



HERITAGE ISSUES IDENTIFICATION

PLANNING PROPOSAL SUBMISSION
ALBION HOTEL SITE
135 GEORGE STREET
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

MARCH 2015

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Issued: Final March 2015

135 George Street Parramatta Heritage Assessment March 2015

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report identifies the heritage issues and assesses potential heritage impacts resulting from future development that would follow the provisions of a Planning Proposal for the site of the Albion Hotel at 135 George Street Parramatta on the corner of Harris Street.

The Planning Proposal is based on the detailed site analysis of the site and preliminary concept design strategy prepared by Bates Smart Architects in conjunction with Robinson Urban Planning on behalf of Albion Hotel.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the principles of ICOMOS Burra Charter (the *Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*) and generally guided by the NSW Heritage Branch guidelines for “Statements of Heritage Impact” (2002).

Any assessment of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous historical archaeology is excluded from this study. Such archaeological research has been independently carried out by Comber Consulting and Casey & Lowe Archaeology & Heritage respectively. Their reports and impact assessments should be referred to in managing the archaeological resource identified on the site.

1.1 Site Location

The subject site comprises adjoining parcels of land which were all previously located within the original Section 18 of the Town of Parramatta. The lots are:

- Eastern half of the original lot 50 in DP 67960
- All of the original lot 51, consisting of DP 73471 in Torrens Title and a small section of the same lot facing Harris Street which remains in Old Systems Title.
- Lot 4 in DP 388895, the north eastern part of the original lot 50A

The site has street boundaries on George Street and Harris Street. The site is located opposite Robin Thomas Reserve across Harris Street.

To the west the site adjoins a site at 142 – 154 Macquarie Street, a site for which a separate Planning Proposal has been prepared.

The area is one under transition with major redevelopment proposals for the Parramatta CBD introducing high rise towers in the immediate vicinity.



Figure 1 — Aerial photograph showing site and context. North at top of page. The adjoining site to the west is the subject of a separate Planning Proposal for future redevelopment

1.2 The Planning Proposal

The Planning Proposal for the subject site is to increase the existing height and density controls and is based on the site assessment and urban design evaluation prepared by Bates Smart Architects in conjunction with Robinson Urban planning Pty Ltd. It provides for a three storey podium with commercial (food & beverage) uses at ground level and a 32 storey residential tower component on site A and a lower Hotel / Function centre development on site B. A five level basement carpark is proposed over the whole site.

The potential form of the development has been predicated on providing a through site link, dedication of a public square, responding to the surrounding neighbourhood context, allowing solar access to neighbouring developments, avoid overshadowing of major heritage sites including 'Hambleton Cottage', Experiment Farm Cottage' and Elizabeth farm site which are all located to the east of the site. The proposal is seen as forming part of a gateway development to the centre of Parramatta city.

1.3 Authorship

This report was prepared by Robert Staas, Associate Director / Heritage Consultant, and Léonie Masson, Historian, of NBRs+PARTNERS. The report relies on information provided by Bates Smart Architects, Robinson Urban Planning and Casey & Lowe Archaeology. Information regarding heritage sites is based on current available assessments in the public domain.

1.4 Reports by Others

This report refers to reports by others as follows:

- *Experiment Farm Cottage Conservation Management Plan*, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Final Draft, July 2001;
- *Harris Park Precinct, Parramatta City for Parramatta Council, Heritage Report on Elizabeth Farm Curtilage*, Brian McDonald + Associates Pty Ltd, 12 August 2003;
- *Hambledon Cottage Conservation Management Plan*, Rod Howard & Associates Pty Limited in association with Geoffrey Britton and Parramatta & District Historical Society Inc., December 2011;
- *The Landscape of Hambledon Cottage, Parramatta Conservation Management Plan*, MUSEcape Pty Ltd in association with Cultural Resources Management, October 2000;
- *Parramatta Historical Archaeological Landscape Management Study (PHALMS)*, Godden Mackay Logan, 2000;
- *Archaeological Assessment Albion Hotel Site, corner of George Street & Harris Street Parramatta*, Casey & Lowe, March 2015
- *Planning Proposal Design Report and Shadow Analysis prepared by Bates Smart Architects March 2015*
- *Archaeological Assessment, Cumberland Press Site, 142-154 Macquarie Street, Parramatta*, Casey & Lowe, July 2007;
- *Non-Indigenous Archaeological Testing, Cumberland Press Site, 142-154 Macquarie Street, Parramatta*, Casey & Lowe, July 2008;
- *'Development in Parramatta City and the Impact on Old Government House and Domain's World and National Heritage Listed Values'*, Planisphere, 2012.

2.0 THE SUBJECT SITE: 135 GEORGE STREET

Existing structures on the site include a one and two storey Hotel, associated outdoor areas, perimeter landscaping and adjoining car parking.

A pre history assessment of the site has been undertaken by Comber Consulting. Pre European phases of development of the site are identified as being:

- Phase 1 Formation of the landscape and swampy areas.
- Phase 2 Aboriginal Occupation and use

Casey & Lowe have researched the development of the site post-1788 and described the progressive development of the constituent allotments of the subject site. They identify five phases of European historic-period occupation of the total site area:

- Phase 3: 1790 to 1810 (Early Colonial Development) (Soldier's District)
- Phase 4: 1810 to 1843 (Early land Grants)
- Phase 5: 1843 to 1938 (Chilcott's Buildings / Whitworth Terrace)
- Phase 6: 1882 to 1924 (Albion Hotel)
- Phase 7 1924 to 2015 (Second Albion Hotel)

The structures and evidence of uses associated with the early European phases 3-6 remain largely as sub-surface remnants. The extant structures on site relate to the last phase and use as a Hotel. The existing buildings are not identified as having any heritage significance. The archaeological resources of the site are considered to be substantially disturbed but may contain remains that are of local significance.

3.0 HERITAGE LISTINGS

The site is located at the eastern edge of the lands to which *Parramatta City Centre Local Environmental Plan 2007* [PCCLEP 2007] applies. Outside that area *Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2011* [PLEP 2011] applies. Both LEPs provide for the management of developments at and in the vicinity of (i.e. 'near') heritage items under the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979*.

The site is not identified as a heritage item on PCCLEP 2007. There are, however, several local heritage items identified in the PCCLEP 2007 or PLEP 2011 that are near the site including the following:

- I489 Queens Wharf Reserve & Stone Wall Potential Archaeological Site (Local)
- I483 'Tara' 153 George Street (Local)
- I487 Gasworks Bridge adjacent to 196 George Street (Local)
- I01676 HMAS Parramatta Shipwreck Memorials (Local)
- A2 Robin Thomas Reserve Archaeological Site (Local)

Development as proposed is unlikely to have any significant impact on the identified heritage values of these local heritage sites which are generally either landscape elements associated with the river and its wider setting or as in the case of 'Tara', located at some distance from the subject site and separated from it by open landscaped areas and adjoining residential scale development.

The site is also in the wider vicinity of heritage items of state, commonwealth and world significance addressed individually below.

The *Heritage Act 1977* provides for the management of places on the 'State Heritage Register' [SHR] and for excavation of relics and other archaeological remains and deposits generally. Places nearby that are entered on the SHR include:

- 'Experiment Farm Cottage' (SHR No. 00768);
- 'Hambledon Cottage', Grounds and Archaeology (SHR No. 01888);
- Ancient Aboriginal and Early Colonial Landscape (SHR No. 01863); and,
- 'Harrisford' (SHR No. 00248).

Places on the SHR further afield include 'Elizabeth Farm' to the southeast and the Parramatta Railway Station and Lancer Barracks to the southwest and Old Government House to the West. The Planning Proposal Design Report recommends a substantial increase in the permissible height on the site. Consequentially, visual and shadowing impacts of these sites has been considered to ensure that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on their identified heritage values.



Figure 2 — Aerial photograph showing site in the context of heritage places of high significance. North at top of page. Extract from www.six.nsw.gov.au

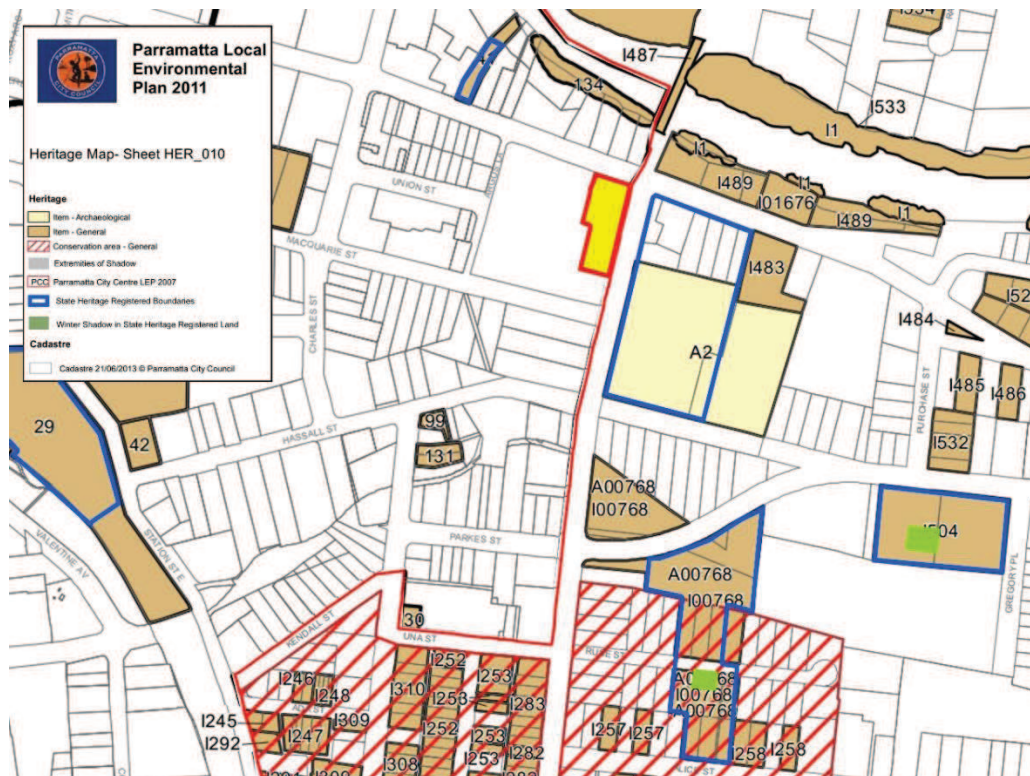


Figure 3 — Composite heritage map of PCCLEP2007 and PLEP2011 with State Heritage Register curtilages shown in blue and the subject site indicated in Yellow with a red border.

The Commonwealth *Environment and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* [EPBC Act] provides for the conservation and heritage management of Commonwealth, National and World Heritage.

- ‘Lancer Barracks’ is also listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List.
- ‘Old Government House and Government Domain’ (OGHGD) within Parramatta Park - about a kilometre west of the subject site - are together included on the National Heritage List. A large part of the National Heritage listed property is also inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List as part of the Australian Convict Sites serial listing. [‘Parramatta Park & Old Government House’ are also listed on the State Heritage Register under the provisions of the Heritage Act 1977. This listing covers the whole of Parramatta Park including the Parramatta Golf Club on the southern side of the railway.]

For discussion on the controls and heritage impacts on Lancer Barracks and OGHGD, refer to sections 8.0 and 9.0 respectively.

3.1 Heritage Impacts on the subject Site

Other than the impacts on the potential archaeological resource that follow from the archaeological significance of the site (refer studies and investigations by Casey & Lowe and Comber Consulting), development of the site as proposed in the planning Proposal Design Study would not cause any adverse heritage impacts on the site itself.

As the site is not on the State Heritage Register there would be no direct impacts on State heritage. The retention and interpretation of archaeological resources on site would enhance the public’s understanding of the historical development and significance of the site. This could be seen as a beneficial heritage impact.

3.2 Potential Impacts on Historic Views (see also Section 9.0)

Figure 4.3.3.4. (page 240) of the *Parramatta Development Control Plan 2011* [PDCP2011] defines nine 'historic views'. None of these would be impacted upon by development on the subject site. View 7 describes a view along George Street to Parramatta Park gatehouse and trees. However, this view is unidirectional west from the junction of Charles and George Streets so is both some distance from the site and looking away from it.



Figure 4.3.3.4 Historic Views

Identified View	Significance
1. Old Government House view northeast to the river, Old King's School building and site of former Government farm.	Key historic view demonstrating the relationship between the Governor, early Government farm and major school institution. Setting of both heritage items.
2. Views east to St John's along Hunter Street, available back to Parramatta Regional Park.	Hunter Street framed view to St John's church.
3. Views to St John's church and square from north	Historic main street approach to city centre and St John's historic church and other heritage items in view.
4. Views west, from eastern side of square, mall, Civic Place and Town Hall.	Backdrop/setting of church. Views to church and spires.
5. Views north and south along Church Street, including view of ANZ Dome and heritage buildings, St John's Church spires to the south and St Peter's church.	Historic main street and approach to city. A number of heritage buildings.
6. Approach to Parramatta south along Church Street from Fennell Street, sequential views.	Historic main street and approach. Relatively consistent scale and setback of streetscape.
7. Views along George Street to Parramatta Park gatehouse and trees.	Key historic street approach to the park. City edge of park, framing views to gatehouse, trees and Old Government House (not now visible), views of streetscape, heritage items.
8. View from Marys Hill across Parramatta's City Centre to distant hills.	Key historic viewing point from the highest part of the Parramatta Park with best views of the city in the river valley, glimpses to hills behind the city between buildings.
9. View from The Crescent to the distant hills Key historic viewing point from the ridge of The Crescent	Key historic viewing point from the ridge of The Crescent to glimpses of distant hills between buildings.

Figure 4 — Figure 4.3.3.4 'Historic Views' from the *Parramatta Development Control Plan 2011*. North at top of page. The location of the subject site has been annotated purple by NBRS+Partners.

Section 4.3.2 of the PDCP2011 provides controls for the Harris Park Special Precinct and the special area known as the ('Area of National Significance') immediately to the east of the subject site. Although indicated in the PDCP2011 as of 'national significance' the area is not listed on the National Heritage List maintained by the Commonwealth. Controls for the 'Area of National Significance' refer to development *within* the 'Area' (i.e. *outside* the subject site). The Plan's 'Appendix 2.1' (page 416) identifies 16 historic view corridors associated with Harris Park. None of these views extends to the development site. Views 13 and 14 are defined as views from the Thomas Street north riverbank ridge to the vegetated southern bank of the Parramatta River. Consequently, development on the site would not intervene in these views but would form a backdrop to view 14. Backdrop buildings to views from the north riverbank ridge currently exist. (See also 'Commonwealth Approvals' below.)

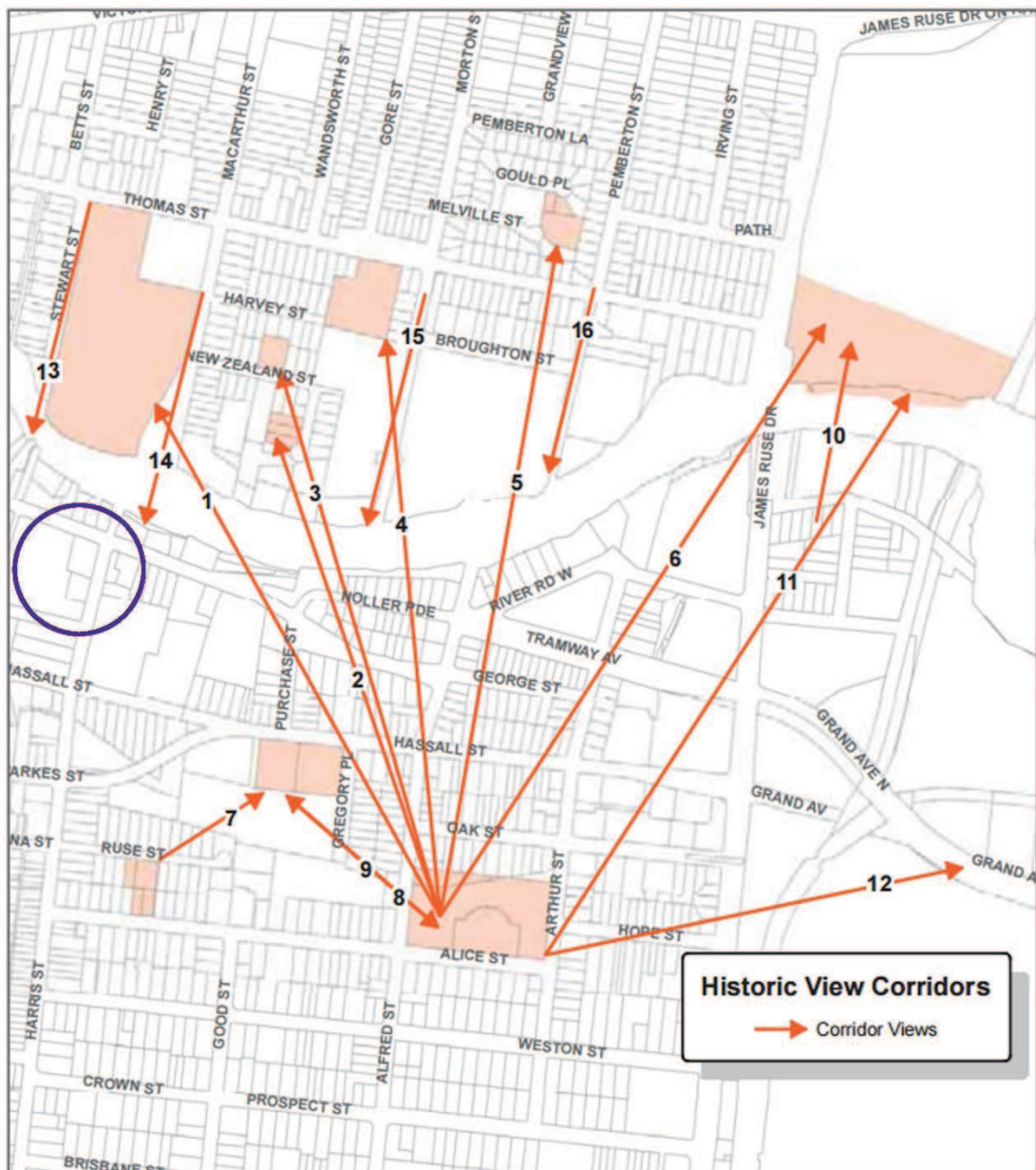


Figure 5 — Appendix 2.1 from the Parramatta Development Control Plan 2011. North at top of page. The location of the subject site has been circled by NBRSP+Partners.

3.3 Heritage Impacts in the Immediate Vicinity of the Site

State significant heritage items in the immediate vicinity of the site include:

- Ancient Aboriginal and Early Colonial Landscape (SHR No. 01863) part of which is also known as Archaeological Site A2 and Robin Thomas Reserve archaeological site; and,
- 'Harrisford' a two storey house at 182 George Street.

Robin Thomas Reserve is significant for its archaeological values and development of built form near it will have no impact on these values. Afternoon shadowing of this landscape area will result from the proposal at the Autumn Equinox and mid-winter periods as indicated in the shadow analysis in the Planning Proposal Design Report. A Construction Environmental Management Plan would manage other risks on this nearby archaeological resource during construction.

Development on the subject site of anything of greater scale than 'Harrisford' will have some visual impact on its wider setting. Development immediately adjoining 'Harrisford' and directly across George Street from it has been carried out with reference to the scale of the nineteenth century building while at the same time establishing a denser and higher context. The Planning Proposal Design Report for the subject site proposes a three storey podium along the George Street frontage with a tall tower on George Street. Any potential adverse heritage impacts that might arise from the scale shift of the proposed development to the nearby 'Harrisford' can be mitigated in the future finer grain design of the proposed built form. This could be done in the selection of materials and articulation of building massing, form and facades. Controls for building exteriors are set out in the PDCP2011 and these include requirements for mitigating impacts on heritage items.

As mentioned above, 'Experiment Farm Cottage' and 'Hambledon Cottage' and their settings are listed on the State Heritage Register. Their defined registered curtilages do not extend to the subject site which is also outside their historic curtilages. Partial shading of the curtilage of these sites will occur at various times in mid-winter as indicated in the shadow analysis in the Planning Proposal Design Report.

A review of conservation management documents for these two properties and for 'Elizabeth Farm' which is further afield, indicates that development of the subject site would not interfere with identified significant views. There will however be some overshadowing of these two properties and that known as 'Ancient Aboriginal and Early Colonial Landscape' ('Robin Thomas Reserve'). The overshadowing will occur over the first two properties in some afternoons between equinox and midwinter and afternoons throughout the year for the latter archaeological site. There is no impact from this overshadowing on the archaeological site. Arboricultural advice has confirmed that there would be little adverse impact on significant plantings at Experiment Farm Cottage and Hambledon Cottage and grounds.¹

Notwithstanding that the original 30 acre curtilage of 'Experiment Farm' has been massively reduced, the nature of its significance lies in part to its role as the first post-1788 Australian experiment in European subsistence agriculture. Expert arboricultural advice has confirmed that the limited shading of the land would not preclude the

¹ *Development Impact Assessment Report – 142-154 Macquarie Street, Parramatta*, Earthscape Horticultural Services, June 2014.

appreciation and use of the original farm lands for experimental horticulture and agriculture should such experimentation be desired.²

As no development is proposed within the land entered on the State Heritage Register, the approval of the Heritage Council would not be necessary (aside from excavation of the archaeological resource which should be managed in accordance with archaeological advice).

4.0 HARRISFORD

Summary of Impacts

'Harrisford', an item listed on the State Heritage Register, is located on the opposite side of George Street to the subject site some distance to the north/west. Due to its relative proximity, the streetscape impacts on its setting need to be assessed and mitigated. Its historic context has been substantially altered in the twentieth century by surrounding development closer to the historic house than that proposed on the subject site. The potential impacts can be mitigated when the final development is proposed, by the selection of materials and articulation of building massing, form and facades. Controls for building exteriors are set out in the PDGP2011 and these include requirements for mitigating impacts on heritage items.

The proposed increase in height and density proposed for the site will have limited and acceptable impacts on this State heritage item.

Statement of Significance:

"Harrisford, which is located between George Street and the river, is one of the oldest houses remaining in the township of Parramatta. It is an important element at the head of the river, representing the early years of settlement. Site possesses potential to contribute to an understanding early of urban development in Parramatta".³

Recommended management identified on the State Heritage Inventory includes:

- Conservation works undertaken by Clive Lucas in 1980s for Kings School Old Boys Union;
- Produce a Conservation Management Plan (CMP); and,
- Prepare a maintenance schedule or guidelines.⁴

Issues pertinent to development on the subject site, include management of views to 'Harrisford' along George Street and the streetscape and scale relationships between new development on the subject site and 'Harrisford'. These can be resolved in the design development of any development proposal and should include building massing, articulation and materials.

In terms of the current Planning Proposal the increase in height and density sought will have limited and acceptable impacts on the identified significance and wider setting of 'Harrisford' and its place in the history and fabric of Parramatta.

² Development Impact Assessment Report – 142-154 Macquarie Street, Parramatta, Earthscape Horticultural Services, June 2014.

³ State Heritage Register, Database number 5051407.

⁴ State Heritage Register, Database number 5051407.

5.0 EXPERIMENT FARM

Summary of Impacts

The Experiment Farm site is a considerable distance from the subject site, the shadow assessment of the Planning Proposal indicates that no portion of this site would be affected by overshadowing. No significant views to or from Experiment Farm would be impacted upon. There would be no significant impact on this State heritage item.

Statement of Significance:

Experiment Farm Cottage and the site of Experiment Farm is of exceptional cultural significance to Australia, NSW and Parramatta because:

- *it forms part of the first European land grant in Australia;*
- *it is associated with the early agricultural pursuits, including Governor Phillip's "experiment" to determine the period required in which a settler could become self-supporting. The initial success of Experiment Farm encouraged Phillip to open the Parramatta area to free settlement;*
- *the location demonstrates the importance of the Parramatta area in the agricultural development and early survival of the European colony;*

Following its purchase by Surgeon John Harris, it became part of "Harris' Farm", one of several large properties established by the "Parramatta Gentry" from the late 18th- mid 19th century, including those owned by the Macarthurs, Marsdens, Kings, Wentworths and Blaxlands. The current Experiment Farm Cottage formed part of "Harris' Farm"

- *It contains evidence of the various phases of the site from the late 18th century to the present, including: the topographical features associated with Ruse's Experiment Farm; the establishment of Harris' Farm and the construction of Experiment Farm Cottage; patterns of subdivision and the emergence of the present suburban setting;*
- *Experiment Farm Cottage is a finely detailed colonial bungalow dating to c.1834. Its sophisticated design is demonstrated through the architectural treatment of the front facade, including French doors, delicate columns and main entrance, and the internal treatment of room configuration and its methods of integrating the verandah into the main area of the house;*
- *of its visual prominence in the surrounding landscape. The position of Experiment Farm Cottage demonstrates important relationships with the landscape. Situated on a once prominent rise, the current house addresses the north towards Parramatta River and Clay Cliff Creek;*
- *of its surviving fabric (both extant and archaeological), and the vast body of records documenting its historical development. In particular, resources from the 19th century provide information on the development and layout of Harris' Farm, including Experiment Farm Cottage and associated farm features such as former fence lines, carriage drive, farm roads, plantings, stables, outbuildings and pattern of subdivision;*

- *Efforts by the community since the 1920s have assisted in its conservation, culminating in the acquisition of the property by the NSW National Trust in 1961. Local residents have expressed great interest in the ongoing conservation of the property and recognise its heritage significance as contributing towards the identity of Harris Park. (Britton & Morris, 2001)*
- *Experiment Farm cottage has a strong association with the earliest free settlement of land in Australia and with the first grant to a freed convict, James Ruse. It also has a strong association with John Harris. The house is a rare example of an early farmhouse in very intact condition. Site possesses archaeological potential to contribute to an understanding of early development in Parramatta.*⁵

Pertinent to development on the subject site, elements of the landscape and setting that contribute to the significance of Experiment Farm Cottage include vistas:⁶

- The northerly aspect of Experiment Farm Cottage (including the views to and from the former Clay Cliff Creek and Parramatta River)
- Views approaching Experiment Farm Cottage (from west along Ruse Street and alignment of former carriage drive)
- Views to the north from Alice Street through the reserve (along the former track leading to the stables)
- View of Bunya and Hoop Pines located at Hambledon Cottage and Elizabeth Farm.

Conservation policies⁷ that bear on development of the subject site include:

Policy 2.0.1

Develop a mechanism (such as a Memorandum of Understanding) between the National Trust and Parramatta City Council for the ongoing conservation and management of Experiment Farm Cottage, its landscape setting and the archaeological resource that:

*Recognise the cultural significance of Experiment Farm Cottage and landscape;
Provides for the ongoing care and maintenance of the reserve areas as part of the landscape setting for Experiment Farm Cottage; and
Recognise areas of archaeological potential. (p135)*

Policy 2.1.2

Ensure that open space areas remain part of the curtilage and landscape setting for Experiment Farm Cottage. (p136)

Policy 2.1.3

Ensure that landscaping works undertaken in the reserve areas consider the landscape setting for Experiment Farm Cottage and recognises the cultural significance of Experiment Farm Cottage and Experiment Farm. (p136)

Policy 5.1.1

Ensure that the Reserves continue to form part of the curtilage of Experiment Farm Cottage. (p144)

⁵ State Heritage Register, Database number 5051403.

⁶ Experiment Farm Cottage Conservation Management Plan, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Final Draft, July 2001.

⁷ Experiment Farm Cottage Conservation Management Plan, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Final Draft, July 2001.