

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HERITAGE MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS PTY LTD

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14<sup>th</sup> June 2007

Redfern-Waterloo Authority  
PO Box 3332  
Redfern NSW 2016

Attention: **Ms Joanne McGuinness** (Senior Town Planner).

Re: **Former Rachel Forster Hospital – Initial Archaeological Assessment.**

Dear Ms McGuinness,

With reference to our meeting (6/6/07) re the above matter and the archaeological site inspection undertaken following that meeting I write to present our initial archaeological assessment of the former Rachel Forster Hospital site.

## Site Identification

The site investigated by this assessment is Lot 7 as shown in Deposited Plan 664804. The street address of this site is 134-150 Pitt Street, Redfern, NSW. Figure 1 shows the site location.

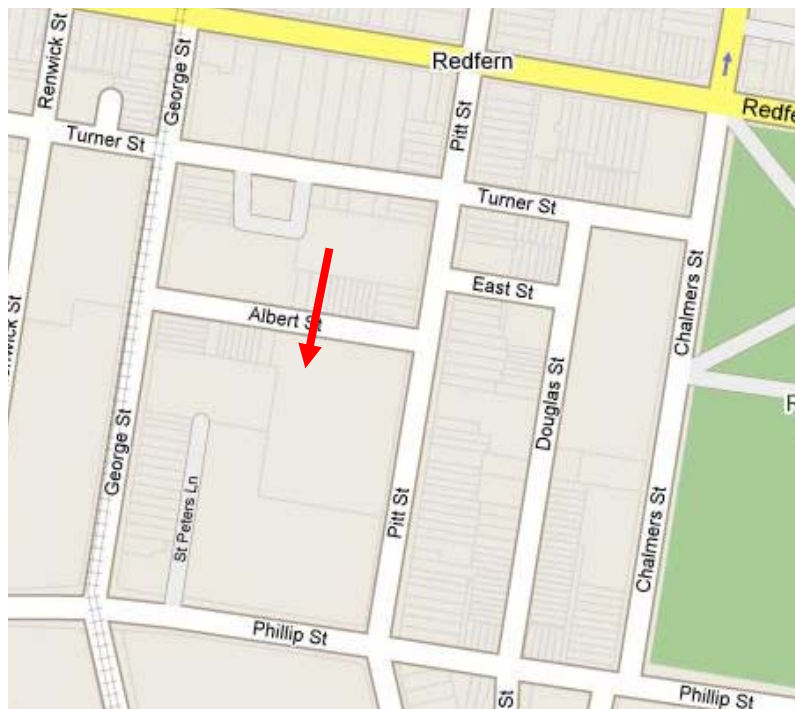


Figure 1: Site Location.

## **Project Initiation & Brief**

This initial archaeological assessment report was commissioned in response to the Final Director General's Requirements (DGR) for the Concept Plan of the Proposed Redevelopment of the former Rachel Forster Hospital site for residential purposes, as authorised by the Minister for Planning (Major Project Application number 07\_0029, issued to the Redfern Waterloo Authority (RWA) by the NSW Government Department of Planning on 15/5/2007). Further to this, the DGR for the project included general requirements to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) that considers the following key heritage issues:

1. Identification of any items of European heritage significance and provision of a heritage impact statement in accordance with the *Heritage Manual*, (NSW Heritage Office & DUAP 1996). Specifically, the design and form of the proposal needs to respond, and assess any impacts on the character of the surrounding conservation area and nearby heritage items.
2. Identification of the site's Aboriginal cultural heritage significance (if any) and, where applicable, preparation of an independent Archaeological report in accordance with the draft *Guidelines for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment & Community consultation*, DEC, July 2005.

In addition, it is noted that the EA was required to address measures to ameliorate potential impacts arising from the construction of the proposed development.

The Major Project Application prepared by RWA seeks concept approval, under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, for building envelopes with a view to develop detailed design following receipt of Part 3A approval. The objective of the current archaeological investigation is to provide a preliminary archaeological assessment of the former Rachel Forster Hospital site to support the major project application.

## **Objectives & Scope of Work**

The scope of work for the current investigation is an initial assessment of the extent and cultural significance of any historical archaeological relics (as defined by the NSW Heritage Act, 1977) and any Aboriginal sites or objects (as defined by the National Parks & Wildlife Act, 1974) at the site. This archaeological assessment was commissioned following the identification, by Weir and Phillips Pty Ltd (principal heritage consultants on behalf of the Redfern Waterloo Authority) during work on the heritage impact statement, of the partial remains of a well considered likely to be a remnant of Nineteenth Century occupation at the site. These remains are located within a basement in the main hospital building.

## **Methodology**

The site history prepared by Weir and Phillips Pty Ltd for the heritage impact statement was reviewed to gain an understanding of past development of land incorporating the site. An archaeological site inspection was then undertaken to allow an assessment of the remains identified in the hospital building basement. During this inspection the location and extent of the remains were recorded on a current survey plan of the site and observations were made regarding the type and age of the remains.

Historic maps and plans showing the configuration of former structures in the locality incorporating the site were then scaled to fit the current survey plan in an attempt to identify any spatial correlation between the extant remains and documented historic occupation at the site.

Initial conclusions regarding the cultural significance of both visible and other potential remains at the site was then made using the criteria set out in the NSW Heritage Office publication *Assessing Significance, 2001* (a NSW Heritage manual update).

Recommendations were then prepared for management of the visible and potential archaeological remains identified at the site taking into consideration an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposal on the remains.

## Results

### Occupation History

The following section presents a summary of the detailed history of past occupation of the site prepared by Weir & Phillips Pty Ltd for their Statement of Heritage Impact on the Hospital site.

Four general occupation phases were identified at the subject site:

- Aboriginal occupation (c15,000 years before present (BP) to 1788);
- Early Land grants and Redfern Farm, (1788-1842);
- Subdivision and Urban Development of Redfern (1842-1937); and
- Rachel Forster Hospital for Women and Children (1937-2000).

### Aboriginal Occupation (15000 BP – 1788)

The date of first human occupation of the Sydney basin is not known, however archaeological evidence indicates that Aboriginal people have lived in the region from around 15,000 years BP.

The *Darug* people are the traditional occupants of the Sydney area. The *Darug* are part of a language group that originally extended from the eastern suburbs of Sydney to La Perouse, Bathurst and the Hawkesbury River<sup>1</sup>. Early European settlers and explorers noted that the *Darug* comprised a number of sub-groups often referred to as 'clans'. Their recognition as separate groups was based on differences in language. The *Darug* clan group that occupied the Sydney area were the *Gadigal*<sup>2</sup>.

Accounts of Aboriginal people made by early British settlers indicate that the *Gadigal* people enjoyed a lifestyle based on fishing and gathering the abundant shell fish on the harbour shores, with seasonal exploitation of inland resources.<sup>3</sup> Although the *Gadigal* probably would have crossed the landscape incorporating the proposed development area, no site specific occupation was identified during the research for this assessment.

### Early Land grants and Redfern Farm (1788 – 1842)

The subject site lay outside of the official boundary of Sydney Town, as defined by Governor Phillip in 1792, and along with all of the land in the colony it was initially Crown Land. Land incorporating the site was first granted to Dr William Redfern by Governor Macquarie on 8 October 1816. It remained in the property of Redfern and his descendants until the early 1840's.

William Redfern arrived in Australia in 1801 as a convict transported for his part in the Nore Mutiny, at which time he had been serving in the Royal Navy as a surgeons mate. Redfern was sent to Norfolk

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<sup>1</sup> Eades, D.K. 1976

<sup>2</sup> Attenbrow 2002: 24

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 47

Island where he commenced duties as an assistant surgeon in May 1802. A little over a year later, on 19 June, 1803 he received a conditional pardon, followed shortly afterwards by a free pardon.

Upon his return to Sydney in 1808, Redfern was appointed assistant surgeon. He was a pioneer of medical education in Australia, and was active in supporting public health and preventative medicine initiatives. He became a highly respected doctor, acting as physician to the Macquarie and Macarthur families.

Redfern was also actively involved in colonial affairs, serving as a magistrate for a brief period. He was also a Director of the Bank of New South Wales, a medical officer of the Benevolent Society, and a member of the Aboriginal Institution committee.

Redfern's 1816 grant to the south of Sydney consisted of 100 acres (Figure 2). Today, Cleveland, Regent, Redfern and Elizabeth Streets approximately define the boundaries of the grant. Over time the grant became known as *Redfern's Farm* or *Redfern's Estate*.

Details of the early development of the grant, such as the location of buildings and cleared and cultivated land, were not identified in the history prepared for the Heritage Impact Statement however a reference is made to surveyor's notebooks identified in the catalogue of the State Archives, Kingswood. Recovery and review of these notebooks could not be undertaken in the time allowed for the current assessment, but they may contain information relevant to archaeological investigation and assessment of the site because such records often contain notes regarding improvements made to grants prior to 1842.

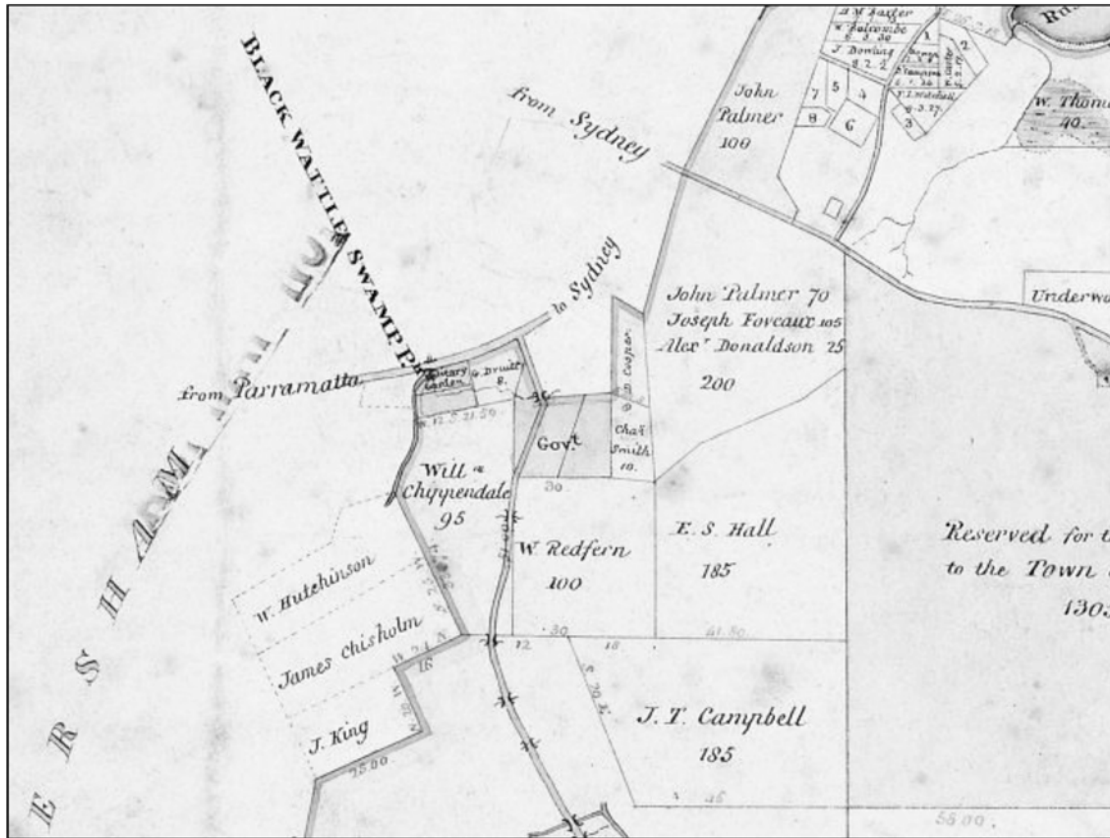
In addition to Redfern's grant, a small section of the subject site formed part of 30 acres granted to William Roberts in January, 1794. Although the size of the grant indicates that Roberts was probably an emancipist, details regarding the early development of this grant have not been identified to date.

### **Subdivision and Urban Development of Redfern (1842-1937)**

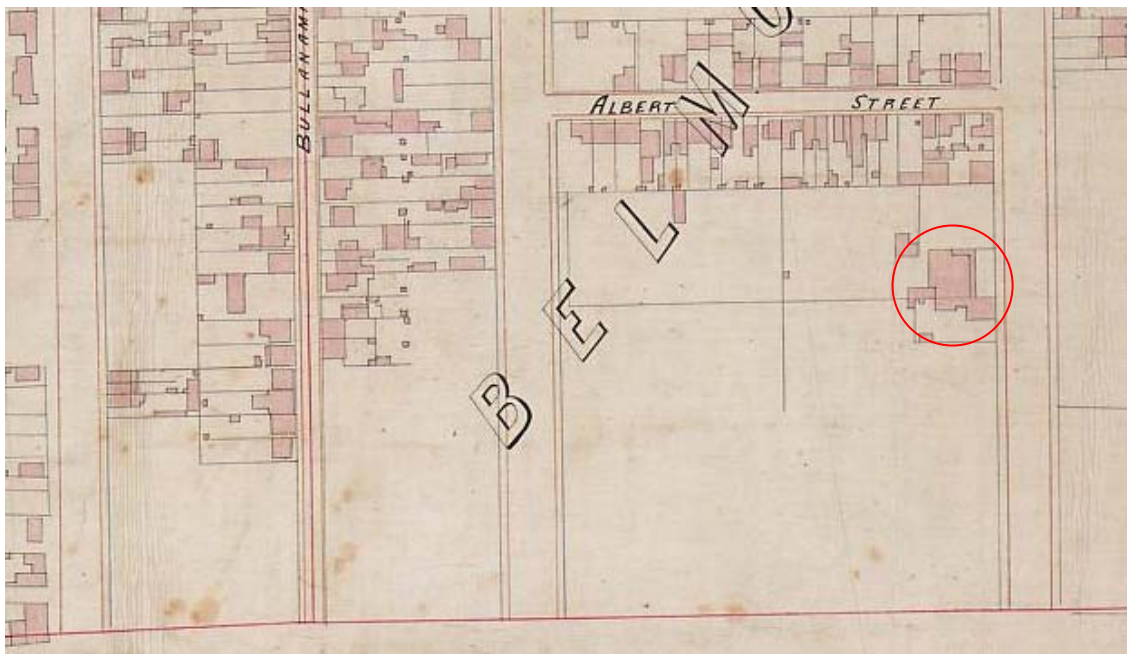
Between 1842 and 1937 the chain of title for the subject site is complex with some lots continuously owned by the same person for long periods while others changed hands many times. Semi detached, and terrace cottages were typical of buildings constructed on the site during the mid to late Nineteenth Century.

Weir & Phillips identified that the most significant building constructed on the site prior to the Rachel Forster Hospital buildings was Redfern Lodge, a single storey stone cottage. The earliest available plan that shows the Lodge is the 1865 Trigonometric Survey of Sydney (Figure 3). At this stage it is unclear if the lodge was actually constructed and/or occupied by Redfern or his descendants, however further targeted research should allow this matter to be clarified.

Comparison of the 1865 Trigonometric Survey of Sydney with the 1887 and 1894 Metropolitan Detail Series Plans (Figures 4 and 5) indicates that the subject site and surrounding land remained largely undeveloped during this period, however a row of terraces fronting Pitt Street, and several buildings towards the centre of the block, were constructed around the older building.



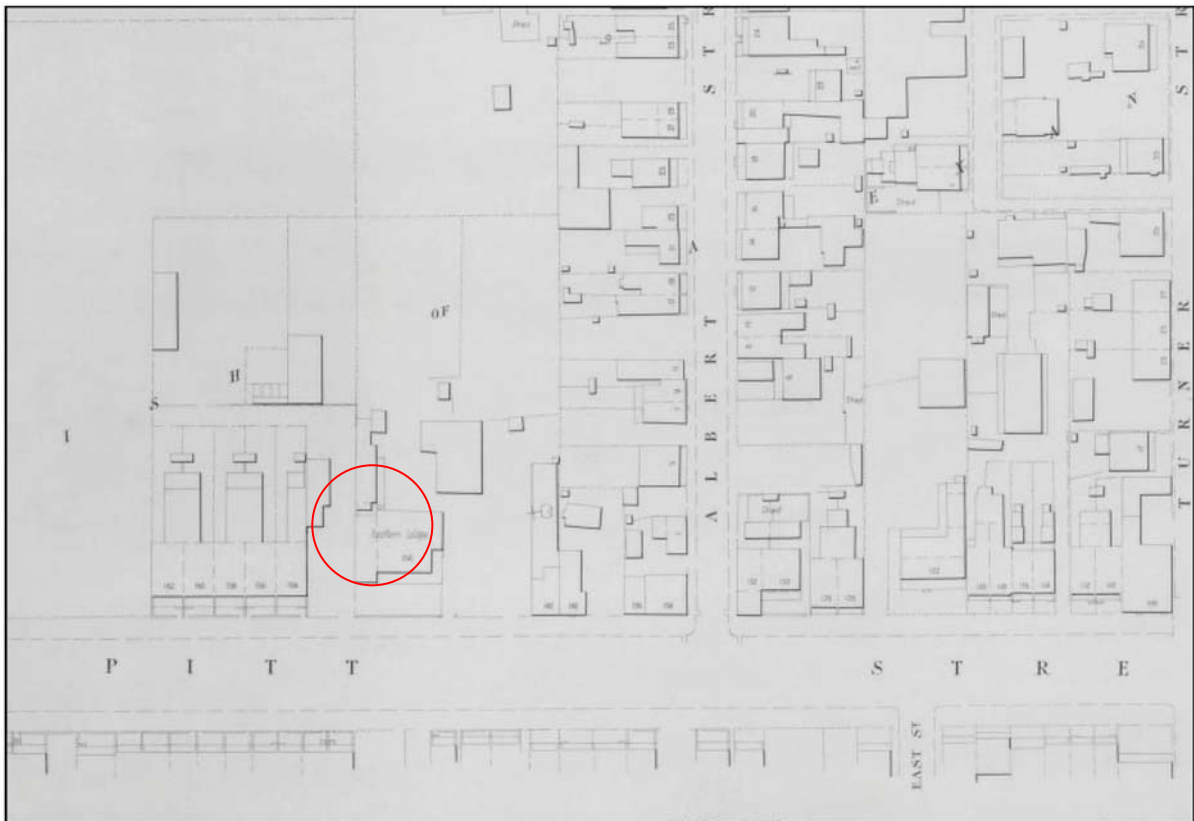
**Figure 2:** Detail from an undated plan of the Parish of Alexandria, County of Cumberland, showing William Redfern's grant.



**Figure 3:** 1865 Trigonometric Plan, Redfern Lodge is circled.



**Figure 4:** Metropolitan Detail Series Section 16 1887. Redfern Lodge is circled.



**Figure 5:** Metropolitan Detail Series Section 16 1894. Redfern Lodge is circled.

In 1875 a committee appointed by the Sewerage and Health Board surveyed the water supply of the Boroughs of Alexandria, Redfern and Waterloo. Water had not yet been installed in these areas, and wells were the main source of potable water. The survey found that the wells in the area were typically 25 feet deep, dug into sandy soil, and lined with bricks without mortar. Often they were located very close to the privies and cess pits in the rear yards of the houses.

When they were present, wells were usually recorded on Metropolitan Detail Series (MDS) plans, but because none are shown on the 1887 MDS this may indicate that a reticulated water supply had been established to the locality incorporating the subject site between 1875 and 1887.

### **Rachel Forster Hospital 1937 - 2000**

Originally the Rachel Forster Hospital was known as the New Hospital and was located in a terrace in Surry Hills. Established in 1922 the focus of the hospital was to provide, health care to women and children living in the inner city.

Patient numbers grew quickly and in 1935 land located at the corner of Albert and Pitt Streets, Redfern (the subject site) was being considered as a potential site for a new Hospital. The Hospital Board requested that the land was resumed and then secured a loan from the AMP with a Government Guarantee, to finance design and construction of the new Hospital. The hospital was designed by the architectural practice of Leighton Irwin, one of a few Australian Architects who studied overseas between World War 1 and World War 2. Irwin played an influential role in Australian Architecture, introducing European modernism to Australian Buildings. The hospital was completed and opened in 1941.

A number of alterations and additions to the original hospital buildings have been made since 1941. The buildings currently on site consist of the main hospital building, which has basement levels throughout, a small building at the rear of the hospital, with an indoor pool, and a weather board garage.

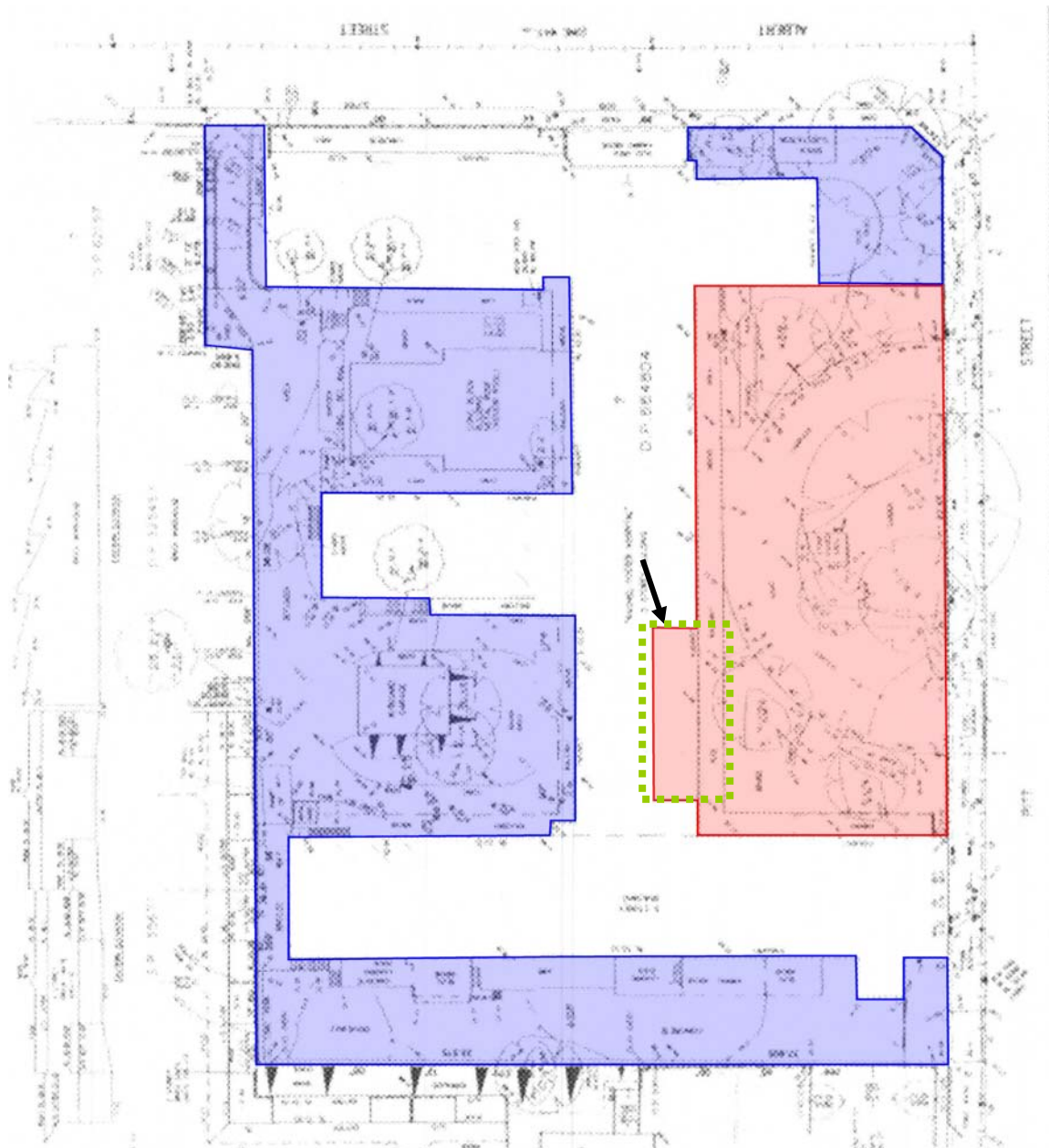
The Hospital has been vacant since 2000, except for the Community Health Centre operating out of the northern wing of the main hospital building.

### **Visible Relics Identified at the Site**

The well identified by Weir and Phillips is centrally located on the east side of the basement in the former North Wing building at the Hospital. This location, shown in Figure 6 (overleaf), is situated between the east wall of the corridor that runs approximately north-south through the basement and the eastern (front) wall of the North Wing. Access to the area is provided by a doorway set in the corridor wall.

The well was observed at the northern end of what is essentially a localised remnant of the upper portion of the soil deposits that existed at the site prior to construction of the Hospital in c1941. This remnant of the former landscape, including remains of the well and other structures present on-site before hospital construction, was "pedestalled" and enclosed within the basement by excavation undertaken to establish the North Wing building footings and the basement slab. This localised portion of the former landscape is approximately 36 metres in length and 4-5 metres wide. The height of the cross-section through the soil deposits left in situ by excavation in c1941 is approximately 1,700mm. The area identified by the dotted green line in Figure 6 shows the location and extent of this remnant landscape on a plan of the existing building configuration.





**Figure 6: Overlay plan of the North Wing building at Rachel Forster Hospital showing the location of the well in the basement (arrowed) and the probable extent of soil deposits with potential to contain physical remains of historical and Aboriginal occupation (shaded red).** Soil deposits within the area defined by the green dotted line (i.e. within the existing North Wing footprint) are those that would be directly impacted by the Concept Proposal. The area shaded blue is below slab and the unshaded areas within the building footprint denote the basement corridors and rooms. Neither of these areas is considered to have potential to contain remains of past occupation.

The upper western portion of the well was removed during excavation undertaken during construction of the hospital basement. The remnant portion of the well is approximately 1000mm in diameter, with a 1700mm high remnant standing section on the eastern side (Figure 7). The depth and content of the *in situ* well remains and any fill deposits is indeterminate but may extend to 5 metres below the level of the exposed section.





**Figure 7:** View of well remains and remnant soil profile (right of frame). The large sandstone blocks covering the well date to its abandonment, estimated at c1875-1887.

Complete sandstock bricks and brick bats bonded with mud mortar were used to construct the walls. The bricks derive from multiple batches and they are of varying quality and colour, including salmon pink, orange and yellow brown examples. Some of the bricks were well formed and well mixed, although most are poorly formed and poorly pugged. One brick was vitrified and may have been recycled from a fireplace constructed elsewhere. The materials used to construct the well suggests that the people who built it were conscious of cost, and reused bricks from a variety of sources, possibly demolished structures nearby.

The fabric and form of the well remains are entirely consistent with construction before c1870-1880 when mechanised brick manufacturing technology was introduced and was widely adopted by the brickworks in Sydney.

Soil deposits considered to have some potential to contain material remains of Aboriginal occupation were also identified within the soil landscape that pre-dates hospital construction. These are described in the following sections of this report within which the site stratigraphy and archaeological potential are discussed.

### Cross-section Description and Analysis

The stratigraphy visible within the east cross-section of the remnant landscape incorporating the well contains numerous historic structural and other remains, in addition to natural and culturally made soil deposits. Examples of these remains and soil deposits are shown in Figures 8 and 9.



**Figure 8:** View of sandstone footing visible in section (Left). View of sandstock brick box drain, visible in section.



**Figure 9:** View of soil profile visible adjacent to the remains of the well (Left). View of deep sandy soil profile visible at the southern end of the pedestalled remnant archaeological landscape within the hospital basement.

At the northern end of the cross-section the stratigraphy includes:

- Fill deposits and truncated structural remnants associated with nineteenth century occupation;
- Mid-brown coloured sandy loam, approximately 100mm thick; this being interpreted as a remnant topsoil (former A1-horizon);
- Light-gray coloured, bleached sandy loam, approximately 300mm thick over a 150mm thick light-yellow coloured sandy clay with laterite inclusions; these being interpreted as part of the former A2-horizon; and
- Orange coloured clay, which is the subsoil or B-horizon.

At the southern end of the cross-section the visible soil profile was considerably different, consisting of:

- Historic soil deposits; overlying
- A former topsoil 200mm thick; and
- Bleached Light grey to white coloured sand approximately 800mm thick (former A2-horizon).

The relics observed both in cross-section and on the surface of the remnant soil landscape within the basement include sandstone building footings and pavers, sandstock brick box-drains, ceramic water pipes, possible yard deposits and demolition deposits containing welsh slate, brick fragments, coal and black bottle glass. Such remains are entirely typical of domestic occupation during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century's.

During the site inspection ground surfaces at the front (east) of the main hospital building were assessed for evidence of landscape alterations such as bulk excavation or deposition of fill deposits. Comparison of the footpath surface level east of the site with levels inside the carpark/garden area indicates that the ground surface has been raised within this part of the site. Therefore it is possible that intact archaeological deposits and relics survive below current ground surfaces in this part of the site.

Taking the above information into consideration it is concluded that the site contains an intact portion of the pre c1940 landscape, with potential to contain remains of all forms of occupation prior to that time, including Nineteenth Century European occupation as well as Aboriginal occupation. The location of this area of archaeological potential is shaded red on Figure 6. The blue shaded and unshaded areas on Figure 6 are not considered to have any potential to contain historic relics and/or Aboriginal sites and objects.

## **Initial Assessment of Archaeological Potential and Significance**

### **Historic Relics**

The well and the above mentioned structural, infrastructural relics and culturally made soil deposits in stratigraphic positions above the natural soil profile are considered to be remains of historical occupation at the site dating from the period between the mid-Nineteenth Century (at a minimum) and c1941.

On the basis of available information it cannot be precisely determined whether or not any of these remains are directly associated with occupation of the historic building known as Redfern Lodge, which was constructed and was presumably in use by 1865. Similarly, it cannot be determined whether or not any of the relics and/or Redfern Lodge are directly associated with William Redfern.

The information available at the time of writing indicates that, despite being granted land incorporating the site, Redfern in fact decamped from Sydney fairly early during the period when he lived in NSW, instead establishing himself within premises, remote from the town, at Airds.

Having stated these uncertainties regarding the site's occupation history and historical associations, it is nonetheless clear that the relics observed at the site would probably be locally significant (at a minimum) for their values in relation to the following assessment criteria:

- (a) **History** - important in the course or pattern of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area); and
- (e) **Potential to yield information** – potential to contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

If the site contains relics associated with Redfern's occupation of his grant in south Sydney then it may also be significant for its heritage values in relation to criteria:

(b) **Association** - with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW' cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area); and

(f) **Rarity** - possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area);

#### **Potential to contain Aboriginal Sites**

The naturally occurring soil deposits observed below historic occupation layers are typical of those found within the Tuggerah and Newport soil landscapes which cover extensive portions of south and eastern Sydney. Both are Aeolian sands, laid down c10, 000 years BP, with the Tuggerah landscape forming extensive dune fields, while the Newport landscape forms a sand mantle over earlier soil horizons. The date of formation of these sand deposits is therefore well within the known timeframe for Aboriginal occupation in the Sydney Basin.

The site does not contain any registered Aboriginal sites and no Aboriginal sites or objects were observed at the site during the current investigation, however the former presence of numerous streams and swamps within these soil landscapes was a resource zone that was attractive to Aboriginal people, as demonstrated by numerous early historic accounts of the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Century's. This, combined with the documented identification of Aboriginal sites by archaeological investigations within development contexts on former dune fields and beside former water sources (e.g. Angel Place, Sydney and Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick) suggests that the natural soil profiles in the basement at the North Wing of Rachel Forster Hospital have some potential to contain remains of Aboriginal occupation.

The significance of any such sites cannot be determined without further archaeological investigation and consultation with relevant Aboriginal community organizations and any registered Traditional Owners of the land incorporating the Hospital site.

## Development Proposal

Attachment 1 shows a current survey plan and copies of the building envelopes described in the Concept Plan for re-development of the former Hospital. In brief, the proposal would entail:

- Retention and alteration of the existing building at the southern site boundary (referred to as Building 1). Demolition of structures on the southern side of this building to allow its extension in a continuous line by construction of a new six storey building with a basement.
- Demolition of the North Wing, with the exception of the colonnade which will be retained and integrated with a new three storey building (Building 2) to be constructed behind the colonnade.
- Construction of a new three storey building (Building 4) between Building 2 and the western boundary of the site.
- Two levels of underground car parking will be provided by excavation under Buildings 2 and 4 and the area separating these buildings.
- The existing building on Albert Street will be demolished and a new four storey building, including a basement level, (Building 3) will be constructed.
- The provision of proposed public open space between Pitt St and Building 2, referred to above.

## Archaeological Impacts

The overlay plan presented at Figure 6 of this report (page 8, above) shows the assessed extent of the area considered to have potential to contain historical archaeological relics and/or Aboriginal sites and objects. This 'area of archaeological potential' (red shading) is limited to the eastern frontage of the Hospital site, mostly below the existing carriageway, and the central eastern portion of the North Wing footprint (ie between the main corridor in the basement and the front wall of the existing North Wing).

The rectangle defined by a green dotted line in Figure 6 shows the portion of the area of archaeological potential that would be directly impacted by construction of the proposal shown in the Concept Plan. This comprises approximately 144m<sup>2</sup> of the proposed development area.

Archaeological remains within this area would be removed by excavation required to construct the Proposal. The balance of the area of archaeological potential will not be the subject of other than superficial impacts because the majority of the area is proposed to be dedicated for public open space.

The un-shaded and blue shaded areas on Figure 6 are not considered to have any archaeological potential because soil deposits, including any remains of past occupation within these areas would have been truncated by construction undertaken during establishment of Rachel Forster Hospital in the 1940's.

## Discussion and Management Recommendations

The proposed development site includes a localised area that would be impacted by the Proposal and which contains relics associated with historic occupation considered to date to the period between the mid-Nineteenth Century and 1941. Within this area and immediately below the level of the historic relics there are remnants of the surface stratigraphy that existed prior to European occupation of Australia. These soil deposits are assessed as having potential to contain Aboriginal sites and/or objects, although it is noted that the probability of such a limited area containing Aboriginal sites and objects is considered to be low.

The identified historic relics are assessed as having local heritage significance, on the basis of information available to date, however further investigation, including targeted research is required to determine the significance of the historic relics.

The significance of any Aboriginal sites within the localised remnant soil landscape below the historic relics cannot be determined without further archaeological investigation and consultation in accordance with Department of Environment and Conservation Guidelines.

Taking the above conclusions into consideration, in addition to the Department of Planning and the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) draft guidelines for the preparation of *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Community Consultation* required for Part 3A Projects (July 2005) and Heritage Office, Department of Planning *Guidelines for Archaeological Assessments*, as set out within the *NSW Heritage Manual* 1996 (updated in 2001), it is recommended that:

### Prior to determination of the Concept Plan

1. Targeted historical research should be undertaken to determine whether or not the relics identified at the site are associated with occupation by William Redfern, or other significant historical occupation; and
2. Following completion of this historical research a revised statement of significance should be prepared for the site, taking into consideration any results obtained by the research.

It is further recommended that **the Statement of Commitments for the Concept Plan should include an undertaking to conduct the following work:**

3. Preparation of an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA), in accordance with draft Department of Conservation Guidelines 1997;
4. Integration of the revised statement of significance and the results of the AHIA within an Archaeological Management Plan for the site that considers (i) heritage interpretation of the archaeological site within the proposed development and/or (ii) archaeological excavation and documentation of the site prior to construction.



**Peter Douglas.**

Director.

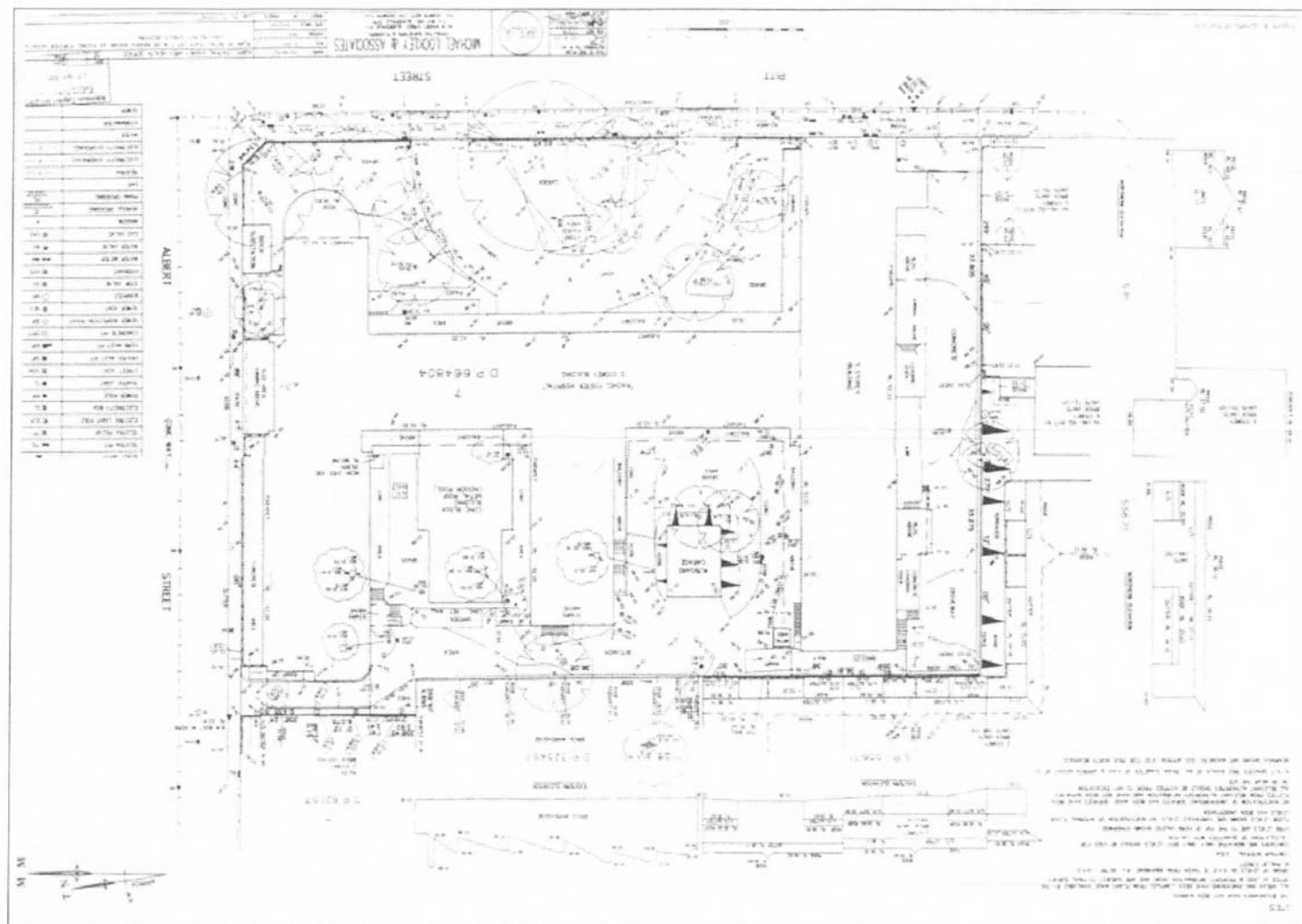


## References

Attenbrow, V. 2002, *Sydney's Aboriginal Past: Investigating the Archaeological and Historical Records*. UNSW Press, Sydney.

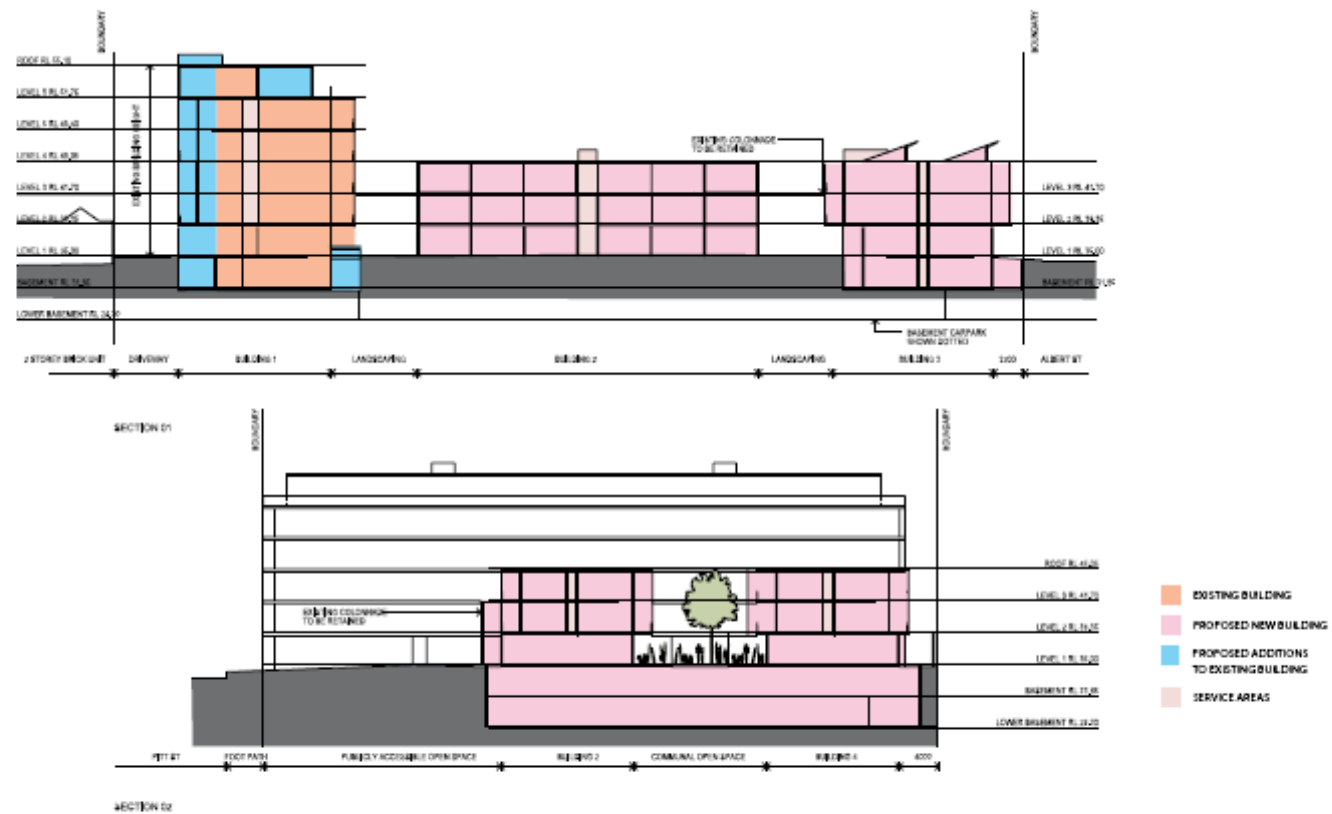
Eades, D.K. 1976, *The Dharawal and Dhurga Languages of the NSW South Coast*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, ANU, Canberra.

## Attachment 1



Survey of Rachel Forster Hospital Site – showing current building configuration





PROJECT	CONCEPT PLAN OF REDEVELOPMENT OF FORMER RACHEL FORSTER HOSPITAL	Uppmann
DESIGNED BY	ARCHITECT	ARCHITECT
DATE	2020	2020

Elevation of concept plan for proposed development of the site