

Appendix A - Review of Heritage Conservation Areas - Final Report June 2016

7.10 Proposed The Junction Federation Cottages Heritage Conservation Area

A section of Glebe Road in The Junction business area was examined. The area contains a highly intact group of Federation period dwellings, at street addresses 55 and 75 Glebe Road. See **Figure 7.4**.

The heritage investigation has now been undertaken by council staff and it is recommended that a Heritage Conservation Area be proposed in recognition of the heritage significance of this group of Federation era cottages. It is proposed that this area is called the “Glebe Road Federation cottages Heritage Conservation Area”. It is suggested that locality specific development controls are devised to retain the single storey scale of the group, including prescribing stringent envelope and heights controls imposed by the LEP. An amendment to the heritage schedule should be undertaken as this will create the necessary statutory controls to preserve the group.

The zoning on the north side of Glebe Road is B2 Local Centre, recognizing the commercial and shopping function. The south side of Glebe Road is zoned R3 Medium Density. It is acknowledged that the difference in zoning recognises a distinct change in the character from one side of Glebe Road to the other, from commercial to residential. The road is the boundary.

7.11 History

The cottages were constructed in rapid succession following the release of the land for residential development by the Australian Agricultural Company, in 1908. As a result, the cottages share similar characteristics and represent Federation style housing. The cottages are in fact at the southern-most edge of the AA Company's estate, so their release was coincident with the releases of other parts of the AA Company's land holding, including sections of Gordon Avenue north in Hamilton. Glebe Road itself is an important marker of the physical boundary of the AA Company's land holding, and the large Merewether Estate to the south.



Figure 7.3 - Subdivision history - The Junction (Source: NCC GIS)

7.12 Physical Description

The character of the south side of Glebe Road is defined by single storey detached weatherboard dwellings set close to Glebe Road, and set off side boundaries. It is noted that none have attached or built in garage structures with their associated garage doors facing the street. Access for vehicles is provided at the side of the dwelling and provision for parking occurs at the side or at the rear. The lack of obvious garaging is considered a distinctive feature of the group, and is evidence of the age of the dwellings. The uniformity of the group in terms of age, height, setbacks and materials contributes to defining the character.

The fieldwork confirms that most of the houses in the group have undergone renovation and restoration that retains and enhances the intact one storey weatherboard with hipped and gabled roof character.

7.13 Previous Heritage Studies

In 2004, Hunter History Consultants Pty Ltd did a brief historical analysis of the group in 2004 to accompany a development proposal²². This history has been used as the basis of this assessment of cultural significance.

In 2005, the Land and Environment Court handed down a judgment that supported refusal of a development application for demolition of a dwelling. The reason was partly attributed to the observation that the area had potential heritage significance as a group of intact Federation houses. In refusing the appeal, the judgement concluded:

"There is real evidence that there is heritage significance in the streetscape, and cultural significance in the early origins of the subdivision, and the row of houses, and there is particular reference to the cultural significance of the existing house on No. 55 Glebe Road. The council is in the process of examining that."

The court also found that because the houses are relatively intact they could be considered fine representative examples of the era of construction - ie. between 1909 and 1915. The court noted:

"The reasons the streetscape is valuable also relates to heritage matters the respondent said. In this aspect:

- (1) The land on which the row of houses stand was the first residential subdivision by the pioneering AA Company at The Junction.*
- (2) The consistency, aesthetic form, scale, detail, alignment and remnant external finishes of the row of houses are intact and demonstrate the early Federation cottage form of detached working persons' houses. Each house in the row had contributory significance for the whole row."*

The court also noted that one of the dwellings, No 55 Glebe Road, was shown to have important historical associations with RJ Kilgour, a past mayor of Merewether, and whose son was the first to enlist locally in 1915 for the First World War. The judgement states "...there is a strong association with a prominent person of the locality and WWI. There was cultural heritage value in the existing house itself".

7.14 Assessment of Cultural Significance

This review has taken these principles further and applied an assessment of cultural significance based on the NSW State heritage inventory criteria. As a result of this, it is recommended that a formalised heritage conservation area be made in Schedule 5 of the Newcastle LEP. This recommendation should be reported to council after July 2015, and based on the boundaries as shown in **Figure 7.4** below.

²² Hunter History Consultants Pty Ltd for Jackson Teece Architects, October 2004

Cultural significance has been assessed using the NSW State Heritage Inventory criteria and inclusion and exclusion guidelines, as follows:

- *Criterion a - An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history:*

The proposed Glebe Road Federation Cottages Heritage Conservation Area is important in the course of Newcastle's cultural history, as it demonstrates key aspects of the urban development of the city of Newcastle, including the gradual urban infill of land held by coal companies, including in this case, land owned by the Australian Agricultural Company. Released by the Australian Agricultural Company for auction in 1909, the group is important in the course of The Junction's cultural history as it represents the transition of this area from undeveloped mining land at the southern extremity of the AA Company's estate, to a residential area dating from the turn of the 20th century.

- *Criterion b - An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history:*

The house at 55 Glebe Road has associative significance with a prominent individual, being the home of RJ Kilgour who was one of the first mayors of the amalgamated City of Greater Newcastle. The group of houses itself has associational significance with the Australian Agricultural Company, and the south east boundary line abuts the easement of the former Burwood Coal and Copper Company railway line, which was the Merewether estate's coal haulage line.

- *Criterion c - An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW:*

The proposed Glebe Road Federation Cottages Heritage Conservation Area is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics that define the Federation period and the style of housing of that period. These features include:

1. Detached Federation cottages, with a detached single storey weatherboard cottage flanked by a driveway to one side, consistent 4 metre front setback and rear garden zones.
2. The consistency in the scale, form, massing, style, and construction of houses and allotment layout. This is aesthetically significant while also being representative of residential construction across Newcastle up until 1915 when the last house was built.

- *Criterion d - An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW for social, cultural or spiritual reasons:*

The area does not demonstrate this criterion to any notable degree.

- *Criterion e - An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history:*

The area does not demonstrate this criterion to any notable degree.

- *Criterion f - An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history:*

The area does not demonstrate this criterion to any notable degree.

- *Criterion g - An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's:*
 - *cultural or natural places, or*
 - *cultural or natural environments.*

The proposed Glebe Road Federation Cottages Heritage Conservation Area is important at the local level in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the Federation period and the nature of residential building construction in Newcastle between 1909 and 1915. The narrow window of time in which the precinct developed is significant in providing evidence of the key features of the Federation period including construction and building technologies, fashions and key elements of the Federation style, including the single storey scale of these modest dwellings, a symmetrical street frontage, open verandah, pyramidal roof form, hip and gable roofs, bearer and joist construction with lightweight cladding material (weatherboard), and the absence of garaging.

7.15 Desired Future Character Statement

This review has gathered information about the elements of heritage value in the Glebe road precinct, and the features that establish character and provide a sense of place that is recognisable and worth keeping. As a result of this work, a statement of desired future character has been prepared. If the area is subject to the regulation of a heritage conservation area, the following statement of desired future character would apply:

The character of the proposed The Junction Federation cottages Heritage conservation area is made up of the single storey Federation cottages that were built between 1909-1920. The homogenous character of this precinct will be preserved and maintained through the retention of all contributory buildings, elements of visual interest and heritage significance. Elements that are to be preserved include:

- *The building group at 55 to 75 Glebe Road, The Junction, is a fine representative example of a group of intact Federation era cottages which have high contributory value to the streetscape.*
- *The urban form which reflects a regular pattern of subdivision and development that dates from the 1900-1920.*
- *Side driveways with access to garages and on-site car parking accommodation at the rear of the house group.*
- *Items of heritage significance recommended for individual listing as heritage items in Schedule 5 of the Newcastle LEP.*

7.16 Contributory Buildings

Fieldwork was undertaken in 2015 to establish the overall level of intactness of this area. The location of contributory buildings has been mapped, see **Figure 7.4**.

Contributory buildings may be defined as those buildings that are part of the original building stock, or have historic or aesthetic significance, or make a positive contribution to the streetscape. Generally buildings in this category had not been heavily altered or where alterations were evident these were of a scale or style that retained the character of the building. Removal of contributory buildings is detrimental to the heritage conservation area because these elements establish the prevailing character and reinforce its sense of place. On the other hand, demolition of and alterations to non-contributory buildings is encouraged if the replacement design is more in character with the streetscape. The contribution of any particular building to streetscape, character or heritage significance will guide the approach to development and assist in determining the degree of change that will be permitted.



Figure 7.4 - Proposed Glebe Road Heritage Conservation Area - contributory buildings map (Source: NCC GIS 18 August 2015)

Selected images of these houses are provided below:







7.17 Development standards and controls

The land to be incorporated into the proposed "The Junction HCA" currently has a maximum building height of 10m and an FSR of 0.9, which is inconsistent with the current built form on the land and would conflict with the conservation objectives that this review proposes.

Council does not currently apply numeric building height or FSR controls to its HCAs given these controls do not adequately dictate the desired building envelope outcomes, nor would they necessarily result in a built form that respects the character and significance of the existing building stock. Hence, it is recommended that consideration should be given to amending the LEP height of building and FSR maps to remove such controls from the subject land.

Detailed design guidelines should also be developed and included in the Heritage Technical Manual to ensure the heritage significance and character of this area is protected.

7.18 Community Survey 1 February 2016 - 14 March 2016

The results of the community survey are at **Appendix A**. The results of the questions posed to the community in the survey are summarised below:

Issue 1: The proposed Hamilton residential area should be included in the Newcastle LEP as a Heritage Conservation Area

62% of this group were in support with this proposal, while 31% indicated disagreement.

Issue 2: The heritage significance of properties at 32, 34 & 18 Gordon Avenue Hamilton should be assessed to determine if they should be listed as heritage items in the Newcastle LEP

62% agreed with this proposal (agree or strongly agree), while 17% disagreed with it. A further 17% were neutral towards this proposed change and 3% were unsure/ not applicable.

Issue 3: A new heritage conservation area should be established to include all of the properties 55 to 75 Glebe Road, The Junction

The majority (14 of 17 people) were in agreement with this proposed change.

Issue 4: A locality specific set of development guidelines should be prepared to protect the single storey character of the potential new Glebe Road The Junction HCA

The majority (14 of 17 people) were in agreement with this proposed change.

Accordingly, this report recommends that Council proceed with the next stage to make these two areas heritage conservation areas, and to proceed with the listing of the houses at 18, 32 and 34 Gordon Avenue Hamilton. It is noted also that there is an existing heritage item at 36 Gordon Avenue Hamilton.