



# Regatta Park, Historical Archaeological Test Excavation Addendum

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**Penrith City Council**

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Template 2.8.1

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Heritage NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet (HNSW), have requested the preparation of an addendum to support a s140 application for test excavation at Regatta Park, Emu Plains. Council are proposing earthworks and civil works associated with the construction of a road deviation through the study area and the implementation of a park masterplan. A report by Biosis titled *Historical Heritage Assessment and Statement of Heritage Impact* (27 July 2020) identified areas of high archaeological potential associated with a range of archaeological features dating from the 1820s to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Council lodged a s140 excavation permit application in August 2020.

During a meeting between HNSW and Penrith City Council on 19 August 2020, HNSW requested clarifications to replace, in part, information within the Biosis archaeological research design. This addendum contains the information required by HNSW to assess the s140 excavation permit (Application number 2020/s140/016) under the Heritage Act 1977.



Figure 1 The study area, lots not included shaded yellow

## 1.2 Study area and ownership status

The study area (Figure 1) comprises multiple lots on the Great Western Highway, Punt Road, River Road, your Road and Regatta Park where the owner's consent has been received. Penrith City Council has recently received consent from the Planning Department for the lot adjacent to the Former Police Station, 28 Great Western Highway, Emu Plains (Lot 1 DP50164).

The only land pending owner's consent is the Thai Square Restaurant and adjoining lots, 32-46 Great Western Highway Emu Plains (Lot 1-4 DP 342116). This application does not include those lots and a separate s140 application will be made for that land parcel once the owner's consent is obtained or Council acquire the land. Council's current funding timeline does not allow the withdrawal of the permit application and relodgement once consent has been received.

## 1.3 The Punt House Comparative Analysis

From the first year of settlement on Sydney Cove, the colony relied on hand operated punts to make crossing over the numerous bodies of water on which Sydney is set. Early punts were established to cross from one side of Sydney Harbour to the other as well as the Paramatta, Lane Cove, Nepean and Hawkesbury Rivers. Punts were earliest and most widespread forms of river crossing instituted in NSW after European settlement.

People had been making their way over the Blue Mountains from around 1815 and the Nepean was crossed at Emu Ford, 700 m downstream from the current Victoria Bridge. A government run punt service began on the Nepean River at Penrith/Emu Plains in 1823 which led to several new buildings being constructed on both sides of the river. The Nepean punt was well patronised and essential for the movement of people, stock and goods across the river, and was an important component of crossing the Blue Mountains, allowing settlement of the Western Plains and aiding the profusion of travellers seeking their fortunes on the Gold Fields. Due to the increased volume of traffic, and the loss of two bridges over the Nepean due to flooding in the 1850s, the Government supplied two punts to convey people and goods across the river from 1860. The punt on the Nepean continued to function despite the construction of the Victoria Bridge in 1863 which could withstand the floodwaters common to the area. The punts were irreparably damaged by a flood in 1867 and were not replaced (Victoria Bridge SHI listing <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/> ).

It is not clear from the available documentation whether the Punt House was accommodation supplied to the punt operator, a storage place for ferry equipment, or both, and there is no information regarding construction material. The building was occupied by the Police after the cessation of the ferry service and demolished around the 1870s.

Most of the punts established on the Hawkesbury still operate at the places where they were first established, though today they are government owned, motorised, cable-driven, and large enough to carry motor vehicles. Only one punt in the Inner suburban area, between Mortlake and Putney on the Paramatta River, still operates (Sydney punts - <https://www.visitsydneyaustralia.com.au/punts.html>).

Punts are relatively common in NSW as a means of transport, and there are numerous towns and suburbs throughout NSW that contain a "Punt Road" attesting to the previous location of a water crossing. Punt Houses or their remains are, however, extremely rare. Some early punts were associated with a nearby Inn or private residence and did not require a separate residence for the punt operator.

It is more likely that Government controlled punts would have included accommodation for the punt operator than punts located on private property. A search of 'Punt House' on the SHI resulted in no items. A search of on-line resources including, but not limited to, Trove, the Dictionary of Sydney, Hawkesbury Council Local History, Sydney Transport did not locate any information regarding Punt Houses.

The following includes the only listed item that may be used in comparative analysis of surviving evidence associated with punts and Punt Houses in NSW. Several Punt Houses are located in South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania.

Location and date	Description
Chatsworth Island Puntman's Cottage 1935	A small rectangular two bedroom fibro cottage with hipped galvanised iron roof. This cottage and the adjoining ferry approach tell of the transport history of the shire, and the importance of punts and ferries. The proximity of the cottage to the ferry approach demonstrates how important it was for the ferryman to live on site.

There are a number of operational punts and a number of archaeological sites of former punts and wharfs that are listed items on the SHI, all of which are all locally listed items. None of these have evidence of Punt Houses.

- Wisemans Ferry 1826, the Great North Road crossed the Hawkesbury River near the Inn of Solomon Wiseman. Wiseman took advantage of this location by offering hospitality to travellers and was granted a seven year lease on the rights to transport goods and travellers across the Hawkesbury River. A government run diesel powered cable punt service still operates at Wiseman's Ferry.
- Batemans Bay car ferry ramps (former) 1871-1956.
- Mortlake to Putney car ferry began operation in 1928 and continues to operate.
- Tarren Point disused ramp for punt west of the current bridge.
- Croki Wharf and punt sites operated from 1860's to early 20th century. Wharf is still intact.
- First Falls Crossing/Mynleford Punt, one of the main crossings on the Clarence River and associated with a major stock route between the coast and the tablelands, early 1880s to 1950.
- Lugarno Ferry/Old Punt Crossing, on the main road south from Sydney to the Illawarra region opened in 1843 and closed 1974.
- Punt Loading Site Nelligen was established in 1878 for vehicle traffic and continued use until 1964.
- Tom Uglys Ferry Site Punt Ramp showing evidence of stone setting and cutting in rock between Georges River and Tom Uglys Bridges, Sylvania.
- The Spit Bridge, Seaforth comprised a hand powered cable punt across the tidal gap between The Spit and the area now known as Seaforth from 1850. Converted to a steam powered cable punt in the 1880s and later was a Tram Terminus and Wharf for Tram Punt dating to 1912.

Other early punts that are not listed items include Gladesville Punt which began operating in 1832 between Abbotsford and Bedlam Point; Joshua Thorp built an early punt across the Cooks River at Undercliffe known as Thorpe's punt; Rhodes Point to Ryde punt was established in the 1830s and closed in 1935 when superseded by the Ryde Bridge, numerous early punts crossed the Hawkesbury/Nepean

at various locations including Richmond, Windsor, Pitt Town, Sackville, Portland and Berowra, as well as the multiple punts that crossed Sydney Harbour, Middle harbour and Parramatta River. Most of these crossings allowed the development of residences, roads and businesses at either end and were later replaced by bridges or a scheduled ferry service and some of which still have operational punts (Sydney punts - <https://www.visitsydneyaustralia.com.au/punts.html>).

This is not an exhaustive list. Detailed research into Punt Houses across NSW is beyond the scope of this Addendum due to the urgency and time frames required by Council and HNSW for the submission of this report. Additional information can be provided in the final report if required.

#### 1.4 Revised significance assessment

The following table presents a revision of the potential and significance of archaeological resource remaining in the study area. The remains of the Union Inn and possibly part of the Victoria Bridge Inn are located in the Lot 1-4 DP 342116 where the owner's consent has not been acquired and therefore is not part of this assessment.

Archaeological resource	Potential	Significance
Punt House	Medium - this part of the site has been subject to land modification, construction and demolition. Geotechnical testing has identified up to 50 cm of fill on the northern part of the study area and previous testing by Artefact (2016) suggests truncation and levelling of the original soils and subsequent filling.	Any remains of the Punt House dating to the 1820s is likely to be of state significance for its rarity, its historical and social association with early water transport, research potential and facilitation of the settlement of greater NSW through to the early 1860s.  The research potential of any surviving archaeological features and deposits will not only confirm its nature and location but may also answer questions relating to Governing on the fringes of the colony, the construction and use of the building, whether it was occupied by the punt operators, building techniques and associations with any other structures such as outbuildings
Office	Low - the location of this building has been highly disturbed by the construction of the Yandhai Bridge and modifications to the Great western Highway. Very little is known about the purpose of this building that appears on plans dating to 1857. It is likely to be associated with the Punt House and possibly a toll or payment office.	The office is likely to be a toll booth directly associated with the Punt House and therefore any remains of the office dating to the 1850s or earlier is likely to be of state significance for their historical and associative values, research potential and rarity.
Early roads	Low - original road surfaces have been truncated, disturbed or removed by ongoing road, infrastructure and services works and development throughout the 20th century. The current roads do not deviate significantly from their early alignments.	If substantial archaeological remains of early roads are encountered, these would have the potential to answer questions relating to the method of road construction used through the early development of Emu Plains, similarities or differences to other early road construction methods, upkeep and repairs and possibly changes in alignment. This information would be of local and possibly state significance for its historical, associative and research values.

Archaeological resource	Potential	Significance
Victoria Bridge Inn	Low – Archaeological remains may have been truncated through the construction of the modern restaurant and the alignment of the Great Western Highway and York Street and associated services.	Inns were common along the road from Sydney to Bathurst and there were at least four other Inns of earlier construction date located in Emu Plains and several others date to same period. An archaeological resource associated with Inns would contribute to information about the commercial, social and economic development of Emu Plains and be significant at a local level for their historical, associative, research and representative values.
Police station	High/Moderate – constructed in 1908 close to the corner of York Street and Punt Road. Descriptions of the building prior to it burning down noted an under-floor deposit some of which was collected by a local historical society. This deposit is likely to be disturbed.	An archaeological resource associated with the site of the Police Station and its outbuildings would have local social and historical significance for its former associations with the establishment of constabulary in the Emu Plains district.

#### 1.4.1 Revised Statement of Significance – Archaeology

The study area is likely to comprise an archaeological resource relating to the use, occupation and development of Emu Plains on the main route between Sydney and Bathurst, via the Blue Mountains, up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The study area occupies an important position on this thoroughfare and may contain evidence of the government Punt House dating to the 1820s which appears to have been one of the earliest structures in Emu Plains. Surviving archaeological evidence of the Punt House and office would have historical, social, associative, research and rarity values at a state level for their important role in the early movement of people and stock across the Nepean River and the subsequent settlement of central NSW.

The Victoria Bridge Inn provided roadside refreshments and accommodation to travellers crossing the Nepean River on their way to or from Bathurst. The Inn was one of up to eight Inns to operate within Emu Plains during the 1850s to 1860s. This business, like many on the Western Road, fell victim to the decline in use after the introduction of the Penrith to Bathurst railway in 1868. Archaeological remains dating to the 1850s and associated with the Victoria Bridge Inn would have historical, associative and representative values at a local level for their potential to contribute to an understanding of the commercial development of Emu Plains associated with the high volume of people who used the Western Road on their way to the Bathurst Goldfields.

The study area may also have the potential to contain archaeological remains which could yield information relating to the Western Road. Any substantial historical road surfaces associated with the early construction of the Western Road and subsequent repairs, upgrades or alignments would have historical, associative and representative values at a local and possibly state level for their potential to contribute to our understanding of road engineering practices not previously documented.

The establishment of Policing at Emu Plains was likely to be required due to the volume of traffic passing through on their way to the Goldfields. Archaeological remains associated with the Police occupation of the Punt House and other existing buildings in the area until the Police Station was constructed in 1908



would be of local significance for its historical, associative, research and representative values and may contribute to our understanding of Policing a transitory population on the farthest fringe of the colony.



Figure 2 Location of areas of high potential (blue) and allotments not included in this addendum (yellow)

## 2. Revised testing methodology

### 2.1 Contamination and geotechnical investigations

WSP Australia Pty Ltd (WSP) propose a detailed site investigation (DSI) at Regatta Park, comprising contamination testing to determine whether the concentration of contaminants pose potential risks to human health or the environment. To achieve the sampling density as per the NSW EPA sampling guidelines a minimum of 44 investigation locations for the eastern portion is required and a minimum 18 investigation locations is required for the western portion (divided by existing River Road).

At locations of steep terrain within the eastern portion, hand auguring is proposed. At all other locations test pitting (mechanical) will be adopted. Test pits will be excavated to a depth of 1.5 m below ground level and located in areas already tested and found to have high levels of lead or other contaminants such as asbestos, and in locations of cut and fill activities. Soil samples will be nominally collected at surface, 500 mm, 1 m and at metre intervals thereafter.

While section 7 of the WSP methodology states that none of the proposed locations are within the areas of high archaeological or Aboriginal significance, six test pits have been proposed in locations of high archaeological potential. This may be clarified by better mapping in their report. Test pits 51, 52, 53 & 54 are located to the north of the existing Police cottage and will require archaeological monitoring or a less intrusive methodology such as Emu pick for asbestos. Historically this area was associated with Punt Road. Test pit 56 is positioned in the potential location of the Punt House and will need to be relocated. Test pit 57 is positioned in the potential location of the Police Station and will need to be relocated. Sampling of soil up to 500 mm will be possible in any trench while the Archaeologist is excavating the trench. Sampling of soil at 1 m and below will only be possible in previously excavated trenches where no Aboriginal or historical remains have been located.

Please see methodology prepared by WSP 29 July 2020, *Detailed site investigation, River Road Deviation and Regatta Park masterplan, Emu Plains, NSW*.

### 2.2 Methodology

The study area has potential to contain relics associated with the construction and occupation of the Punt House (1823), the Victoria Bridge Inn (1856) and the Police Station (1908). The focus of the investigation is to determine the survival, extent, location, and significance of key archaeological or sub-surface features and deposits associated with former buildings and activity areas without removing them. The excavation of a series of targeted test trenches would aim to inform the final landscape design regarding the presence or absence of archaeology, its depth and integrity and avoid the requirement for further archaeological investigation (salvage). This will allow the final design to avoid the archaeological resource, redesign or raise levels if necessary and assist long term management of the area as a part of any future works within the park (Figures 3, 4, & 5).

- The small scale of the former buildings that occupied the site will not require extensive test trenching.
- It is proposed that this investigation would be undertaken as a series of 1 m x 1 m test trenches to maintain consistency with proposed Aboriginal archaeological testing being undertaken concurrently.

- Five targeted test trenches spaced approximately 5 m apart at each historical location is proposed to enable location of structural elements or deposits if present.
- All trenches will be excavated manually. Mechanical excavation will only be used to remove hard surfaces or rubble fill.
- All test trenches will be initially excavated in 10cm spits to maintain consistency with proposed Aboriginal archaeological testing. Excavation of stratigraphic units will be undertaken if such units are present.
- Trenches will be located in areas that will be subject to impacts, except for the Punt House location, as impacts to this area have not yet been finalised.
- We intend to avoid impacts to significant archaeological features and deposits. If archaeological features and deposits are present, they will be cleaned and recorded and left *in situ*. No further excavation will take place. Investigations will remove post 1900 deposits but will not excavate through early structural remains, occupation deposits, yard or early road surfaces.
- If features and/or deposits are located in several trenches, and we understand the pattern of survival and extent of historical archaeological remains, it may not be necessary to excavate further trenches.
- If a test trench locates archaeological features or deposits, subsequent test trenches may need slight changes in position to ensure the information regarding the nature and extent of historical archaeological remains is maximised.
- Excavation to natural deposits will only be required if there are no historical features or deposits located in the trench.
- Soils consist of alluvial silty sand or silty clay and. It is anticipated that excavation of test trenches will be required to maximum of 600mm as bore logs indicate anthropogenic material does not exceed a depth of 500mm.
- Contamination testing is associated with lead and asbestos and focussed around the historical structures and building locations.
- Contamination testing should be undertaken after the archaeological testing has taken place and the nature and extent of the below ground features and deposits is known.
- An archaeologist will monitor the contamination testing of the site by WSP. The positions can be moved slightly to suit site conditions such as services, trees etc.
- The location of proposed contamination test pits may require adjustment if impacts to historical archaeology is likely to occur and will be subject to advice from the Archaeologists to avoid any impacts.
- Sampling of upper layers of soil for asbestos will be possible in areas of high archaeological potential while the Archaeologist is excavating the trench or where recent disturbance is evident (ie: Yandhai Bridge and approaches).

### **Combined Aboriginal and Historical testing methodology**

- All ELA staff are experienced in the identification and excavation of historical and Aboriginal Archaeology.
- Aboriginal test trenches will not be located in areas of high historical archaeological potential or areas of identified disturbance in order to avoid historical contamination.
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- Should any Aboriginal objects be identified in historical occupation or fill layers they will be recorded as being in a disturbed context but will be collected and catalogued. Further excavation for Aboriginal objects will not be undertaken in disturbed contexts.
- Should any historical remains be identified in Aboriginal test pits, they will be cleaned, recorded and left *in situ*. The trench will not be further excavated for Aboriginal objects as it will be considered disturbed. Another location for the Aboriginal test trench will be sought in an area of low disturbance.
- Contamination testing can only be undertaken previous Aboriginal or historical test trench locations or areas of high disturbance such as roads, car parks and service trenches.
- Sampling of upper layers of soil for contaminants can be undertaken while the Archaeologist is excavating the trench.
- Contamination testing can be undertaken in any trench where Aboriginal or historical testing has been undertaken and not found to contain any significant remains, or when no further artefacts are located at two spits below the last level containing archaeological deposit.
- If any evidence of historical or Aboriginal cultural deposits are uncovered in contamination test pits, sampling will cease, and the remains will be recorded and/or collected.
- Trenches will be backfilled when fully recorded including GPS location.

## 2.3 Test trench locations

### The Punt House

Overlaying historical mapping on modern plans to locate structures is often imprecise. According to Biosis' mapping the location of the Punt House is on the river side of the existing Police cottage. Excavation of five trenches measuring 1 m x 1 m and spaced 5 m apart will enable identification of subsurface conditions, investigate the extent and intactness of remains if present and facilitate park design which has not been finalised in this location.



Figure 3 Location of test trenches associated with the Punt House

### Victoria Bridge Inn

The Victoria Bridge Inn lies within the proposed footprint of the River Road deviation. This testing would enable the extent and intactness of remains associated with the Inn to be identified and would inform whether modification to the road design would be necessary. The expected location of the Victoria Bridge Inn is intersected by a number of sub-surface services within the road reserve for the Great Western Highway. Five test trenches measuring 1 m x 1 m, spaced 5 m apart, between existing service trenches will be located to the south of the existing footpath and directly opposite River Road. Exact locations to be decided based on information available from a qualified service locator.



Figure 4 Location of test trenches associated with the Victoria Bridge Inn

### The Police Station

The Police Station lies within the footprint of a proposed car park as a part of the park upgrade. This testing would enable the identification of archaeological remains associated with the Police Station and inform the car park design. Five test trenches measuring 1 m x 1 m, spaced 5 m apart will be located within the footprint of the former Police Station and in the area surrounding the Station, to identify the potential for outbuildings.

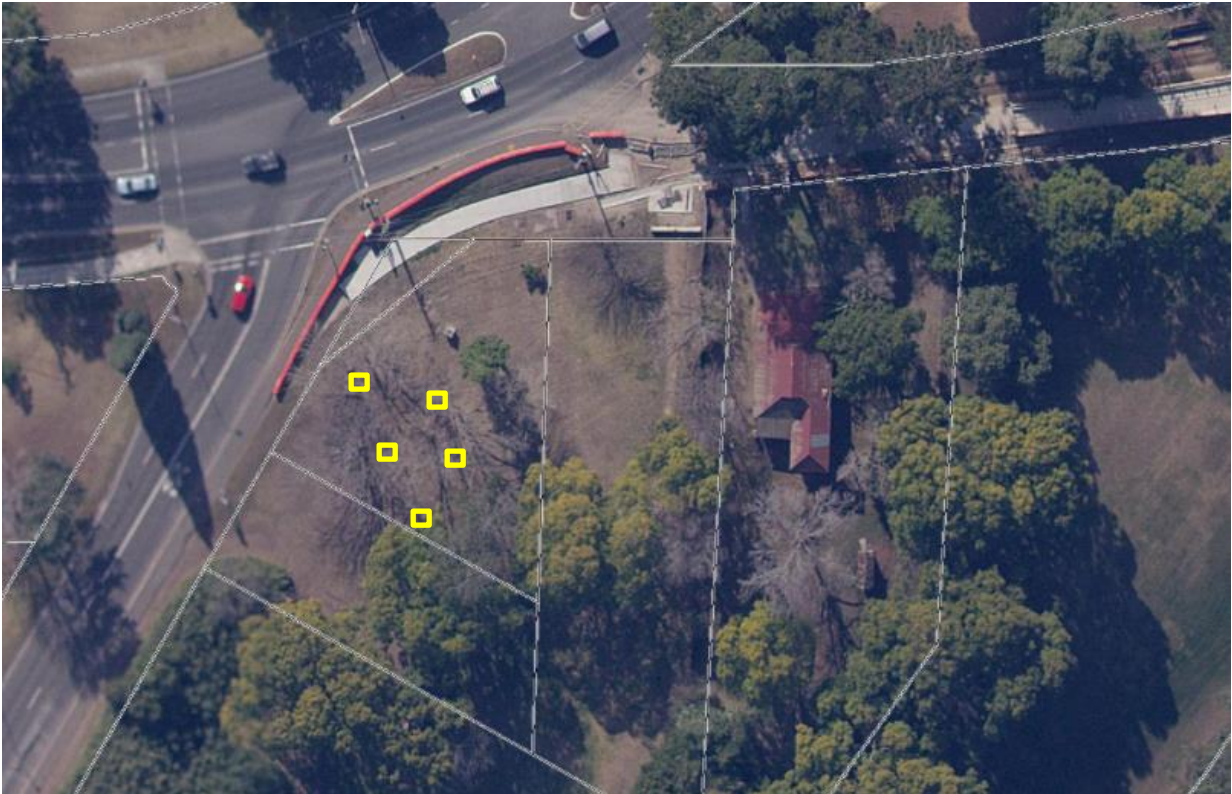


Figure 5 Location of test trenches associated with the Police Station

## 2.4 Personnel

the following personnel will undertake the works.

Name	Qualifications	Experience	Tasks
Karyn McLeod Principal Heritage Consultant (Sydney)	BA Honours (Archaeology) University of Sydney, MA (Cultural Heritage) Deakin University	25 years built heritage, historical and Aboriginal archaeology	Excavation Director, project management client contact, recording, artefact identification, report preparation, compliance, review and QA
Tyler Beebe Senior Aboriginal Archaeologist	BA Honours (Anthropology) Hamline University, Minnesota, USA, MA (Cultural and Environmental Heritage) Australian National University	15 years Aboriginal archaeology	Project management, Aboriginal consultation, field work, recording, lithic analysis, report writing, compliance, review and QA
Jennifer Norfolk Archaeologist	BSc. (Marine Science) Syd University, MSc. (Marine Archaeology) Southampton University	7 years Aboriginal and historical archaeology	Project management, Aboriginal consultation, field work, recording, on site artefact management, report preparation, GIS
Declan Coman Archaeologist	BA (Archaeology) Australian National University	5 years Aboriginal and historical archaeology	Background research, field work, recording, report preparation, GIS

Name	Qualifications	Experience	Tasks
Matt Elsley	BA (Archaeology and Palaeoanthropology), BSc (Geology and Environmental Science), BSc Geoscience (Mineral Systems and Deposits) University of New England	2 year Aboriginal and historical archaeology and Environmental Science	Background research, field work, recording, soil analysis, report preparation, GIS
Charlotte Bradshaw	BA (Archaeology) University of Sydney, Australian Professional Practice and Fieldwork, Australian National University	1 year Aboriginal and historical archaeology	Background research, field work, recording, GIS, lithic analysis

Guy Hazel will survey plan and prepare photogrammetry.

Jeanne Harris will catalogue and report on any artefacts recovered.



Figure 6 Location of historical test trenches (blue) and Aboriginal test trenches (green). Yellow shaded area is not included

