armidale Future School Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment

Importance: High

Dear CEO,

Apex Archaeology have been engaged to assist NRBS Architecture on behalf of the Department of Education to assist with an archaeological assessment for the proposed Armidale Future School in Armidale. Please find attached a letter explaining why we are contacting you, as well as an Aboriginal Archaeological Assessment report.

I will also give you a call to discuss.

Kindest regards,



Jenni Bate
DIRECTOR - ARCHAEOLOGIST

0422 229 179

JENNI@APEXARCHAEOLOGY.COM.AU

WWW.APEXARCHAEOLOGY.COM.AU