



CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT GROUP

## Lindum Vale Dry Stone Wall Historic Heritage Assessment



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# Part 1 | Assessment

## 1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This historic heritage assessment (HHA) is a key outcome of MAB's due diligence on historic heritage values within the Lindum Vale Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) area.

The objectives of the assessment are to undertake a due diligence of dry stone walls (DSW) within the PSP area, and ultimately provide a statement of significance and future actions for the ongoing management or removal of the DSW.

### 1.1 Location of the Study Area

The project area is located within the Municipal boundary of the City of Hume at 1920, 1960 and 2040 Mickleham Road, Mickleham Victoria. The PSP area is situated immediately north of Mt. Ridley Road and east of Mickleham Road. The PSP area is approximately 142 ha in total area.

### 1.2 Purpose

MAB was requested to prepare this HHA by the Metropolitan Planning Authority who are the planning authority for the Lindum Vale PSP. The purpose of this document is to provide management outcomes in relation to DSW within the Lindum Vale PSP area located within the City of Hume. It aims to supplement State and Local planning policy (specifically Clause 22.12 – Heritage Conservation Policy), and to guide MAB, who are currently implementing a PSP, on their Heritage Overlay responsibilities under interim Clause 52.37 of Hume City Councils Planning Scheme.

The HHA has been prepared in accordance with a standard brief prepared by MAB setting out the following deliverables.

- Where possible, develop a brief thematic environmental history of the DSW within the PSP area. While various municipal studies have identified elements relating to DSW construction in their respective districts, there has been a distinct lack of prior studies of site specific DSW across the Municipality in general.
- Map the DWS within the PSP area and provide a presentation in PDF in the subject report. Provide shape files of DSW distribution within the PSP area to MAB to assist with future use.
- Develop a statement of significance for the DSW within the PSP area to determine the level of significance the DSW should be ascribed.
- Develop a list of future actions and management measures to assist MAB to manage and or remove DSW into the future



## 2 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Introduction

In accordance with Heritage Victoria guidelines, the management plan was prepared with reference to the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Significance (the Burra Charter) and its guidelines.

Places of potential historic heritage significance were identified using criteria adopted by the Australian Heritage Council and the criteria adopted by the Victorian Heritage Council (Section 2.4). Heritage Victoria notes that the thresholds applied in the application of significance might include State significance and local significance.

The methodology of the HHA was based upon a number of components agreed to between the archaeologist and MAB.

It included the following milestones.

- A one day field-based assessment to visually inspect all DSW within the PSP area.
- GIS. Providing shape files and demarcating the location of all DSW in PDF format within the subject report.
- Develop a Statement of Significance based on the criteria adopted by the Heritage Council.
- Develop clear and concise management recommendations for the DSW based on the result(s) of the significance assessment.
- Development of the results of the assessment in this HHA.

The Assessment was prepared by John Stevens, Principal at Cultural Heritage Management Group.

### 2.2 Previous Research

There is a limited amount of detailed research on DSW at a State level with previous work focused more on collation and centralisation of databases rather than more meaningful significant assessments and detailed local histories. Limited thematic DSW studies have been undertaken across few municipalities throughout Victoria, although Melton and Melton and Wyndham City Councils have commissioned Municipal-level DSW assessments over the past 2 years. No robust studies of any detail have been undertaken on DSW within the Hume municipality. Traditionally, where site specific heritage studies have been undertaken the focus has exclusively been on historic dwellings, bridges, railway yards including railway water towers, gold mining sites, saw mills and historic markers with little to no focus on DSW. A recent amendment to Clause 52.37 of the Hume City Council Planning Scheme provides a layer of protection for all DSW within the municipality boundary and this policy shift is expected to drive more detailed historic assessments at regional levels in the future.

No previous heritage studies have been undertaken on the DSW within the Lindum Vale PSP area so relevant information was sourced from fragmented shire documents, personal communication with Heritage Victoria and discussions with Dry Stone Wall Association Australia (DSWAA) President Jim Holdsworth.

## 2.3 Identification of places of potential historical significance

This HHA considers the significance of all DSW within the PSP area. Identified DSW may or may not be located on land managed by MAB and MAB accepts no maintenance or management responsibility for DSW not on MAB land.

## 2.4 Archaeological Fieldwork

The fieldwork component of the HHA was undertaken over one day commencing on Wednesday 26 August 2015. Photographs, Differential GPS points (Table 1) and notes were taken at a number of locations throughout the PSP area. All sections of DSW were visually assessed as part of the fieldwork for the assessment.

## 2.5 Database Searches

The following on-line databases were consulted as part of the HHA. The information from the following databases and resources formed an integral part of the assessment.

National Heritage:

- National Trust of Australia: National Trust Register.
- Register of the National Estate: Australian Heritage Database.

State and Local Heritage:

- Victorian Heritage Database: Victorian Heritage Inventory and Victorian Heritage Register.
- Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) Planning Schemes: Online Heritage Overlays and Planning Schemes.
- Hume City Council Heritage Overlay. Publically available Heritage Management Plans.
- Publically available literature sources including resources at the National Library of Victoria.
- Previous consultant heritage studies.

## 2.6 Establishing Significance

The *Heritage Act* 1995 (the Act) requires criteria to be used when assessing the cultural heritage significance of places and objects and determining whether those places or objects warrant inclusion in the VHR (refer to s.8(1)(c) of the Act).

In 2008 the Heritage Council of Victoria adopted the heritage assessment criteria set out in Table 2 below.

| Heritage Assessment Criteria (2008) |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Criterion:</b>                   |  |
| (a)                                 | <i>Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.</i>                                   |
| (b)                                 | <i>Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.</i>                      |
| (c)                                 | <i>Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.</i> |

- (d) *Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.*
- (e) *Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.*
- (f) *Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.*
- (g) *Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.*
- (h) *Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.*

Table 1: Itinerary for the fieldwork component of the assessment

In Victoria, places and objects of cultural heritage significance can be protected and managed through one or more of four statutory mechanisms. The mechanism that protects the largest number of places of cultural heritage significance is the Heritage Overlay under a local planning scheme (estimated to cover in excess of 150 000 places). At the other end of the spectrum, one place in Victoria (the Royal Exhibition Building & Carlton Gardens) is inscribed in the World Heritage List for its outstanding universal value. The significance threshold determines the level of cultural heritage significance a place or object has and what mechanisms can therefore be used to protect and manage it. The significance threshold can be defined as:

*...the minimum level of cultural heritage significance that a place or object must possess to justify its inclusion on the relevant local, state, national or world heritage list.*

As a general principle:

- a place that is of heritage value to a locality or municipality has the potential to be recognised as being of local cultural heritage significance (and may be included in the Heritage Overlay of the local planning scheme);
- a place or object that is of heritage value to wider Victoria has the potential to be recognised as being of state level cultural heritage significance (and may be included in the VHR). Further discussion of how state level cultural heritage significance can be determined is explored under each heritage assessment criterion.
- a place with outstanding heritage value to the nation has the potential to be recognised as being of national heritage significance (and may be included in the National Heritage List); and
- a place that is of outstanding universal value has the potential to be recognised as being of world heritage significance (and may be inscribed on the World Heritage List).

It is important to note that a place or object may, for example, be of local, state and national heritage significance and be subject to multiple statutory mechanisms.



### 3 BACKGROUND ASSESSMENT

#### 3.1 Introduction

There are regional variations in the type of stone used for DSW, as the local geology varies from one place to another, dictating the shape and size of available stone as well as the workability of the material. DSW can be built as a 'single' wall, of one stone in thickness, or two stone walls (double dyke) built parallel to each other. The stones used on dry stone walls diminish in size as the wall is erected, using the largest stones as the foundation layers, also known as the footing or foundation stones. The following courses are constructed using building stones for single wall construction or face stones for double wall construction. Hearting or packing is used to fill in voids within the wall. The top stone on the wall is the cope stone which holds down the stones beneath and sheds rain water.

DSW were all made for a particular function. Usually they were an aid to farming by forming a longstanding field barrier, using readily available material. They keep livestock and wild animals from crops, define the property boundary and also provide a use for the stone removed from the field so that grass and crops can grow better. DSW widely where there is plenty of stone, either loose or easily quarried within a short distance. DSW are also valued by people as part of their heritage and vernacular tradition. Not only were many built and repaired, with great effort, by the ancestors of local families but they are also of interest because of the variations in the local styles of construction and the features found. The styles are directly related to the shape and hardness of the stone available locally. The features, such as the stiles, gateways and sheep holes also vary considerably in style.

Victoria has more DSW than any other state in the country and the network of walls in the Western District comprises the greatest group of walls in terms of number, length, height and overall size. Victoria's Western District is one of the world's great basalt plains.

The plains are dotted with dormant and extinct volcanoes, which have poured out the stones, which then covered the plains. These are igneous rocks being the products of molten magma from deep in the earth's crust. Some have cooled slowly at depth and have then been uplifted and exposed by erosion either very locally or over larger areas. Others cooled quickly when erupted from volcanoes. Suitable stone raw material for DSW construction typically sourced from surface or near surface deposits and due to the widespread distribution of lava flows, were abundant across the landscape.

Contrary to popular belief, the walls throughout Australia were not built by convicts, but by craftsmen employed by free settlers. The landscape was given new form and function by the migrants who began arriving about the middle of the 19th century. The early migrants who arrived before the gold rushes were English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh and Cornish who were used to using stone built the walls in Victoria's Western District. Stone material played a part in determining style; the denser basaltic stone in generally low, massive walls, and the lighter volcanic enabling narrower walls due to better grip between stones. Other European migrants who settled in Victoria brought their skills to the goldfields. Whilst the stone and the landscape of their home countries were sometimes different, the waller / stonemason adapted his skills and learnt to effectively use the available stone. Dry stone construction is found in several other parts of the State - in the goldfields area around Maldon, Castlemaine, Chewton and Walhalla where walls and some buildings were constructed from sandstone. These structures were mainly built by Swiss, Italian and German immigrants and were different in the type of stone and in the style of construction from those built in the Western District. This was because of the difference of local available stone types. The Swiss, Italians and Germans whose dry stone skills had come from the fact that their

homeland stone was of a similar nature to the stone where they were settling – coursed flat bedded stone. This work has been identified more around Central Victoria than anywhere else in the State.

It is unclear why DSW were constructed and there are likely a myriad of reasons each dependent on the individual needs of the person constructing or commissioning their wall. Certainly clearing the fields of the over-abundant supply of loose volcanic stone, the availability of relatively cheap labour and skilled immigrants, protection from rabbit plagues, and continuation of the traditional use of stones as a fencing material during the 19th century in Britain are relevant functional explanations for their construction. It appears that the easier availability of wire and higher wages resulted in a decline in full construction of stone walls sometime after the 1880s.

### 3.2 DSW within the Lindum Vale PSP area

The definition of a DSW is made on the basis of a number of attributes including evidence that there is a clear intention to place at least two rocks on top of the other in a linear or semi-linear line. This definition also needs to differentiate between low walls and or destroyed dismantled walls and instances where only a single row of stones was placed along the base of post and wire fences during land clearing practices. These occurrences typically lack structural integrity and consist of various sized rocks of inappropriate morphologies and raw material types.

There is approximately 4.3 km of linear or semi-linear stone occurrences across the Lindum Vale PSP area (Map 1); however, only 496 metres of this distance comprises occurrences that are two stones or higher. This measurement includes a square DSW compound within the bluestone homestead complex. The remaining 3804 comprises semi-linear or scattered rocks that are considered to have been too heavy and cumbersome to have been used by wallers for the purposes of constructing DSW (Plates 1-2). These correspond to all stone occurrences in the 'Rating 1' category on Map 1 and Table 2.

The 496 metres of walls greater than two stones high includes 281 metres of Rating 2 DSW that are two stones or higher or less than 40%, but more the 20% of their original height. Rating 2 DSW are indicated in yellow on Map 1 and include the immediate area at the rear of the bluestone homestead running in an easterly direction into the PSP area and the immediate area from the south boundary of the homestead running in a southerly direction to the corner of Mt. Ridley and Mickleham Roads. Rating 3 DSW comprises a total length of 215 metres; however, approximately 41 metres of this distance comprises the 100% intact DSW compound within the bluestone homestead complex indicated in aqua on Map 1. Rating 3 DSW are defined by full height walls of between 1.1 – 1.3 metres or less than 80% but more than 60% this height and retain their structural and functional integrity.

Aside from the DSW compound in the grounds of the homestead, the Rating 3 DSW in the PSP area is also at the rear of the homestead and adjoins the rating 2 DSW which runs in an easterly direction through the PSP area. This section of DSW is indicated in aqua on Map 1.

The bluestone homestead bounding the PSP area is a coursed bluestone cottage with a DSW located to the north of the dwelling. The DSW around the dwelling are substantial full DSW; although it appears they have collapsed in places and been reconstructed in a non-professional style.



# Lindum Vale Dry Stone Walls Distribution and Condition Rating



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## Legend

- Cadastral Boundaries
- Contours (10m)
- Main Road
- Minor Road
- Collector Road

- Dry Stone Walls  
- Condition Ratings
- Rating 1
  - Rating 2
  - Rating 3



0 100 200 m





| Condition Rating | Condition Description   | Approximate length in Assessment Area (m)                               |
|------------------|---|---|
| Rating 1         | Wall remnants and single course walls. These were either never intended as dry stone walls in the first place, but were merely where farmers had piled gleaned stone from the paddocks, or where a wall once existed but had been removed apart from foundation stones.   | 3804  |
| Rating 2         | Half-height composite walls, less than 40%, but more than 20% intact. These walls still have some small sections which demonstrate their original form, but more than half their structure is either fallen or inexpertly replaced, and in many cases substantial amounts of stone have been removed, for example walls along well used local roads have had much of the coping stone stolen.   | 281   |
| Rating 3         | Full height walls or less than 80% but more than 60% intact. These are the more intact 'typical' walls of the area. Some full-height walls, less than 40% intact, have been altered with the introduction of post and wire, possibly because the skill to rebuild them to full height was no longer available. Half-height walls, more than 40% intact, still have some small sections that are intact to their original height and construction, but in most cases have up to half their structure either fallen or inexpertly replaced. | 215<br>Including the 41 metre square compound in the homestead complex. |

Table 2: HCV criteria for establishing significance of historic heritage sites



*Plate 1: Example of rating 1 stone occurrence in the northern section of the Lindum Vale PSP. Note scattered nature and large basaltic floaters.*



*Plate 2: Example of Rating 1 stone in the eastern section of the Lindum Vale PSP area. This occurrence comprises a haphazard semi-linear row of stones consisted with land clearance practices.*



*Plate 3: Example of Rating 3 DSW in the PSP area. The Rating 2 DSW can be seen in the background of the image.*





*Plate 4: Overview of the Rating 3 DSW in the PSP area showing breadth of construction.*



*Plate 5: The full DSW compound in the grounds of the homestead.*



## 4 SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 Social:

The DSW at Lindum Vale has social significance at a local level as a distinctive local landmark.

### 4.2 Rarity:

The DSW is a common surviving example of an agricultural / early pioneering building type and is important for its ability to demonstrate early land use practices at a local level.

### 4.3 Representativeness:

The Rating 3 DSW (including the DSW within the homestead complex) is a fine and intact example of late 19th century DSW building technology. It is a good example that has been maintained in good condition and, while it no longer serves its intended purposes, it has retained its visual and structural integrity.

### 4.4 Visual Integrity

The Lindum Vale DSW is aesthetically distinctive and has retained its landmark qualities.

The only visual changes made to the original structure over the years is the top two layers of coping stones have been removed from the Rating 3 DSW and half or approximately 40-60% of the DSW has been removed from the Rating 2 DSW.

### 4.5 Structural Integrity

The condition survey and structural review of the Rating 2 and Rating 3 DSW found the walls condition to be good with little to no structural weaknesses and little risk of collapse.

### 4.6 Functional Integrity

The DSW no longer serves its original function.

### 4.7 Statement of Significance

DSW were all made for a particular function. Usually they were an aid to farming by forming a longstanding field barrier, using readily available material. They keep livestock and wild animals from crops, define the property boundary and also provide a use for the stone removed from the field so that grass and crops can grow better. Dry stone walls occur widely where there is plenty of stone, either loose or easily quarried within a short distance. Dry stone walls are also valued by people as part of their heritage and vernacular tradition. Not only were many built and repaired, with great effort, by the ancestors of local families but they are also of interest because of the variations in the local styles of construction and the features found.

Dry stone walls are a direct link to the local history. They are of early technological significance at a local level as an example of early land use practices associated with agricultural and livestock activities.

DSW have landmark qualities and often have social significance for local residents. Construction of DSW marked a significant stage in the development of the agricultural / livestock industries in Victoria in the middle part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

## 5 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Statutory approval should be sought for any places on the HO or VHI which are likely to be impacted by future works or where a dry stone wall is referenced in the schedule to Clause 52.37.

- The purpose of the Heritage Overlay is:
- To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.
- To conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance.
- To conserve and enhance those elements which contribute to the significance of heritage places.
- To ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places.
- To conserve specifically identified heritage places by allowing a use that would otherwise be prohibited if this will demonstrably assist with the conservation of the significance of the heritage place.

The process for preparing Precinct Structure Plans is currently underway in parts of the City of Hume, including areas where numerous DSW are present. While there is potential for managing DSW in the PSP process through provision of compatible land use, reserves and location of infrastructure, the PSP outcome does still not preclude preservation of particular sections of DSW, as there will be options for partial retention, relocation and reconstruction of walls or other mitigation measures, during later planning and design stages including development plans, subdivision plans and functional layout plans as part of the planning permit process.

While the PSP provides the framework for how a precinct is to be developed over 20-30 years (which may include the removal of DSW) the PSP or the UGZ still requires planning permits for use, development and subdivision. Further the UGZ doesn't exempt development in the PSP area from permit triggers in other sections of the planning scheme. A permit will still be required to remove, demolish or alter a dry stone wall under Clause 52.37. Some approved PSPs require dry stone walls that are impacted at the subdivision stage to be reconstructed at the developers cost.

A hierarchy of preference should be given to managing walls as follows;

- Retain and conserve in original setting,
- Avoid impacts to wall in new development,
- Reconstruct ion of walls on new alignments
- Demolition ion and removal.

## 5.1 Objectives

- To ensure the cultural significance of dry stone walls is not adversely impacted, by ensuring that demolition is minimised and any repair or creation of openings in walls does not change the alignment or style.
- To ensure the structural integrity of walls is maintained.

## 5.2 Guidelines

MAB should consider that Council encourages applicants to practice a policy of avoidance or minimising demolition of walls. Demolition may only occur if the demolition is shown to be unavoidable and strategic justification is given to the satisfaction of Council's Heritage Advisor.

The original alignment and construction style of a wall must be maintained in any repair or maintenance works to walls.

Reconstruction of wall sections must be undertaken by a professional waller, utilising stone which matches the original type and design of the wall to the satisfaction of Council's Heritage Advisor.

Any demolition of a section of a wall for a through way or to create road breaks will require new wall ends to be built.

Ends of walls breached for new openings or gates should be properly finished at wall ends, with closer stones and tie backs to ensure they do not deteriorate or collapse.

While maintaining the original alignment of a wall is important and desirable, where a road widening is required, reconstruction of the wall on the new property boundary is an acceptable alternative to complete removal.

A planning permit is required to:

- Change the alignment of any wall
- Change the arrangement of openings and gateways in walls
- Demolish any part of a wall
- Reconstruct part or section of a wall
- Construct new wall ends

## 6 MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

These management recommendations are intended to provide context for decisions in managing walls so that comparison can be made and decisions about overall retention and selection of walls to conserve or remove can be formulated.

### 6.1 Recommendation 1

All Rating 1 stone occurrences can be removed from the PSP area. They are a product of land clearance practices and are not associated DSW development.

### 6.2 Recommendation 2

Rating 2 and Rating 3 DSWs are intact but in a degraded state of preservation. It is critical that DSWs are managed effectively in the future so they do not compromise public safety.

It is recommended that options for removal and reconstruction of DSWs be considered by MAB in areas of open space.

More specialised repairs which involve removal and reconstructing a wall or section of wall, should only be undertaken where appropriate resources and skills are available. It is therefore recommended that wherever possible, walls that cannot be retained *in situ* are dismantled by a suitable qualified dry stone waller.

If walls cannot be preserved or reconstructed in open space a robust historical impact assessment (HIA) must be completed including a broad thematic environmental history of the DSW and associated land use patterns.

## 7 CONCLUSION

There are approximately 3804 metres of Rating 1 linear stones within the PSP area. These occurrences correspond to the physical manifestation of land clearance practices across the broader area. They are characterised by scattered semi-linear basalt occurrences comprising highly variable size frequencies, many of which could not be lifted manually. There are no Heritage Overlay protocols or other legislative requirements for the Rating 1 stone occurrences within the PSP area and they can be removed from site.

The Rating 2 DSW are concentrated around the homestead, the construction of which is in-line with property demarcation in the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The 281 metres of Rating 2 DSW are characterised by half and full walls that are less than 60% and more than 40% intact with all coping stones removed. Rating 2 DSW in the PSP area are highly degraded and should be rebuilt in areas of open space.

The Rating 3 DSW in the PSP is an extension of the Rating 2 DSW heading in an easterly direction from the rear of the homestead. The Rating 3 DSW comprises walls that are less than 80% and more than 60% intact with all coping stones removed. Rating 3 DSW in the PSP area are highly degraded and, due to their height and degraded nature, may pose public safety risks. It is recommended that DSW be repaired and / or dismantled and re-established in open space.

There are no additional legislative requirements outside of the Heritage Overlay on Hume City Council's interim Clause 52.37 on their Planning Scheme. The DSW in the PSP area are not listed on the National Trust or on Heritage Victoria's (HV) Heritage Inventory or Heritage Register.

## 8 REFERENCES

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