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Dear Joshua

RE: Due diligence assessment of Aboriginal heritage at 29 Stirling Cr, High Wycombe

To determine if any Aboriginal heritage sites or places might be at risk from development of the land at 29 Stirling Crescent, High Wycombe, a desktop review and inspection was conducted. This due diligence assessment was done in accordance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 guidelines* (published Nov. 2023).

This assessment involved searches of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Inquiry System (ACHIS), maintained by the Department of Planning, Land & Heritage (DPLH). The ACHIS database provides a record of many of the heritage surveys that have been carried out in WA, as well as the Aboriginal heritage sites or places that have been found and reported.

This review was followed by a physical inspection of the land at 29 Stirling Crescent (the study area) by archaeologist Joe Mattner, conducted on Monday 24th June in the company of Tayne Evershed and Joshua Carmody (both from Planning Solutions). The study area is illustrated in Figure 1.

The study area is located on the Bassendean Dunes geomorphic unit, which can be characterized as low-lying and gently undulating land formed of pale leached quartz sand with many seasonal swamps and lakes. Some of the land adjacent to the study area remains undeveloped, and it is flat and low-lying with no evidence of remnant sand dunes. Neighbouring houses are built on raised sandpads, confirming the land was always low-lying. In the study area and on several adjacent blocks, 'ponds' have been excavated to a depth of several metres. This appears to have been done to drain seasonal wetlands or swamps.

Many decades prior to its subdivision for housing, land in the study area was cleared and used for farming and grazing, so was considerably disturbed then. Subsequently, a house has been constructed on a sandpad, while there are sheds and vehicle tracks as well as a gravel driveway. As mentioned, there is a 'pond' in the southwest corner of the block. Small amounts of gravel and crushed brick occur in some of the sands, indicating historic and extensive low-level disturbance. Numerous non-native trees have been planted and the block was fenced.

Searches of the ACHIS found that there are no Aboriginal cultural heritage places/sites in the study area; that is, no Register places, no Lodged places and no Historic places.

However, one place/site was reported to be directly adjacent to the study area, on the southwest margin, and several places/sites are within one kilometre. The results of the ACHIS searches for known places/sites are illustrated in Figure 2.

The place/site abutting the study area was ID 30039 *Stirling Crescent Swamp*. It was reported to be comprised of a water source which was an historic camping site, a food source and a cultural feature. That wetland and the surrounding land has been drained, infilled, cleared and flattened, and the heritage place no longer exists.

* https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2023-11/aboriginal_heritage_act_1972_guidelines.pdf

Only a short distance to the south of the study area, two heritage sites once existed. One of these (ID 124 *High Wycombe 05*) was reported to be a small artefact scatter (i.e. campsite or activity area), while the other place/site (ID 125 *High Wycombe 06*) was associated with a Dreamtime story or narrative, and had a ceremonial or ritual component. Both of these cultural heritage places/sites have been lost through subdivision of the land, construction of a house and garden, and the excavation of a large 'pond' to drain the wetland.

Other heritage places/sites were reported to be less than 500m from the study area, and three of these were artefact scatters or contained artefacts (ID 752 *High Wycombe 4*, ID 17506 *Adelaide Street*, ID 21605 *High Wycombe Isolated Artefacts*). Two culturally significant sites are also in the vicinity, but are approximately a kilometre distant. The highly significant place, ID 3719 *Munday Swamp*, is situated to the west of Stirling Crescent, and the important place, ID 25023 *Poison Gully Creek*, is located to the south and southwest. In both cases, however, dithered boundaries around these places extend beyond the sites' actual boundaries and are close to the study area (as seen in Figure 2).

A search of the ACHIS found that no heritage surveys had specifically covered the study area. Several surveys have been conducted of land within one kilometre, while general surveys covering the metro region are also listed on the ACHIS for the High Wycombe area. However, High Wycombe, some neighbouring suburbs and Perth Airport were systematically searched as part of the Perth Area Archaeological Survey Project. This research work was conducted during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and was coordinated by Associate Professor Hallam from UWA. The surveys focused on undeveloped land and farmland and resulted in hundreds of sites being recorded.

It is probable that the study area (29 Stirling Cres.) was searched during those archaeological surveys, as indicated by the fact that most of the heritage places/sites within a kilometre were found and documented then. This includes sites within 200m of the study area.

In summary, archival research established that no cultural heritage places/sites are known to be in the block at 29 Stirling Crescent, and no such places/sites intersect with it. Ethnographic sites have also been reported in the vicinity, included site ID 30039 *Stirling Crescent Swamp* which was directly beside the study area. The boundary of that place/site terminated at the boundary of 29 Stirling Crescent, which confirms there was no cultural place or site in the study area.

The physical inspection of the study area confirmed that the land is low-lying and likely would have been unsuitable for camping. Subsequently, portions of the land have been disturbed, so there is very little potential for any archaeological material to survive in situ and in context.

Therefore, it is concluded that there is negligible risk that development of the land at 29 Stirling Crescent, High Wycombe, will affect any Aboriginal heritage sites. There is, then, no requirement for a Section 18 Notice to be lodged.

Please note that if any archaeological or cultural or skeletal material is unearthed during earthworks, then work should stop until that material is assessed by a heritage professional. If the skeletal material should prove to be human, the WA Police must be called immediately.

I trust this due diligence assessment is clear and sufficient for your needs. If you have any questions, please contact me.



Joe Mattner (B.Sc., M.A.)

Heritage Manager

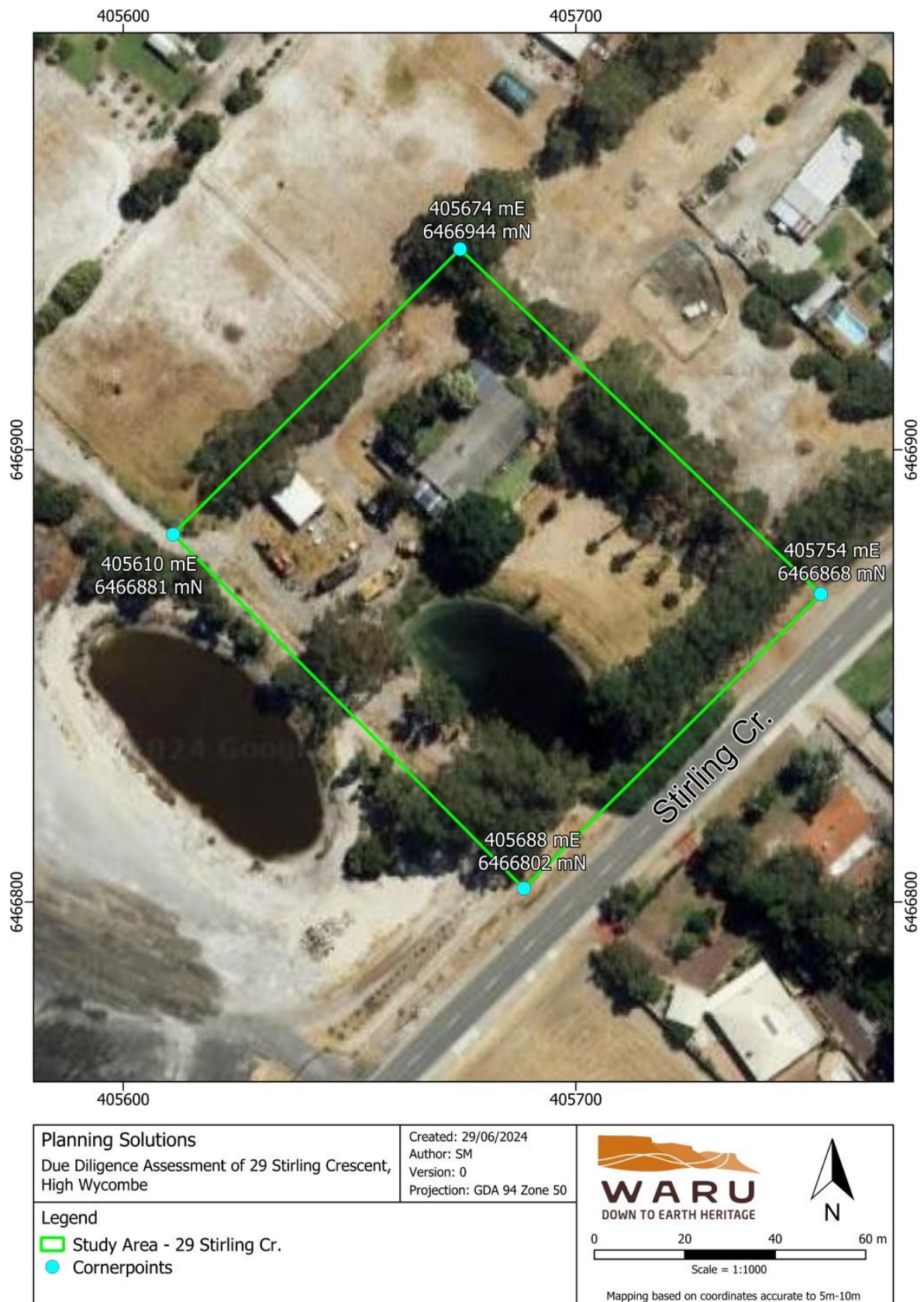


Figure 1: The study area: 29 Stirling Crescent, High Wycombe



Figure 2: Known Aboriginal heritage places/sites near the study area