

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

18B UNWIN STREET ROSEHILL



SEPTEMBER 2002

**Cultural Resources Management
For DB Real Estate**

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SECTION 1.0

PRECIS

1.1 The Work

The subject of this report is the sub-surface archaeological resource that may be contained within land at 1B Unwin Street, Rosehill. The objective of the work has been to determine the probability of finding archaeological evidence here and, if so, its extent, nature, integrity and significance. The report assesses the impact of the proposed work on that resource and provides recommendations for its management. The work fulfils statutory requirements of Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 28: Parramatta.

1.2 Historical Context

The pre-settlement landscape of the study area was characterised by dense forest and scrub. It was a haven for native wildlife. These resources were attractive to Aboriginal people who had occupied the area for at least forty thousand years. No archaeological sites of this type have been identified within the study area. The pre-settlement landscape is likely to have been progressively removed from the later years of the eighteenth century as part of the Elizabeth Farm Estate development. The study area was alienated in 1816 a part of one of the grants that were encompassed by this property. Apart from clearance, though, there is no evidence that any improvements were made to the site or it had any particular use as part of Elizabeth Farm.

This property was put to auction and sold in 1881. The first subdivision was made in 1883 but the study area was not sold until 1905 and then as part of a much larger block of 368 acres. This property was subdivided and sold in 1908 as part of 142 acres purchased by the Commonwealth Oil Corporation. The business collapsed in 1911. No works had been carried out at Rosehill at any time between 1905 and 1911.

John Fell and Company, a pioneering Australian firm in oil production, purchased the 142-acre site in 1924. In the following year a rail siding was built across the study area to their newly established cracking plant (on the present-day Shell site). The plant was closed in 1927. The site was progressively sold beginning with the study area that was purchased by the Department of Main Roads in February 1927.

The purpose of the depot at Rosehill was to store plant and road material used in repair work. The earliest development was focussed around three rail sidings close to Unwin Street. During the 1930s the depot gradually began to expand to the south and by 1940 it encompassed a large portion of the formerly vacant land to A'Beckett's Creek. Extensive reconstruction of the Central Workshop commenced in 1943 and was completed in 1948. In the post-war years the need to expand became urgent. For this reason an additional 17.5 acres were acquired adjacent to the existing eight-acre site. Burnside Homes purchased the site in the 1980s as an investment property. The former depot buildings have been leased to a number of light industrial and other businesses and during this period substantial alterations have been made to a number of the buildings. National Mutual Pty Ltd purchased the site in 1998.

1.3 Archaeological Profile

On the basis of the evidence provided by archival sources it has been concluded that the potential sub-surface archaeological resource of this site is likely to be characterised as follows:

- Little or no evidence will remain of the pre-existing environment; this is likely to have been removed by the initial site clearance of the early nineteenth century but, more particularly, through the impact of the twentieth century DMR occupation.
- No evidence will be found of the historical associations of this place with the Elizabeth Farm Estate, the Commonwealth Oil Company or John Fell and Company.
- The site will contain evidence of the buildings, works and services constructed at various periods by and for the Department of Main Roads.

Generally, the site will contain an archaeological resource entirely post-dating 1926 and relevant to the DMR occupation. These features are already recorded by means of a series of site surveys, aerial photographs and other primary records.

1.4 Cultural Significance

Although the study area has a history of European association that dates back to the eighteenth century the archaeological resource contained within it is likely to relate only to the construction of buildings, services and other works for the Department of Main Roads from 1926 onwards. While it is demonstrative of the principal historical association of this place the information contained in the ground is unlikely to provide more or better evidence for that occupation than is now contained in primary archival resources. The archaeological resource of this site is assessed to have low cultural significance as a means for research and investigation.

1.5 Impact Assessment

The work will have a substantial impact on a resource assessed to be of low cultural significance through excavation required for demolition, levelling, landscaping and the construction of new buildings.

1.6 Management

It will be necessary for the owners/managers of this site to apply for a Section 140 Excavation Permit from the Heritage Council of NSW. This is considered to be a matter of prudence in the event of any nineteenth century relics being revealed although this is considered to be very unlikely. No ongoing work is required for relics revealed by the excavation of the DMR occupation.

SECTION 2.0

CONTEXT

2.1 Background

This report provides an archaeological assessment of land in Unwin Street, Rosehill. The site is to be redeveloped for warehousing. The excavation associated with this work may entail the removal of archaeological relics. This document has been written to determine if relics are present within the site, assess the impact of the redevelopment on archaeological resources and provide information and analysis that will determine the necessity or otherwise for an excavation permit application under Section 140 of the Heritage Act of NSW. It fulfils statutory requirements of Sydney Regional Environmental Plan 28 – Parramatta.

2.2 The Study Area and Subject

The subject of this investigation, the "study area", encompasses land with the street address of 1B Unwin Street, Rosehill. Buildings and other works constructed for the Department of Main Roads during the twentieth century occupy the site. The site may be identified as Lot 201 DP 870298. It is located in Portion 201 of the Parish of St John, County of Cumberland. It is within the Local Government Area of Parramatta City Council.

This report broadly encompasses the European "heritage" values of the study area with respect to a possible archaeological resource. Heritage values are understood to mean the appreciation and value placed upon the resource by contemporary society in terms of the criteria expressed in the Burra Charter and formalised by the Heritage Office of NSW. Archaeological evidence, "relics", is defined by the Heritage Act of NSW to be physical evidence (structures, features, soils, deposits and portable artefacts) that provide evidence of the development of NSW, of non-Aboriginal origin and fifty or more years in age. Aboriginal relics are provided protection by the National Parks and Wildlife Act of NSW.

2.3 Status of the Site

A heritage impact assessment has been prepared with respect to the status of the above ground resources contained within the study area¹. The property was identified within the City of Parramatta Heritage Study (Inventory Item 314). The listing does not refer to archaeological significant or potential. The former Depot is listed as an item of environmental heritage in the Local Environmental Plan of Parramatta City Council.

¹ Brian McDonald and Associates, Heritage Assessment Former Department of Main Roads Depot 1B Unwin Street Rosehill (1998).

2.4 Methodology

This report has been prepared in accordance with the principles expressed by the Heritage Office of NSW in its publication "Archaeological Assessment Guidelines". It also draws on the methods and procedures presented in the NSW Heritage Manual, Historical Archaeological Sites Investigation and Conservation Guidelines and the Burra Charter. There has been no archaeological sampling or investigation of this place to date or any geo-technical sampling.

2.5 Objectives and Tasks

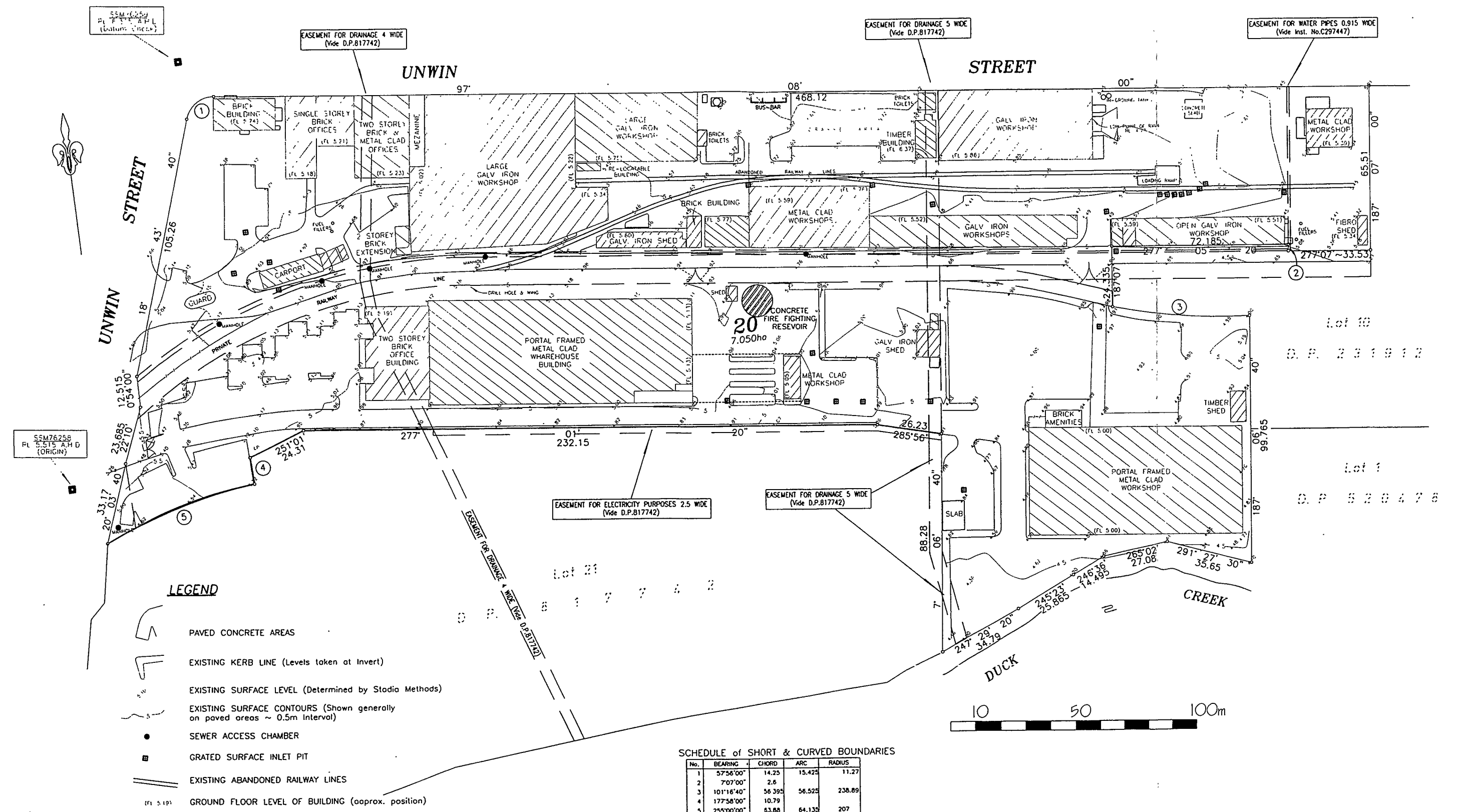
The principal objectives of the work have been to determine the development of the built environment and landscape and, secondly, to identify whether there is an archaeological issue to be addressed prior to and/or during the work proposed for the study area. The report identifies what may be retained in the ground as an archaeological resource, the significance of that material, the impact of the proposed work on that resource and the most appropriate means of managing that impact. To this end the following tasks have been undertaken:

- primary and secondary historical research sufficient to determine the physical development of the site and its principal associations;
- site survey (visual inspection only) and an assessment of physical evidence taking into account those factors which are likely to have impacted on the retention of archaeological evidence;
- a determination of the probable archaeological profile;
- an evaluation of the cultural significance of this resource with reference to standard criteria;
- an assessment of the impact of the work on sub-surface features
- identification of management strategies;
- complete documentation of the programme.

2.6 Authorship, Client and Acknowledgements

This report has been written and researched by Wendy Thorp (Cultural Resources Management) to meet the requirements of Parramatta City Council and the NSW Heritage Office. It has been commissioned by DB Real Estate. The work draws on both primary and secondary sources. A complete bibliography is included at Section 7.0 of this report.

The author would like to thank Ms Helen Sole (RTA Archives), Mr Colin Kay (Sydney Water Archives) and Mr Brian McDonald for their assistance.



LEGEND

- PAVED CONCRETE AREAS
- EXISTING KERB LINE (Levels taken at Invert)
- EXISTING SURFACE LEVEL (Determined by Stadia Methods)
- EXISTING SURFACE CONTOURS (Shown generally on paved areas ~ 0.5m Interval)
- SEWER ACCESS CHAMBER
- GRADED SURFACE INLET PIT
- EXISTING ABANDONED RAILWAY LINES
- GROUND FLOOR LEVEL OF BUILDING (approx. position)

NOTE : THE LEVELS AND CONTOURS SHOWN HAVE BEEN DETERMINED BY STADIA METHODS ONLY. THE ACCURACY OF THIS DATA IS NOT CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE FOR BUILDING CONSTRUCTION. THEREFORE, SURVEY MARKS SHOULD BE PLACED PRIOR TO ANY CONSTRUCTION COMMENCING.

SCHEDULE of SHORT & CURVED BOUNDARIES

No.	BEARING	CHORD	ARC	RADIUS
1	57°56'00"	14.25	15.425	11.27
2	7°07'00"	2.6	56.525	238.89
3	101°16'40"	56.395	10.79	63.88
4	177°58'00"	63.88	64.135	207
5	255°00'00"			

No	REV	DATE	TO

No	REV	DATE	TO

ISSUE DATE AMENDMENT

CONTRACTORS ARE TO VERIFY DIMENSIONS ON SITE BEFORE COMMENCING WORK

ANY DIMENSIONS OR DISCREPANCIES ARE TO BE NOTIFIED TO THE ARCHITECT

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SCALE NTS	DATE MARCH 2002	

DRAWING TITLE EXISTING SURVEY DRAWING	REVISION
DRAWING NUMBER ADA 1001	

SECTION 3.0

HISTORICAL PROFILE

The study area occupies land that was formally granted for European purposes in 1816 although there is no evidence of occupation until the twentieth century. This development was undertaken for the Department of Main Roads as the first phase of occupation of the present depot.

This section presents evidence derived from both primary and secondary archival sources. It is used to describe the evolution and occupation of the study area and its principal associations. This narrative provides the basis for assessing what may be retained in the ground as archaeological evidence of that development as well as providing a context for determining the significance of this resource.

The evidence is presented in the following sections that follow the chronological development of the place:

- The Pre-Settlement Environment and Aboriginal Occupation
- The Elizabeth Farm Estate
- Subdivision: The Commonwealth Oil Corporation
- John Fell and Company
- The Department of Main Roads
- Later History

3.1 The Pre-Settlement Environment and Aboriginal Occupation

The study area is encompassed within a large geological system, the Cumberland Plains, primarily based on Hawkesbury Sandstone but with significant outcrops of rich volcanic soils. Its defining characteristic is the river valley and its tributaries. The dominant pre-settlement landscape of this system was heavily timbered open forest. The principal vegetation comprised eucalypts, including spotted gum, forest red gums, smooth-barked gums as well as grey box, woollybutt and stringybark. There were several types of ironbark².

Beneath this canopy was scrub that varied from almost impassable to relatively open heath lands dominated by paperbarks and native grasses³. The earliest European surveys of the area, in the 1790s, describe the area around Duck River and A'Becketts Creek as "dense brush thicket"⁴.

The land along the river-banks and creeks was defined by mudflats and mangroves with marshy land above the High Water Mark. Later settlers would describe how these flats were a haven for marine life; small crabs, balloon fish, bream and mullet were plentiful⁵. The marshy areas were a refuge for migratory birds and the inland forest and scrub supported a very large variety of other native birds and wildlife. The naturalist George Bennet described the environment of this area in 1834 as being of barren soil though heavily wooded and particularly noteworthy for its wildflowers⁶.

With such abundant natural resources the area was a haven for Aboriginal people for at least forty thousand years BP. The original occupants of the study area and its environs are likely to have been members of the Aboriginal tribal family or clan of the Wangal belonging to the larger Dharug group⁷. This clan laid claim to land along the southern banks of the Parramatta River as far as Rosehill. Alternatively, those living on the Duck River were members of the Wategora or Wategura clan⁸.

It is likely that the study area was occupied or intermittently visited by Aboriginal people in the pre-settlement period; there is substantial ethnographic evidence to that effect. It was noted that these people had a complex social organization and an elaborate tool kit primarily devoted to exploitation of the marine resources⁹. However, although many sites of Aboriginal association have been recorded in the area including middens, artefact scatters and scarred trees, no specific evidence has been found to associate Aboriginal people with the study area.

The pristine and rich condition of the environment was not to last long after the arrival of Europeans. As part of the work devoted to developing a new estate it was normal practice to remove large areas of tree cover. Early paintings of estates along the river show that by the 1820s the dense tree cover and scrub of many places had been replaced by sparse patches of trees, stumps and open ground. The only survivors generally were the mangroves although these were removed in large parts during the later part of the nineteenth century.

² Ibid: 4

³ Benson and Howell, Taken for Granted the Bushland of Sydney and Its Suburbs: 69

⁴ Noted in Tery Kass, Op Cit: 11

⁵ Mrs L. Meredith, Notes and Sketches in NSW 1839-1844: 151

⁶ Quoted in Benson and Howell: Loc Cit.

⁷ Terry Kass et al, Parramatta A Past Revealed: 5

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Fox and Associates, Parramatta River Heritage Study: Section 3.3



View of Elizabeth Farm Estate in 1822 by Joseph Lycett showing the impact of clearing on the previously densely forested pre-settlement landscape. The study area is beyond the area of the image, to the right.

(Source: Tim McCormack, First Views of Australia 1788-1825: 265)

3.2 The Elizabeth Farm Estate

Elizabeth Farm began with a grant of one hundred acres given to John Macarthur in 1793. This encompassed the land surrounding the house that is located to the west of the study area in Alice Street, Rosehill. By 1794 Macarthur was able to write,

*"I have a farm containing nearly 250 acres of which upwards of one hundred are under cultivation and the greater part of the remainder is cleared of the timber which grows upon it...I have at this moment twenty acres of fine wheat growing and eight acres prepared for India corn and potatoes which it will be planted in less than a month"*¹⁰.

By 1798 the farm had grown to 400-500 acres including gardens and wheat fields. In October 1816 Macarthur was granted an additional 850 acres to the east of his estate to the Duck River¹¹. This grant encompassed the study area.

Apart from clearing there is no evidence that John Macarthur made any particular use of this land up to his death in 1834. His son Edward, who also appears to have made little or no use of this part of the property, then inherited the estate¹².

The only contemporary survey of Elizabeth Farm was made in 1844. It shows that all the principal improvements, the gardens and other features, were within the close environs of the house. Although the plan is damaged in the area that recorded the estate to Duck River it suggests that the study area was unoccupied and had no particular use¹³. The most famous view of Elizabeth Farm prepared by Joseph Lycett in 1824 shows the house surrounded by huge areas of grass swards with a few specimen trees left scattered within the landscape¹⁴.

Members of the Macarthur family continued to live at Elizabeth Farm until 1865 after which time it was leased to several tenants¹⁵. After Edward Macarthur died Trustees were appointed in 1873 to manage the property¹⁶.

By that time the house was in disrepair, fences were broken, roads were unkempt and the pasturage was returning to scrub¹⁷. Basic repairs were made and the property was put up for auction. The house and 1100 acres was sold to Septimus Alfred Stephen, a solicitor of Sydney, in 1881 for £50,000¹⁸.

¹⁰ Quoted in James Jervis, The Cradle City of Australia A History of Parramatta 1788-1961: 23

¹¹ Schedule attached to PA 5303.

¹² Historic Houses Trust, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta A History and Guide: 16

¹³ William Brownrigg, Plan of the Town of Parramatta and Environs: 1844

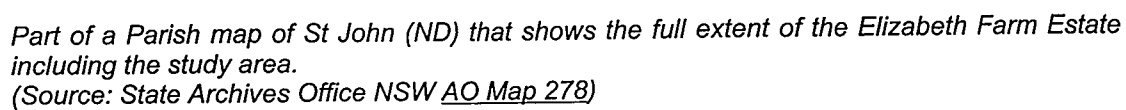
¹⁴ Joseph Lycett, The Residence of John McArthur Esq Near Parramatta NSW (aquatint) in T. McCormick, First Views of Australia: 265

¹⁵ Historic Houses Trust, Op Cit: 44

¹⁶ Primary Application 5303

¹⁷ Historic Houses Trust, Op Cit: 49

¹⁸ Primary Application 5303



3.3 Subdivision: The Commonwealth Oil Corporation

Two years after his purchase of the property, during which time it was leased¹⁹, Stephen commenced the subdivision of the Elizabeth Farm estate. In February 1883 183 allotments were offered for sale including the house and the land in its near environs²⁰. In October of the same year the Granville portion of the former estate was subdivided and put to auction. 270 allotments were offered and 139 were sold at that time²¹.

140 acres were purchased by John Bennett and laid out as a recreation ground now Rosehill Racecourse²². In 1884 a subdivision adjoining the racecourse and just north of the study area was offered for sale. It encompassed 617 allotments and was described as Rosehill Township²³. An undated subdivision plan, probably of the 1880s, shows all these subdivisions but indicates that most of the land in this area, including the study area, was yet to be subdivided²⁴. Another subdivision plan of the same area in 1901 shows that little had changed by that time; the study area remained undivided and unsold²⁵.

It was not until 1905 that the study area was first sold from the former Elizabeth Farm Estate. At that time Alexander Hamilton, Keith Maxwell and Colin Stephen purchased it as part of a large holding of 368 acres 2 roods and 31 ¾ perches²⁶. This holding included nearly all of the land in the Granville area that had not yet been subdivided and sold from the former Elizabeth Farm Estate. There is no indication that the new owners intended anything for their purchase than subdivision and sale.

In 1908 the Commonwealth Oil Corporation Ltd purchased 142 acres 2 roods 2 perches from the 368-acre subdivision. This new subdivision essentially encompassed all of the land now bound by James Ruse Drive, the Racecourse, A'Beckett's Creek and a substantial portion of the present-day Shell Oil site²⁷.

The Commonwealth Oil Corporation was a London-based company that had taken out leases in the Wolgan Valley in 1906 and established the township of Newnes and associated refinery and plant for the production of shale oil. The Sydney purchase appears to have been part of a refinery and distribution plan. Retorting began at Newnes in 1911 but financial and technical problems closed the operation within four months²⁸.

Clearly these problems impacted on whatever plans were intended for the Rosehill site. There is no evidence that the Company made any changes to this place. A parish map of 1915 shows the study area to be unoccupied and undeveloped.

¹⁹ Primary Application 5303

²⁰ Granville Municipal Council, *Granville Municipal Jubilee Souvenir*: 47

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² James Jervis, *Op Cit*: 35-36

²³ Granville Municipal Council, *Op Cit*: 48

²⁴ Sydney Subdivision Plans: *Elizabeth Farm* ML SP G10/123

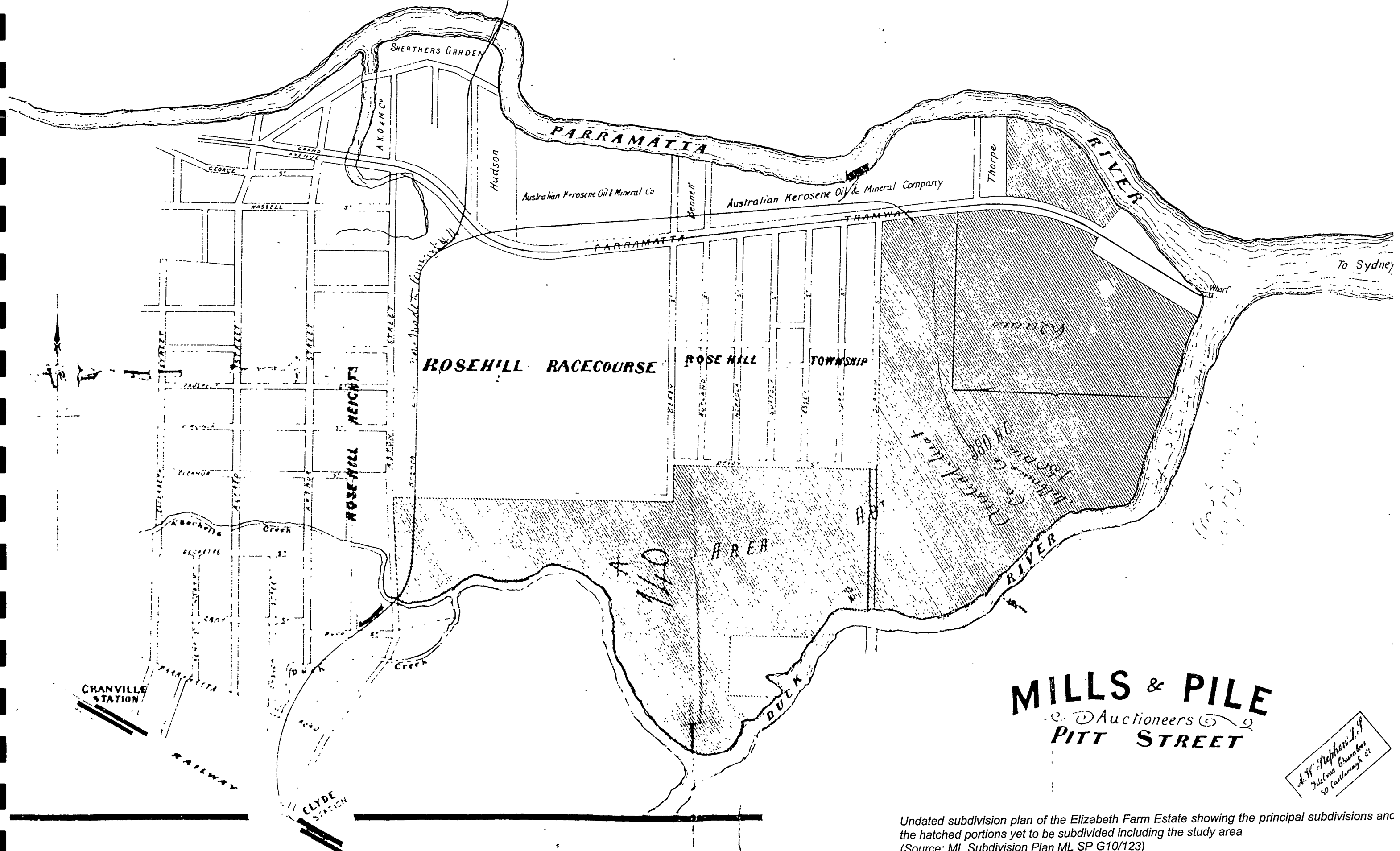
²⁵ Sydney Subdivision Plans: *Elizabeth Farm Estate Plan of Unsold Portions of the Estate, 1901*: ML SP G10/126

²⁶ LTO, *Certificate of Title Volume 1639 Folio 176*

²⁷ LTO, *Certificate of Title Volume 1897 Folio 43*

²⁸ Rick Wilkinson, *A Thirst for Burning*: 240

ELIZABETH FARM



Undated subdivision plan of the Elizabeth Farm Estate showing the principal subdivisions and the hatched portions yet to be subdivided including the study area
(Source: ML Subdivision Plan ML SP G10/123)

3.4 John Fell and Company

In 1924 the Commonwealth Oil Company sold some of its land at Rosehill to John Fell²⁹. The new owners purchased 67 acres 34 perches that encompassed practically all of the land from the present-day railway line, Unwin Street, the river and part of the Shell Oil Site. A small portion in the north-western corner was reserved having already been sold to the Bank of New Zealand. This curving corridor was later used as part of the easement for a private railway line through the site³⁰.

John Fell and Company had earlier purchased the Commonwealth Oil Company property at Newnes in 1913³¹. The Fell family were pioneers in the Australian shale oil industry. They used their site (now within the Shell property) to establish a cracking plant to refine motor spirit from shale oil mined in the Blue Mountains³². As part of the development of this site a rail siding was built in 1925 across the study area to the cracking plant (the main railway is part of the original Sydney to Parramatta line constructed in 1855)³³. Apart from the rail siding the study area was not developed as part of Fell's plant.

In 1927 an explosion at the plant killed three men including John Fell Junior. The refinery closed down in the following months³⁴. In February the study area was sold to the Department of Main Roads and by July the entire site had changed hands³⁵.

²⁹ LTO Certificate of Title Volume 1897 Folio 43

³⁰ LTO Certificate of Title Volume 3914 Folio 221

³¹ Rick Wilkinson: Loc Cit.

³² Ibid: 172-173

³³ John Watson (Ed), Granville from Forest to Factory: 89

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ LTO Certificates of Titles Volume 6963 Folio 195, 199

3.5 The Department of Main Roads

The development of the depot at Rosehill was one outcome of a lengthy restructuring of the authority responsible for maintaining and developing the state's roads culminating in the Main Roads Act passed in 1924. The Act created a corporate body known as the Main Roads Board of New South Wales. In 1925-26 because of the large number of shires and municipalities in charge of the maintenance of the main arterial routes the Board, to encourage a more uniform and economical programme, took over the maintenance of major lengths of several main roads including Parramatta Road, Liverpool Road and the Great Western Road³⁶.

To facilitate its repair work the Board purchased the Rosehill site or at least the first eight acres of it approximately the north-western end. The intention of the site was to store plant and road material and it was chosen because of its strategic position. It was close to four main roads, Parramatta Road, Woodville Road, the Great Western Road and Windsor Road³⁷.

The inter-war period of the site's development is well documented by a series of detailed site surveys and aerial photographs. The earliest survey dates to 1929. It shows a scattered development of Main Roads buildings and other works developed around three rail sidings that came from the main line into the site. At that time Unwin Street ended at the railway line, there was no curved extension around to the south. The buildings are described as wooden or galvanised iron. Apart from the buildings and railway lines there were miscellaneous features such as elevated metal bins (close the intersection of Unwin Street and the railway), timber racks and bowsers³⁸. An aerial photograph of 1930 confirms this development³⁹.

During the 1930s the depot gradually began to expand to the south⁴⁰ and by 1940 it encompassed a large portion of the formerly vacant land to the south to A'Beckett's Creek. Here was the main administration office⁴¹.

The most significant period of operation at the site was in the immediate post-war years. New plant and spare parts were in short supply and it became necessary to purchase many items second-hand as they were released from military uses. The major overhaul and repair of old plant in poor condition placed a heavy burden on what was the Central Workshop at Rosehill. The need to expand became urgent. For this reason an additional 17.5 acres were acquired adjacent to the existing eight-acre site. The Metropolitan Maintenance Depot and Store, which previously had shared the smaller site with the Workshop, were moved to the expanded site⁴².

Extensive reconstruction of the Central Workshop had commenced in 1943 and was completed in 1948. It included, in 1943, a school for plant instruction and the construction of a bituminous hot-mix plant erected at the depot in 1947-1948⁴³. Macdonald has noted that some of the most significant buildings that are now on the site date from this period including the workshop and canteen⁴⁴.

³⁶ Department of Main Roads, The Roadmakers: 103-4

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Water Board Archives, Plan DS 1098: 1929 revised 1940

³⁹ Lands Department, Aerial Photograph 6 March 1930

⁴⁰ Sydney Water Archives, Granville Sheet 68, Sewer Detail Sheet Blackwattle 1724

⁴¹ ⁴¹ Water Board Archives, Plan DS 1098: 1929 revised 1940 and Detail Sheet 2494 Plan DS 24942

⁴² Department of Main Roads, Op Cit: 191

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Brian McDonald and Associates, Heritage Assessment 1B Unwin Street Rosehill: 2

This expansion is also recorded by Sydney Water Archives surveys beginning with a comprehensive plan of 1953⁴⁵. Two years earlier an aerial photograph of the site graphically showed the massive expansion undertaken during the war years⁴⁶.

Staff recollections of the place state that during its main period of later twentieth century occupation it was used for the manufacture of signs, as an engineering workshop, for vehicle manufacture and repair, as an electrical workshop, a carpentry workshop manufacturing items such as furniture for the Department and a radio workshop⁴⁷. A perspective drawing of 1963 shows that by this time the principal depot activities were centred in the northern part of the site. In this period, certainly by 1961, Unwin Street was extended to curve around the western end of the site through a resumption of land made for the Department of Main Roads⁴⁸. This is seen first in aerial photographs taken in 1971⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ Sydney Water Archives, Sewer Reference Sheet Base 1724

⁴⁶ Lands Department, Aerial Photograph May 1951

⁴⁷ Oral evidence of Mr Bill Evans recorded in Brian McDonald and Associates, Loc Cit.

⁴⁸ LTO, Certificate of Title Volume 3963 Folio 199

⁴⁹ Lands Department, Aerial Photograph July 1970

3.6 Later History

Burnside Homes purchased the site in the 1980s as an investment property. The former depot buildings have been leased to a number of light industrial and other businesses. During this period substantial alterations have been made to a number of the buildings⁵⁰ and these may be seen from aerial photographs⁵¹. National Mutual Pty Ltd purchased the site in 1998.



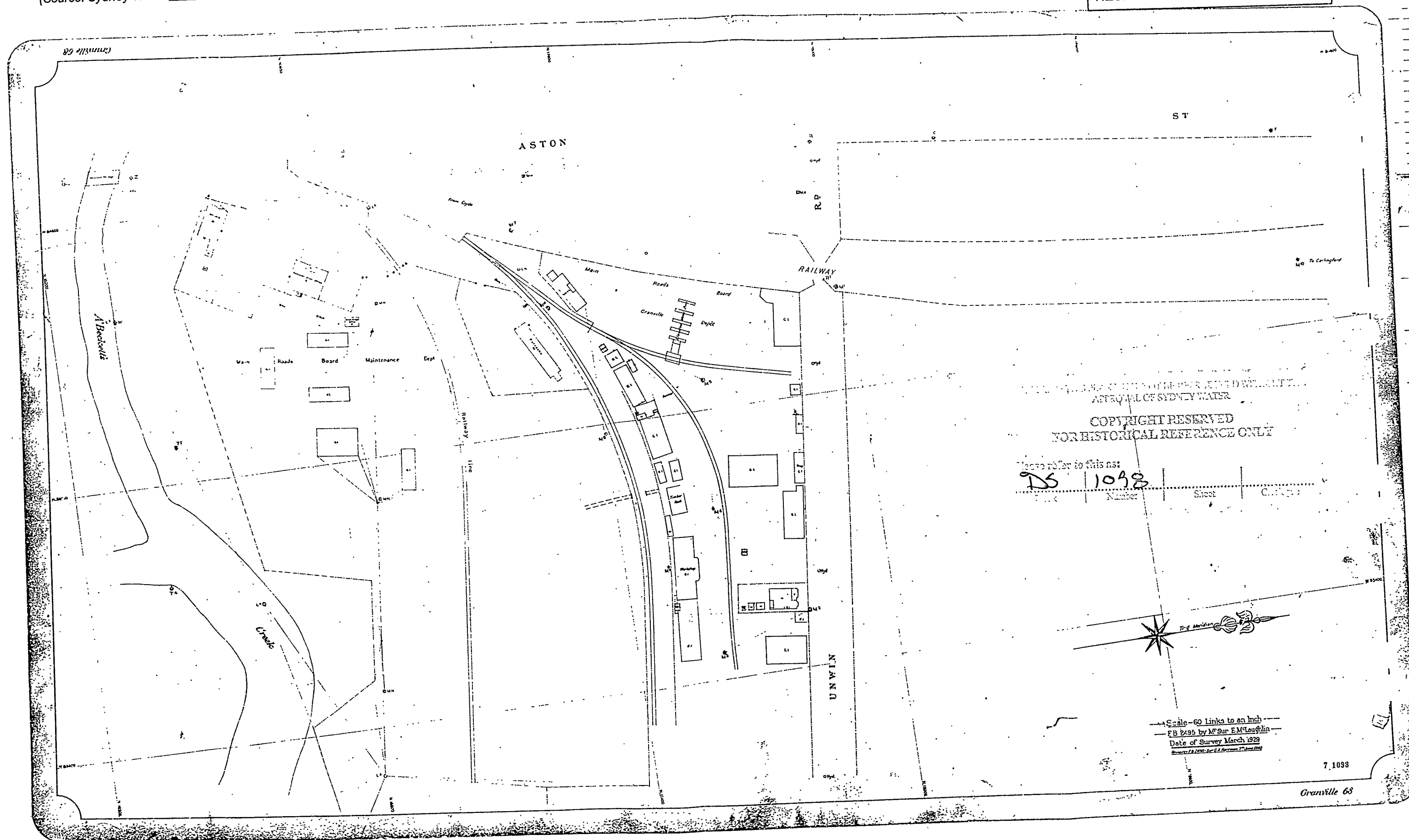
View west towards the present-day entrance on Unwin Street

⁵⁰ Brian McDonald and Associates, *Op Cit*: 3

⁵¹ Lands Department, Aerial Photograph August 1982

The earliest survey of the site, 1929, after it had been purchased and developed by the Department of Main Roads.
(Source: Sydney Water Plan DS 1098)

SYDNEY WATER
THIS PLAN IS NOT NECESSARILY
UP TO DATE OR CORRECT AND
SYDNEY WATER ACCEPTS NO
RESPONSIBILITY IN THAT REGARD



THIS PLAN IS NOT NECESSARILY
UP TO DATE OR CORRECT AND
SYDNEY WATER ACCEPTS NO
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For Historical Reference Only

Refer to this as:

DS 1098

Number Sheet

Scale 60 Links to an Inch

FB 2495 by M. Sur. E. M. Laughlin

Date of Survey March 1929

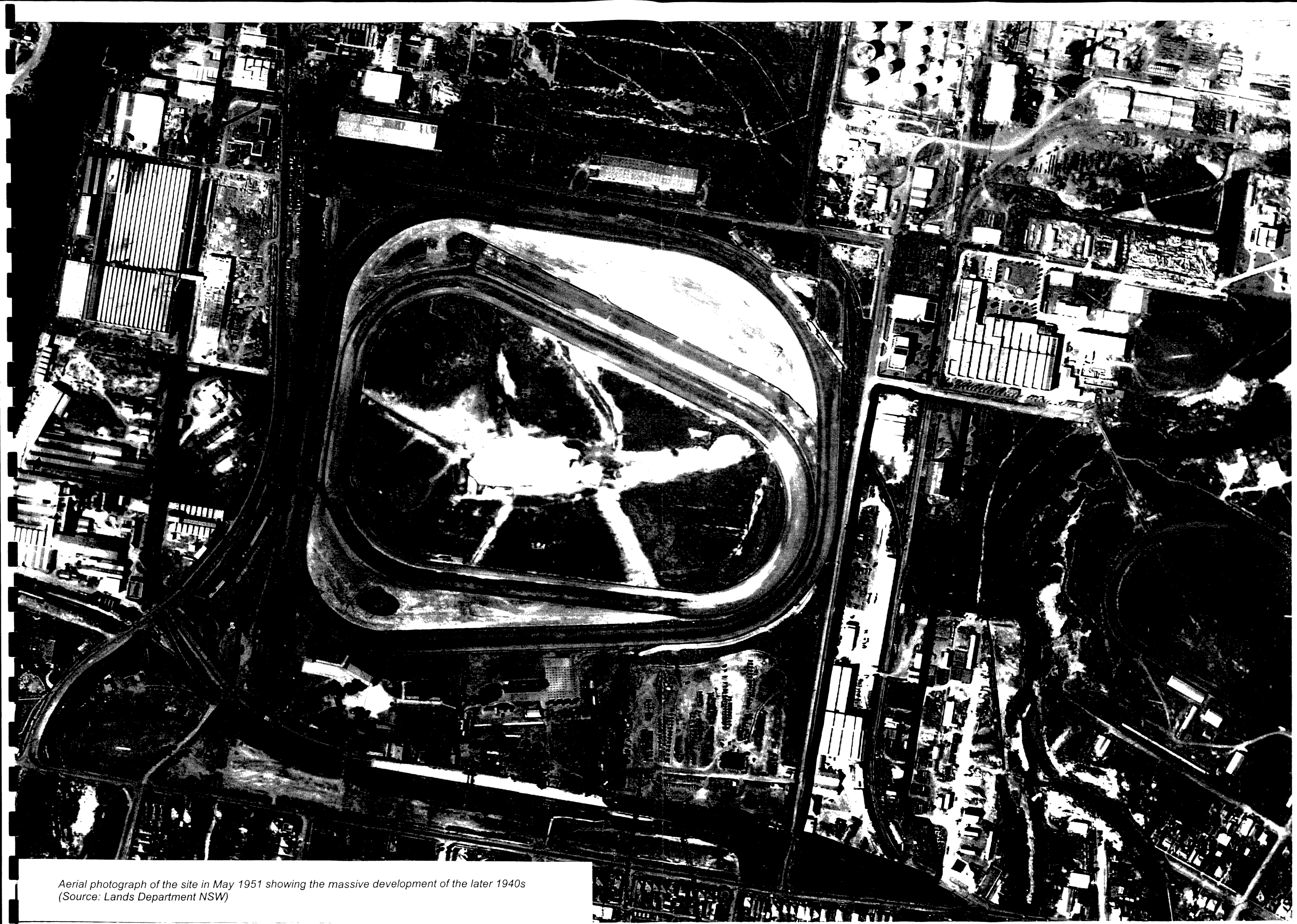
Source: Sydney Water Plan DS 1098

Granville 68

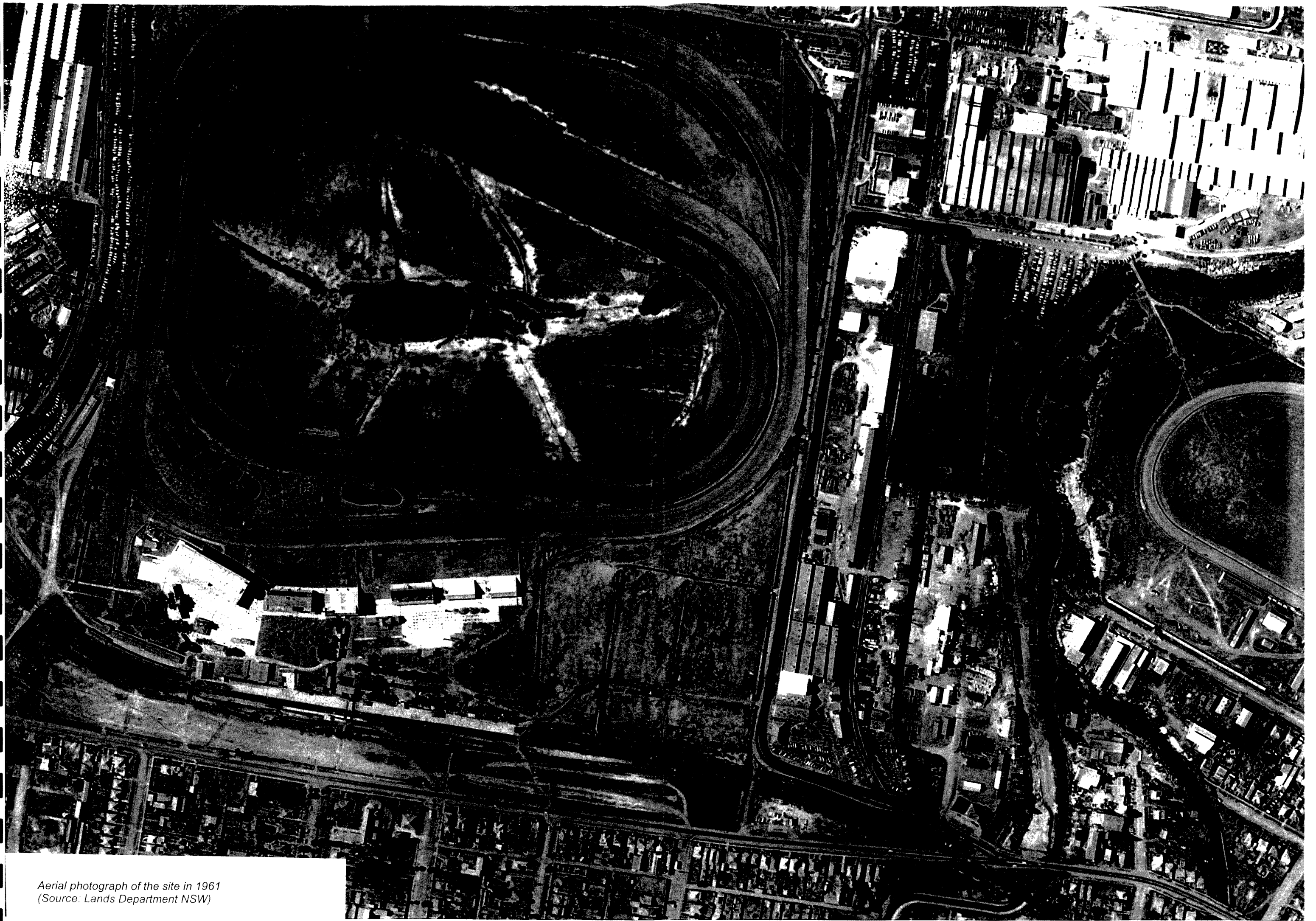
7, 1098



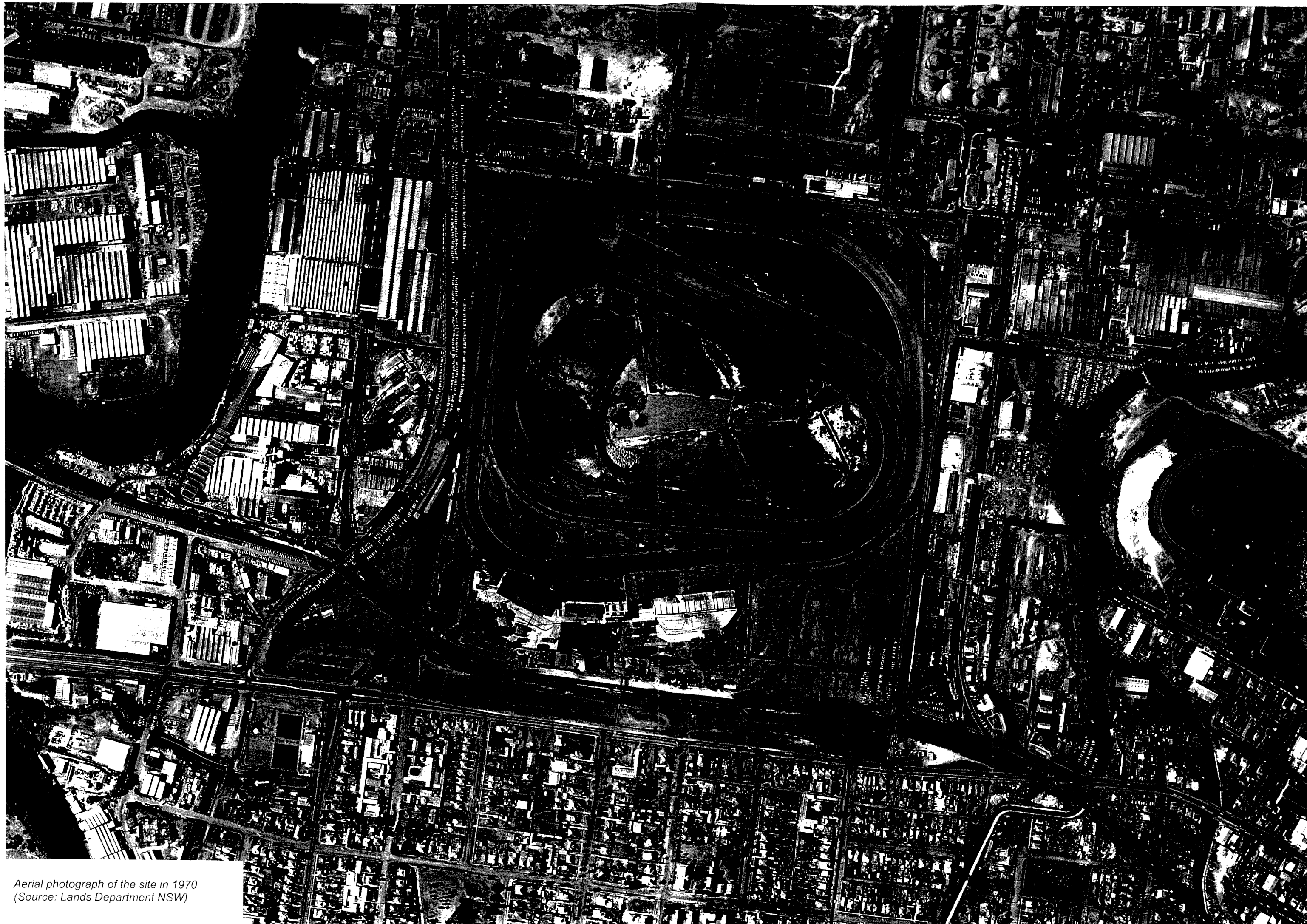
Aerial photograph of the study area in March 1930 with the beginning of the DMR developme
(Source: Lands Department)



Aerial photograph of the site in May 1951 showing the massive development of the later 1940s
(Source: Lands Department NSW)



Aerial photograph of the site in 1961
(Source: Lands Department NSW)



Aerial photograph of the site in 1970
(Source: Lands Department NSW)

SECTION 4.0

THE RESOURCE

4.1 Topography

The site is relatively level although there are changes in this plane because of the modifications required for the railway and depot works.

4.2 Structures and Sites

The only evidence of European activity on this site relates to the occupation by the Department of Main Roads. Of this McDonald has identified only a few items of pre-1960s construction. These are the Main Workshops (1944-45), the Canteen (1944) and two gable-roofed buildings between these two structures⁵². There is a steel framed workshop on the eastern portion of the site built in 1969 and there are other buildings of the 1970s and later⁵³. There is a rail spur crossing the site. McDonald has described the configuration of the site and its general chronological development in the accompanying plan.

4.3 Open Space and Services

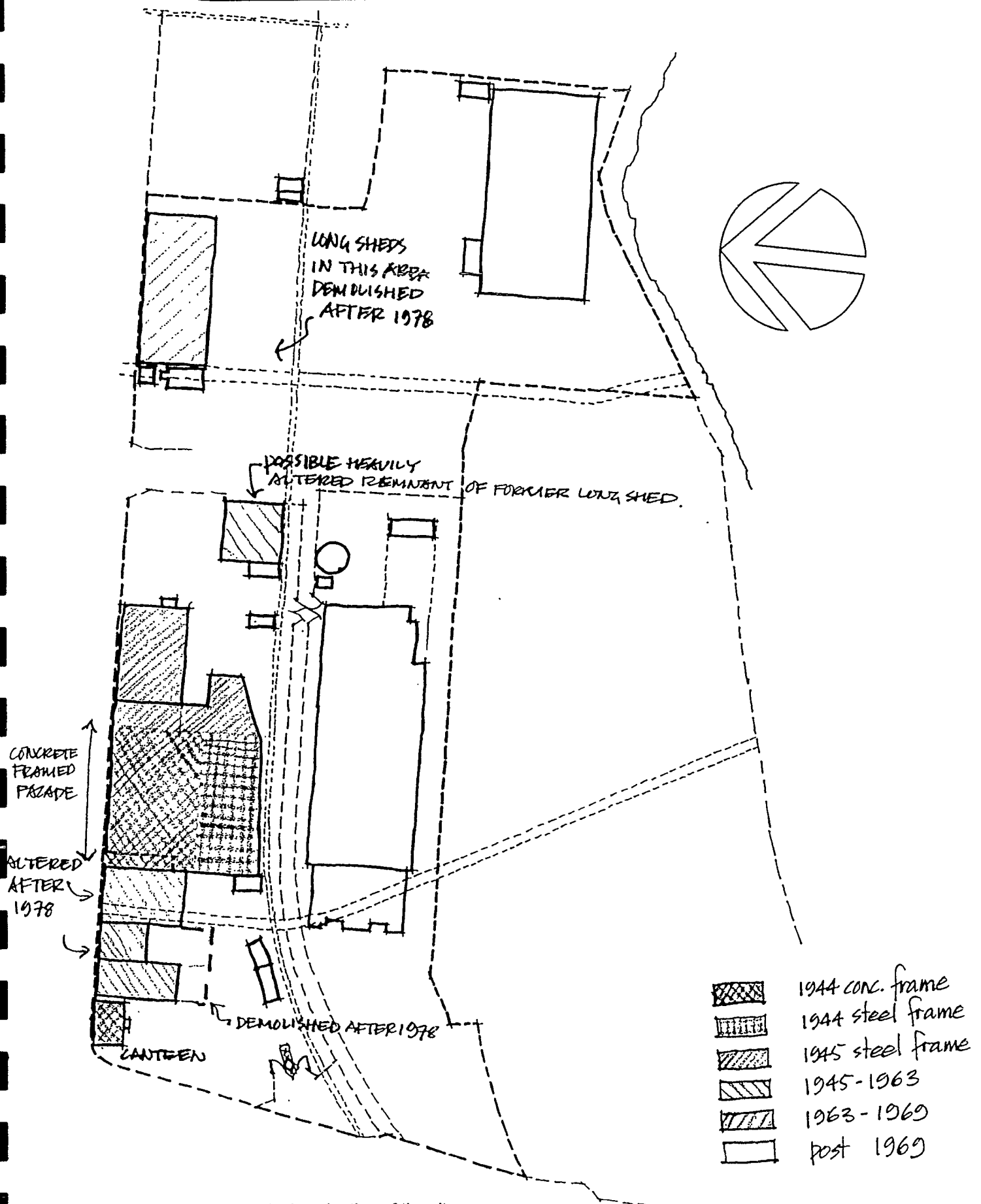
The study area encompasses several areas of open space. Most have been the sites of earlier DMR buildings or other structures. The entire area is extensively disturbed through the introduction of numerous services.

4.4 Sampling

There has been no geo-technical testing of this site and no archaeological investigation to date. There are no sites in the close environs of this place that have been investigated or tested to provide additional evidence of the sub-profile and the processes that have influenced its formation.

⁵² Brian McDonald and Associates, Op Cit: 3

⁵³ Ibid.



Chronological evaluation of the site
(Source: McDonald and Associates, *Heritage Assessment*)

4.5 Site Formation

These are the processes, conditions and uses that are likely to have influenced the formation of the study area:

- The study area in the pre-and early settlement period was heavily forested and this is likely to have been removed during the first half of the nineteenth century.
- Although there is evidence for several significant historical associations throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century there is no evidence for any physical change to this place until 1925 when a rail siding was constructed across to a cracking plant (this site lay within the present-day Shell Oil property).
- The only significant changes to this site have been through the long-term occupation of it by the Department of Main Roads from 1926 to the 1980s. This lengthy period of use has encompassed successive periods of building, the introduction of numerous services and changes to the land profile.

4.6 Archaeological Profile

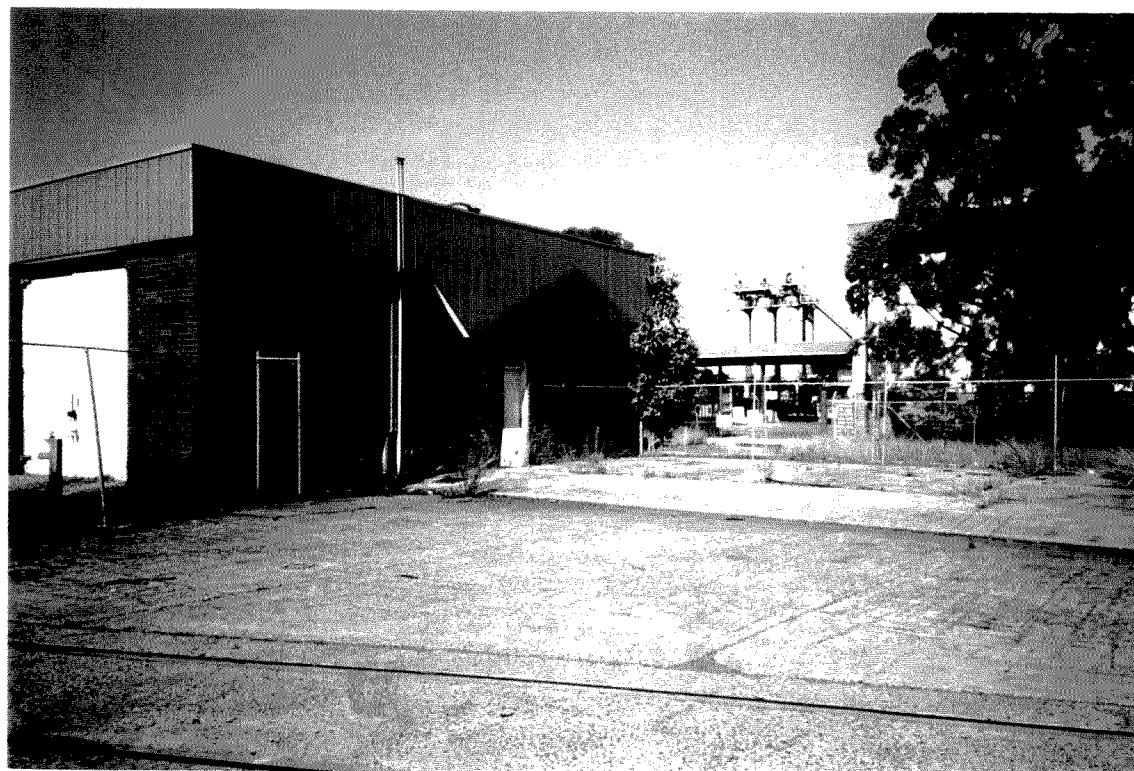
On the basis of the evidence provided by archival sources it has been concluded that the potential sub-surface archaeological resource of this site is likely to be characterised as follows:

- Little or no evidence will remain of the pre-existing environment in the form of residual soils and micro-flora. This is likely to have been removed by the initial site clearance of the nineteenth century but, more particularly, through the impact of the twentieth century DMR occupation.
- No evidence will be found of the historical associations of this place with the Elizabeth Farm Estate, the Commonwealth Oil Company or John Fell and Company.
- The site will contain evidence of the buildings, works and services constructed at various periods by and for the Department of Main Roads.

Generally, the site will contain an archaeological resource entirely post-dating 1926 and relevant to the DMR occupation. These features are already recorded by means of a series of site surveys, aerial photographs and other primary records.



This page and following views of some of the industrial buildings remaining on the site, the open areas and rail lines



SECTION 5.0

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 Evaluation Criteria

"Heritage significance", "cultural significance" and "cultural value" are all terms used to describe an item's value or importance to our own society. This value may be contained in the fabric of the item, its setting and relationship to other items, the response that the item stimulates in those who value it now and in the historical records which allow us to understand it in its own context. An assessment of what is significant is not static. Significance may increase as more is learnt about the past and as items become rare, endangered or are found to document and illustrate aspects that have acquired a new recognition of importance.

Determining cultural value is at the basis of all planning for places of historic value. A clear determination of significance permits informed decisions for future planning that will ensure that the expressions of significance are retained, enhanced or at least are minimally impacted upon. A clear understanding of the nature and degree of significance will determine the parameters for and flexibility of any development.

An analysis of archival evidence provides the context for assessing significance. This analysis is presented in Section 3.0. An assessment of significance is made by applying standard evaluation criteria to what is known of the item's development and associations. These criteria are divided into two categories:

- Nature of Significance
- Comparative Significance

The four basic criteria used to assess the nature of an item's significance, for what reason it is significant, are those of **Evolution and Associations** (Historic), **Creative and Technical Accomplishment** (Aesthetic), **Community Esteem** (Social) and **Research Potential** (Scientific). Comparative significance, or the degree to which an item is significant, is assessed according to its value as a rare or representative element.

Items have value if they meet at least one of the nature of significance criteria and are good examples of either of the comparative criteria.

5.2 Assessment of Significance

5.2.1 Existing Assessments

An assessment of significance for the former DMR site was made as part of the Heritage Impact Assessment. In this the above ground elements were assessed to have limited local significance principally for the following reasons:

- they have strong historical associations with the role of the Department of Main Roads but this association is reduced through the removal of the plant and equipment
- some elements of the site, principally those of the 1940s period of construction, have some limited aesthetic merit
- there is limited scientific or technological value because of the removal of the artefacts of industrial technology. Some of the buildings encompass minor value because of their construction techniques⁵⁴.

5.2.2 Historic Associations

The archaeological resource contained within this site is unlikely to provide any significant evidence of the historic associations of this place pre-dating the twentieth century DMR occupation. It is unlikely to reveal evidence of the pre-settlement landscape and environment or the nineteenth century association with Elizabeth Farm. Apart from clearing there is no evidence to suggest that the land had any particular significance or use for this estate. This is also true for the associations with the two oil companies that owned the site.

The principal association of the study area is with the Department of Main Roads. There will be an archaeological resource encompassed within the study area that derives from this period of occupation. However, exploitation of that resource is unlikely to make that association any more explicit than is now recorded by several primary archival sources.

5.2.3 Scientific/Research Potential

The evidence that may be found on this site is unlikely to provide any meaningful resources to investigate or better document either the residential or commercial history of the place.

5.2.4 Degree of Significance

Archaeological evidence recorded on this site would have low cultural significance.

⁵⁴ Brian McDonald and Associates, Op Cit: 4-5

5.3 Statement of Significance

Although the study area has a history of European association that dates back to the early nineteenth century the archaeological resource contained within it is likely to relate only to the construction of buildings, services and other works for the Department of Main Roads from 1926 onwards. While it is demonstrative of the principal historical association of this place the information contained in the ground is unlikely to provide more or better evidence for that occupation than is now contained in primary archival resources. The archaeological resource of this site is assessed to have low cultural significance as a resource for research and investigation.



The original DMR façade on Unwin Road

SECTION 6.0

MANAGEMENT

6.1 The Development Proposal

It is proposed to redevelop this site for a commercial warehousing purpose. Generally the works may be described as follows:

- Retention of a limited number of above-ground heritage items
- Demolition of all other works and services on the site
- Excavation for new structures, services and landscaping

6.2 Impact Assessment

The excavation required for the construction of new buildings, landscaping and services as well as general site levelling would certainly lead to the exposure of relics. These will all derive from the DMR occupation of the place and have been assessed to be of low significance. It may be concluded that the work is unlikely to have a substantial impact on any significant archaeological resource.

6.3 Statutory Considerations

6.3.1 Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No. 28 - Parramatta

There are several clauses in this instrument that require consideration of archaeological relics. Generally Part 9 Section 42(e) states that one of the principal heritage objectives of the region is to ensure that archaeological sites and potential archaeological sites are conserved.

In particular Part 3, Section 23(2f) states that development consent will necessitate the proponent of the development to give regard to the likelihood of disturbing relics.

Part 9 Section 43(d) states that development will require development consent where there is the potential to discover, expose, remove, damage or destroy a relic. In giving this consent the authority must consider whether the development will adversely affect archaeological relics (Section 45, 2a(iv)).

Part 9 Section 51 (1,2) specifically refers to the development of archaeological sites or potential archaeological sites. It requires a heritage impact statement explaining how the proposed development would affect relics contained within it.

This report fulfils these requirements to assess the impact of work that may disturb archaeological relics.

6.3.2 NSW Heritage Act

The principal state statutory requirement with respect to archaeological relics is contained in the NSW Heritage Act. When the potential for the retention of "relics", as these are defined by the Act, is identified for a site a number of legislative requirements are made of its owners/managers who will be responsible for the disturbance of that archaeological resource. The Act requires that an Excavation Permit be sought from the Heritage Council of NSW.

An application for a Permit is made through the Heritage Office of NSW. It may take twenty-eight days to process and it requires a small fee. No excavation of any kind may take place on the site until the applicant is notified of the permit's approval.

Aboriginal relics are afforded protection by the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The identification at any time during the excavation of this site of Aboriginal relics will require notification to be made to the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The relics must be made safe and retained in situ until advice for their proper management is provided by the NPWS. The site is highly unlikely to contain relics of Aboriginal occupation.

6.4 Management Procedures for the Archaeological Resource

6.4.1 Application for an Excavation Permit

This assessment has identified the potential for archaeological relics to be revealed and disturbed by the proposed development of this site although these are likely to be of low cultural significance. Application for a Section 140 Excavation Permit prior to the commencement of any site works will be a requirement for this site. The application:

- must nominate an archaeologist who will be responsible for the investigation and documentation of significant archaeological evidence
- provide a document called a "research design", essentially a specification of works, which describes how the archaeological investigation will be carried out and the issues to be addressed by it
- identify a permanent repository for artefacts which may be obtained from the site and for the records which are generated by the archaeological investigation.

6.4.2 Archaeological Investigation and Documentation

This assessment has concluded that, although the site is likely to contain sub-surface features that are encompassed by the definition of "relics" contained within the Heritage Act, little or nothing is likely to be gained by physical investigation of them that is not already available through primary archival sources.

For this reason it is recommended that the permit application propose no site work unless the excavation uncovers evidence of pre-1926 occupation or use. This is considered to be a highly unlikely occurrence based on the known historical development of this site.

Sign-off of an excavation permit is made with the presentation of a report that documents any site work and its interpretation. Copies are to be made available to the Heritage Office of NSW and Parramatta City Council and a copy is to be lodged with any artefacts that may be conserved from the site.

6.4.3 Artefacts

It is a condition of the Excavation Permit that the owners of the site assume responsibility for the professional curation of artefacts that may be retrieved from the site during the course of its investigation. Artefacts, like the report generated from the investigation, generally are the only evidence that remains after the site has been redeveloped unless elements such as wells or foundations are retained in situ as interpretive elements.

The permit requires that artefacts are cleaned, catalogued, boxed and provided with a permanent repository. The repository may be on site, it may be in a commercial storage area or it may be offered to a public authority such as a Museum. It is highly unlikely that the latter would take a collection. The repository must be specified in the application for a permit and the arrangements for access to the collection must be made clear.



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