

5 Aboriginal Heritage Survey

5.1 Survey Methodology

The Aboriginal cultural heritage survey was undertaken on 19 June 2008 by AMBS archaeologists Christopher Langeluddecke and Jenna Weston, accompanied by Aboriginal community representatives (see Table 5.1). The fieldwork methodology, the proposed development and available mapping information were discussed with all Aboriginal community representatives prior to fieldwork. Copies of topographic maps and aerial photographs were made available to all participants to guide the survey. The findings of the survey and recommendations were discussed with all representatives in the field, and no objections were raised.

Table 5.1 Aboriginal Community Participants

Aboriginal Community Group	Representative
Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council	Darren Duncan
Guringai Tribal Link Aboriginal Corporation	Tracey-lee Howie
Darug Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessments	Gordon Morton
Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation	Justine Coplin

The aims of the survey were to:

- employ the predictive model to inform the survey areas;
- ensure appropriate sampling of undisturbed land, and land not previously the subject of archaeological investigation;
- relocate AHIMS site 45-6-2040, which was previously recorded within the study area, and record its current condition;
- record any Aboriginal sites/objects within the study area; and
- determine any areas of potential Aboriginal heritage sensitivity.

The survey methodology involved pedestrian transects throughout undeveloped sections of the study area. As Figure 1.2 shows, part of the study area has been developed for the nursing and retirement villages (off Mt Pleasant Ave), residential homes (at the northern end of Fox Valley Road), a school (at the corner of Fox Valley Road and The Comenarra Parkway), and the Sydney Adventist Hospital and associated buildings. The undeveloped sections of the study area which the Aboriginal survey aimed to sample were broadly defined as the vegetated areas:

- along Coups Creek (flowing through the centre of the study area; see Figure 3.2);
- along a tributary of the Lane Cove River (on the western boundary of the study area); and
- within the area containing the Blue Gum High Forest (BGHF area east of Fox Valley Road).

These areas appeared to comprise predominantly regrowth vegetation. Although the majority of these areas have been previously surveyed by Val Attenbrow in 1989 and Cosmos Archaeology in 2004 (see Section 3.3.2), the predictive model indicated that these are the areas where evidence of Aboriginal occupation are most likely to occur. Further, it was considered possible that in the intervening years archaeological material may have been exposed, which was not visible during the previous surveys.

During the survey, particular attention was paid to areas of ground surface exposure, rockshelters and other sandstone outcrops. Where older mature native trees were observed within the study area, they were examined for the presence of Aboriginal cultural scarring. If any Aboriginal artefacts were encountered, notes were to be made

regarding their type, size, and material, descriptions of the site were to be recorded including the environmental setting and details of any disturbance to archaeological material in the site's vicinity, and Australian Map Grid (AMG) coordinates were to be taken by a handheld Magellan Explorist 500LE GPS unit. Photographs of objects and their location were also to be taken. Photographs of the study area in general were taken using a Canon EOS 300D digital camera.

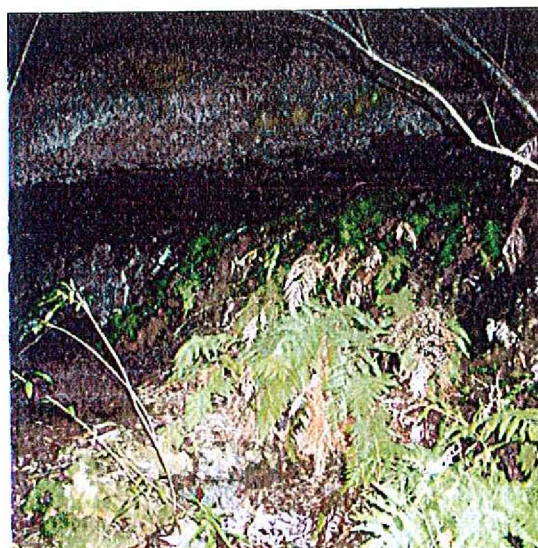
5.2 Survey Results

No new Aboriginal sites were located during the survey.

The previously recorded site 45-6-2040 was relocated; however the two quartz artefacts recorded in 1989 were not relocated. Evidence of recent use of the shelter includes broken glass bottles and other rubbish, large pieces of charcoal from recent fires, and spray-painted graffiti on a section of the shelter wall. It is anticipated that the artefacts have been disturbed through this recent use of the shelter.



View of north eastern end of shelter site 45-6-2040



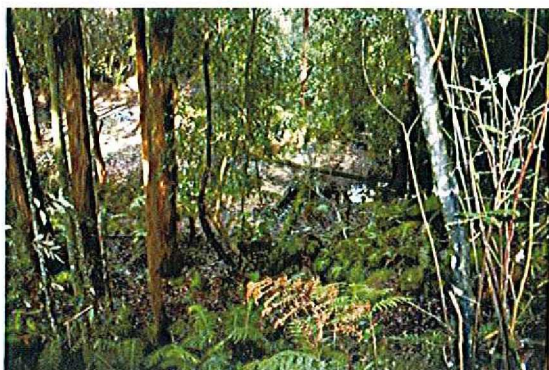
View of ferns at north eastern end of shelter



View of south western end of shelter, showing spray-painted graffiti



Example of ground exposure in shelter



View of creek from shelter site



View of shelter site from opposite side of creek

The scope of the survey was impeded by the density of the vegetation, which reduced visibility in many areas, particularly around the creeklines (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Effective Coverage Table

Landform of Transect	Description	Approx. Area (m ²)	Approx. Area Surveyed (m ²)	Visibility	Exposure	Effective Coverage (m ²)	Sample Fraction (%)
Creek	Coups Creek	80000	8000	0.8	0.3	1920	2.4
Slope	Urban Conservation Area	62500	7000	0.95	0.1	665	1.1
Total		142500	15000			2585	1.8

5.3 Discussion of Survey Results

Coups Creek was traversed between Ferndale Drive in the northern section of the study area, and Comenarra Parkway in the southern section. Pedestrian transects were traversed on both sides of Coups Creek, where vegetation was sparse enough to permit access. The transects generally followed informal unpaved pathways. Numerous sandstone outcrops are present within and adjacent to the creek, and these were inspected for art, engravings, grinding grooves and archaeological deposit (particularly beneath sandstone shelters). Although no artefacts were found, leaf litter obscured large portions of the ground surface, including soil deposits in the shelters.

The banks on each side of the creek are relatively steep, with a relatively level area of approximately 10-20m immediately adjacent to the creekline. Sheer sandstone cliffs and shelter outcrops dominate the north western side of the creek, particularly in the area of site 45-6-2040. Some of these shelters have evidence of modern use, including rubbish and graffiti. Vegetation was dense away from the creekline and the pathways, although there was evidence of some clearing in the area, particularly near paths and on the south eastern side of the creek. Cleared vegetation has been placed into plastic garbage bags which are in piles near the creek. Some revegetation/rehabilitation efforts are also evident, particularly on this south eastern side of the creek. Apart from this clearing, disturbance of the creekline is mainly the result of the introduction of paved and unpaved pathways, and the construction of service access hatches in the vicinity.



Evidence of clearing for pathways, and drainage (arrowed)



Example of unpaved path (centre) and paved path (top left)



Formal bridge across Coups Creek



Service access hatches near creek



Example of sandstone outcrops in Coups Creek



Example of graffiti

The steepness of the topography, dense vegetation, and lack of access paths in the vicinity of the creek on the western boundary of the study area, and the small first-order tributary just north of the Comenarra Parkway precluded pedestrian survey in these areas. The thick lantana in the south eastern part of the BGHF area also precluded pedestrian survey in this area. However, the north western section of the BGHF area had been recently cleared of lantana, and hence pedestrian survey was possible in this area.

Apart from clearance of vegetation, including the removal of large trees and lantana, disturbance in the north western section of the BGHF area appears to have resulted from the nearby buildings on Fox Valley Road. A small amount of rubbish was present throughout the area. A small cement drain has been constructed behind the Administrative Headquarters building, which pools into a small depression. Pedestrian use of the area was evident in a small track behind the Fox Valley Road buildings. The landscape in this area is a moderately steep slope, and it is considered an unfavourable area for Aboriginal occupation.



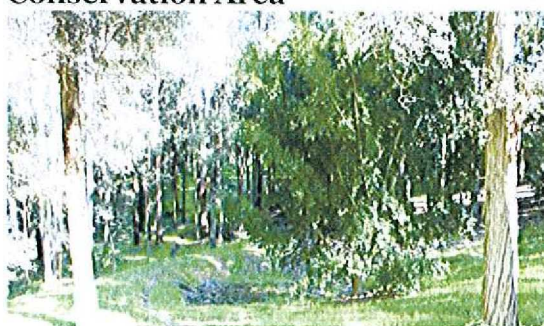
Thick lantana in south eastern section of Urban Conservation Area



Evidence of clearing in north western section of Urban Conservation Area



Concrete drain into depression behind Administrative Headquarters building



Sloping landscape, showing pedestrian track, and depression