

Brief Reassessment of Site 45-5-2491

June 2010



Report to Landcom

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1.2 Background to this Investigation

The Thornton Park Masterplan (Penrith City Council 2002, based on Brookes & Associates 2001) identifies the following planning policy for Indigenous heritage within the development area:

Objective

Conserve Aboriginal heritage in accordance with the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974.

- ☉ The conservation and management of the Aboriginal site 45-5-2491 should be undertaken in accordance with the findings and recommendations of the report prepared by ABMS 2001 and Helen Brayshaw 1993.
- ☉ Within future proposals for development at Thornton Park, the site should be preserved intact within a dedicated public open space separated from site works, buildings and trenched services.
- ☉ The dedicated reserve should be located, dimensioned and designed in accordance with the recommendations of a qualified Aboriginal archaeologist, and in consultation with the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council.
- ☉ The site should be restored to a natural setting using methods which do not disturb the soil surface.
- ☉ All visible rubbish should be removed from the surface by hand, and monitored by a representative of the local Aboriginal land Council.
- ☉ Where possible a representative of the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council and/or Darug Tribal Aboriginal Corporation should be contracted to undertake this work.
- ☉ Topsoil should be added and grass cover promoted to cover all areas to protect Aboriginal stone artefacts.
- ☉ Signage which draws attention to the presence of stone artefacts at the site should not be erected.

- ☉ Non-obtrusive educational signage which mentions that the park conserves important evidence of Aboriginal activity including the manufacture of stone tools is appropriate.
- ☉ Any future development within the park, e.g. construction of amenities etc., should be subject to test excavation by a qualified archaeologist working with the local Aboriginal community.
- ☉ An on-going maintenance plan should be prepared and implemented for Aboriginal site 45-5-249I, as part of the future conservation of the site.

2. FIELDWORK INSPECTION

The previously recorded site was inspected on Friday 11th June 2010 by Archaeologists Jo McDonald and Sandra Wallace. The previous recording of the site was used to assist in its reassessment. The area was relocated and assessed for its current condition. Photographs were taken and a GPS co-ordinate was logged.

Plate 1: View from the open paddock south east to site 45-5-249I



The site was as described previously (Brayshaw 1993, AMBS 2001). It is located in a narrow parcel of land between two fence lines, near the north-eastern boundary of the development area (287179E 6263416N). Inspection of previous photographs

(Brayshaw, AMBS) indicates that the ant nest and areas of exposure are still present; as are a number of surface artefacts. The area had been recently mown and vehicles moving across the site have left clear tire impressions/ruts in the exposed areas.

Plate 2: Facing north across area where surface artefacts were located.



Air photo interpretation indicates that the paddock within which the site is located has been ploughed - with the exception of the immediate surrounds of the site (Figures 2 & 3). This paddock is the least disturbed area across the entire development area. Fragments of brick, glass ceramic, bitumen and other introduced materials were observed on the open exposures where artefacts were also seen.

As discussed in the AMBS report (2001:9) a dam was once located just to the east of site 45-5-2491 with the dam wall appearing to cover the area where artefacts have been recorded (Figure 2). AMBS suggest that the artefacts may have been brought into the area with the soil used to create the dam wall, or to fill in the dam in the 1960s. The artefacts may also be from the local area but may have been moved when soil was moved for dam works. In any case it is unlikely that these artefacts are in their original context and that the site contains intact archaeological deposit.

Figure 2: 1961 aerial photo with study area overlaid (from AMBS 2000:7). The dam is the pale area to the east of the site.



High levels of colluvial gravels amongst the surface finds suggest that the Unit A soil horizon (where artefacts were usually found) is fairly thin (i.e. is unlikely to contain depth or preserve context for the artefacts). The fact that this area has not re-vegetated in the last decade suggests that the topsoil layer has been stripped, impeding regrowth.

The site is small (in terms of surface artefact numbers: 25 artefacts were observed by Brayshaw, less by AMBS; only 15 were counted during the current inspection); it is devoid of landscape context (i.e. is sandwiched between residential blocks and extremely disturbed land) and would appear to have minimal integrity due to relatively high levels of previous disturbance.

Figure 3: Air photo showing site in its local context. Artefacts were observed over the surface within the area marked in yellow. The red dotted line identifies the area designated previously as an "Archaeological Park".



3. ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to appropriately manage the Aboriginal heritage values in the study area, it is necessary to assess the archaeological significance and/or potential of site 45-5-2491 and the surrounding area of the previously proposed Archaeological Park. This assessment includes the identification of potential to contain intact archaeological deposit (i.e. only minimally disturbed by previous land use impact) and whether this is in a landscape which is locally and regionally threatened by urban development. These two factors affect the assessment of high conservation potential.

An archaeological sensitivity map has been created for this site on the basis of prior land use impacts and the results of the survey (Figure 4). Four zones of archaeological sensitivity are commonly identified for this purpose, although only three are found within the current study area.

- ☉ Zone 1 – High archaeological potential
- ☉ Zone 2 – Moderate archaeological potential
- ☉ Zone 3 – Low archaeological potential
- ☉ Zone 4 – No archaeological potential

These zones are used to assist in the assessment of the sites and landscapes within the study area.

Figure 4: Zones of archaeological potential (Blue=Zone 4, Yellow=Zone 3, Purple =Zone 2). The previously proposed Archaeological Park is outlined in red.



The majority of the study area is designated as Zone 4 and is assessed as having minimal or no archaeological potential. The land along the western edge of the study has been impacted by previously existing buildings and roads. The Zone 4 area in the central eastern section of the study area has been impacted by the now infilled dam and dam wall (see Figure 2). There should be no further archaeological constraint to development in Zone 4 areas.

The site area is similarly of relatively low potential to contain intact archaeological deposit. It is less disturbed than the surrounding areas, but is disturbed. The surface

artefacts, which are located in a stripped area, are Zone 3; while the intact areas of the site which are unlikely to have been ploughed are Zone 2. The proposed Archaeology Park does contain some surface artefacts, but with very little potential for intact deposit. Given the small size of the sensitive area (Zone 2), it is not considered worthy of sub-surface archaeological investigation.

Cultural significance

This usually refers to the importance of a site or feature to the local Aboriginal community. Certain sites, items and landscapes may have traditional significance or contemporary importance to the community. This importance may involve both traditional links with specific areas, as well as an overall concern by Indigenous people for continued protection of their sites in general. Cultural significance must be assessed by the relevant Aboriginal community – in this case Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council, Darug Custodial Aboriginal Corporation, Darug Tribal Aboriginal Corporation and Darug Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessments.

A report outlining the field inspection of the study area and its assessed cultural or Aboriginal significance should be forwarded by the Aboriginal groups and their views on the conservation values of this place sought.

Scientific significance

One of the aims of cultural heritage management is to preserve a representative sample of the archaeological resource for the benefit of future scientific researchers and the general public. Assessment of scientific significance involves placing a site or heritage item within a broader regional framework, as well as assessing the site's individual merits in light of current archaeological discourse. This usually includes an assessment of a site's potential to answer current archaeological research questions. Assessment is also based on the condition (integrity), content, and representative of a site, e.g. is it representative of a certain site type? Is it a rare or exceptional example? Can it contribute information that no other site can?

On the basis of the field inspection of the study area and the intactness/integrity of archaeological deposits in surrounding areas, it is highly unlikely that this site retains significant intact archaeological deposit. Previous land use here includes clearing and agricultural uses (including a farm dam), which will have a substantial impact on sub-surface deposits. This site is assessed as having ***low scientific significance***.

Public significance

This usually refers to a site's potential to educate the general public about Aboriginal culture, but can have a broader definition. Increasing public awareness and understanding about a site's Indigenous and scientific values may spare other sites spared from inadvertent or intentional destruction. Educating the public to appreciate the past may increase the chances of archaeological resources surviving into the future.

Public significance may also include the different community values placed on a site or heritage place. These may include its importance to local residents or the wider community: e.g. aesthetic values, recreational values, links with local European history and local identity.

Previous uses within the development area have significantly changed the environs of this site. This combined with the low visibility of the archaeological evidence here, and the small area over which artefacts can be seen, mean that the study area has been assessed as having ***low public significance***.

Management Principles

The currently accepted cultural heritage management principles are applied to site 45-5-2491. These principles are predicated on the assessment of archaeological sensitivity based on previous levels of land-use disturbance.

- ☞ Sites and/or landscapes with high archaeological potential or Aboriginal significance (particularly in threatened landscape) should be identified as worthy of conservation, and development impacts on these should be avoided.
- ☞ Sites and/or landscapes with good archaeological potential or Aboriginal significance (particularly in threatened landscape) should be avoided if possible by development proposals. If impacts are unavoidable then these features should be subject of further investigation to ensure that information is retrieved prior to their destruction. Selection of salvage areas should be made on the basis of a 'whole of development' approach and be landscape based;
- ☞ Sites and/or landscapes with moderate archaeological potential or Aboriginal significance should be managed on the basis of their assessed significance. These area would only require sub-surface investigation if they provided landscape parameters which are poorly understood in the local and regional context; and

- ☞ Sites and/or landscapes of low or no archaeological potential or Aboriginal significance do not require planning consideration or further archaeological investigation in relation to the proposed development.

Managing identified sites/landscapes

The proposed management strategy for site 45-5-2491 is predicated on a landscape-based philosophy. This approach advocates conserving archaeological landscapes based on landscape parameters (McDonald 1996). These areas should be managed on the basis of their archaeological sensitivity.

- ☞ No land within the current study area has been identified as worthy of conservation (i.e. Zone 1);
- ☞ Most of the current study area has been assessed as Zone 3/4, having low - no archaeological potential;
- ☞ A small area of the subject land is assessed as having Zone 2 PAD (potential archaeological deposit).

Land in Zone 3/4 poses no constraint to development. Further archaeological works will not be required in these areas.

The area of land which is designated Zone 2 is too small to warrant further archaeological investigation. The Zone 2 PAD in the Archaeological Park should only be protected if this Open Space is considered an optimal planning solution. Based on the nature and significance of the identified site, it is concluded that the most appropriate management outcome for this site is not conservation.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on consideration of:

- ☞ Legal requirements under the terms of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* (1974) (as amended) which states that it is illegal to damage, deface or destroy an Aboriginal object or Place without first obtaining the written consent of the Director-General, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, NSW;
- ☞ The management zones based on archaeological sensitivity identified across the proposed Archaeological Park based on air photo interpretation;

- ② The results of the field inspection in the study area;
- ② The interests of Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council, Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation, Darug Tribal Aboriginal Corporation and Darug Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessments; and
- ② The likely impacts of the proposed development.

It is recommended that:

1. There are no Zone 1 lands the proposed Archaeological Park, therefore no areas within this area warrants conservation. Given the small size of the area identified with surface stone artefacts, our increased knowledge of open sites in the region over the last decade, and the lack of integrity of this landscape, this site is assessed as being a poor candidate for conservation effort;
2. The surface site identified has only a small area of associated Zone 2 PAD. Given the small size of the affected sensitive area, it is not considered worthy of sub-surface archaeological investigation;
3. The remainder of the Archaeological Park assessed as Zone 3/4 should be considered developable without archaeological constraint. There is no requirement for further archaeological investigation within these parts of the study area;
4. The Aboriginal community needs to be consulted to determine their current views on the cultural values of this site;
5. The proponent should proceed with community consultation adhering to the DECCW community consultation guidelines, Part 3a planning process and associated DGRs;
6. Three copies of this report should be sent to:

Ms Lou Ewins

Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water,

Level 7, 79 George St

PARRAMATTA

NSW 2150.

7. One copy (each) of this report should be sent to:

Mr Frank Vincent
Chairperson,
Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council
PO Box V184
NSW 2770.

Ms. Leanne Watson,
Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation,
PO Box 81,
WINDSOR, NSW, 2756

Mrs. Sandra Lee,
Darug Tribal Aboriginal Corporation
PO Box 441
BLACKTOWN, NSW, 2148

Mr. Gordon Morton
Darug Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessments
90 Hermitage Rd
KURRAJONG HEIGHTS, NSW

5. REFERENCES

- AMBS 2001 Thornton Park Masterplan Conservation of Aboriginal site 45-5-2491.
Report to the Department of Defence Major Property Disposal Unit.
- Brayshaw, H. 1993 Defence Department Land At Penrith, Nsw: Archaeological Survey
For Aboriginal Sites. Report prepared for the Department of Defence through
Planning Workshop.
- Grahame Brooks & Associates 2001 Heritage Management Plan: Department of
Defence - Thornton Park, North Penrith.