Appendix B: Indigenous Cultural Heritage Sites

Sites Recorded in the Lake Burley Griffin Study Area Indigenous Cultural Heritage Field Surveys

A limited program of archaeological field survey was conducted at Stirling Park, Yarramundi and Springbank and Spinnaker Islands in the context of the development of this HMP. The program aimed to check the locations of previously recorded sites and expand the existing site database. The survey was not comprehensive and the lack of recordings in these areas should not be taken as a definitive absence of sites in the areas.

Stirling Park

No recordings of Aboriginal sites had been registered for Stirling Park.

A series of survey transects were carried out on foot across the study area. Surface visibility within the study area was poor due to vegetation and grass coverage, however surface exposures in the form of foot and vehicle tracks did occur regularly throughout the study area. Visibility on these surface exposures was good—approximately 85%. These surface exposures covered approximately 25% of the study area (Figures 4.1 and 4.2).

One possible Aboriginal scarred tree was recorded in the course of the 2006 field survey. The site is described below.

Stirling Park Scarred Tree 1 (SPST1)—Possible Aboriginal Scarred Tree

AGD 55691757.6091259

The scarred tree is located on the crest of a hill near the southwestern end of Stirling Park, just north of a gravel bike/walking path. The 20m high tree, a Scribbly gum, is apparently healthy (Plate A.3).

The scar consists of an ovoid area 110cm in length and 45cm in width. The scar is considered a 'possible' Aboriginal scar (on a scale of possible/probable/definite). Alternative explanations for the origins of the scar are mechanical damage and stock damage.

The chair of the Buru Ngunawal Aboriginal Corporation Don Bell has stated that the stone arrangements in the northern section of the Stirling Park study area have cultural significance to Aboriginal people. Anne Gugler[1], who accompanied the representatives of the Buru Ngunawal Aboriginal Corporation on site as part of a previous study, is also of this belief. Ms Gugler identified similar stone-ringed arrangements elsewhere in Stirling Park as European garden beds in her publication *Westlake* in 1997 but re-evaluated her findings in 2004.

The stone arrangements in that part of the study area have been, we believe, conclusively identified through a previous study[2] as being the remains of stone-edged garden beds/tree plantings and European in origin. Those gardens/tree plantings occurred some time after 19 July 1952, and were probably constructed by government workers after 1963.

The date of 19 July 1952 is significant as an aerial photograph of that part of Canberra shows the study area to have been contour ploughed. It is considered extremely implausible that any stone arrangements of the type present in the study area would have survived such ploughing. In addition, the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage notes in its heritage listings for Stirling Park that the government planted exotic trees, shrubs and flowers in Stirling Park, in the area of the Gap on

the eastern side of the ridge, after 1963. It is therefore also probable that the government is responsible for the plantings in the study area around the same time.

aspect	North
length (excl regrowth)	90cm
length (incl regrowth)	110cm
width (excl regrowth)	45cm
width (include regrowth)	70cm
regrowth (max width)	25cm
regrowth (max depth)	5cm
height above ground:	
base of regrowth	38cm

Features:

axe/hatchet marks	termite activity
scar surface burnt	core wood missing
original scar surface whole/partly missing	large/small borer holes/tracks

Yarramundi Reach

Twelve Aboriginal sites have previously been recorded for Yarramundi Reach. These sites, which were located variously in 1984, 1990 and 2003, have been registered on the ACT Heritage Register.

The Yarramundi Reach area has undergone major changes in the years since the twelve sites were recorded. The major impact on the area was the bushfire of 2003 when forests planted in the area were burnt. These forests have not been replanted but the dead timber has been removed and the earth has been ripped. Naturally regenerating pine trees cover the southern end of the study area, intermingled with thick blackberry bushes (Plate A.4 and A.5). Grasslands occur in the northern section.

As a result of the passing of time, recreational usage of the area, vehicle traffic, forestry and post-bushfire activities, the 2006 field teams were unable to relocate the previously recorded sites. Visibility of the ground surface was negligible with dense stands of vegetation including blackberry bushes obscuring the site. In areas of clear ground there was a dense cover of grass and while all exposures (vehicle tracks etc) were closely examined no artefacts were discovered.

One area of potential archaeological deposit (PAD) was identified in the course of the 2006 field survey. The PAD is described below.

Yarramundi PADYA1—Potential Archaeological Deposit (AGD:689700-689850.6092900-6093100)

An area of potential archaeological deposit (PAD) was identified at Acacia Inlet.

A potential archaeological deposit, or PAD, is defined as any location where the potential for subsurface archaeological material is considered to be moderate or high, relative to the surrounding landscape. The potential for subsurface material to be present is assessed using criteria developed from the results of previous surveys and excavations relevant to the region. Where necessary, PADs can be given an indicative rating of their 'archaeological potential' based on a combined assessment of their potential to contain artefacts, and the potential archaeological value of the deposit. Locations with low potential for artefacts fall below the threshold of classification. In such cases the potential incidence of artefactual material is considered to be the same as, or close to that for background scatter. Where there is moderate potential for artefacts, the predicted archaeological potential parallels the potential significance

of the deposit. For deposits with high potential for artefacts, the assessed archaeological potential is weighted positively.

The boundaries of PADs are generally defined by the extent of particular micro-landforms known to have high correlations with archaeological material. A PAD may or may not be associated with surface artefacts. In the absence of artefacts, a location with potential will be recorded as a PAD. Where one or more surface artefacts occur on a sedimentary deposit, a PAD may also be identified where there is insufficient evidence to assess the nature and content of the underlying deposit. This situation is due mostly to poor ground surface visibility.

The area at Yarramundi Reach was identified based on its location next to the Acacia Creek. Similar locations (eg the confluence of the Molonglo River and it tributaries) identified in other archaeological studies have proved to be a focus for Aboriginal activity.

This PAD identification is also strengthened by the location of three previously identified sites occurring within the PAD area. The pleasant aspect of the point being sheltered by the surrounding hills is attested to currently by the construction of a picnic area at the junction point. The location of the PAD is also detailed in Figure 1.

In June of 2002 Navin Officer Heritage Consultants conducted a cultural heritage assessment of land situated at the Glenloch interchange.[3] This area comprised approximately 21 ha of valley floor and fringing basal slopes on the lower reaches of Black Mountain Creek. Four artefact scatters and two isolated finds were identified. The deposits associated with the artefact scatters exhibited varying degrees of subsurface archaeological potential. Glenloch adjoins Yarramundi Reach and the same pattern of site location can reasonably be expected to occur along the lower reaches of Black Mountain Creek.

Springbank and Spinnaker Islands

Springbank Island is a man made structure constructed for aesthetic effect when Lake Burley Griffin was filled. Despite this, the potential for aboriginal artefacts to occur on the island does exist as the material used to form it may have originated from one of the sand bodies that occurred along the banks of the Molonglo. These sand bodies have been found to be areas of high archaeological potential as many aboriginal artefacts have been collected from them historically. Due to the lack of knowledge as to the original location of the material that now comprises Springbank Island field survey was undertaken to assess its heritage potential.

Spinnaker Island is a remnant natural feature of higher ground that once would have been connected to the spur line that runs to the Lake edge from Stirling Park. Due to its topography it has the potential to have been used by Aboriginal groups in the past and survey was undertaken to identify the presence of any aboriginal artefacts.

Ground surface visibility at both islands was negligible (rating 0–5%) due to grass cover and dense leaves dropped from the deciduous trees planted on the islands. Surface exposures did occur infrequently (10%) generally around the base of tree trunks.

No Aboriginal sites or areas of archaeological potential were identified on Springbank and Spinnaker Islands (Plate A.6 to A.9).

Endnotes

[1] Gugler, A 2004, A History of Human Habitation at Stirling Park Yarralumla 2003–2004: A Study of the Cultural Landscape of the Land also known as Canberry, Guru Bung Dhaura and Westlake, A Gugler, CD Format, Canberra.
[2] Navin Officer Heritage Consultants 2004, op.cit.
[3] Navin Officer Heritage Consultants 2002, op.cit.