

4.1.1 DECCW Review Comments

DECCW has agreed with this assessment with the exception of Site RAA3. Comments are quoted here:

The recommendations in relation to sites RA11, RAA23 are supported in terms of their archaeological assessment.

The reassessment of Site RAA3 is not supported by the evidence provided in the review. Neville Baker has argued:

i) that the site is not located on a river terrace as there are no rivers nearby past or present. Williams description is 'a river terrace between two creeks, which has subsequently been truncated by Hambledon Road'. It is apparent from Figure 1 contained in the review that the site is located on a creek flat between two creeks and that Williams has simply used the river flat rather than creek flat. It is also apparent that the construction of Hambledon Road has truncated the creek.

ii) That the landform is not generally considered archaeologically sensitive and is at a distance from a second order creek (>50m) generally accepted as archaeologically sensitive in this part of the Cumberland Plain. Generally, the accepted distance considered archaeologically sensitive is 150 m rather than 50 metres. Neville Baker's statement requires references to support his statements. (sic)

In response to the DECCW comments, Site RAA3 occurs neither on a river flat, nor a creek flat, both of which are alluvial landforms which give rise to an archaeological interest in stratified deposit. Site RAA3 was not shown on Figure 1 of the document reviewed by DECCW, however it is shown on Figure 2 of the ENSR report as occurring on very gently slope. The site occurs on typical duplex soil in a non-alluvial context. The significance assessed by Williams derives from his identification of the landform as a river flat, and therefore that the area is alluvial with potential for stratified deposit and hence high research potential.

There has been little comment in the literature or archaeological reports from the northern Cumberland Plain on the area of archaeological sensitivity next to creeks with the exception of Smith in her 1989 northern Cumberland Plain regional study where she stated that Aboriginal sites generally occur within 50 m of creeks. AECOM is not aware of any reports by McDonald which comment specifically on the distances away from creeks considered sensitive.

AECOM is not aware of literature or reports from the area that mention 150 m as an area of archaeological sensitivity in the northern Cumberland Plain and no guidance has been provided in the DECCW review in this matter.

4.2 Revised Test Excavation Areas

The ENSR report recommended test excavation under a section 87 AHIP at the following sites:

- a) RV30 – a PAD identified on a flat area of ground next to First Ponds Creek;
- b) RAA3 – a PAD identified on a flat area of ground approximately 100 m from First Ponds Creek; and
- c) RAA8 – a PAD identified on a very disturbed hilltop within 100 m of First Ponds Creek.

AECOM notes that each of these areas fall within drainage reserve on the current draft ILPs for Riverstone and Alex Avenue Precincts.

The area of RV30 is warranted as a PAD as it occurs adjacent to First Ponds Creek. Such areas close to creeks are generally accepted as archaeologically sensitive.

The identification of RAA3 and RAA8 as PADs is not supported by the evidence provided.

The area of RAA3 is described as a "river terrace" in the ENSR report despite the lack of nearby rivers past and present. The area occurs in a landform not generally considered archaeologically sensitive and is at a greater distance from a second order creek (>50 m) generally accepted as archaeologically sensitive in this part of the Cumberland Plain.

RAA8 is noted as being heavily disturbed and yet despite the substantial soil exposure evident in photos of the area within the ENSR report, no artefacts were observed. The area occurs in a landform not generally considered archaeologically sensitive and is at a greater distance from a second order creek (>50 m) generally accepted as archaeologically sensitive in this part of the Cumberland Plain.

In conclusion, the PAD defined as RV30 warrants management as if archaeological deposit were present, i.e. avoidance of ground impacts. Test excavation for the purpose of defining the archaeological content and significance of the area is warranted if ground impacts are anticipated. If the land is to be retained as natural drainage reserve with no soil impacts then no test excavation is warranted.

4.2.1 DECCW Review Comments

The DECCW review stated,

The recommendation in terms of the revised test excavation for sites RV30 and RAA8 are supported.

4.3 Artefact Collection

Artefact collection as a condition of S90 AHIP is proposed at the following sites, listed here with their reported site contents. All sites were assessed as being of low archaeological significance with the exception of RL5 assessed as of moderate significance.

- RAA1 (1 artefact in a paddock) ;
- RAA2 (1 artefact on a bike track);
- RAA4 (8 artefacts on a very disturbed vehicle track);
- RAA5 (1 artefact on a ridgeline track);
- RAA6 (1 artefact in a horse paddock);
- RAA7 (1 artefact on a hill top);
- RAA9 (5 artefacts over an area of 70 m x 150 m);
- RAA10 (9 artefacts over a dam wall)
- RAA12 (1 artefact on a track)
- RAA13 (1 artefact on a ridge)
- RAA14 (1 artefact on a road)
- RAA15 (1 artefact from a market garden)
- RAA16 (approximately 14 artefacts within introduced gravel on a track)
- RAA17 (1 artefact within introduced gravel on a track)
- RAA18 (1 artefact within a horse paddock on a ridge)
- RAA19 (1 artefact on a track)
- RAA20 (1 artefact on a ridge)
- RAA21 (1 artefact on a ridge)
- RAA22 (1 artefact by a dam)
- RL5 (extensive area of naturally occurring silcrete)

- A5 (1 artefact on an irrigation channel)
- 45-5-3838 (sic) – presumably 45-5-2838, a site described as destroyed in the ENSR report but originally recorded in 1999 as 4 artefacts by a road
- RV40 (1 artefact on a track)

The surface collection of artefacts is a normal condition of S90 AHIP requested by Aboriginal community groups. While there are no sound archaeological reasons for collections where the sites are of low significance, the Aboriginal community generally regard collection as a means of caring for the land. Experience suggests that single artefacts in isolation are rarely relocated during collection activities.

The collection of all RL5, a natural scatter of silcrete cobbles and fragments, is not warranted or practical, given that tonnes of rock would need to be collected and stored. Instead, collection of a small representative sample comprising a cobble and various fragment classes may be warranted as examples of natural silcrete morphology.

4.3.1 DECCW Review Comments

The DECCW review stated,

Surface collection of artefacts is recommended based on an assumption that the Aboriginal community will require surface collection. Of the 23 sites included in this recommendation 16 sites are isolated finds. The recommendation is followed with the statement 'Experience suggests that single artefacts in isolation are rarely relocated during collection activities'. In light of this statement it is difficult to justify this recommendation.

There is no direction for the eventual destination of the material if located, if retrieved. In light of the unresolved issues surrounding care and control of such material between the Primary stakeholder groups this matter should be resolved. In particular, while acknowledged in the review, there is no attempt at resolution of the management issues surrounding the recommendation regarding the site RL5 – a natural scatter of silcrete relating to the logistics of storage.

In response to the DECCW review, the original letter, still in the original form five paragraphs above, stated that Aboriginal groups may *request* collection and that such collection is regarded as caring for the land. This is the justification.

The eventual location for the collected material would be the “default” location of the Australian Museum as specified in the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. The logistical problem of collecting natural silcrete from RL5 was explicitly addressed by the suggestion, included five paragraphs above, of,

collection of a small representative sample comprising a cobble and various fragment classes may be warranted as examples of natural silcrete morphology.

4.4 Salvage Excavation

The ENSR report recommends salvage of the three PADs: RAA3, RAA8 and RV30 if test excavation demonstrates they are Aboriginal sites. As commented on above, there is little reported evidence for RAA3 and RAA8 being considered PADs. Should RV30 be considered an Aboriginal site, the assessment of significance resulting from the test excavation data would provide guidance as to the appropriate management of the site. Salvage of RV30 cannot be specified as a management measure prior to test excavation.

Salvage excavation would be warranted at 45-5-2626 (the Loftus Street site – RL3) in the area to be impacted by the proposed road. The Mills reports, which have come to light since the ENSR report was completed, have identified the only area of demonstrated archaeological deposit with some potential for soil integrity within the study area.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Review of Sites RAA11 and RAA23

Site RAA11 contains items of heritage significance comprising naturally occurring silcrete boulders, cobbles and fragments as well as three Aboriginal flaked stone artefacts indicating the use of this resource by Aboriginal people in the past. The area above the 50 m contour should be managed for conservation following works to remediate the damage and weed infestation on the site under a S90 AHIP. Areas below the 50 m contour contain no Aboriginal heritage items and no constraint to development is identified.

Site RAA23 is a significantly disturbed site confined to the market garden area originally observed by Alan Williams as part of the original ENSR Aboriginal site survey. This area is approximately 65 m x 65 m. There is no evidence for high significance nor any reason to consider that archaeological test excavation might find such evidence. The low archaeological significance of this site does not provide a sound basis for conservation management of either the artefact scatter area or the larger area (200 m x 200 m) beyond observed artefacts.

The revised assessment provided in this review is made in light of new information not available during the original assessment.

5.2 Management of Aboriginal Sites

S90 AHIP is required to disturb, damage or destroy Aboriginal objects and sites prior to development. While the ENSR report suggests "whole of precinct" S90 AHIPs will be sought, this approach should be clarified with DECC. The experience of Oran Park and Turner Road Precincts in the South West Growth Centre has been that separate S90 AHIPs have been granted to large joint venture developments with precincts with seven year duration despite application for 20 year timeframes. "Whole of precinct" S90 AHIP may be considered by DECC provided that conservation outcomes are secured by lasting planning instruments which carry with title. These matters require clarification in a meeting with DECC.

Collection of Aboriginal sites may be warranted if such a recommendation for collection accurately reflects the wishes of the relevant Aboriginal stakeholders. Collection of all non-artefactual silcrete from site RL5 presents significant logistical issues in the collection and storage of potentially tonnes of rock. It may be appropriate instead to collect a small sample of rock if such collection is endorsed by the Aboriginal stakeholders.

Test excavation of PAD RV30 may not be warranted if no impact is proposed at that location, identified as a drainage reserve in the draft ILP.

The areas RAA3 and RAA8 should not be considered as PADs.

Salvage is warranted at site 45-5-2526 (RL3 or LL-OS-01 and LL-OS-02) in that part of the site along the road reserve of Loftus Street which will be impacted by planned road construction under the ILP.

5.3 Aboriginal Consultation

Aboriginal consultation on the finding of this report is warranted. It would be appropriate to prepare a synthesis of this review and the results of DECC consultation on the S90 application for review and comment by Aboriginal stakeholders. It would be appropriate to invite the groups to a joint meeting for discussion of the proposed S90 AHIP application approach and any conditions for archaeological work. Final written submissions from Aboriginal groups would be invited following the meeting. These submissions would provide final feedback on the Aboriginal heritage assessment for the purposes of S90AHIP application(s).

Yours sincerely,

AECOM Australia Pty Ltd



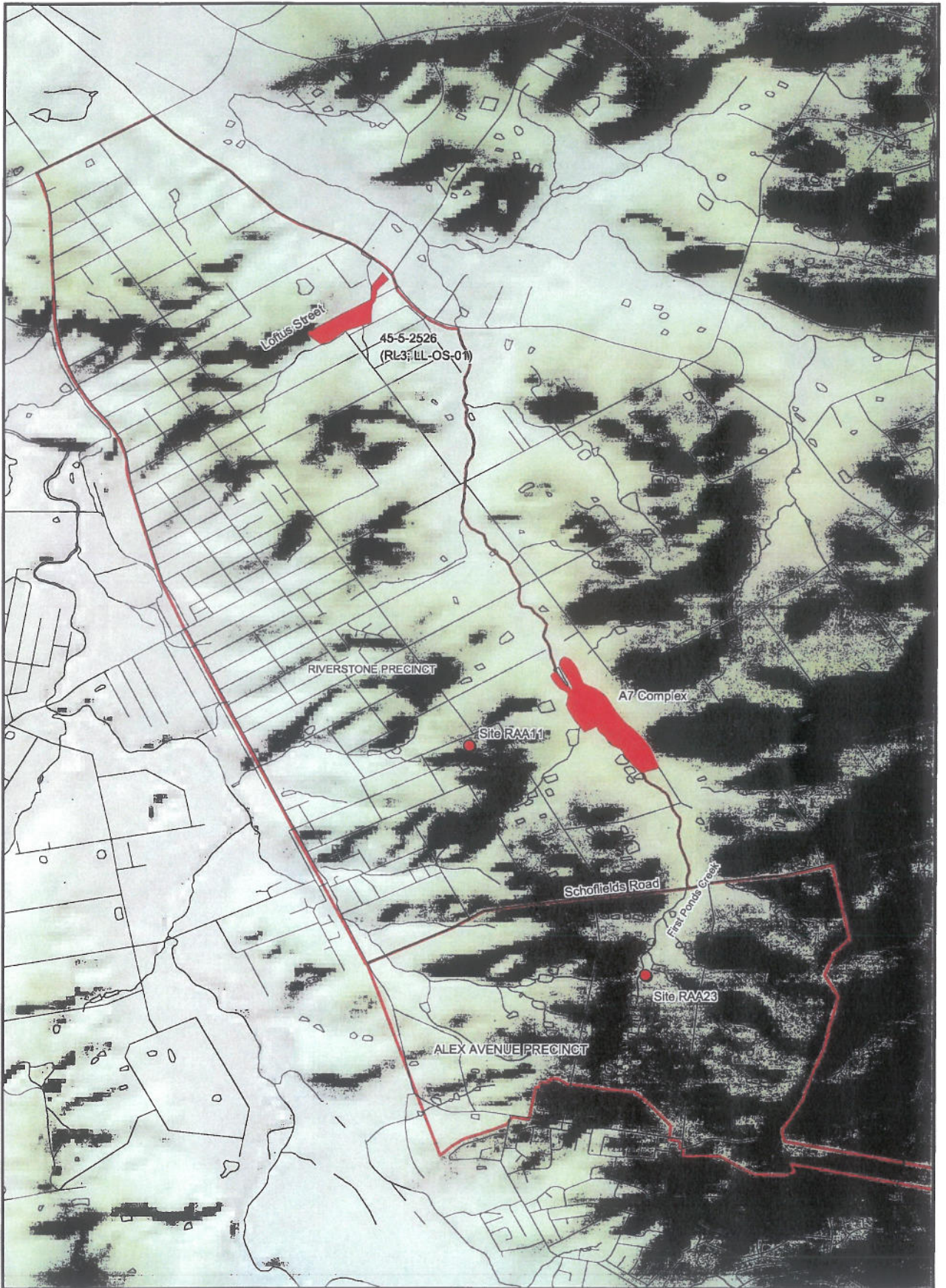
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0.5 0 0.5 1 1.5 km

Figure 1 Study Area and Major Aboriginal Sites Mentioned

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50 0 50 100 150 m

Figure 2 Distribution of Silcrete and Artefacts at Site RAA11, Bell Property

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Figure 3 Site RAA23 boundary
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