Parramatta City Council

South Parramatta Conservation Area Review

**Heritage Comments** 

- Final Report (March 2014)

Issue:

- A Final Draft Text Only (02/03/2014)
- B Final Draft with illustrations (09/03/2014)
- C Final with comments (16/03/2014)

## South Parramatta Conservation Area Review

## **Heritage Comments - Final Report**

This report is prepared to inform the Parramatta City Council's Land Use Planning Team of identified issues with, and desirable changes to, Parramatta LEP 2011 and DCP 2011. The report is prepared as part of the review of South Parramatta heritage conservation area.

The report briefly presents:

- History of the area, including a case study of one property (deemed typical of the pattern of development in the area),
- Significance of buildings (via external inspection and desktop research), and
- Recommendations.

The report was prepared by Zoran Popovic, Council's Heritage Advisor, in February and March 2014.

# 1. History of South Parramatta Area

The history of development of the South Parramatta conservation area is described in the Section 4.4.4.2 of the PDCP 2011 as follows:

This area includes two rural grants to Meehan and to Norris. Development to the south of Parramatta township occurred later than that to the north, and the 1855 Street Alignment Plan shows very few buildings in this area. In 1855 the railway from Sydney to Parramatta Junction (now Granville) terminated near Meehan's grant. Anticipating a demand for housing close to the terminus, Meehan's land was subdivided into 22 allotments of 50 feet x 150 feet and auctioned in 1856. When the railway was extended to Parramatta in 1860, the subdivision lost its attraction. Nevertheless, modest but slow development did occur, most aimed at the rental market. Brickmaking was also occurring at that time along A'Becketts Creek. Ten houses remain from this early period. All stand on or close to the front fence.

The 1880s saw rapid suburban expansion throughout Sydney. In South Parramatta, Norris's grant was subdivided and more houses built. Rental housing remained important. Some allotments were amalgamated and re-subdivided for smaller lot housing. The Detail Survey of 1895 shows 104 buildings scattered through the Conservation Area at that time. Eleven were later demolished for the park and eight went in recent years for the flats in Lennox Street. Forty-seven of those 104 houses remain today - a very high retention rate.

Houses continued to be built in the early years of last century, 28 of which remain intact. They stand further from the front fence than the earlier cottages. In the 1920s, Sydney experienced another rash of suburban development, at which time all houses on the western side of Alma Street and most of those on the eastern side of Denison Street were built. Other houses were built on vacant allotments scattered throughout the area. Front gardens were deeper than previously, gardening being at that time an important part of suburban living. Crimea Street was the important cross street, linking Church Street with Pitt Street, and small groups of shops were built on corner positions to serve this passing trade and local needs. Some vacant allotments remained, however, until the 1960s. Since then some earlier houses have been demolished for new development, or altered comprehensively in attempts to update them.

The area thus developed around the subdivision of two large rural estates. The initial subdivision included the creation of a street layout (albeit without paving), the division of land into parcels, but not much else. In this early period, water was supplied from wells in rear yards and sewerage was not instantly organised. The earliest recorded plan of the area is dated 1855-1856 and is associated with the sale by "Bowden & Threlkeid", advertised for 7 January 1856 (Figure 1).

A comparison of the layout of the 1855 subdivision and current subdivision and street layout indicates that:

- □ The long-term plan for the area in 1855 appears to include the continuation of Lansdowne Street, a proposal which did not eventuate.
- □ A number of today's properties retain their original 1855 boundaries, including:
  - The majority of properties in Crimea, Denison and Alma Streets, the eastern side of Carrington Street, and the part of Inkerman Street that is within the conservation area; and
  - □ A substantial proportion of the sites in Marsden Street and Lansdowne Street.
- The current area boundaries do not match the original subdivision boundaries; major parts of the subdivision are outside the conservation area, however, small areas of land (including part of the government domain and today's Lansdowne Street – south side) were included in the area.





Despite the advertised sale of land, few individual lots of this original subdivision were sold. The repeated advertisement for the sale of land, now being handled by F M Overton (not dated, est. late 1865 – ref. Figure 2) shows that land was mostly being sold in whole street blocks (indicating speculative purchases) and that land closer to the Granville Junction (mostly outside today's conservation area) apparently sold quicker.

The development took time, and some of these speculative areas remained undeveloped for decades. As an example, the street block between Crimea, Denison, Rosehill and Alma Streets remained vacant land and its allotments were re-offered for sale in 1919 (refer to Figure 3). This represented a considerable delay of 64 years in area development.

Surrounding areas remained equally undeveloped. For example, the area to the north of Lennox Street (Early Street, refer to Figure 4) was not developed until the "Hillside Estate" subdivision in 1912. Note that by that time (1912), there were only two cottages on 12 allotments. However, every lot was "kerbed and guttered", and "water, sewerage and gas" were available.



Figure 2 Map of the 1856 Overton's sale. Today's conservation area boundaries are overlaid in blue. Note the crossed-out allotments, presumably indicating these were sold in the original Sale in January 1856. (Source: Town of Parramatta, valuable building allotments for sale by F.M. Overton, publication date 1856; publisher E.J.H. Knapp; http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/36804205 access date 21 February 2014)



**Figure 3** Advertisement of sale of land, Muston's Estate, 1919. Land in this estate was purchased as a speculative investment of the first subdivision, but remained undeveloped for decades. (Source: Parramatta Heritage Centre, Archived Plan P6.73)



**Figure 4** Advertisement of sale of land, Hillside Estate, 1912. Land in this estate was also initially purchased as a speculative investment. (Source: Parramatta Heritage Centre, Archived Plan P6.103)

Eventually developed allotments were mostly "investment" rather than outright "speculative" properties. A typical example, set out hereafter, follows the development of 13 Carrington Street.

This house is part of a group of four properties at 9-15 Carrington Street, developed at the same time and to a similar design. Each house had a single storey structure; a simple 2/4 room plan built with a timber frame with weatherboard cladding. Each front featured a small verandah and fences were of a simple post-and-rail design. Today, the four houses are listed as a single heritage item.

A detailed search on 13 Carrington Street indicates that this property was first time purchased in 1878, 22 years after the original subdivision. It was bought by (William) Richard Murray, listed in Land Titles documents as an Ironmonger.

He was a famous Parramatta businessman at the time, the older of the Murray Brothers, who also developed a number of other properties in the area. At this time, he had only opened his hardware store on Church Street (opened in 1876) and his brother had not yet joined him in any business ventures. Later, they would leave construction business to establish the famous Murray Brothers Department Stores.

The houses at 9, 11, 13 and 15 Carrington Street are confirmed in the 1895 Public Works Department survey of the area. The survey, completed for the Water Board, shows all structures, fences and wells on properties. At this time, only 8 of the 15 lots in the associated street block were developed (ref. Figure 5). The majority of the houses shown in this survey had wells, and virtually all had outhouses.



**Figure 5** 9-15 Carrington Street, footprint c. 1895, with marked site of 13 Carrington Street. (Source: Public Works Department detailed survey, 1894-1895, detail of the Detailed Sheet 2723, original held by the Sydney Water Corporation's Plan Room)



**Figure 6** 13 Carrington Street, footprint c. 1895. Note letter "B" indicating a brick kitchen, behind the "W" (weatherboard) house. (Source: Public Works Department detailed survey 1894-1895, detail of the (Surveyor's) Field Book FB 1690, original held by the Sydney Water Corporation's Plan Room)

The house at No. 13 was most likely completed by August 1881, when it was sold to Isaac White of Parramatta, Storekeeper. The subsequent history of the house was retrieved from Sands Directories. The Sands Sydney Directory was published annually from 1859 to 1932, listing householders and business names street by street, and neighbourhood by neighbourhood.

White was confirmed as the resident in the early street directories, including the *Fuller's Directories* for 1885 and until 1887 when the *Fuller's* ceased. White was also confirmed in Carrington Street in the *Sands Directories* from 1884 (when Parramatta was first included in the *Sands*) and until 1892, after which no further information on this person was retrieved.

An enlarged detail from the Surveyor's Field Book (Figure 6) shows that the house in 1894-1895 had verandahs at the front and rear. The rear verandah provided connection to the detached brick structure (kitchen), which some houses had behind the main house which was clad in timber. Three of the four houses in the Carrington Street group had such detached brick kitchens at this time.

In the 1890s, Carrington Street had no house numbers, making it difficult to reconstruct a list of residents after Isaac White vacated the house. Given that the house remained in his ownership, it is concluded that it was leased, and the following list is based on the assumed position of the house in the street. The Sands indicate that the early tenants rarely stayed for two consecutive years: in 1892, the house was tenanted by a Mr Down, in 1893 by Mr Slater, in 1894 by Richard Johnstone, in 1895 by someone named Langfield, and in 1896 by a Miss E. Plater. As none of these tenants' occupations were recorded, it is fair to presume that they were not professional people, indicating their socio-economic status.

It would appear that the house was vacant in 1897-1898, and then tenanted by William Culpan (in some years listed as: Culpin) from 1899-1904. In 1905, the house was sold to Frederick Handley, and he is listed in the *Sands* from that year until 1932, when the *Sands* ceased.

The house footprint is next shown in the 1943 aerial photograph of the area, and then in the 1959 repeated survey of the area, conducted for the (then) Water Board. Both these records (Figures 7 and 8) show the house at No. 13 (like its neighbours at Nos. 9, 11 and 15) without additions to the floor plan. However, the few vacant lots of land shown in 1943 have all been developed by the time of the 1959 survey.



**Figure 7** Aerial photograph of part of South Parramatta, 1943, with marked area of 9-15 Carrington Street. (Source: Parramatta City Council GIS)



**Figure 8** Water Board's updated Detailed Survey Sheet No. 2723, dated 1959, with marked area of 9-15 Carrington Street. (Source: original held by the Sydney Water Corporation's Plan Room)

Research of the Land Titles documents indicates that the house remained in the ownership of Frederick Handley, and then his daughter Elma until 2005, when she passed away and the house was sold to Mr and Mrs Arnautovich. In the meantime, the house underwent a series of alterations, typical of most historic houses in the area. These included installation of services, fitting kitchens and bathrooms, removal of fireplaces, and enclosing of the rear verandah. In 2006, with council's approval, the house was restored, and an elongated rear wing was added, incorporating the brick kitchen in the floor plan. The garage with workshop was also added to the property. The outcome is a full three-bedroom house, fully in keeping with the current DCP controls (shown in Figure 9).



Figure 9 Additions to 13 Carrington Street, c. 2006. (Source: Parramatta City Council DA file)



**Figure 10** Aerial photograph of part of South Parramatta, 2013, with marked area of 9-15 Carrington Street. Compare Figure 7. (Source: Parramatta City Council GIS)

A brief comparison of the aerial photograph of 2013 (Figure 10) with previous aerial photographs and surveys, shows how the area was developed and how the density of development has increased over the decades since 1856.

#### 2. Significance and Zones

The DCP offers the following Statement of Significance:

This area is the earliest remaining example in Parramatta of a speculative private subdivision related to the railway. The pattern of subdivision remains along with a very intact collection of early pre-1900 cottages. The consistently single storey scale of most of its housing and associated shops, and the range of building styles, from the 1850s to the 1960s, clearly demonstrate the way in which this suburb gradually developed and allows its history to be understood.

For the purposes of this project, this statement is adopted verbatim, and used to assess whether any changes to the current controls are required. Any potential corrections to this statement of significance are deemed to be out of scope of the current project.

As indicated above, the initial development typically included street blocks, or sizeable portions thereof – groups of lots, developed around the same time. Due to the different development time of street blocks, there are several distinctive zones in the conservation area. A special case is the open recreational space of the former Glebe, which was never developed. Whilst usually easily identifiable as street blocks, these areas do not present clearly divided "territories." A number of development anomalies exist within the areas, and in some cases are of concern, e.g. in proceedings of the Land and Environment Court, where existing anomalies were used as precedent for future development.

In that regard, the following distinctive zones / areas are identified:

- □ The key core of the area is represented by the rectangular blocks between Crimea Street to the north, Rosehill Street to the south, Carrington Street to the west and Inkerman Street to the east. This includes whole streets: Crimea, Carrington, Denison and Alma Street, Inkerman Street (west side), and the encompassed part of Marsden Street.
- □ The majority of the area of the former Glebe Land (now the park) is of a different, albeit generally complementary character.
- □ It is noted that in the same case, the Commissioner indicated a need for a "transition" zone, allowing for a smoother change in scale from single storey cottages to the surrounding multi-unit development.
- □ Lansdowne Street (south side, east of Inkerman Street) presents a relatively compact group of historical houses. However, this zone does not provide the same experience as the other streets in the conservation area, mainly because it is surrounded by blocks of flats developed on all sides.
- The western fringe of the conservation area, facing Pitt Street/Railway Street, has been developed c.1940s and has a somewhat different character, facing larger development in Pitt Street. This is similar to the experience of Lansdowne Street east of Inkerman Street. To a degree, the same is true for Crimea Street north side. However, unlike Lansdowne Street, Crimea and Pitt / Railway Streets are organically connected to the other streets in the area. Thus these "fringe" zones may present a logical choice for any potential "transition" zones, if such zones are considered inside the conservation area.

□ Major townhouse development in Marsden Street is a development anomaly. It was quoted by the Commissioner of the L&E Court as being a relevant precedent in the proceedings against the Council in 2010. The Council's views that this was a unique and special case were disregarded. This raises the question as to how appropriate is for this area to remain in the conservation area.



**Figure 11** Aerial photograph of South Parramatta conservation area, c. 2013, with marked areas of different character. (Source: base sourced form www.google.com)

Core areas

Fringe zones

The Park

Zones of atypical elements

## 3. Results of the Survey of Individual Buildings

For the purposes of this project, the houses in the area were individually visually surveyed in February 2014. The following key matters were identified:

- There are a number of houses in the area which are not tenanted, and appear to have been vacant for a long period. These include Nos. 11 and 13 Denison Street, and Nos. 44 and 46 Marsden Street.
- Some houses which are currently not heritage listed are deemed worthy of individual listing. These include houses at: 8 Alma Street, 10 Alma Street, 11 and 13 Denison Street (as a pair). It can also be argued that the majority of houses in Lansdowne Street (south side, east of Inkerman Street) are worthy of collective listing as a group. There are precedents of similar group listings of houses, e.g. Marion Street and Wigram Street, Harris Park).
- In the area there are a limited number of historical properties and several post-1950s houses, which feature a second storey. However, they have a different character to the rest of the buildings in the conservation area, which is acknowledged. These include historical shops with flats over at 8 and 8A Crimea Street. Their ground floors were built for commercial use, though they are currently zoned for residential use in the LEP.
- □ Some houses were demolished since the previous survey was undertaken for the purposes of the DCP (in 1996). These include 6A Lansdowne Street, 8 Lansdowne Street, 24 Crimea Street, and 34 Crimea Street.
- Some 1950s houses have lost their integrity, or have been modified to the point where they no longer contribute to the area's significance. This includes 2 Crimea Street and 21 Lansdowne Street.
- Three houses were wrongly entered twice in the DCP schedules, being Nos. 23, 49 and 51
  Marsden Street (listed as both 1900-1920s Federation period and as 1920s-1930s Bungalows).
- The age of some houses appears to have been incorrectly identified in the DCP (in that they may be older than thought). This includes 4 Crimea Street, 27 Crimea Street, 12 Alma Street and 8 Rosehill Street.
- □ The age of some houses appears to have been incorrectly identified in the DCP (in that they may be later than thought). This includes 9, 11 and 13 Alma Street.
- □ The idea of separating historical houses by the age in the DCP is not consistent with other conservation areas, where buildings are simply identified as contributing.

## 4. Summary proposal – options

The following heritage recommendations arise from the analysis presented previously. Primarily, it is deemed necessary to align the planning controls and heritage controls for the area and to correct the DCP details (schedule of significant houses in the area) to reflect the changes which have taken place. It is also recommended that consideration be given to changing area boundaries to consolidate the area, to remove uncharacteristic elements from the area and to encourage the conservation and restoration of properties on Lansdowne Street by allowing for their integration into the new development proposed for Auto Alley.

In detail, it is recommended to:

- □ Align LEP and DCP controls: land use zoning, allowable FSR and height.
- □ No further subdivisions in the area should be allowed.
- □ New development to be limited to single storey, but allowing exemptions for two storey additions to properties which were originally built as two storey.
- □ Consider the creation of a thoroughfare following the path of the extension of Lansdowne Street designed in the 1850s.
- □ Consider allowing a buffer / transition zone, along Crimea Street (north) and along Pitt Street and Railway Street, where attics may be permissible to the rear of properties.
- Consider reducing the conservation area boundaries to exclude part of the Glebe block, specifically the townhouse developments at 66 and 70 Marsden Street. Whilst this will exclude heritage items on adjacent sites: 74 and 76 Marsden Street, their values will be protected through existing individual heritage listing. The reduction of the area could also consider excluding the park from the conservation area boundaries.
- □ Assess Lansdowne Street south side, to the east of Inkerman Street for potentially meeting heritage listing criteria as a group item.
- Consider removing Lansdowne Street south side, to the east of Inkerman Street from the conservation area boundaries and protecting the heritage values of properties here through a group listing of houses in this street segment. The exclusion of this group would allow for the amalgamation of properties, with the transfer of FSR and the subsequent adaptive reuse of these houses in a new context.
- Assess houses at 8 Alma Street (individually), 10 Alma Street (individually) and 11 and 13 Denison Street (as a pair) for heritage listing.
- □ Change zoning at 8 and 8A Crimea Street to allow commercial use on ground floors (B1).
- Remove demolished houses from the schedule of significant houses in the DCP, specifically 6A
  Lansdowne Street, 8 Lansdowne Street, 24 Crimea Street and 34 Crimea Street.
- Investigate age of houses which appear to be incorrectly dated (in that they may be older than thought) and update information in the DCP accordingly: 4 Crimea Street, 27 Crimea Street, 12 Alma Street and 8 Rosehill Street. Investigate the age of houses which appear to be incorrectly dated (in that they may be later than thought) and update information in the DCP accordingly: 9, 11 and 13 Alma Street.
- Remove one entry of houses entered twice in the DCP schedule of significant houses.
  Specifically, remove Nos. 23 and 49 Marsden Street from the list of 1920s-1930s Bungalows and remove 51 Marsden Street from the list of 1900-1920s Federation period houses.
- □ Remove 1950s houses which have been significantly modified from schedule of significant houses in the DCP, specifically: 2 Crimea Street and 21 Lansdowne Street.

## 5. Photographs

The photographs presented in the following pages are organised in these categories:

- General Area Views from the Park
- Some of the Oldest Houses in the Area
- Case Study Carrington Street
- Historical Two Storey Elements
- Proposed Zoning Change
- Proposed New Individual Items
- Lansdowne Street (South Side, from East to West)
- Recently Developed Sites
- Intrusive and Atypical Elements
- Houses Recommended to be Removed from Schedule of Significant Houses
- Houses of Re-assessed Age

Note that not all relevant buildings were photographed, as in some cases clear views were obstructed. Specifically, the sites of the recently demolished Nos. 5 and 7 Lansdowne Street, are now being redeveloped with Council's approval, and views were obstructed by the construction site fence.

- General Area Views from the Park



Figure 12 General view of the area from the north, panoramic view (top) and enlarged details (below)





Figure 13 General view of the area from the north, panoramic view (top) and enlarged details (below)

Some of the Oldest Houses in the Area



Figure 14 Lansdowne Street, Nos. 1 and 3 (c. 1860)



Figure 15 Marsden Street, Nos. 44, 46, 48 and 50 (c. 1880)

#### Case Study – Carrington Street



Figure 16 Cottages at Nos. 9-15 Carrington Street



Figure 17 Cottages at No. 15 (top) and 13 (below) Carrington Street



Figure 18 Cottages at No. 9 (top) and 11 (below) Carrington Street

South Parramatta Conservation Area Review – Heritage Comments **Historical Two Storey Elements** 



Figure 19 Nos. 8 and 8A (top) and 6 (below) Crimea Street, historical two storey elements in the area





Figure 20 Shops on the corner of Marsden and Lansdowne Streets, historical two storey elements in the area

#### - Proposed Zoning Change



Figure 21 Nos. 8 and 8A Crimea Street, currently zpned for Residential, consideration should be given to B1 zoning use

Proposed New Individual Items



Figure 22 Nos. 13 (top) and 11 (below) Denison Street, recommended for consideration as a new single item (Pair of Bungalows)



Figure 23 No. 8 Alma Street, recommended for consideration as a new individual heritage item



Figure 24 No. 10 Alma Street, recommended for consideration as a new individual heritage item

- Lansdowne Street (South Side, from East to West)



Figure 25 Lansdowne Street, south side, general views



Figure 26 Lansdowne Street, south side, general views





Figure 27 Lansdowne Street, eastern end, Nos. 57 (top) and 51-55 (below).





Figure 28 Lansdowne Street, Nos. 49 (top) and 47 (below)



Figure 29 Lansdowne Street, Nos. 43-45 (top) and No. 41 (below)



Figure 30 Lansdowne Street, No. 37 (top – adjoining No. 41 on the previous page) and the No. 35 (below)


Figure 31 Lansdowne Street, No. 33 (top) and No. 31 (below)



Figure 32 Lansdowne Street, No. 29 (top) and No. 27 (below)



Figure 33 Lansdowne Street, No. 25 (top) and No. 23 (below)



Figure 34 Lansdowne Street, No. 21 (top) and No. 19 (below)





Figure 35 Lansdowne Street, No. 17 (top) and No. 15 (below)



Figure 36 Lansdowne Street, No. 13 (top) and No. 11 (below)



Figure 37 Lansdowne Street, No. 9 (top) and No. 7 (below)



Figure 38 Lansdowne Street, No. 5 (end of the street, adjoining the reserve)

## - Recently Developed Sites



Figure 39 New houses at Nos. 24 (top) and 34 (below) Crimea Street



Figure 40 Glebe Street, part of the area recommended to be excluded from the conservation area





Figure 41 Crimea Street, modern two storey houses (viewed from Glebe Street). See also Figure 42.



Figure 42 Crimea Street, modern two storey houses (viewed from Crimea Street). See also Figure 41.



Figure 43 Marsden Street, modern two storey townhouses (viewed from the park)



Figure 44 Nos. 12-14 Denison Street

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Houses Recommended to be Removed from Schedule of Contributory Houses

Figure 45 No. 21 Lansdowne Street, recommended to be removed from the Schedule of contributory houses



Figure 46 No. 2 Crimea Street, proposed to be removed from the Schedule of contributory houses

## - Houses of Re-assessed Age



Figure 47 No. 4 Crimea Street, steep roof indicates possible c. 1860-1880s construction



Figure 48 Nos. 13 (top) and 9 (below) Alma Street present as possibly c. 1960 houses