

AMBS Reference: 2005014

7 September 2005

Ian Cady
UrbisJHD
Level 18
60 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Ian

Preliminary archaeological assessment Emirates Luxury Resort, Wolgan Valley

This letter outlines a preliminary archaeological assessment of the proposed Emirates Luxury Resort in the Wolgan Valley, NSW. The assessment was undertaken for UrbisJHD on behalf of Emirates Hotels. The preliminary results are not a conclusive archaeological assessment and further archaeological work and consultation with the Aboriginal community will be required. Only 25% of the development precinct was intensively surveyed during the current investigation.

Australian Museum Business Services (AMBS) was contracted to undertake a brief archaeological inspection of the proposed site for the Emirates Luxury Resort. AMBS spent nine hours inspecting the property, primarily concentrating on the proposed development precinct. However, due to the scale of the development, AMBS was able to inspect only 25% of the development precinct and a small portion of the remainder of the property. During this inspection AMBS identified four archaeological sites, all of which are located outside of the currently proposed development precinct. The lack of observed archaeological sites within the development precinct, however, cannot be taken as indicative of an absence of archaeological material. It is likely that archaeological material exists within the development precinct, but was not visible due to the low effective visibility and the limited amount of time spent investigating the property. During the inspection it was noted that artefacts were apparent in virtually all significantly eroded areas, outside of the immediate creek line. No eroded areas of significance were visible within the development precinct. Further archaeological work is recommended. Recommendations include an on site consultation and survey with the Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council (BLALC), predictive modelling, an impact assessment and archaeological significance assessment.

Consultation

Warwick Peckham chairman of the BLALC was contacted prior to the survey. Due to the tight timeframe, BLALC was unable to participate in the survey. Warwick has indicated that BLALC would like to participate in all future assessments. A copy of this letter will be forwarded to BLALC.

Significance

The Wolgan Valley is located in proximity to highly archaeologically significant portions of the greater Blue Mountains and Wollemi National Parks. One of the cornerstones of our understanding of past culture in the Sydney Basin comes from a series of excavations undertaken by the Australian Museum in the 1950's and 1960's in the Capertee Valley near Glen Davis, approximately 20 kilometres to the north. These excavations helped to establish a greater antiquity for Aboriginal culture than had previously



existed. The Capertee sites remain important today because they showcase a range of technological changes, which are continually being researched and debated. New archaeological information from the Wolgan Valley would play an important part in increasing our understanding of Australia's cultural heritage because it would be directly comparable with the Capertee information. In addition, the rock-art of the Wollemi region has recently become internationally significant with the discovery of the superb art site known as Eagles Reach. This site is one of the best art sites in Australia and is extremely important to rock-art researchers, Aboriginal community and general public. Recent investigations within the Wollemi during the past four years have re-discovered over 200 art and occupation sites, which have vastly increased our understanding of Aboriginal culture in rugged and remote environments. In this light, several important rock-art sites are also found within 10 kilometres of the Wolgan Valley. Rock shelters in direct proximity to the proposed resort may also contain rock-art, but have as of yet not been investigated. Blackfellows Cave near Wolgan Gap, for example, is covered by handstencils and stencilled boomerangs and axes. Concentrations of rock-art sites are also found in the east near Mount Cameron and Galah Mountain and in the north within the Capertee Valley.

Wolgan Valley Survey

The survey of the Wolgan Valley property for the proposed Emirates Resort was conducted on the 5th and 6th of September. A vehicle survey was conducted of the proposed main road and a combination of vehicle and pedestrian survey was conducted for the remainder of the development precinct as well as targeted portions of the property. The following sites were identified:

Site Name	Easting	Northing
Wolgan Valley-AMBS 01	239566	6314374
Wolgan Valley-AMBS 02	238593	6317089
Wolgan Valley-AMBS 03	238081	6316876
Wolgan Valley-AMBS 04	237916	6316615

Each site was recorded using standard site cards supplied by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). All site cards will be forwarded to the DEC as required by legislation. Copies of the site cards are attached.

Wolgan Valley-AMBS 01

This site is located in the southern arm of the property on the eastern side of Carne Creek approximately 1.8 kilometres south of the development precinct and 200 metres northeast of Carne Creek just above the 580 metre contour line. The site is situated in a large eroded area 30 metres north of a small westward flowing tributary. The site consists of one mudstone core. The site was found late in the day and poor lighting may have hampered the identification of further artefacts.

Wolgan Valley-AMBS 02

This site is located 100 metres north of the development precinct within cleared pasture which is part of the national park. The site is located on a flat elevated terrace just east of a small cluster of trees. The terrace extends some 50-75 metres towards the south. The site is approximately 200 metres east of Carne Creek and on the edge of the 570 metre contour. Artefacts were visible along the heavily eroded northwestern edge of the terrace, near an isolated sandstone boulder. The site consists of six mudstone flakes. Two artefacts were initially identified at this site late in the first day of survey and a follow-up inspection the next day in good light yielded four additional artefacts.

Wolgan Valley-AMBS 03

This site is at the northern tip of a low hill approximately 150 metres west of the Wolgan homestead. The hill is 100 meters southeast of the Wolgan River and 250 metres west of Carne Creek and is adjacent to the main homestead road. The site consists of three artefacts: one large basalt flake, one bipolar crystalline quartz flake and a heavily patinated mudstone flake. The artefacts were found eroding out of a sandy deposit approximately 565 metres in elevation.

Wolgan Valley-AMBS 04

This site is an artefact scatter located on the same hill as WV-AMBS 03. The site is situated along the southern side of an access road leading to a stockyard on the western side of the hill. The site consists of one mudstone flake and one bipolar quartz core. The artefacts were found eroding out of the side of the hill where it had been cut by the road at an elevation of 570 metres.

Interim Results

The results of the preliminary inspection indicate the visible presence of archaeological material on the Wolgan Valley property and within the adjacent national park. An archaeological synopsis of the property is as follows:

Artefacts are visibly present in low densities across the property where significant erosion has exposed the subsurface. It is possible that subsurface artefacts will be located across all portions of the property. The density and distribution of artefact on the property will vary depending on geomorphic and cultural factors.

Previous experience in similar environments within the Sydney Basin suggests that the observed low densities and occurrences of artefacts are not a reliable indicator of actual artefact numbers. Rather, the overall low numbers of artefacts identified during the survey are indicative of the substantial quantity of grass currently covering the property (i.e. limiting the effective surface visibility) and the limited amount of time spent surveying the 2000 hectare site.

An interesting observation is that archaeological material is most visible between the 560-580 metre contours. This is likely related to the tendency for the edges of these contours to erode more readily because of land clearance across the floor of the valley, but it may also indicate a greater degree of fluvial disturbance within the deposit below this elevation level. Further work will be able to explore this observation more closely and examine the possible impact on potential subsurface archaeological deposits.

The survey also identified deep stratified deposit at multiple locations across the property. This deposit is principally a combination of alluviums and ranged from 0.5-2.0 metres in depth. Deep deposits of alluvium have the potential to yield artefacts at substantial depths; such artefacts would not be visible during a surface survey. On average it was noted that the artefacts identified during the present survey appeared to emanate from 5 - 6 cm below the surface.

Summary and Recommendations

The current preliminary archaeological assessment was able to identify the presence of archaeological material on the property. The current assessment however was only able to briefly examine a limited portion of the very large property. A summary of the preliminary results are as follows:

- Archaeological assessment is incomplete and further work is required;
- Artefacts have been found dispersed across the property;
- No consultation with the BLALC has taken place;
- The development precinct, as well as the remainder of the property has not been fully assessed.

The following recommendations are based on the findings of this preliminary study. Recommendations are as follows:

- Consultation and inspection with the Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council and other relevant Aboriginal groups is required in order that an Aboriginal heritage assessment of the property be completed;

- In conjunction with Aboriginal community consultation, the proponent should undertake further intensive archaeological survey of the development precinct and targeted survey of the remainder of the property. This step is necessary to establish a more informed understanding of the archaeology of the property and will form the foundation of a predictive model (below);
- Generate a predictive model for the property. This will allow for an informed assessment of the areas of the property which do not currently exhibit archaeological material. For example, a predictive model will be able to ascertain the probability of archaeological material occurring in areas of the development precinct which exhibit a dense coverage of grass (effectively precluding an effective surface survey);
- The outcome of the predictive model will allow management of the identified archaeologically sensitive areas within the final design concept;
- Generate a detailed report outlining the Aboriginal community's views on the potential sociocultural impacts resulting from the development and detailing the potential scientific impacts on the archaeological significance of the property. This report will provide opportunities for conservation and management outcomes across the property.

If you require any additional information, or if I can be of assistance in any way please contact me on (02) 9320 6466 or email matthewk@austmus.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Dr Matthew Kelleher
Archaeologist / Project Manager