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HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT for PROPOSED LOT SUBDIVISION at THE ESCARPMENT, CHURCH LANE, CASTLEREAGH, NSW

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1.00 Introduction

This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been commissioned by Penrith Lakes Development Corporation (PLDC) and is prepared for a proposed nine lot subdivision within PLDC land at The Escarpment (also referred to as the subject site), Church Lane, Castlereagh. The Escarpment is located in Lot 1 in DP 1180473, and forms part of the Penrith Lakes Scheme area.

Located within the subject site is a heritage item of Local significance listed in Schedule 2, Heritage LEP 1991, as item C13 Ruins of Pise House, Portion 280 Church Lane. It is also listed in Schedule 5 Environmental heritage as Pise House Ruins Item, No. 12260029 in the Penrith LEP Exhibition Draft May 2013. In Section 7 Heritage, Table 7a: Proposed Heritage Items and Archaeological Sites in Planning Proposal: Penrith Local Environmental Plan Public Exhibition, May 2013 page 78 - 79 the subject site is identified under Archaeological Sites as Mass Concrete House (ruins), item number 2260883. Also noted in the above Table in Archaeological Sites is the Site of Castlereagh Township, item number 2260030 which is located adjacent to the subject site – separated by Church Lane. Both sites are listed as being of Local significance and are also shown in proposed Penrith Local Environmental Plan Heritage Map – Sheet HER-004 as Archaeological Items.

This report is prepared by James Stephany with reference to the Heritage Assessment for the Mass Concrete House Ruins, Castlereagh prepared by Godden Mackay Logan (GML), Heritage Consultants, June 2012. The GML report is attached to the Planning Report.

The location of the Mass Concrete Ruins within the Penrith Lakes Scheme area is shown in Figure 1.2 of the GML report (page 4).

Reference is made to the plan - Proposed Subdivision of Lot 1 in DP 1180473 prepared by Matthew Freeburn, Land, Engineering & Mining Surveyor, reference 32698-06-01, which accompanies documentation for the subject application.

Given the GML report previously noted already provides adequate documentary and physical evidence and statement of significance, this HIA provides: a background to the proposal; a brief description of the site and setting; a description of the development proposal; a discussion of significance for the heritage item located within the subject site; identification of heritage items in the vicinity; and an assessment of the impact of the proposal from a heritage point of view. A conclusion with recommendations is noted at the end of the report.

The methodology in preparation of this report generally follows guidelines for the preparation of statements of heritage impact by the Heritage Office of NSW as part of its *Heritage Manual*; and the principles contained in the *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance – Burra Charter* by Australia ICOMOS.

This HIA does not assess potential Aboriginal heritage or natural area impacts.

2.00 Background

A decision has been made by PLDC to subdivide The Escarpment into rural residential lots. Prior to preparation of this development proposal, PLDC have commissioned several reports relating to the Mass Concrete Ruins including the GML Heritage Assessment previously noted, and a site contamination assessment prepared by Coffey Environments Pty Ltd.

In preparation of this proposal PLDC was mindful of heritage constraints and the significance assessment in the GML report (page 38 and 39) related to the diminished integrity of the historic boundaries of the heritage item. The GML report notes:

Portion 280 has some historical significance for defining the western boundary of the Castlereagh township laid out by Governor Macquarie. However, the lot was not part of the town plan, rather a leftover piece of land between the town's street and the Cranebrook Escarpment. The original boundaries of Portions 280 and 76) are no longer clear, with the two brought under one title in 1912 and amalgamated as a single lot in 2009 with the new Castlereagh Road alignment cutting across the centre.

The historic significance of the site has been further diminished by the sale of the property to quarrying companies in 1960, and the lower portion of the site quarried from 1978 (GML report page 39).

Given the reduced integrity of the original land parcels, the statement of significance in the GML report and Penrith Heritage Inventory report for the

heritage item largely relate to the rarity of the mass concrete house ruin construction technique only.

Based on the above the GML report has suggested a reduced heritage curtilage and setting would be suitable to conserve the significance of the heritage item and includes: the driveway from Church Lane; house and dairy ruins; exotic plantings; site of the hay shed; and a track to the lower paddocks at the base of the Cranebrook Escarpment (GML report page 41).

3.00 Setting and Description

As stated in section 3 of the GML report and noted during the site inspection, the mass concrete house ruin is sited on the Cranebrook Escarpment overlooking the Nepean River valley. The place is accessed from an un-made track from Church Lane. Located along Church Lane is a narrow strip of Shale Plains Woodland. The remains of the mass concrete house and dairy are clearly visible set within cleared exotic pasture, however the remains of a hayshed noted in documentary evidence was not located. In addition to the above, there are several European trees clustered around the house ruin.

From the public domain there are filtered close-range views of the remnant house ruins through native vegetation from Church Lane. The place does not appear to be visible in long-range views from (new) Castlereagh Road.

3.00 Development Proposal

This application comprises a nine lot subdivision of land described as The Escarpment which is 24.4 hectares in area, bordering Church Lane and (new) Castlereagh Road. Most of the lots are slightly larger than 2 hectares in area. The subdivision plan includes asset protection zones (APZ's) and building envelopes in Lots 1 – 9. It is understood the APZ's have been proposed for bush fire management reasons, and have been generally located to avoid encroachment on the remnant native vegetation along Church Lane. Lot 5 shows a proposed heritage area which captures the mass concrete house ruins, dairy ruins, and remnant European trees.

4.00 Significance of the Mass Concrete Ruins

As stated in the in the GML Heritage Assessment statement of significance (page 40), the primary significance of the heritage item located within The Escarpment is:

The mass concrete house ruins have Local significance for the Penrith area. Despite their condition, the ruins provide evidence of a rare construction technique adapted in a way that was particular to the Castlereagh area ... The house ruins, dairy ruins and remaining European plantings contribute more broadly to an understanding of the settlement of the Castlereagh area during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The statement of significance also notes the use of locally-available quarry materials and the use of galvanized-iron strips to reinforce the concrete walls.

The statement of significance in the Penrith Heritage Inventory report in the State Heritage Inventory for the heritage item is largely consistent with the above, and states that the house ruins are:

Unusual for its inclusion of a large number of river stones, ranging in size from pebbles to small boulders.

It is noted there is a substantially intact example of a mass concrete house displaying similar construction techniques to the heritage item located within The Escarpment site located nearby at 43 Smith Road, Castlereagh.

5.00 Heritage Items in the Vicinity

As previously noted in section 2, The Escarpment borders the western boundary of the Site of Castlereagh Township, which is an archaeological site proposed for listing in the draft Penrith LEP Heritage Schedule.

6.00 Assessment of Heritage Impact

In consideration of the Proposed Development (section 3), Significance of the Mass Concrete Ruins (section 4), Heritage Items in the Vicinity (section 5), the assessment of heritage impact for the proposal is addressed below.

For this report, the methodology for the assessment of heritage impact below consists of responding to questions raised in the NSW Heritage Office guidelines for the assessment of heritage impact. These questions will be noted in italics, with the associated response to follow in regular text.

6.01 Consideration of Options and Alternatives

This report largely adopts the recommendations in the GML Heritage Assessment for the Mass Concrete House Ruins. Consideration of options or alternatives were limited to: the location of the proposed building envelope in Lot 5, which in an earlier design was located closer to Church Lane - further away from the mass concrete house ruins; a heritage curtilage for the mass concrete ruins which in an earlier scheme overlapped Lots 4, 5 and 6 but as proposed is now wholly located within Lot 5; and the setting shown in the GML report which in an earlier design overlapped Lots 4 and 6 to a far greater degree than the final design which substantially captures the GML recommended setting in Lot 5. The final location of the building envelopes and APZ's as proposed have been generally positioned so as to avoid significant and endangered native vegetation along Church Lane.

6.02 Heritage Item in the Vicinity

- a) *How is the impact of the proposal on the heritage significance of the archaeological site known as the site of Castlereagh Township*

(proposed to be listed in the draft Penrith LEP Heritage Schedule) to be minimised?

The boundary of The Escarpment borders, but does not overlap with the boundary of the proposed heritage item (Site of Castlereagh Township) as noted in section 1 and 2. Any future development on the subject site will not obscure or diminish existing appreciation and interpretation of the site of the Castlereagh Township.

6.03 Heritage item Located Within the Subject Site

- a) *How does the curtilage allowed around the heritage item contribute to the retention of its heritage significance?*

The curtilage beyond and within the current boundaries of the heritage item have been compromised to such an extent that few traces of the agricultural use of the land remain. As the GML statement of significance notes, the cultural significance of the heritage item primarily resides in the extant physical evidence of the rare construction technique of the mass concrete house ruins particular to the Castlereagh area.

The proposal includes a heritage curtilage for the house ruins and its associated elements which is located wholly within proposed Lot 5. It is envisaged the heritage area would be defined by a perimeter rural fence (to future design) enclosing the historic driveway access from Church Lane, the house and dairy ruins, and cultural plantings adjacent to the house ruins - allowing for a suitable buffer zone within the perimeter fence. The perimeter fence will assist in the appropriate management of the heritage item into the future with respect to security and protection, pest and weed management, and controlled access etc. As the house ruins have been found to include hazardous materials as noted in the Coffey Environments report, a perimeter fence is also considered necessary for health safety reasons.

- b) *How is the impact of the proposal on the heritage significance of the item to be minimised?*

With proposed lot subdivision there is an expectation of future residential development in the vicinity of the house ruins. The sketch attached to this report prepared by PLDC indicates a setting suggested by GML (Figure 4.1, page 42), which has been superimposed onto a portion of the subdivision plan, and is substantially captured within proposed Lot 5. Proposed building envelopes for Lots 4 and 6 are positioned to allow filtered views (through existing vegetation) to the heritage item through open space between building envelopes on Lots 4 & 5 and Lots 5 & 6.

The proposed building envelope and APZ on Lot 5 have been located to avoid encroachment into remnant Shale Plains Woodland along Church Lane which includes the species *Grevillea juniperina* subsp. *juniperina*. The above noted plant community and species are listed as significant and threatened.¹ Given

¹ Cranebrook Escarpment Vegetation & Threatened Plants Survey, ecological Australia, 2007, p.5

the constraints associated with the above, the APZ for Lot 5 partly encroaches within a portion of the proposed heritage area for the massed concrete ruins. This is considered acceptable as it is understood the APZ would not physically impact any remnant European vegetation or the ruins. The proposed location of the building envelope on Lot 5 has some impact on the setting of the heritage item, but on balance, and having regard to identified constraints, has relatively minor impact on overall significance. Impacts can be minimised by ensuring any outbuildings and additional landscaping within Lot 5 are positioned well away from the mass concrete ruins.

To assist in the long-term care of the place, a Plan of Management should be prepared for the house ruins addressing: site security: access and interpretation: stabilization and care of fabric, maintenance of cultural plantings, archival recording and OH&S issues etc. There will also be need for an accurate survey of the property and ruins to confirm the proposed location of the reduced curtilage.

There is a recommendation in the GML report (page 42) for preparation of a CMP in accordance with the requirements of DA4. This recommendation is not factually correct. The subject item falls within the lands subject to Development Application 3 for the Penrith Lakes Scheme and as such subject to the clause associated with this DA. SREP 11 and DA3 did not require the ruins (noted as Item 37 – Pise House in DA3) to be retained in the implementation of the Penrith Lakes Scheme and therefore a CMP to be developed. Clause 38 (ii) in DA3 notes that when development is carried out in the vicinity of Item 37, an archival recording is to be undertaken prior to removal. The previously noted approach recommending a Plan of Management is considered reasonable from a best practice heritage point of view given the level of significance of the item.

7.00 Conclusion and Recommendations

Taking the above into account, the proposal from a heritage point of view facilitates and secures the ongoing significance of the site as a ruin and does not diminish the significance of items in the vicinity. The proposal overall from a heritage point of view is considered acceptable subject to implementation of the recommendations as noted below:

- i) That a survey of the property and ruins be prepared.
- ii) That a reduced heritage curtilage be defined around the house ruins and associated elements by a perimeter fence, wholly located within proposed Lot 5 as shown on the subdivision plan.
- iii) That a setting be defined for the house ruins largely along the lines suggested in the GML report, and substantially located within proposed Lot 5. The setout of Lots 4, 5 and 6 on the subdivision plan appear to achieve the above objective.
- v) Prior to registration of the subdivision, a Plan of Management to be prepared for the house ruins site under the direction of a suitably

qualified Heritage Architect, which addresses the following heads of consideration: Security and protection; Weed and pest management; Maintenance of cultural plantings; Stabilization and care of fabric; Public access and interpretation; OH& S issues; and Archival recording.