



# EXTENT

PEOPLE CENTRED HERITAGE

## Civic Link Block 3, Parramatta

### Draft Heritage Interpretation Strategy

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Prepared for City of Parramatta Council  
September 2024

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# 1. Introduction

Extent Heritage has been engaged by City of Parramatta Council to produce a Heritage Interpretation Strategy (HIS) for the Civic Link Block 3 Project at Horwood Place, Parramatta (the site). The aim of the HIS is to identify key themes and stories and interpretative opportunities at the earliest stage to ensure that they can help shape design throughout the precinct. The HIS identifies potential tangible and intangible values associated with the site and surrounding cultural landscape, specifies key themes and stories relevant to the site, and makes recommendations for potential devices. It also outlines the consultation process that was followed to engage, listen and reflect with a Dharug Custodians Panel convened by the City of Parramatta. The HIS will form the basis of a future more detailed Heritage Interpretation Plan to guide implementation.

Figure 1, Figure 2.  
Civic Link Block 3 artist impression.  
Source: McGregor Coxall  
and City of Parramatta.



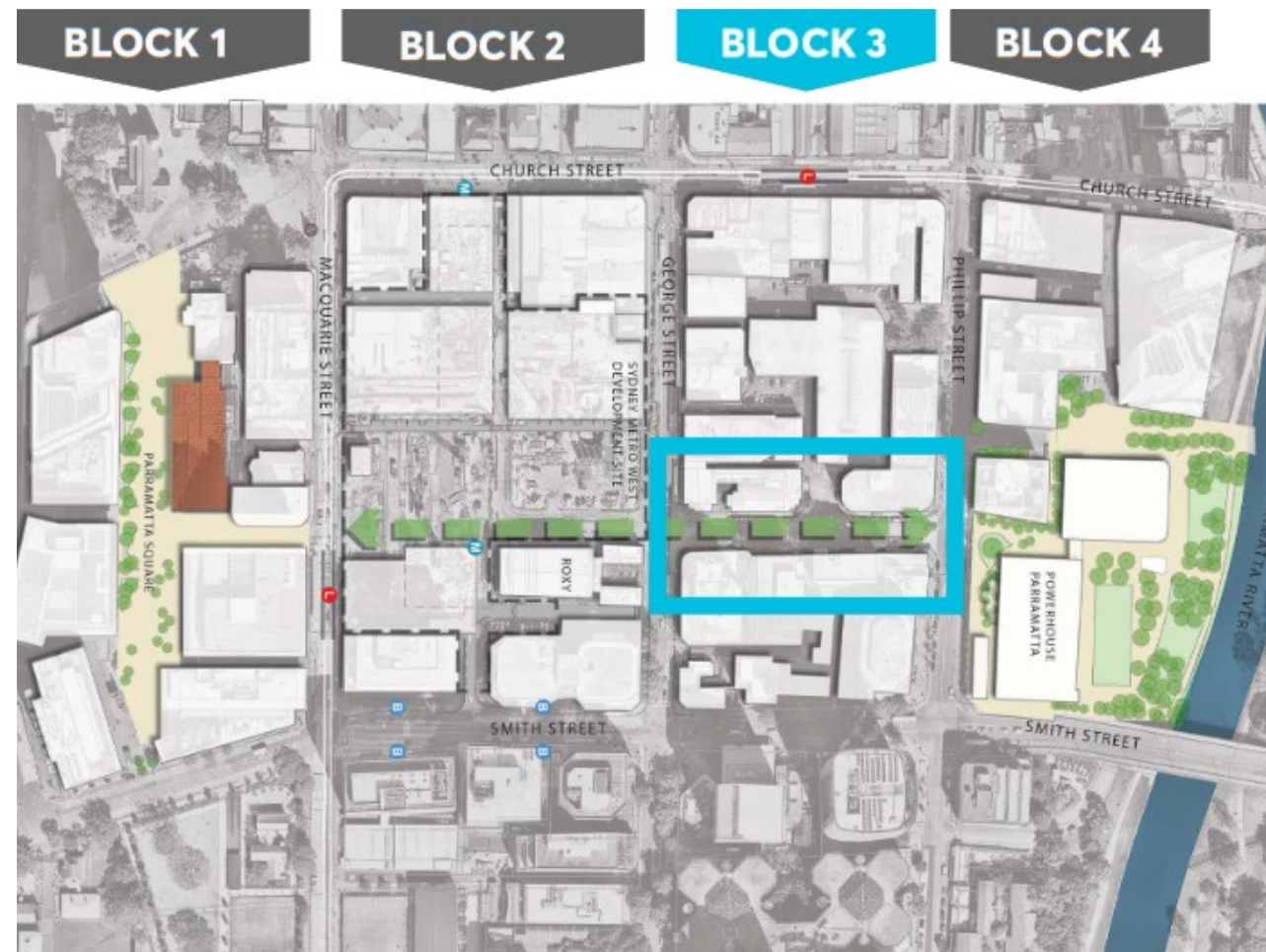


# 1.1 The Civic Link Project

The Civic Link is a proposed pedestrianised public space and cultural spine connecting Parramatta Square to the Parramatta River. The overall project spans 500 metres and consists of four blocks. Civic Link Block 3 is located along the existing Horwood Place, between George Street and Phillip Street, and includes Auctioneer Lane which provides access to Eat Street Car Park, to the west of Horwood Place. The proposed works will include removal of roadway, planting of a central green spine, installation of street furniture including seating and lighting and water management infrastructure.

The vision for Block 3 is one that aligns with the Metro West and Powerhouse Parramatta initiatives in Blocks 2 and 4 and aims to create a vibrant and welcoming block with a garden character theme. The design vision will focus on providing a respite and retreat for everyone, and form part of the journey from Parramatta Square to the riverfront.

**Figure 3, Figure 4.** Civic Link Block 3 artist impression and location of Block 3 in Civic Link project.  
Source: McGregor Coxall and City of Parramatta.





## 1.2 The study area

The study area is located in the Parramatta CBD, within the City of Parramatta Local Government Area (LGA). It consists of Horwood Place between Phillip Street and George Street, and a portion of Auctioneer Lane, and also includes Lot 102 DP 241030. The study area consists of the existing road reserve, currently comprising the two-way carriageway, with street parking either said as well as foot paths and street furniture. The study area is outlined below.

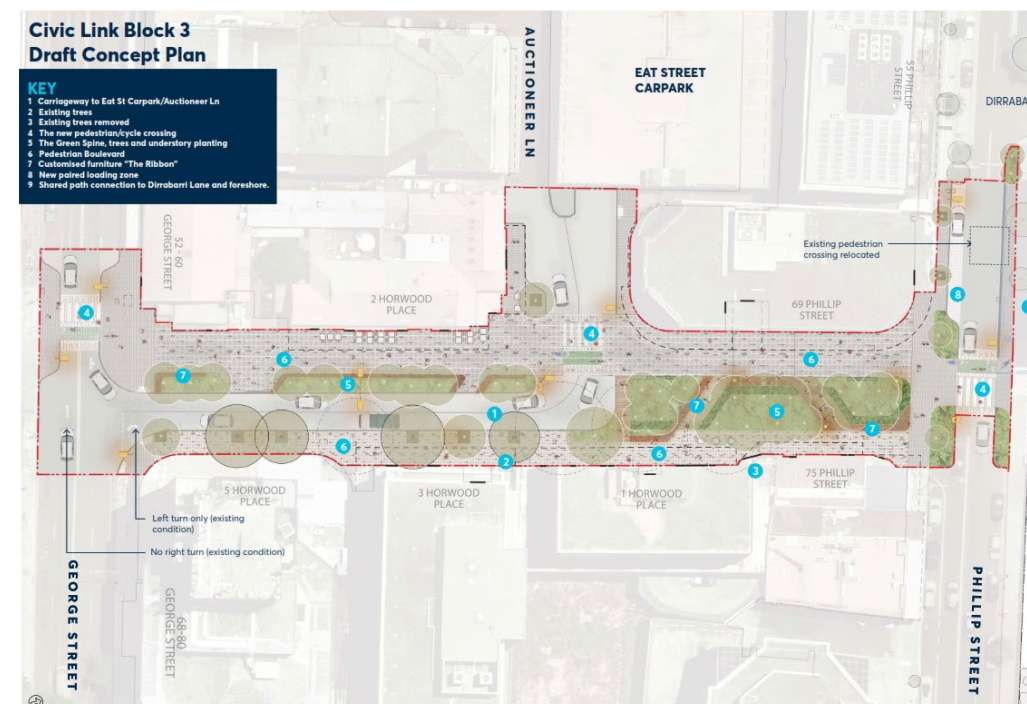


**Figure 5.** Location of site within Parramatta, and extent of archaeological and historical assessment undertaken by Extent Heritage outlined in red.

[Source: Extent Heritage.](#)

**Figure 6.** Outline of Civic Link Block 3 draft concept plan and location.

[Source: City of Parramatta.](#)





## 1.3 Methodology

The general philosophy and process used in the development of the strategy is adopted from the *Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013*. (Australia ICOMOS 2013) (the *Burra Charter*), which defines interpretation as, ‘all the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place. Interpretation may be a combination of the treatment of fabric; the use of and activities at the place; and the use of introduced explanatory material.’

Preparation of the HIS has entailed the following steps:

### Review of background material

A number of supporting documents were reviewed to ensure that we understood the project as a whole. The review considered project objectives, key stakeholders, and work undertaken to date.

### Historical research

Historical and archaeological research was carried out to provide supporting content and to identify key themes and stories for Horwood Place. Research was limited to secondary sources and reports, with targeted archival research relating to key questions undertaken as required.

### Identification of a preliminary set of methods and locations for interpretation

Research on global and national interpretive precedents was undertaken to help provide a basis for device recommendations. Methods of interpretation researched were initially broad, with more detailed investigation of relevant case studies undertaken once the project team had agreed on likely directions and devices.

### Aboriginal community consultation

Extent Heritage attended several workshops with a Dharug Cultural Custodians Panel convened by the City of Parramatta included an extended session on Country. These workshops have been a critical component of the methodology and have ensured that Dharug voices have shaped the approach to interpretation at every stage.

An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) is also being prepared for the project. This report is following the statutory RAP consultation requirements which are central to the ACHAR process. Information obtained from the RAP consultation process has also been incorporated into the interpretive approach where possible and appropriate.

### Ongoing meetings and stakeholder discussions

Extent Heritage has attended a number of meetings with City of Parramatta Council and the landscape design team (McGregor Coxall) throughout the project. These meetings have provided an opportunity to further understand project objectives, relationships, opportunities, and constraints. The approach to interpretation has been a collaborative process designed to ensure that the priorities of Council and the landscape team are comprehensively reflected.

## 1.4 Objectives

The objective of this heritage Interpretation Strategy are:

- To ensure that traditional, historical and contemporary Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal values associated with the site are integrated and interpreted in meaningful and culturally appropriate ways;
- To provide an overarching strategy for key themes and values to ensure they are represented at appropriate locations and enhance visitor understanding of the area's cultural heritage;
- To outline a range of devices and programs suitable to address the different needs and interests of visitors that will improve and enhance visitor enjoyment and understanding of the cultural significance of the subject site;
- To identify opportunities for key community stakeholder engagement with future interpretation project planning, development and presentation; and
- To demonstrate best practice interpretation consistent with relevant state, national and international standards and guidelines.

## 1.5 Limitations

The historical overview provides sufficient historical background to provide an understanding of the place in order to assess the significance and provide relevant recommendations, however, it is not intended as an exhaustive history of the site. Additional archival research may be required during content development.

Archaeological investigations have not yet been undertaken. Findings from the fieldwork may have an impact on future recommendations for interpretation.

## 1.6 Authorship

Sarah Janson (Associate) authored significant sections of this Strategy with support by Emma Whitworth (Heritage Advisor). Dr Madeline Shanahan (Director) oversaw the project throughout, attended all consultations and provided input, review, and quality assurance.



## 1.7 Terminology

The terminology in this report follows definitions presented in *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013 (Burra Charter)*. Article 1 provides the following definitions:

**Place** means site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, and may include components, contents, spaces and views.

**Cultural significance** means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.

Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.

Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.

**Fabric** means all the physical material of the place including components, fixtures, contents, and objects.

**Conservation** means all the processes of looking after a place so to retain its cultural significance.

**Maintenance** means the continuous protective care of the fabric and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction.

**Preservation** means maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

**Restoration** means returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

**Reconstruction** means returning the place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material into the fabric.

**Adaptation** means modifying a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.

**Use** means the functions of a place, as well as the activities and practices that may occur at the place.

**Compatible use** means a use that respects the cultural significance of a place. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.

**Setting** means the area around a place, which may include the visual catchment.

**Related place** means a place that contributes to the cultural significance of another place.

The terminology in this report also follows definitions presented in The Ename Charter.

**Interpretation** refers to the full range of potential activities intended to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of cultural heritage site. These can include print and electronic publications, public lectures, on-site and directly related off-site installations, educational programmes, community activities, and ongoing research, training, and evaluation of the interpretation process itself.

**Presentation** more specifically denotes the carefully planned communication of interpretive content through the arrangement of interpretive information, physical access, and interpretive infrastructure at a cultural heritage site. It can be conveyed through a variety of technical means, including, yet not requiring, such elements as informational panels, museum-type displays, formalized walking tours, lectures and guided tours, and multimedia applications and websites.

**Interpretive infrastructure** refers to physical installations, facilities, and areas at, or connected with a cultural heritage site that may be specifically utilised for the purposes of interpretation and presentation including those supporting interpretation via new and existing technologies.

**Site interpreters** refer to staff or volunteers at a cultural heritage site who are permanently or temporarily engaged in the public communication of information relating to the values and significance of the site.

**Cultural Heritage Site** refers to a place, locality, natural landscape, settlement area, architectural complex, archaeological site, or standing structure that is recognized and often legally protected as a place of historical and cultural significance.



## 2. Guidelines, Frameworks & Statutory Context

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## 2.1 Heritage status

The site is not subject to any statutory heritage listings. However, several heritage items listed on Schedule 5 of the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023 directly adjoin the study area.

Table 1. Summary of heritage status of study area.

Register/listing	Item listed (Y/N)	Item name	Item number
Statutory listings			
State Heritage Register	N	-	-
Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023, Schedule 5	N	-	-
Non-statutory listings			
Register of the National Trust (NSW)		-	-

Table 2. Heritage items adjoining the study area.

Item number	Item name	Item address	Lot DP	Significance
Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023, Schedule 5				
I537	Dr Pringle’s Cottage	52 George Street	SP 21427	Local
I572	Redcoats’ Mess House and potential archaeological site	2 Horwood Place	SP 21574	State
I536	Civic Arcade, formerly a theatre, and potential archaeological site	48 George Street	Lots 1–79, SP 159	Local
I625	Willow Grove and potential archaeological site	34 Phillip Street	Lot 1, DP 569139	Local
I538	Roxy Cinema	69 George Street	Lots 1 and 2, DP 76080	State

## 2.2 Guidelines and frameworks

This Part outlines the international and local guidelines, policies, and principles that have guided the approach towards developing a meaningful and successful interpretation strategy specific for the Civic Link Block 3 project. By understanding these guidelines and using them to shape our methodology, we will ensure that the approach adheres to best practice, and that it is guided by values, significance, and place.

### 2.2.1 The Burra Charter

The *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS 2013) is considered the guiding document of best practice standards for the management of cultural and natural heritage within Australia. The charter states that it can be applied to all types of places of cultural significance, including natural, Indigenous, and historic places with cultural values.

### 2.2.2 The Ename Charter

The *Ename Charter* (ICOMOS 2008) outlines seven principles upon which interpretation and presentation should be based. Ratified in 2008, the international charter defines its purpose as being:

*to define the basic principles of Interpretation and Presentation as essential components of heritage conservation efforts and as a means of enhancing public appreciation and understanding of cultural heritage sites. (ICOMOS 2008)*

### 2.2.3 Connecting with Country

In 2023, the Government Architect NSW (‘GANSW’) finalised its ‘Connecting with Country’ Framework’, which was first circulated as a draft in 2020. The ‘Connecting with Country’ project aims to provide a framework that can be used to inform the planning, design, and delivery of built environment projects in NSW, and achieve better outcomes for Country and community. The Framework provides practical ways that connections to and understandings of Country can be integrated into project planning and design processes, as well as a number of principles. The principles of the framework have informed this current project’s methodology, ensuring that Dharug voices have shaped the approach to interpretation at every stage.



### 2.2.4 Ask First: A Guide to Respecting Indigenous Heritage Places and Values

The document *Ask First: A Guide to Respecting Indigenous Heritage Places and Values* (Australian Heritage Commission 2002) focuses on allowing the relevant Indigenous people to determine the significance of places in accordance with their culture, before achieving agreements between parties on how places and heritage values should be managed.

In relation to interpretation, the following principles are identified in the document:

- Indigenous people are the primary source of information on the value of their heritage and how this is best conserved;
- Indigenous people must have an active role in any Indigenous heritage planning process;
- Indigenous people must have input into primary decision-making in relation to Indigenous heritage, so they can continue to fulfil their obligations towards this heritage; and
- Indigenous people must control intellectual property and other information relating specifically to their heritage, as this may be an integral aspect of its heritage value.

In identifying and managing this heritage:

- uncertainty about Indigenous heritage values at a place should not be used to justify activities that might damage or desecrate this heritage;
- all parties having relevant interests should be consulted on Indigenous heritage matters; and
- the process and outcomes of Indigenous heritage planning must abide by customary law, relevant Commonwealth and State/Territory laws, relevant international treaties and covenants, and any other legally binding agreements.

Adhering to cultural restrictions on information about an Indigenous heritage place is essential to maintaining its heritage value.

### 2.2.5 Interpreting heritage places and items, heritage information series guideline produced by the NSW Heritage Council, 2005

The Interpreting Heritage Places and Items guideline explains why it is important to interpret heritage, and provides guidelines to achieve good heritage outcomes. This document explains how interpretation strengthens the relationships between communities and their heritage, and outlines the different ways of communicating the significance of an item to a range of audiences. This can involve various mediums including publications, events, public activities, and controlled settings.

### 2.2.6 Heritage interpretation policy, heritage information series guideline produced by the NSW Heritage Council, 2005

The Heritage Interpretation Policy prepared by the NSW Heritage Council intends to guide heritage practitioners towards best practice outcomes. It lists the following 'ingredients' in achieving best practice interpretation for all types of heritage:

- respect for the special connections between people and items;
- understand the item and convey its significance;
- apply good research;
- explore, respect and respond to the identified audience;
- make reasoned choices about themes, ideas and stories to interpret;
- engage the audience, stimulate thought and dialogue, provoke response, and enhance understanding;
- research and understand the physical, historical, spiritual, and contemporary context of the item and related items; and respect local amenity and culture;
- develop interpretation that strengthens and sustains the significance of the item, its character and authenticity;
- integrate interpretation in conservation planning, and in all subsequent stages of a conservation project; and
- include interpretation in the ongoing management of an item; provide for regular maintenance, evaluation, and review.

### 2.2.7 City of Parramatta Draft Heritage Guidelines

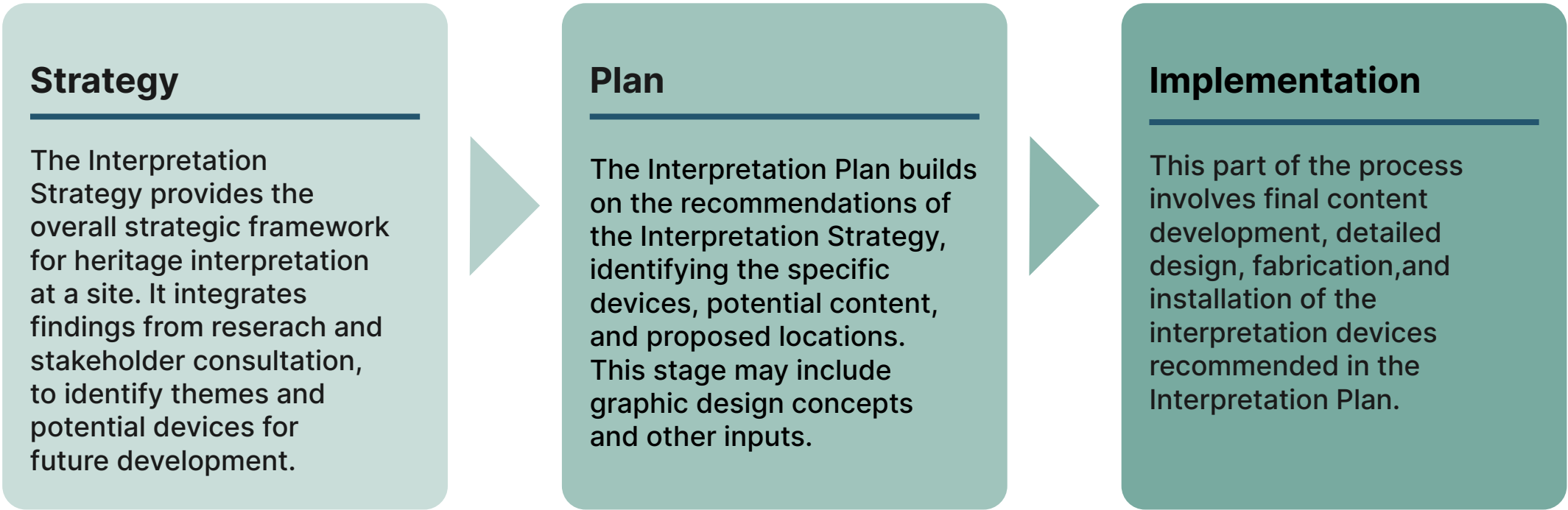
The Heritage Interpretation Guidelines for the City of Parramatta working draft provides information on the importance of interpreting the heritage of the city and how it can enhance development. It outlines the rich and diverse stories of Parramatta, its history, and its cultural significance. The document includes a checklist for the heritage interpretation process, principles for effective heritage interpretation, and various interpretive interventions and equipment that can be used in the public domain. It emphasises the importance of embedding the stories of Parramatta into the fabric of the city and involving professional heritage interpreters in the planning and implementation process. The document also outlines the themes and key stories for interpreting Parramatta's heritage including:

- 'A landscape of stories';
- 'Dharug Country: Dharug people';
- 'Gathering place';
- 'Fertile ground';
- 'Experiment, enterprise, governance'; and
- 'Waves of people'.



# 2.3 The interpretation process

The following graph outlines the interpretation process and the role of the Strategy stage in relation to future phases of work. As shown in the flowchart below this strategy will be followed by a more detailed plan, and then implementation.





# 3. Consultation



## 3.1 Dharug Cultural Custodian Panel

A panel of representatives from Dharug organisations was convened by City of Parramatta through an expression of interest process. The panel members comprise of individuals from Muru Mittigar, the Dharug Strategic Management Group, and the Darug Boorooberongal Elders Aboriginal Corporation.

The aim and role of the Panel is to guide the expression of Barramada Country in the revitalised streetscape as part of the project, including guiding the interpretation of Dharug cultural knowledge and themes, considering neighbouring interpretation plans and relevant stories for Block 3 and to provide ongoing feedback, content and guidance on interpretative elements and design.

The Panel will participate in workshops and have additional time for discussions within the wider Dharug community to ensure comprehensive input and representation. To date, Extent Heritage have attended and presented at three consultation workshops with the panel.

### Workshop 1, Project Introduction, Site History and Research Findings

An online workshop was held on 9 November 2023 to introduce the project to the panel as well as present information on the site's history and some of the findings from preliminary research undertaken as part of built heritage, historical archaeological and Aboriginal archaeological assessments.

Key observations and feedback include:

- The term 'Aboriginal' is preferred over First Nations amongst the group and Dharug should be used where possible/is most appropriate to reflect knowing that this is Dharug Country.
- Stories need to connect across the landscape, and not be siloed.
- There are contemporary and continued links to Parramatta and this area for Aboriginal community.
- Opportunities to connect between the different existing interpretative work in Parramatta could include connecting the footprints of animals from Parramatta Square in the types of plantings in Block 3; using plants that would have been used/eaten by those animals.
- There are many resources that can be drawn upon for information on the past landscape and Dharug use of land, such as convict era paintings as well as archaeological work.
- The colonial stories of the First Gaol and Red Coats Mess are associated with a turbulent time, of resistance and violence, including sexual violence, which would need to be addressed with sensitivity.
- More stories of the environment and vegetation are not frequently discussed on site (rather interpretation is in online formats); there is a good opportunity at Block 3 for a way to connect this to devices at the site, and also to the wider stories being told in Parramatta.

### Workshop 2, On Country

A second workshop was held On Country, on 7 December 2023. This included a walkover of the Horwood Place study area, including noting the landscape, context and connection to the Metro site and the Powerhouse Museum.

Key observations and feedback include:

- Connection to the Parramatta River and water is extremely important.
- The use of water, or representations of water is strongly encouraged in the design.
- There is opportunity to restore a peaceful part of Country; healing and restoring Country is important, archaeology can help recreate past landscape.
- Country looked very different; including the types of vegetation communities (Cumberland Plains Woodland), the chain of ponds that characterised the lower area.
- There can be different ways to tell different stories as you move down towards the river, using the topography of the land to tell a story, as the colonial landmarks are mainly up near the George Street frontage.
- Connection but not too much repetition will be key to ensure there's a connection between the Metro site and Powerhouse.
- Artwork that is around Aboriginal cultural concepts and knowledge should be by a Dharug artist, or the commissioning process should involve Dharug in selection
- Material selection is important.
- The Garden block theme in vegetation native to the area, and also fauna.
- Sound and light, both needed for practical security reasons are an interpretative opportunity. Sound can be used to express a relaxing version of Country.

### Workshop 3, Initial Themes and Storylines

An online workshop was held on 11 March 2024, to reflect on feedback from the first two workshops and to discuss a draft thematic framework to help structure the stories for interpretation, and possible interpretative devices that can be used to tell those stories.

Key observations and feedback include:

- It's important for any theme around healing or restoration of Country, there needs to be truth-telling and recognition as to why there is a need for that healing or restoration, i.e. the dispossession of Dharug.
- Healing and restoring country are not just physical endeavour, but is also about people and culture, which is why truth-telling needs to be a part of this.
- The suggested food and sustenance theme can span across both pre-colonial and into the colonial era, as access to Country, and therefore food and resources, was a key part of conflict between colonists and Dharug.



- When discussing colonial power, the lived experience of the Dharug people and the impact on individuals and their experiences are critical. From creating the exclusionary town centre, to the imposition of a colonial town layout over Country, these colonial stories should not be alienated from the impacts on people and need to address the notion of colonists 'civilizing' and recognise the actual consequences for the health of people and Country.
- A theme focused on the everyday lives and people connecting to Horwood Place can be expanded to any contemporary connections.
- Language is an important tool; the overall name for the walk or co-naming Horwood Place can be used to show that an overall story of several parts makes up a whole. It can also express this as Barramutta being a meeting place and a place of many clans coming together, and it can highlight the concept of travelling through Country, as this project will help visitors and community travel between Parramatta Square and the river.
- Queried possibility of incorporating artifacts if archaeological excavations uncover any, in order to show a direct connection to Burramattagal.
- It's important for future generations to embed these values and ideas in shared spaces.

## 3.2 ACHAR Consultation

As part of the preparation of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR), consultation with a number of Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) place on site on 26 and 27 February 2024 on site as part of the archaeological survey. A list of attendees is included in the ACHAR consultation records.

The following summaries comments and observations recorded during the onsite discussions as they relate to potential interpretation:

- Archaeological work can help inform interpretation.
- The use of plantings, furniture and signage for interpretation is encouraged, with QR codes to provide more information.
- Recommendation for including grassed resting area.
- Ensure the project and its materialities are not sterile.
- 3D printing of artefacts is an effective interpretation method; it can ensure the safekeeping of the original artefact but allow people to use and learn from the models.
- There are opportunities for the inclusion of artwork. Inlays were suggested as an effective method; footprints were suggested as potential motif.
- Soundscapes and lighting are interesting opportunities; particularly to ensure safety.
- Lighting was of interest, particularly with safety and motion sensors.
- An Acknowledgment of Country should be included.
- Eel Dreaming is a key part of the Parramatta story.
- The potential for the food theme can relate to Parramatta as a trading hub, people passing through as well as the resources of Country, such as honey from Native bees.



# 4. Audience

Understanding the potential audiences for interpretation at Block 3 will help determine the opportunities, approach, and scope for heritage interpretation in particular locations. Given the public facing nature of the project, there is likely to be a very wide audience including people from a range of age groups, abilities, education levels, interests, and cultural and language backgrounds. Interpretation should respond to this by including a diverse range of stories that will resonate with these different viewers. Content should be highly accessible and provide a range of different levels of detail. Some content should be targeted to people passing by, while other devices should provide more detail for those wishing to 'delve'.

The main audiences likely to interact with interpretation at this site:

### Local community, residents and workers

- People currently living in the vicinity of the proposed precinct come from a variety of diverse backgrounds. As the population of the area increases the diversity is also likely to increase significantly, and heritage interpretation should plan for the likely needs of future residents including linguistic diversity.
- The garden nature of the precinct and planned recreational spaces are likely to attract local community members looking for a space to relax, visit cafes and enjoy open space. This creates an opportunity for interpretation as people will be attracted to the area and likely to spend time here.

### Commuters, travellers and passers-by

- Regular visitors passing through the precinct will likely engage with the interpretation more peripherally as they filter through from the Metro station. Members of this group may be less likely to actively seek the information out or to stop along their regular route.
- Content appropriate for them may be less detailed, but enhance their experience of their journey through.
- In order to capture this audience, interpretation will need to be eye-catching and immediately accessible.

### Visitors and tourists

- Once the Powerhouse Museum is open the precinct will have an increased number of tourists and visitors. This audience may be drawn from Greater Sydney, but will also come from regional, interstate and international destinations.
- This audience is likely to be engaged and open to absorbing content on their route from the Metro to the museum.



# 5. SWOT Analysis

A high-level Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis has been undertaken to inform the content and approach to this HIS.



Figure 7. SWOT analysis.



# 6. Thematic Framework

## 6.1 Introduction

Themes provide an important structure for interpretation. By grouping diverse stories together into overarching topics, themes help to identify connections and provide order for the information, assisting audiences to engage with it more meaningfully. Themes also help interpretation specialists plan which stories should be prioritised. Without the structure of themes, audiences can become overwhelmed by too many divergent storylines, and schemes lack clarity of messaging. A series of succinct themes will help ensure the site’s interpretation communicates a clear narrative, and in doing so, will assist in building a strong identity for the place.

Under each theme sit key stories. Importantly, an audience will likely not be aware of the themes- only the stories within them. In essence, the themes provide the ‘scaffold and structure’, and the stories are the ‘bricks and mortar’. While there are many potential stories which can be told about a place, the crux of successful interpretation process is in narrowing those stories down to a meaningful and engaging few.

The themes identified have been informed by consultation as well as consideration of the City of Parramatta Heritage Interpretation Guidelines working draft Parramatta City Council thematic approach. The highlighted themes also take into account the different stories being told across the Civic Lunk project in the other blocks.

The themes incorporate both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal storylines within this structure, in order is to create a cohesive approach to heritage interpretation and messaging. These storylines have been identified based on the historical and archaeological research that has been undertaken as outlined above as well as consultation through the Panel and ACHAR process. The incorporation of these storylines into their recommended thematic structure, is that it has also encouraged a more introspective consideration of these recent stories, in which the role of Country in shaping all facets of life and history here can be explored.

## 6.2 Relevant historical themes

This section identifies potential historic themes which could be effectively interpreted within the Civic Link Block 3, Parramatta. These are drawn from the NSW framework for Historic Themes set out in the NSW Heritage Manual.<sup>1</sup> These themes should be understood as broad guides and the points beneath them more detailed issues related to the site. It is not necessary to interpret all themes within the site. This would be in fact be undesirable, as it would lead to a crowded and potentially confusing interpretive experience.

Table 3. Relevant historic themes

National Theme	NSW Theme	City of Parramatta Heritage Interpretation Themes
Tracing the natural evolution of Australia	Environment – naturally evolved	A Landscape of Stories
Peopling Australia	Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures	Darug Country: Darug People
	Convict	Experiment, Enterprise, Governance
	Ethnic influences	Gathering Place
	Migration	Waves of People
Developing local, regional and national economies	Agriculture	Fertile Ground
	Fishing	Darug Country: Darug People Fertile Ground
Building settlements, towns and cities	Town, suburbs and villages	Experiment, Enterprise, Governance

1. Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (1996) NSW Heritage Manual: History and Heritage, p. 6.



## 6.3 Themes

In designing a framework for this project, the key elements that structure clear and engaging storytelling have been considered. The selected themes for Civic Link Block 3 have been kept as broad and flexible as possible, so that they can accommodate further stakeholder feedback and cover a variety of stories to be further developed at content development stages.

### 6.3.1 Primary Theme: Healing Country

From Deep Time to present day, Dharug people have been sustained by and cared for Ngurra (Country). This theme will explore how Dharug people have lived here for many thousands of years, and how their custodial responsibility continues to the present day. As the primary and overarching theme for the precinct, it will influence design and storytelling throughout, providing an opportunity for reflection and a deeper understanding of Ngurra for all visitors.

Key stories will look at how Country provides the resources and necessities for life - water, plants and animals for food, medicine, fibres, tools and shelter. Content will also explore how Dharug people used these resources sustainably, creatively and innovatively.

Importantly, the theme will also provide space for truth telling; an acknowledgment of the destruction caused by colonisation and the wounds caused that need healing.

Content will draw on information from oral tradition and Dharug knowledge combined with evidence from the archaeological record. Together, these sources can build a picture of Ngurra prior to invasion and help to teach us more about caring for it today.

#### Key Stories

- **Enduring Connection;** the ongoing and continuous connection of Dharug, from Deep Time to present day.
- **Recognition and Truth telling;** stories that acknowledge the impact of colonisation on Ngurra and for Dharug and our responsibility to care for Ngurra as part of healing.
- **Hidden History;** archaeological findings from the Parramatta Sand Body and historical archaeological digs reveal the region's deep geological history and highlight how past environments and Dharug people interacted and adapted.
- **Thriving on Country;** stories of the Dharug connection to Ngurra, sustainable practices for resources and caring for Ngurra.



**Figure 8.** Cumberland Plains Woodland at the Australian Botanic Gardens.  
[Source.](#)



**Figure 9.** South west view of Parramatta in New South Wales by an unknown artist 1811.  
Source: Museum of Sydney ; MOS2005/17.



### 6.3.2 Landscapes of Power

During the violent and destructive colonisation of Parramatta, new landscapes of power and control were created, and this theme will explore the precinct's unique place within this wider story, as well as key sites and buildings associated with this chapter.

Block 3 fronts on to George Street, formerly High Street. This was a pivotal position between the military barracks to the east and Government House to the west. This strategic placement of institutions, and the axis it forms through the city, illustrates how government structures and the spatial layout of the early colony were wielded to assert control over the landscape.

Central to this theme is the significance of the site as the location of the first gaol in Parramatta; built in 1797 and burnt down by arson in 1799. This storyline will be explored in detail, highlighting experiences of forced migration, dislocation, trauma, destruction and violence at the heart of Parramatta in this period.

Importantly, adjacent to the site is the Red Coats Mess House. Still standing, this remains a visible emblem of the military presence, class hierarchy and colonial trauma in early Parramatta.

#### Key Stories

- **A Strategic Location;** the site's location within the town plan in a pivotal position between the military barracks to the east and Government House to the west.
- **The First Gaol;** the significance of the site as the location of the first Gaol in Parramatta; built in 1797 and burnt down by arson in 1799.
- **Life in a penal colony;** stories of the experiences of forced migration, dislocation, trauma, destruction and violence at the heart of Parramatta in the colonial period.
- **The Red Coats Mess House;** a visible emblem of the military presence, class hierarchy and colonial trauma in early Parramatta.

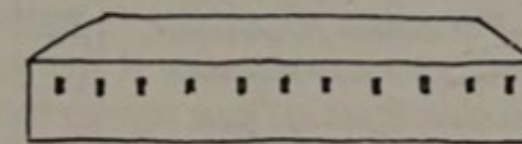
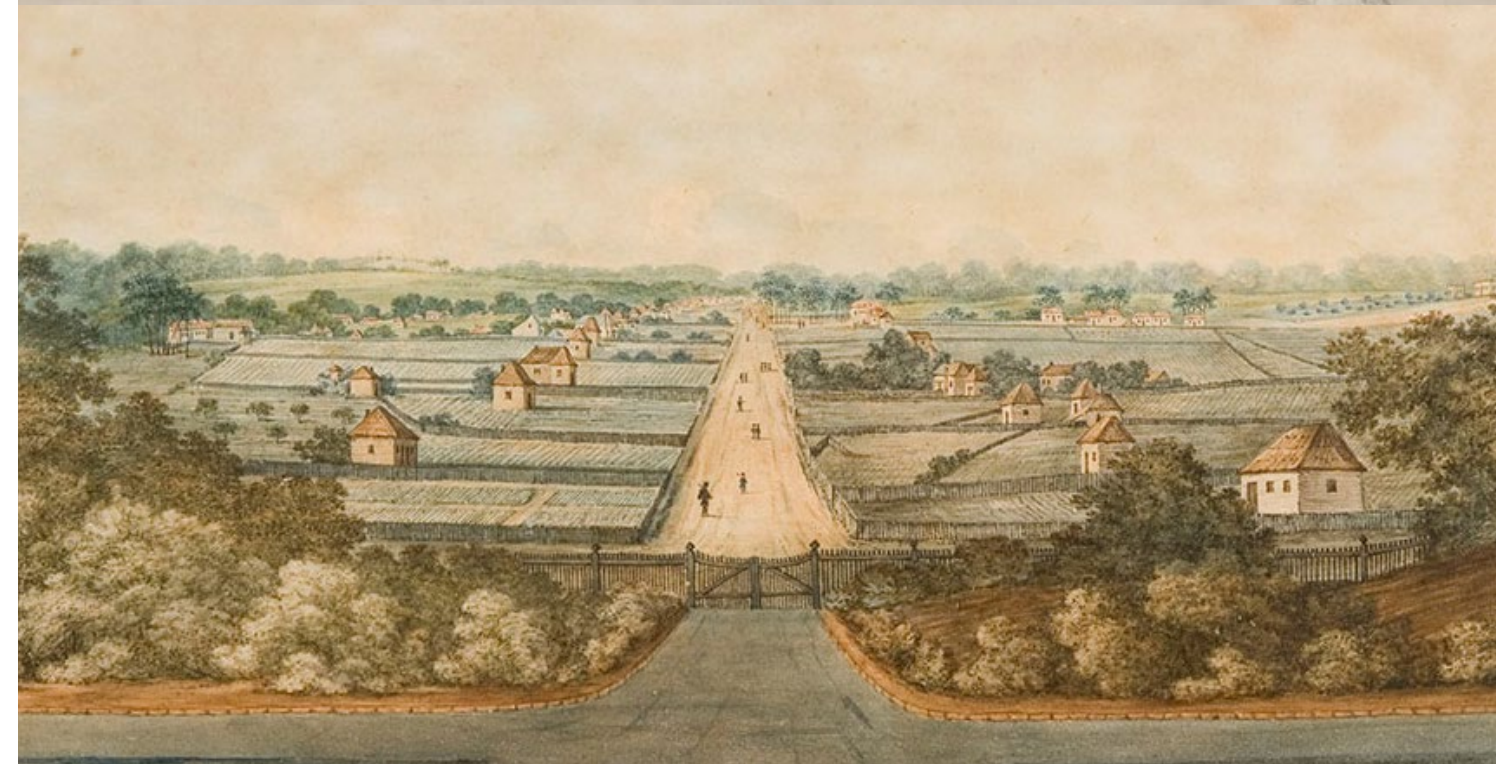
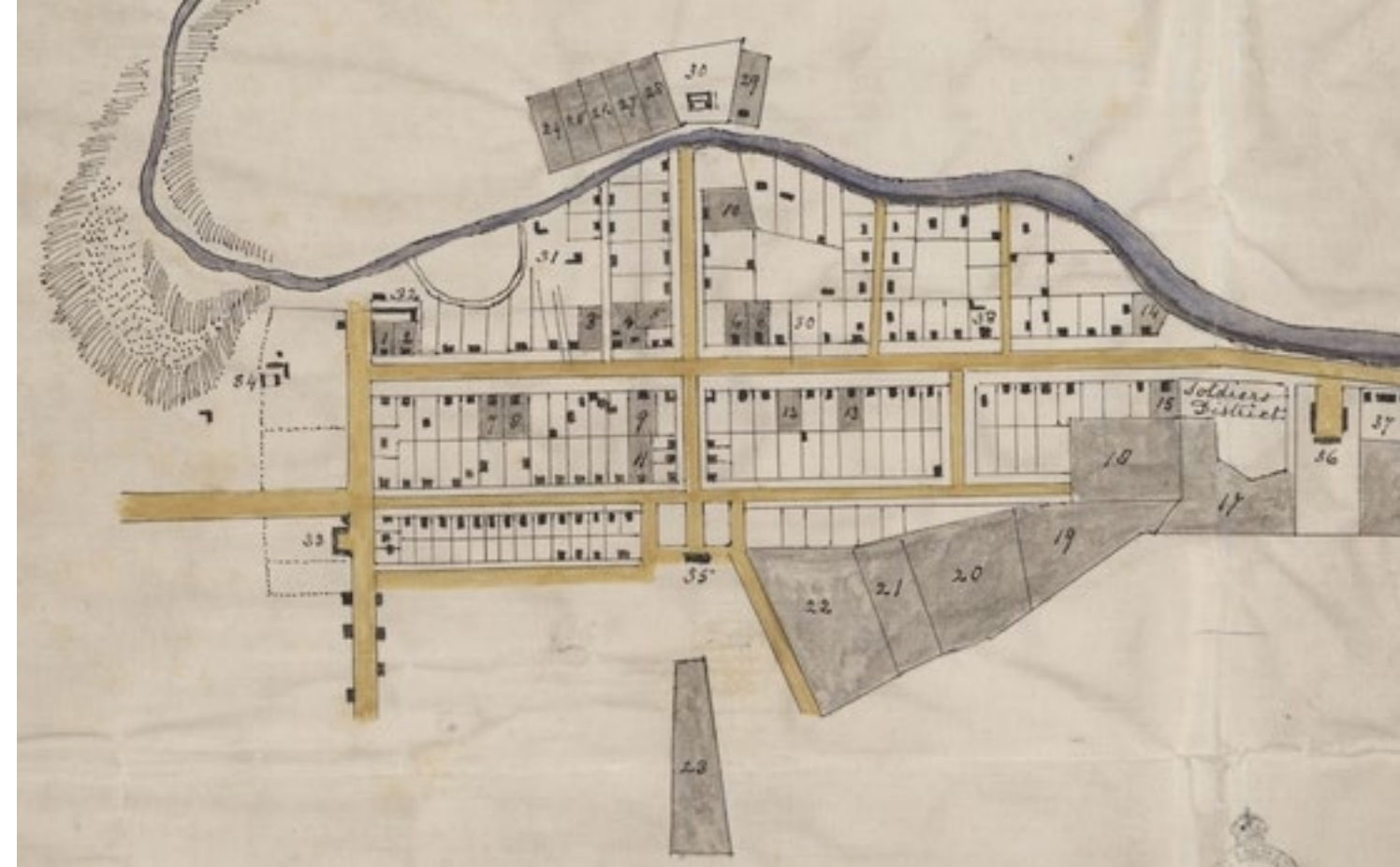


Fig 19. Sydney, NSW. Elevation of log gaol  
Based on painting attributed to William  
DIXSON

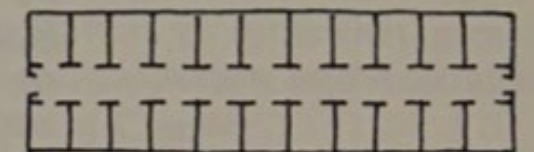


Fig 20. Sydney, NSW. Plan of log gaol  
Based on Fig. 19 and Collins  
description in the text above.



### 6.3.3 Food and Community

This theme will explore how communities have been built, strengthened and changed here over millennia, with a special focus on coming together through food. These stories will connect to the landscape theme of ‘garden precinct’, exploring the role that Ngurra has played in nourishing communities for countless generations.

For Dharug people, Country provided all the resources and necessities of life; food, shelter, materials and water. The river was central to this, and this location, near its banks was the type of place a place where community would have rested, cooked and shared meals together. Many archaeological sites along the river tell this story, and the results of excavations may provide additional information of Dharug experiences here.

The pressing need for food security was also the key reason for colonisation. Sydney’s sandy soils drove the British west, looking for a place to raise stock and grow crops. Early Convict allotments along George Street were used for growing crops to help feed and sustain the colony. Historical and archaeological evidence from the allotments provides evidence of this early farming and may be explored here as a key storyline.

Nearby buildings such as The Red Coats Mess House and The Red Cow Inn were also important sites connected to food and community, as well as power. These were places where distinct cross sections of the colonial community came together. From the hub-bub of an early colonial Inn, to the solidarity found within a rowdy mess hall. Engaging with these places helps us to understand life daily life and experiences in the early colony, and the role that food and drink played in forging bonds.

Finally, this theme presents the opportunity to connect with recent stories of the community and memories of how it has come together around the nearby Church Street precinct. This precinct was home to bootmakers, the Salvos and adjacent to the Roxy and the Civic Theatre Arcade. This theme presents the opportunity to celebrate the contribution, memories and stories of those who have called this place home over generations.

#### Key Stories

- **Thriving on Country;** stories of the Dharug connection with Ngurra and sustainable practices resource procurement.
- **Fertile Grounds;** picking up directly from the City of Parramatta themes, this story will highlight how the agricultural potential of the area influenced its selection for colonisation and the role convict allotments played in the story of food security and sustenance for the early colony.
- **Food Institutions;** the Red Coats Mess House and The Red Cow Inn were important sites connected to food and community.
- **Evolving Community;** stories of the various services, businesses, and individuals in the block, including the Salvation Army, Dr. Pringle’s practice, and the Civic Theatre Arcade and how they shaped the area’s social and economic landscape in areas such as food, leisure, business, and daily life.
- **Today’s Parramatta;** recent stories of the community and memories of people from different backgrounds and cultures; highlighting influences of migration and diversification that culminate in the nearby hub of Church Street.



# 7. Interpretative Devices

A range of potential interpretive 'devices' could be integrated into the project to communicate key themes and stories to audiences and convey and celebrate its heritage values, storylines and themes. The devices are intended to help inform and inspire the interpretative direction, before proceeding to detailed design and content development.

The range of devices listed here has been selected through consultation with the Dharug Cultural Custodian Panel and the project team. The range is designed to ensure the themes and stories are conveyed in a textured and multifaceted way that will resonate with a diverse audience. Some include detailed content, while others are more experiential.

This Part of the strategy references national and international case studies, comparing examples of interpretive devices and highlighting their benefits, as well as their limitations. The case studies have been selected to showcase high quality and innovative examples of a range of device types suitable for Block 3.



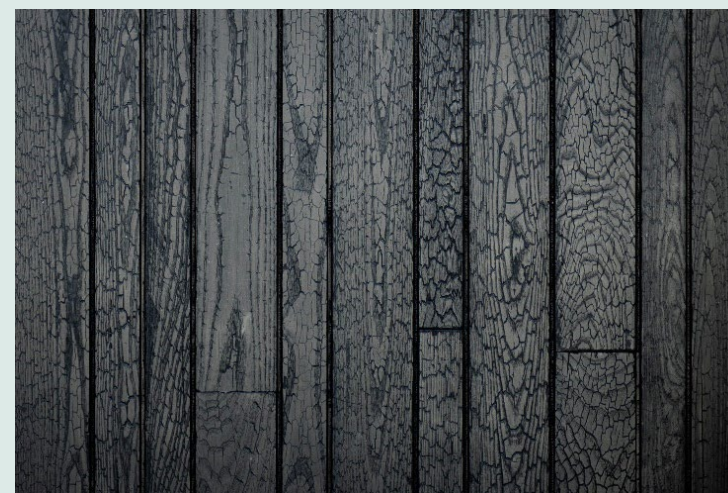
# Device 1: Installations Exploring Fire

As theme 2 (Landscapes of Power) discusses, this was the site of the first gaol, burnt down through arson in 1799. This gaol and its destruction represent the violence, suffering, chaos and resistance inherent to colonisation and convictism. But fire can also represent cleansing and healing and so the exploration of fire here resonates across themes. The primary device for the precinct will be an installation exploring this event in the public domain. This could take many creative directions, from playing with fabric in the landscape design, through to interpretive art. The intention will be to attract the attention of people passing by and encourage them to pause and reflect. This will be connected to a QR code where web-based content relating to the history of the site will provide more detail.

## Case Study: The Grove, by Glen Hayward

Glen Hayward's "The Grove", located along the waterfront of Wellington, New Zealand, emphasises the area's maritime history. Hayward created the grove of "copper headed nails", inspired by relics from the ship "Inconstant" (later known as "Plimmer's Ark"), from timbers once used on the wharves in the area. In order to ensure the longevity of the timbers, Hayward utilised Shou Sugi Ban, a traditional Japanese technique that involves charring the surface of the timber to protect it. This technique creates a striking visual of burnt and tarnished wood.

Shou Sugi Ban is a material that can have a high impact creatively, and, if used sparingly in Block 3 in the form of either a functional piece of street furniture or public artwork, could create a point of interest, drawing the attention of passers-by and sparking curiosity. The installation could be accompanied by a QR code connecting to a more detailed history and web-based content for those who are curious to learn more.



**Figure 10.** "The Grove", by Glen Hayward.

[Source: Wellington Sculture Trust.](#)

**Figure 11.** Example of Shou Sugi Ban cladding.

[Source: Mortlock Timber.](#)

**Figure 12.** Example of Shou Sugi Ban cladding.

[Source: Kebony.](#)



## Case Study: **Illuminate**, by Mika Utzon Popov

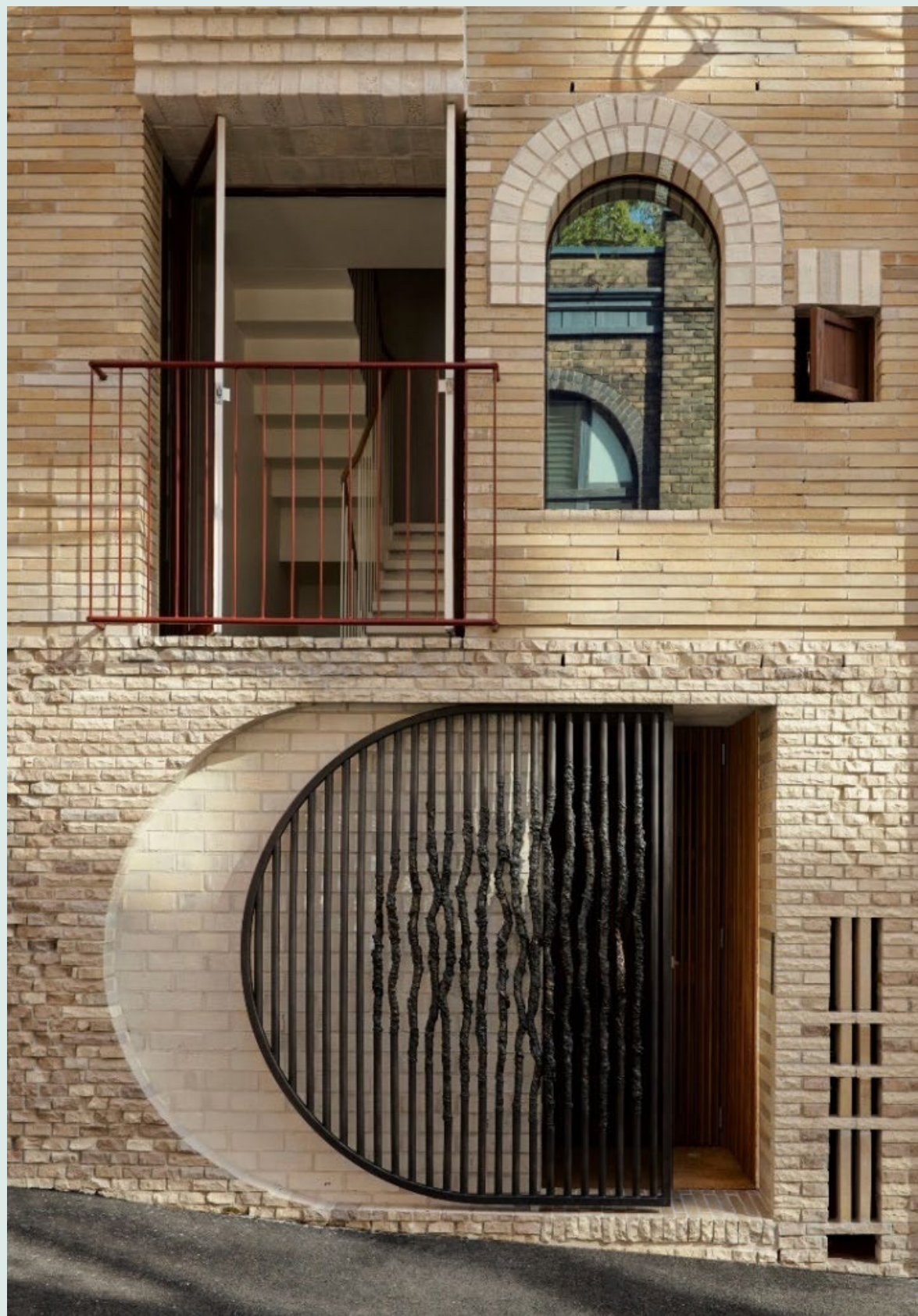
"Illuminate" by Mika Utzon Popov is a study in contrast. The work, standing at 3m tall, juxtaposes the highly textured, rough exterior with a smooth, mirrored finish to the interior void created by the two halves of the sculpture. "Illuminate" evokes the image of a burnt tree stump slowly decaying over time, and invites the viewer to step within the void to experience the contrasting materiality.

"Illuminate" is another example of the way in which materials experimenting with the theme of burnt and charred remains could be used to create a high impact interpretive installation.

**Figure 13, Figure 14.** "Illuminate",  
by Mika Utzon Popov.  
[Source: UAP.](#)







### Case Study: **Strands, by Mika Utzon Popov**

Located at the entrance to a residential dwelling in Surry Hills, “Strands” by Mika Utzon Popov showcases Popov’s signature use of textured and twisted materiality. At a distance the cast iron gate looks warped by time or impact, but, looking closer the design takes on a more organic shape, with the bars transforming into leafy branches.

Popov’s design demonstrates the potential for the public art within Block 3 to take on a functional role, in addition to contributing to the development of atmosphere and the sense of place.

**Figure 15, Figure 16.** “Strands”, Mika Utzon Popov.  
[Source: Mika Utzon Popov.](#)



### Key Stories:

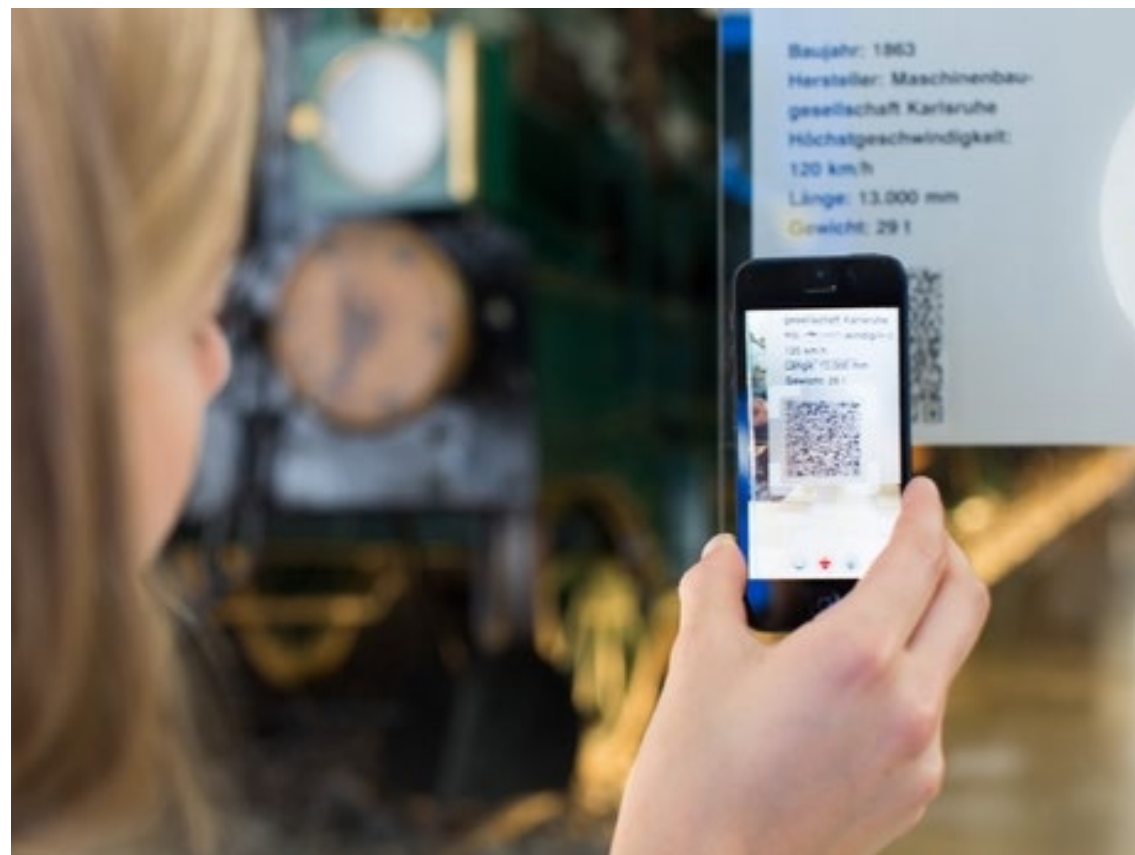
- **The First Gaol;** the significance of the site as the location of the first Gaol in Parramatta; built in 1797 and burnt down by arson in 1799.
- **The Red Coats Mess House;** a visible emblem of the military presence, class hierarchy and colonial trauma in early Parramatta.
- **Legacy of Colonisation;** stories of the experiences of forced migration, dislocation, trauma, destruction and violence at the heart of Parramatta in the colonial period.



## Device 2: QR Linked Story Mapping

The significance of the site warrants more detailed interpretive content for members of the public wanting to know more. Rather than clutter the site with physical signage which may detract from the landscape design, this more detailed content could be provided online. A QR code located near installations could link to a 'story map' online, where historic images, plans and potentially animated reconstructions will explore the history and archaeology of the site in more detail.

Online and digital heritage options expand the reach and interaction with interpretation significantly. It allows for a wealth of information to be obtained immediately by audiences from anywhere in the world, at any time.

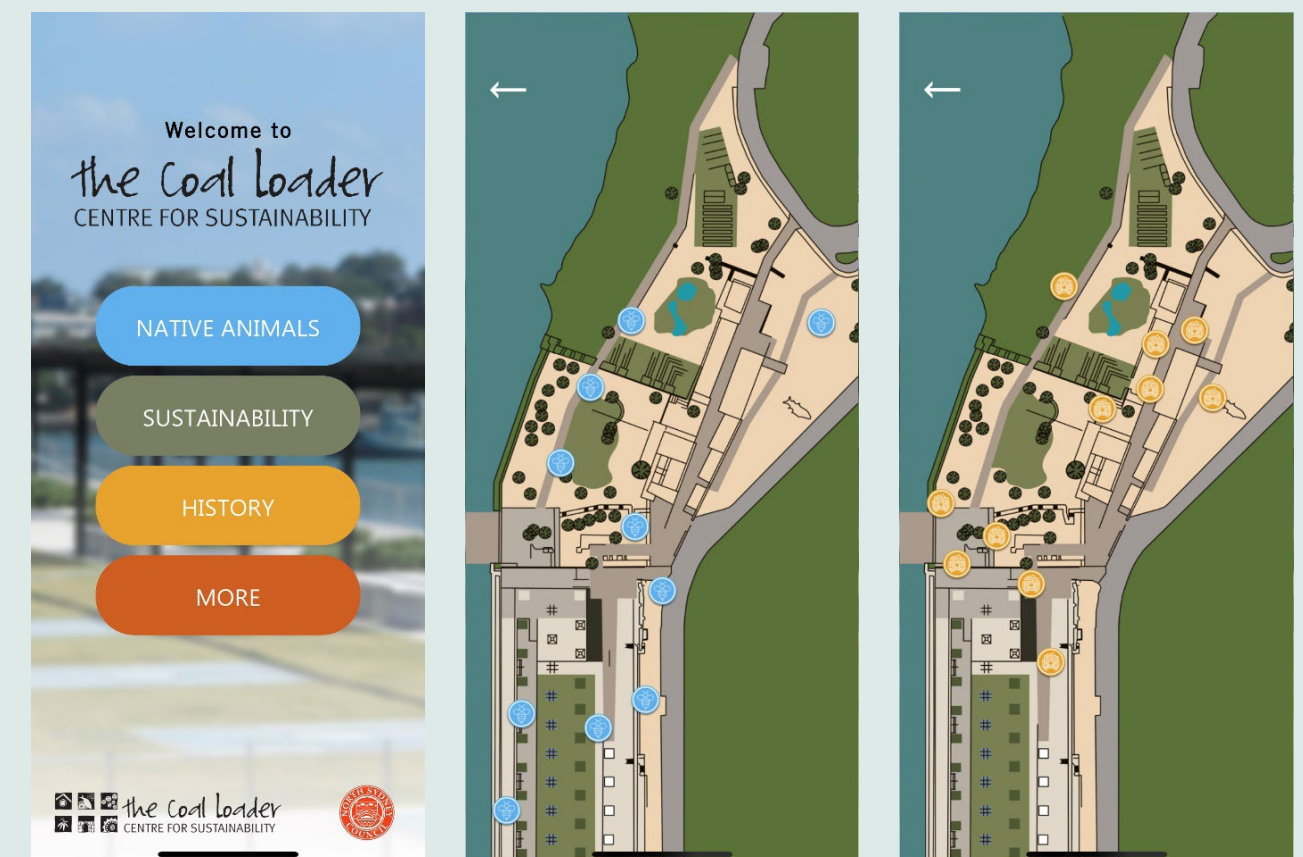


**Figure 17.** Example of QR codes integrated with heritage interpretation signs.  
Source: DB Museum.

### Case Study: The Coal Loader App

Developed by North Sydney Council, The Coal Loader app provides an additional layer of interpretation for the Coal Loader site in Waverton. The app features three walking trails with interactive targets around the site, accessed through the use of QR codes, and provides information on the native animals, historical re-enactments, and sustainability initiatives being undertaken. Augmented reality is utilised to depict native animals and historical machinery within the landscape.

The Coal Loader app demonstrates the value of a location-based application which prompts people to engage with their surroundings, an idea that could be utilised within the precinct. The development of a virtual map that links to a "story map" encourages exploration of the precinct, and a deep level of engagement with the history of the place.



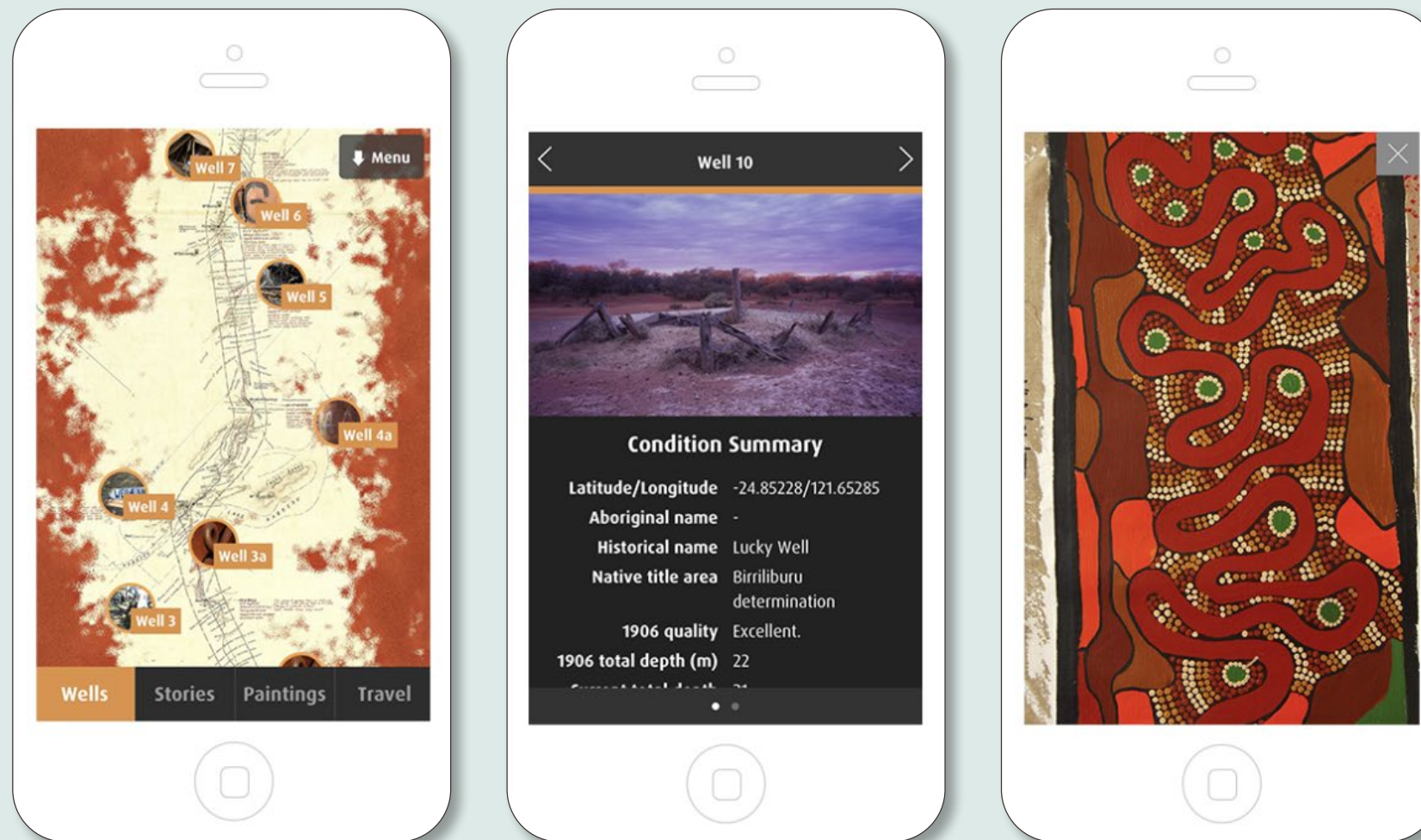
**Figure 18, Figure 19, Figure 20 (left to right).** The Coal Loader app, developed by North Sydney Council.  
[Source: The Coal Loader app.](#)



## Case Study: Canning Stock Route, WA Mobile & Web Apps

The Canning Stock Route mobile and web application was originally conceived as a large-scale interactive exhibition intended to be displayed across 10 multi-touch screens. The success of the original project led to the reworking of the existing application by Lightwell into a mobile and web application enabling the continued use and experience of the exhibition. The application features hundreds of videos, paintings, images, stories, well data, and additional travel and camping tips for travellers keen to explore the Canning Stock Route. It also includes detailed aerial imagery for the area, and several animated creatures that traverse the screen, making the map come alive (Lightwell, 2022).

The stories, histories, and documents presented in the Canning Stock Route mobile and web application is accessible both on the Route and off-site, ensuring that there are no limitations to learning. A similar webpage could be compiled for the precinct, linking with the story mapping onsite, and providing information for those who aren't able to visit.



### Key Stories:

- Elements of all the themes and key stories can be included in web-based content. The finding of archaeological testing programs will also inform the detailed content to be included.

**Figure 21.** Example of the Canning Stock Route mobile and web application prepared by Lightwell.  
Source: Lightwell 2022.



## Device 3: Drinking Fountains

Drinking fountains provide the opportunity to incorporate interpretive art with a practical function. They are also important nodes within the public domain, which draw people to them and where they pause or linger to sip, or to fill a bottle. These are places to congregate and gather, highlighting how water brings people together here as it has for many thousands of years. An interpretive drinking fountain also has the potential to enhance the ambiance on the site, incorporating the sounds of running or moving water and creating a link to the Parramatta River.

It is important to note that feedback from the Dharug Custodian Consultation Panel indicated the importance of incorporating water into the precinct and landscape design. While there are some restrictions on elements such as water features, this could be a meaningful way to respond to that feedback.

### Case Study: The O Fountain, painted by Robert Young

O Fountain is an initiative to combine the need for water refilling stations with the promotion of local artists and community engagement. Robert Young is an Indigenous artist who took part in installation of these fountains by Yarra Valley Water and Moreland City Council during NAIDOC Week in 2020. The inspiration for his artwork was a story of his grandmother, and her experiences as a little girl watching her father catch and clean fish during Easter.



**Figure 22.** Robert Young with O Fountain.

Source: Herald Sun, 13 November 2020.

**Figure 23.** O Fountain painted by Robert Young.

Source.





## Case Study: Herm, by Alison Wilding

Alison Wilding's "Herm" is a sculptural bronze drinking fountain located in Rathbone Square, London, providing the public an equally accessible source of drinking water. The fountain sits on the site of an historic spring used by eighteenth century chemist Henry Cavendish in his campaign for clean, accessible drinking water.

"Herm" demonstrates the possibility of creating a point of attention within the precinct while also contributing to the sense of ambience through the sculptural nature of the fountain and the potential to function as both a drinking fountain and a water feature.



**Figure 24.** Alison Wilding's "Herm", featured in Rathbone Square, London.  
Source: Jes Fernie, photo by Thierry Bal.

### Key Stories:

- **Enduring Connection;** the ongoing and continuous connection of Dharug, from Deep Time to present day.
- **Thriving on Country;** the stories of the Dharug connection with Ngurra and the knowledge and sustainable practices for using all the materials, plants, land and waters of Ngurra that sustained life and community.
- **Fertile Grounds;** the agricultural potential influenced its selection for colonisation and the role convict allotments played in the story of food security and sustenance for the early colony.



## Device 4: Bronze Sculpture Series

This precinct has a deep and layered history stretching over many millennia. It will also be a place where people travel though – be it on their way from the Metro Station to the Powerhouse, or on a slow meander through the ribbon, taking time to rest on its shaded seating. A series of small bronze sculptures could be dotted through the precinct, connecting to the many layers of history and encourages people to find and discover more as they journey though. This device would connect to all themes and stories, from Deep Time to the present. Simple signage will support the series, linking to content online for those seeking more information.

### Case Study: **The Distance of Your Heart, by Tracey Emin**

Located above doorways and awnings on Bridge and Grosvenor Streets in Sydney's CBD are more than 60 small bronze birds created by artist Tracey Emin. These birds are dotted throughout the area, taking a keen eye to spot, but once found, spark a treasure hunt to track them all down. The birds encourage a deeper level of engagement with the surrounding landscape, and prompt passers-by to pay attention to the smaller details around them.

"The Distance of Your Heart" demonstrates of how bronze sculptures can be hidden within the landscape, prompting passers-by to explore their surroundings and discover the stories these sculptures communicate.

**Figure 25, Figure 26** "The Distance of Your Heart",  
by Tracey Emin.  
[Source: City of Sydney](#)





## Case Study: Bentunigo (Oysters), by Jonathan Jones

Lining the high tide mark of Sydney's Gallipoli Memorial Club, clusters of bronze oysters are embedded within the mortar of the sandstone wall. These oysters represent those found within the Aboriginal middens destroyed by colonists to create the lime mortar used for the construction of buildings within the new colony. Through this sculpture, Jonathan Jones is reinforcing the destruction of Aboriginal knowledge and history through the very construction of colonial buildings.

"Bentunigo" conveys a story of Sydney's colonial history through a solely visual medium. This artwork demonstrates how simple sculptural elements incorporated within the precinct can convey deeper meanings and complex histories through a predominately visual medium, along with supportive signage.



Figure 27, Figure 28. "Bentunigo (Oysters)", by Jonathan Jones.  
Source: [Travel With Joanne](#).

### Key Stories:

- **Enduring Connection;** the ongoing and continuous connection of Dharug, from Deep Time to present day.
- **Recognition and Truth telling;** stories that acknowledge the impact of colonisation on Ngurra and for Dharug and our responsibility to care for Ngurra as part of healing.
- **Legacy of Colonisation;** stories of the experiences of forced migration, dislocation, trauma, destruction and violence at the heart of Parramatta in the colonial period.
- **The First Gaol;** the significance of the site as the location of the first Gaol in Parramatta; built in 1797 and burnt down by arson in 1799.
- **The Red Coats Mess House;** a visible emblem of the military presence, class hierarchy and colonial trauma in early Parramatta.
- **Thriving on Country;** the stories of the Dharug connection with Ngurra and the knowledge and sustainable practices for using all the materials, plants, land and waters of Ngurra that sustained life and community.
- **Fertile Grounds;** stories highlighting how the agricultural potential of the area influenced its selection for colonisation and the role convict allotments played in the story of food security and sustenance for the early colony.
- **Food Institutions;** the Red Coats Mess House and The Red Cow Inn were important sites connected to food and community.
- **Evolving Community;** stories of the various services, businesses, and individuals in the block
- **Today's Parramatta;** recent stories of the community and memories of people from different backgrounds and cultures; highlighting influences of migration and diversification that culminate in the nearby hub of Church Street.



## Device 5: Support Signage

Interpretive signs can take a number of forms, ranging from small-scale place-making identification plaques, through to large scale information boards.

For this site, where a series of installations will be the primary method of storytelling we recommend that the signage on the site be minimal, providing context to public installations or play spaces and connecting audiences to more detailed content online

### Case Study: Interactive Plant Labels

The use of plant labels within a landscaped space can not only provide information about the types of plants in the area, but can also be a minimal form of supportive signage that does not rely heavily on text-based content. Plants labels can be highly useful in providing information about plant uses; QR codes can be incorporated on the labels, linking to further content about plant uses or history. Creative content could also be produced, such as recipes or stories that incorporate the specific plants.



Figure 29, Figure 30, Figure 31. Examples of plant labels.  
[Source: Miller Metal Imaging.](#)



## Case Study: Storytelling Floor Discs

Working alongside Gaja Kerry Charlton, Yuggera Traditional Owner, Blaklash explored local histories linked with seafood and flora, specifically oyster fishing and plant species used to make dilly bags, to develop stories that could convey the importance of the land to the local Aboriginal community. These stories were adapted into floor inlays installed within Mirvac's new commercial tower at 80 Ann Street, Brisbane City, to spark conversation and provide opportunities for learning.

The storytelling discs demonstrate the type of minimal signage that could be used within the precinct, providing contextual information to other examples of interpretation, and allowing for the focus to be on exploring the area rather than being fixed in one spot engaging with dense, text-based interpretive signage.



Figure 32, Figure 33. Storytelling discs at 80 Ann Street, Brisbane City.

[Source: Blaklash.](#)



## Case Study: 161 Castlereagh Street, Sydney

The display cabinets at 161 Castlereagh Street in Sydney's CBD were developed to convey the archaeological artefacts discovered during the excavation and development of the new office tower, and present a timeline of the use of the site, from a coach factory to a motor garage.

These cabinets present an example of how to display the artefacts from the excavation of the precinct in a clear and engaging manner, with minimal text-based interpretation used only for providing context to the artefacts.



Figure 34, Figure 35. 161 Castlereagh Street, Sydney display cabinets.  
Source: Freeman Ryan Design.

### Key Stories:

- **Enduring Connection;** the ongoing and continuous connection of Dharug, from Deep Time to present day.
- **Recognition and Truth telling;** stories that acknowledge the impact of colonisation on Ngurra and for Dharug and our responsibility to care for Ngurra as part of healing.
- **Legacy of Colonisation;** stories of the experiences of forced migration, dislocation, trauma, destruction and violence at the heart of Parramatta in the colonial period.
- **The First Gaol;** the significance of the site as the location of the first Gaol in Parramatta; built in 1797 and burnt down by arson in 1799.
- **The Red Coats Mess House;** a visible emblem of the military presence, class hierarchy and colonial trauma in early Parramatta.
- **Thriving on Country;** the stories of the Dharug connection with Ngurra and the knowledge and sustainable practices for using all the materials, plants, land and waters of Ngurra that sustained life and community.
- **Fertile Grounds;** stories highlighting how the agricultural potential of the area influenced its selection for colonisation and the role convict allotments played in the story of food security and sustenance for the early colony.
- **Food Institutions;** the Red Coats Mess House and The Red Cow Inn were important sites connected to food and community.
- **Evolving Community;** stories of the various services, businesses, and individuals in the block.
- **Today's Parramatta;** recent stories of the community and memories of people from different backgrounds and cultures; highlighting influences of migration and diversification that culminate in the nearby hub of Church Street.



## Device 6: Play and Exploration

The project presents opportunities for areas of play and engagement along its central spine through the design of a series of nodes. These will not be formal play areas, but are places for movement, rest, exploration and discovery. More detailed interpretive content can be provided at each of these nodes, through inlays, signage, motifs, graphics or other features. If significant artefacts are discovered these could be installed or embedded if appropriate to do so. The playful responsive to interpretation ensures generational equity and inclusivity, encouraging children to engage and explore.

### Case Study: Skipping Stones, by Jade Oakley

Skipping Stones, inspired by the Lane Cover River, is an artwork that invites play and interaction. Each of the stones, made from cast concrete, have been etched with artist Jade Oakley's sketches of native flora, and surround a central water feature, reminiscent of the meandering nature of the river. The stones themselves sit on glass, lit from below in a changing pattern inspired by the first heavy drops of rain at the start of a summer storm.

The clustering of natural elements within the precinct in a manner similar to Oakley's artwork can create a space in which informal play can be encouraged, relying on children's inherent inquisitive and curious nature.



**Figure 36, Figure 37.**  
"Skipping Stones", by Jade Oakley.  
[Source: Jade Oakley.](#)





## Case Study: Paperbark Playground, Parramatta Park

Items relating to convict and early colonial heritage were incorporated into Paperbark Playground within Parramatta Park. Designed by Jane Cavanough Art & Design in 2019 for the Western Sydney Parklands Trust, these elements included convict love tokens, which are facsimiles of small pennies engraved with messages and drawings, given by the transported convict to loved ones. Hardwood balance beams in the play area feature convict implements of labour including sewing items and road building tools.

The love tokens featured within the Paperbark Playground demonstrate how small interpretive elements can be incorporated into the precinct to establish areas of play and interaction without creating a formal playground space.



**Figure 38.** Convict love tokens incorporated in the play equipment in Paperbark Playground, Parramatta Park.  
Source: Jane Cavanough Art and Design 2019.

### Key Stories:

- **Enduring Connection;** the ongoing and continuous connection of Dharug, from Deep Time to present day.
- **Thriving on Country;** the stories of the Dharug connection with Ngurra and the knowledge and sustainable practices for using all the materials, plants, land and waters of Ngurra that sustained life and community.
- **Hidden History;** archaeological findings that reveal the region's deep geological history, evolution of past environments, and the stories of Dharug people over Deep Time through to colonists and their interactions.
- **A Strategic Location;** the site's location within the town plan in a pivotal position between the military barracks to the east and Government House to the west.
- **Fertile Grounds;** picking up directly from the City of Parramatta themes, this story will highlight how the agricultural potential of the area influenced its selection for colonisation and the role convict allotments played in the story of food security and sustenance for the early colony.
- **Evolving Community;** stories of the various services, businesses, and individuals in the block, including the Salvation Army, Dr. Pringle's practice, and the Civic Theatre Arcade and how they shaped the area's social and economic landscape in areas such as food, leisure, business, and daily life.
- **Food Institutions;** the Red Coats Mess House and The Red Cow Inn were important sites connected to food and community.



# 8. Recommendations

# 8.1 Key interpretative devices

Based on the analysis above, we recommend the following interpretative devices for the Civic Link Block 3 project:

- Sculptural interpretative elements
- landscape elements including plantings
- street furniture and material finish
- signage; and
- digital media.

The following table provides a summary breakdown of the Themes and Key Stories for the site, and the proposed interpretive device to convey these.

Story	Device
Theme: Healing Country	
<b>Enduring Connection;</b> the ongoing and continuous connection of Dharug, from Deep Time to present day.	Drinking Fountains
	QR Linked Story Mapping
	Bronze Sculpture Series
	Support Signage
	Play and Exploration
<b>Recognition and Truth telling;</b> stories that acknowledge the impact of colonisation on Ngurra and for Dharug and our responsibility to care for Ngurra as part of healing.	QR Linked Story Mapping
	Bronze Sculpture Series
	Support Signage
<b>Hidden History;</b> archaeological findings from the Parramatta Sand Body and historical archaeological digs reveal the region's deep geological history and highlight how past environments and Dharug people interacted and adapted.	QR Linked Story Mapping
	Support Signage
	Play and Exploration
<b>Thriving on Country;</b> the stories of the Dharug connection with Ngurra and the knowledge and sustainable practices for using all the materials, plants, land and waters of Ngurra that sustained life and community.	QR Linked Story Mapping
	Drinking Fountains
	Bronze Sculpture Series
	Support Signage

Story	Device
Theme: Landscapes of Power	
<b>A Strategic Location;</b> the site's location within the town plan in a pivotal position between the military barracks to the east and Government House to the west.	QR Linked Story Mapping
	Support Signage
	Play and Exploration
<b>The First Gaol;</b> the significance of the site as the location of the first Gaol in Parramatta; built in 1797 and burnt down by arson in 1799.	Installations Exploring Fire
	QR Linked Story Mapping
	Support Signage
<b>Legacy of Colonisation;</b> stories of the experiences of forced migration, dislocation, trauma, destruction and violence at the heart of Parramatta in the colonial period.	Installations Exploring Fire
	QR Linked Story Mapping
	Bronze Sculpture Series
	Support Signage
<b>The Red Coats Mess House;</b> a visible emblem of the military presence, class hierarchy and colonial trauma in early Parramatta.	Installations Exploring Fire
	QR Linked Story Mapping
	Bronze Sculpture Series
	Support Signage



Story	Device
<b>Theme: Food and Community</b>	
<b>Thriving on Country;</b> the stories of the Dharug connection with Ngurra and the knowledge and sustainable practices for using all the materials, plants, land and waters of Ngurra that sustained life and community.	QR Linked Story Mapping
	Drinking Fountains
	Bronze Sculpture Series
	Support Signage
<b>Fertile Grounds;</b> the agricultural potential influenced its selection for colonisation and the role convict allotments played in the story of food security and sustenance for the early colony.	QR Linked Story Mapping
	Drinking Fountains
	Bronze Sculpture Series
	Support Signage
	Play and Exploration
<b>Food Institutions;</b> the Red Coats Mess House and The Red Cow Inn were important sites connected to food and community.	QR Linked Story Mapping
	Support Signage
<b>Evolving Community;</b> stories of the various services, businesses, and individuals in the block, including the Salvation Army, Dr. Pringle's practice, and the Civic Theatre Arcade and how they shaped the area's social and economic landscape in areas such as food, leisure, business, and daily life.	QR Linked Story Mapping
	Support Signage
	Play and Exploration
<b>Today's Parramatta;</b> recent stories of the community and memories of people from different backgrounds and cultures; highlighting influences of migration and diversification that culminate in the nearby hub of Church Street.	QR Linked Story Mapping
	Drinking Fountains
	Bronze Sculpture Series
	Support Signage
	Play and Exploration

## 8.2 Next steps

### 8.2.1 Site-specific interpretation planning

Following the completion of the interpretation strategy, a detailed interpretation plan for the precinct should be completed. The plan should also incorporate the results of an archaeological testing programs, noting that storylines and potential content may change based on those findings.

The future interpretation plan should detail any requirements for implementation. They should provide detail on the specific devices chosen for implementation, including content, visual media, graphic design inputs, and other required specifications, as relevant to the device.

### 8.2.2 Aboriginal community consultation requirements

In recognising the rights and interests of Aboriginal people in their cultural heritage, all parties concerned with identifying, conserving, and managing cultural heritage should acknowledge, accept and act on the principles that Aboriginal people:

- are the primary source of information about the value of their heritage and how this is best protected and conserved;
- must have an active role in any Aboriginal cultural heritage planning process;
- must have early input into the assessment of the cultural significance of their heritage and its management so they can continue to fulfil their obligations towards their heritage; and
- must control the way in which cultural knowledge and other information relating specifically to their heritage is used, as this may be an integral aspect of its heritage value.
- Future stages of interpretation will require consultation with Aboriginal knowledge holders to seek guidance regarding the interpretation of the thematic structure, content development, and the appropriateness of proposed content and devices.

The Dharug Custodians Consultation Panel should provide advice in subsequent stages to ensure the approach is culturally appropriate and endorsed.

### 8.2.3 Archaeological investigations

Results from any archaeological investigations should be considered and the strategy and/or plan revised; integrating any results and new information

### 8.2.4 Cultural protocols and intellectual property

Intellectual and cultural property rights should be acknowledged and respected in all stages. Cultural information should only be included with permission and must be correctly acknowledged and attributed.

### 8.2.5 Implementation

Once the interpretation plan has been prepared and finalised, the next phase will include the implementation of agreed devices. This involves content development, design, manufacture, and installation. Specific design requirements should be detailed during interpretation planning. The mood boards, colour palette and graphic direction developed as part of the plan should be adhered to closely during content development.

# Appendix A

## Historical Overview

The following historical overview is intended to provide a broad context for storytelling at the site. It has been used to help inform the development of the thematic framework and identification of key values and stories suitable for interpretation. It is noted that further primary research and results of any archaeological investigations would need to be incorporated during any further content development.



## A.1 Life on Dharug Country

The site is located on Dharug Country, and it has been part of Dharug Country for countless generations. From Deep Time to the present day, Aboriginal communities have lived and worked here, maintaining strong communities and caring for Ngurra (Country).

Block 3 is on the traditional lands of the Burramattagal people, (also spelled Boromedegal, Booramedegal, and Burramedigal), whose ancestors have been here since Deep Time (Attenbrow 2002, 24; Kohen 1986, 56). The Burramattagal are a clan of the inland Dharug (also spelt Darug, Dharrook, Dharook, and Dharruk) people (Attenbrow 2010). Inland Dharug Country is thought to have stretched from the Hawkesbury in the north, Appin in the south, and past the Georges River in the west (Attenbrow 2010, 34).

The term 'Dharug' is thought to mean 'wild yam', highlighting the cultural and economic importance of this dietary staple (Attenbrow 2002, 31). The word 'Burramattagal' translates variously as 'the head of the river' or 'where the eels lie down'. The suffix, '-gal', refers to the people, specifically the men, who lived in the Parramatta region (Collins 1975, 453; Kass et al 1996, 5–6; Tench 1979, 292).

Over many millennia, inland Dharug people developed a complex system of resource use that was attuned to the seasons and made the best possible use of the forests, waters, and grasslands of Cumberland Plain and the significant waterway of the Parramatta River; where salt and freshwater meet. Importantly, Dharug people had and continue to have a custodial role in caring for Country, and ensuring the resources are used in a balanced and sustainable way.

### Waterways and the Parramatta River

The waters that run through Country are highly significant. The Parramatta River runs west to east across the Cumberland Plains, through Parramatta and Westmead, to the mouth of Warrang (Sydney Harbour). The river passes just 150 m north of the site.

Before sea levels rose at the end of the Pleistocene (the last Ice Age), the Parramatta River looked very different to what we recognise today. At that time, it was a small creek with a surrounding Country that is very different from the landscape there now (GML Heritage 2021, 162). Following the end of the Ice Age, the river came to form an estuary where salt and fresh water meet. The point where these waters meet is Charles Street weir, just 400 m north east of the site. Understanding how the river has changed helps us to understand how life and culture has changed over many millennia too. The archaeological resource in Parramatta records information of this ancient cultural landscape, as well as evidence relating to change over the course of following glacial period.

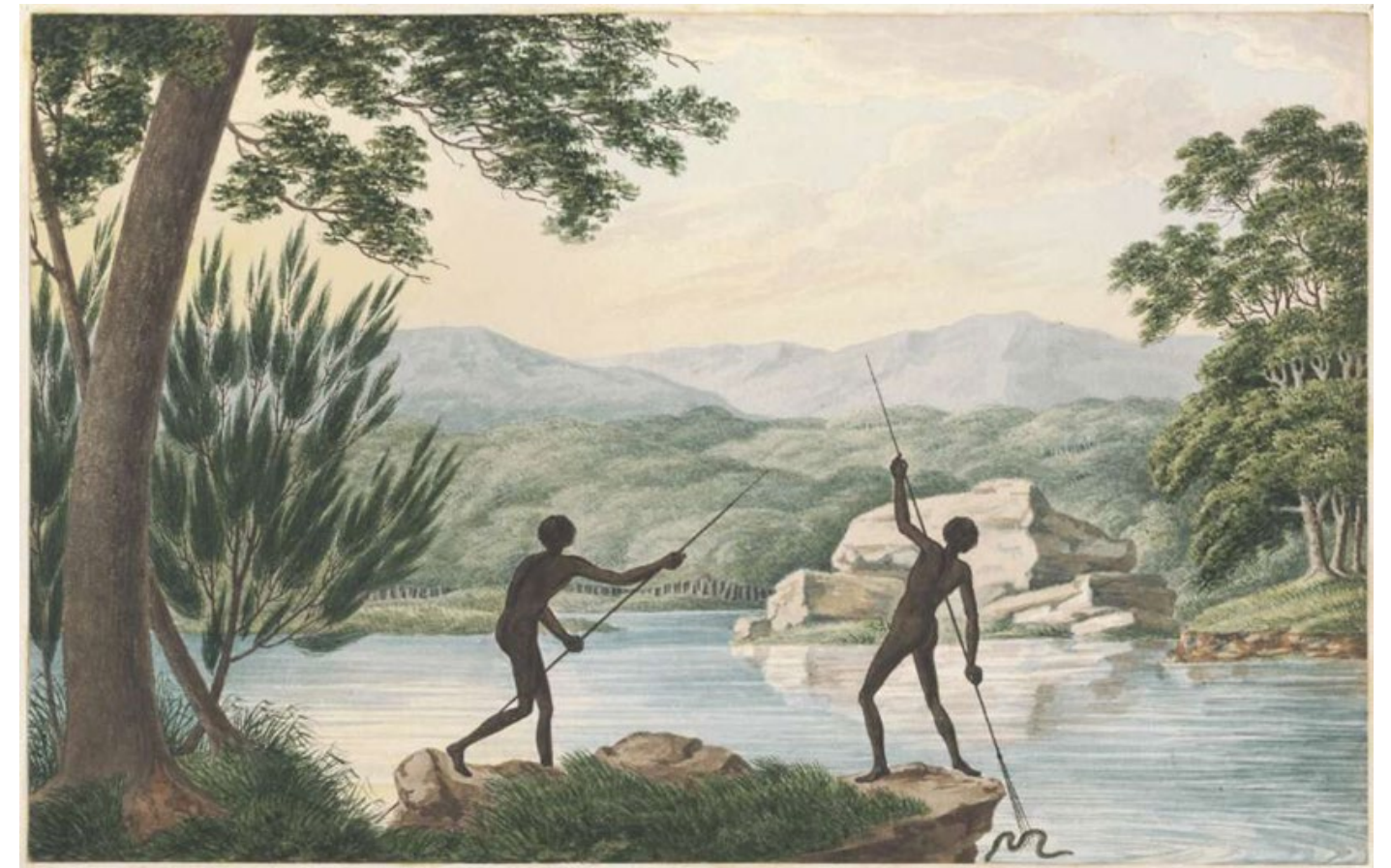
The significance of the river and its resources is highlighted in the clan name of its traditional owners and the importance of the brackish waters that were a perfect breeding ground for eels. Eels are unique animals that can move on land, as well as through both fresh and salt water. Jules Christian, a Burramattagal Woman, described the subsistence of the region through the eel totem:

*The eel has 'the ability to swim in freshwater then transition with ease into the saltwater of the ocean. The eel's ability to work its way out of the water onto grassy land areas, climb over and under concrete barriers, stands in contrast to fish that are either just fresh water, or salt water variety, and definitely cannot live without water' (Garland Magazine 2021).*

The combination of saltwater and freshwater supported a rich range of species that underpinned the diet of Aboriginal peoples in the area. The freshwater streams flowing into the river provided a habitat for ducks, turtles, and a range of fish and shellfish species. Saltwater species of fish, shellfish, molluscs, and, importantly, eels thrived in the river itself. Eels would have been caught with traps and pronged spears (Mary Dallas Consulting Archaeologists 2003, 31–32). Yams also flourished in the riverbeds and were an important staple for the Aboriginal groups here.

### The landscape and resources of Country

Geological processes that took place many millions of years ago also shaped the story of Country and people here. The Parramatta Sand Body (PSB) is sand deposit that extends for approximately 2.5 km along the Parramatta River. Most of the PSB is located on the south side of the river, with some sections on the north bank. Radiocarbon dating suggests the PSB began forming around 50,000 years ago, though some areas may have formed around 20,000 years ago during the Last Glacial Maximum.



**Figure 39.** Sketch by Joseph Lycett of two Aboriginal men spearing eels, c.1817.  
Source: National Library of Australia, PIC MSR 12/1/4.



This means it holds significant archaeological and cultural importance, providing evidence of Aboriginal occupation dating back to the late Pleistocene and throughout the Holocene. The PSB is typically found at depths of around 1 metre but can extend beyond 3 metres in some areas, buried under more recent swamp deposits and modern fill. The deposit is largely situated between approximately 4 metres and 8 metres above sea level (AHD). Due to extensive urban development in Parramatta, much of the sand body has been destroyed, making the study and preservation of remaining sections crucial. Mapping of the extent of the PSB shows that the deposit may extend through the Block 3 study area.

The ancient landscape of Parramatta would have also looked very different to the urban environment we see today. Cumberland Plain Woodlands – dominated by eucalypt species, in particular grey box and forest red gum with an open grassy understorey would have been the dominant forms of vegetation. Mangroves may have colonised the river margins, while the common reed, paperbarks and rough-barked native apple are more likely to have occupied wetter and drier areas on the lower river terraces (Casey and Macphail 2008).

Like their Wangal neighbours and the Gadigal down river, the Burramattagal used the timber and bark from this landscape to build vessels such as canoes and shelters, as well as a range of other goods such as weapons, bags, containers, string, and tools. Trees were also used to build vessels such as canoes. These were an important form of transportation for the Dharug, and were used to access the major waterways of the Cumberland Plain for hunting and fishing activities. A range of other goods such as weapons, bags, containers, and tools also relied on the timber and bark of the forests.

The forests were also home to small mammals, goannas, birds, insects, and larger game, hunted for food and furs. Fruits, native berries, and other plants were gathered as dietary staples, as well as important components of traditional medicine. Like their neighbours, the Burramattagal also used fire to shape the landscape, encouraging the development of a grassy understory intended to attract game and enrich the soils.

## A.2 Colonisation and resistance

After British colonisation in 1788, life changed dramatically for the Dharug and other Aboriginal peoples of the region. Dispossession, restriction of access to resources, disease, and violence became a reality of everyday life. This loss of life and upheaval also led to major social restructuring, as traditional groups and boundaries were put under intense pressure.

Shortly after the First Fleet arrived in Sydney Cove, Governor Phillip realised that the soils around Sydney Harbour would struggle to support the needs of the colony. In November 1788, Phillip founded a new settlement, initially named 'Rose Hill', on the rich alluvial soils at the head of the river (Tench 1793, Chapter 2). Later, in 1791, the settlement was renamed Parramatta, after the Burramattagal (Kass, Liston and McClymont 1996, 5–6). The features of the area that made it attractive to the colonists correlate closely with Aboriginal use of the site; it being of open forest with grass cover with access to fresh water and the head of navigation from the Parramatta River.

Almost immediately upon arriving in Parramatta, the British set about a rapid program of clearing trees and vegetation, causing environmental destruction which had a lasting impact. A town plan was prepared by Governor Phillip and Surveyor Augustus Alt in 1790, which set out an orderly grid of streets. This was

framed by two main east-west streets: High Street (now George Street) and South Street (now Macquarie Street) crossed by two north-south streets: Bridge Street, (now O'Connell Street) and Church Street. A redoubt was constructed in the area that is now Parramatta Park and military forces sent to defend the new settlement. This military presence highlights both the strategic importance of the new settlement to the British, and the violence inherent to the invasion of Parramatta. The Governor's house was to sit in an elevated position on a small hill on the western edge of the town, from which High (George) Street would run for a mile down to the new Military Barracks and Wharf (near present day Queen's Wharf Reserve and Harris Street). Church Street, as the name implies, was the planned civic and religious 'axis', with a church to the south and a town hall and marketplace to the north. As Shanahan and Gibbs explain,

this design for the town plan is important, as it formed what is essentially an axis of power and control, with symbols of divine authority, military power and civic order and industry marking the end of each principal street, and the ultimate symbol of Crown authority- the Governor's House- in an elevated position overlooking all (2022,86).



**Figure 40.** Image of 'Pimbley' by Samuel John Neele, published in *The Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery* by James Grant (1803).  
Source: [State Library of New South Wales Q80/18](#).



The allotments themselves measured 100 feet by 200 feet and were set in a grid along these thoroughfares. Each allotment was to contain a hut capable of holding ten persons, spaced at 60 feet intervals, to house the convict workforce of the new settlement. In September 1790, it was reported that twenty-seven huts for accommodating the convicts were under construction, and by November, Watkin Tench reports that High (George) Street:

...contains at present 32 houses completed, of 24 feet by 12 each [7.3m x 3.65m], on a ground floor only, built of wattles plaistered with clay, and thatched. Each house is divided into two rooms, in one of which is a fire place and a brick chimney. These houses are designed for men only; and ten is the number of inhabitants allotted to each; but some of them now contain 12 or 14, for want of better accommodation. More are building; in a cross street stand nine houses for unmarried women: and exclusive of all these are several small huts where convict families of good character are allowed to reside (1793, 196)

Historical images and archaeological excavations show that huts were generally centrally located within each allotment, occupying the street frontage, however these investigations have also shown some allotments contained multiple dwellings or 'back huts'. The large allotment size was also important to facilitate gardens; linked to the role of the town as an agricultural landscape.

Burramattagal continued to live in the area throughout this period, adapting to the ever-changing environment. Aboriginal people found ways to survive and maintain a connection to Country in the colony. Several men began to sell or exchange fish, including mullet and bream, for bread or salt meat with the British colonisers (Collins 1798, Chapter 13). Aboriginal people also utilised new glass and ceramic resources to fashion tools. Soon though, the ever-swelling numbers of people created increasing pressure for resources and environmental destruction. This exacerbated tensions between the newcomers and the increasingly marginalised Burramattagal.

In 1792, conflict in the region and the new town intensified further as Bidjigal (Bidjigal) man Pemulwuy commenced a campaign of resistance against the incursions of the British on the lands of his people. Pemulwuy undertook a series of guerilla raids across the Sydney region. On 22 March 1797, Pemulwuy entered the town of Parramatta, supported by 100 warriors. He was shot during the conflict, but recovered in hospital, adding to his increasingly feared status in the colony. He continued his campaign of resistance until 1802, when he was killed in an ambush (Kass et al. 1996, 49). His son, Tedbury, continued the campaign throughout the Sydney and Parramatta districts.

Notwithstanding the social, cultural, and economic destruction, as well as the catastrophic loss of life caused by colonisation, oral and community histories and other sources show that Aboriginal people maintained an active connection to Country throughout the colonial period.

## A.3 The First Gaol

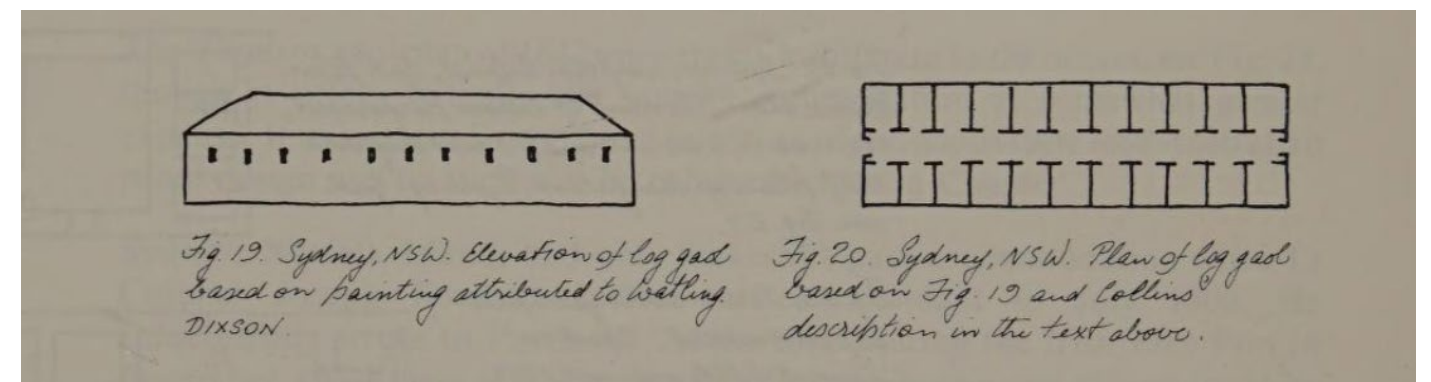
The Block 3 study area fronts George Street, and historically was part of an allotment that was laid out as part of the early town plan, as described above. Evan's map of the township of Parramatta, drafted around 1814 and based on Meehan's survey of 1804, shows George Street as flanked by allotments with cottages set back from the once much wider street. The allotment corresponding to Block 3 is conspicuously empty. However, annotation no.30 corresponds to 'gaol' in the accompanying key. At first sight this appears to be a duplication because 30 is also indicated at the commonly accepted site of the early gaol is indicated just north of the Parramatta River, in what is now Prince Alfred Park. Secondary sources that address or discuss Parramatta's first gaol all assume that this first gaol was at this northern location, located in Prince Alfred Park.

However, further information is contained in Meehan's survey field books where he notes the corners of the old gaol yard on George Street, in contrast to the gaol north of the river, which reveals that the first gaol was in fact within the Block 3 site. Previous work undertaken by Extent Heritage included redrafting the survey based on these field books (AHMS 2013, Extent Heritage 2017).

The first gaol at Parramatta had a brief lifespan and operated for less than three years. It was completed in June 1797 and was destroyed by fire in December 1799. Orders for the construction of gaols at Sydney and Parramatta were issued by Governor Hunter in 1796. Both were to be of double log construction. He issued a General Order (26.9.1796) that required every settler and householder to furnish and deliver:

ten logs weekly each, the logs to be 9 feet long, not under or over 7 inches diameter and ... quite straight. The Governor thinks it also necessary to inform the officers who are furnish'd with labourers from Government that he expects from them twenty logs each (CHRNAW 3.139, cited in Kerr 1984).

The Parramatta gaol was to be 100 feet long while the Sydney gaol was 80 feet long. David Collins's description of Sydney gaol indicated that it had 22 cells. Collins's description, reproduced in part below, provides additional insights into the configuration and structure of Sydney gaol, and Parramatta gaol by comparison. External walls and internal cell partitions were constructed of a double wall of logs. The floor was also constructed of timber logs, while the walls and floors were covered in clay. The pragmatic use of logs and of thatch roofs explains how both prisons were burnt relatively soon after construction.



**Figure 41.** Conjectural reconstruction of elevation and plan of Sydney gaol by Kerr (Design for Convicts, p19).



The precise plan and configuration of the gaol and its location within the gaol yard is unknown. However, it was a substantial structure measuring 100 feet (approximately 30 m) long and could be comfortably accommodated within the gaol yard boundary on either a north-south axis or an east-west axis.

In reporting the demise of the gaol, Governor Hunter records:

A strong logged gaol of 100 feet in length, with separate cells for prisoners, built at Parramatta, and paled round with very high fence, as was the foregoing. This prison was also burnt by design, but no discovery made of the villains, though a considerable reward, with other inducements, were offered

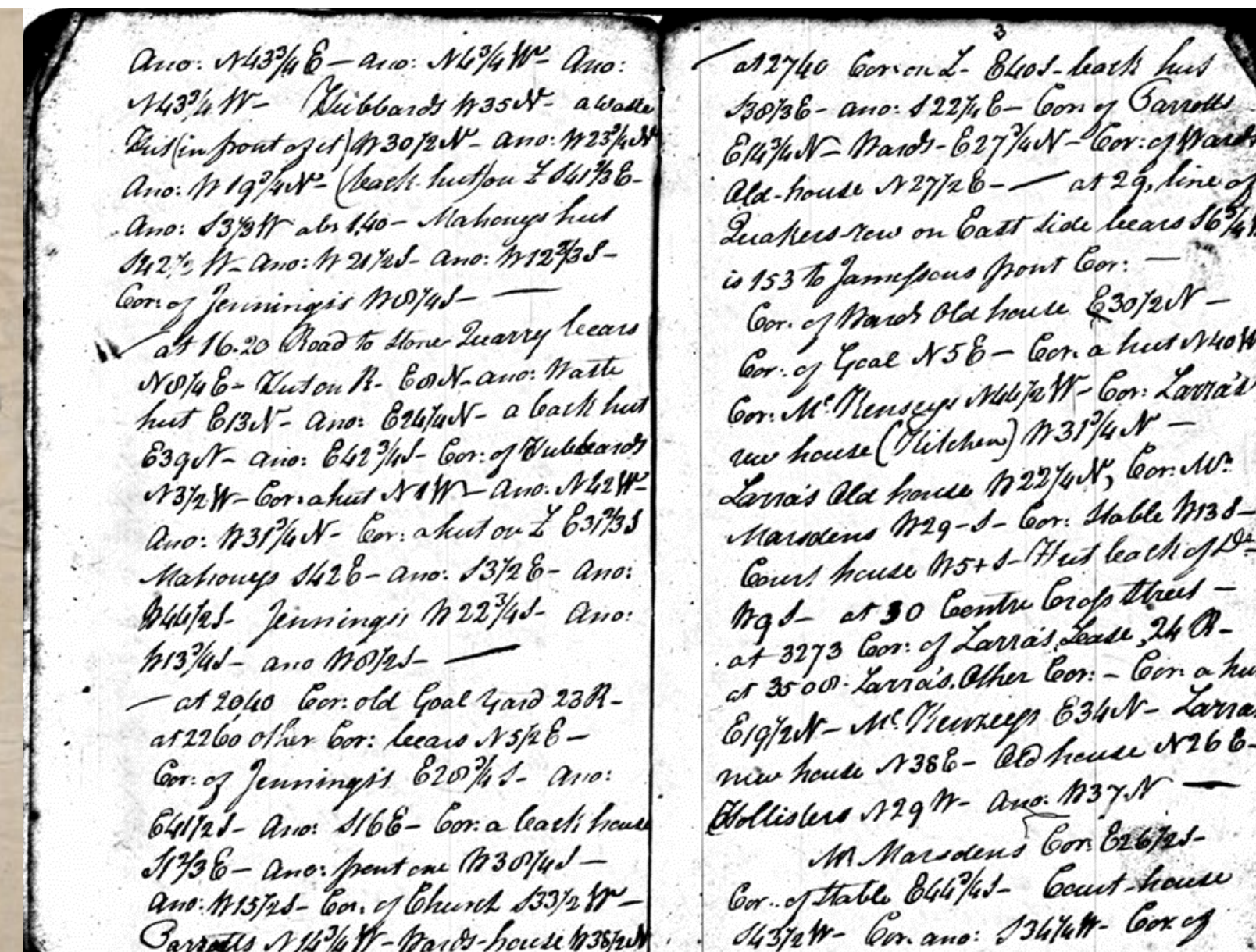
And writing on 7 January 1800:

I am concerned to have to represent to your Grace that on the night of the 28th ult<sup>o</sup> our public goal [sic] at Parramatta, a strong and substantial log building of one hundred feet long, was wilfully and maliciously set fire to by some unknown person, and was intirely [sic] consum'd. There were at the time eight prisoners confin'd in it, who were with much difficulty saved from the suddenness of the conflagration; several of them were shockingly scorched, one of whom is since dead.

Establishing that the first gaol was actually located on George Street further underlines the importance of the street as the primary axis within the 1790s town plan. It can now be seen that the place of incarceration was situated prominently on the main street at a point midway between the government house to the west and the military barracks to the east. The gaol was relocated north of the river after the first building was burned to the ground. At that point, the northern 'second gaol' can be seen to be the counterpoint to the Anglican church along a north-south Church Street alignment.

Figure 42. Meehan's survey data overlain on Evans' plan, the annotated '30' referring to a gaol, and location of the study area, is outlined in yellow.

Figure 43. Meehan's 1804 survey field book distinguishing between the old gaol and the new gaol.





## A.4 Red Coats Mess

After the arson of the first Parramatta Gaol, the allotment does not appear to have been formally occupied until perhaps as late as the 1830s. Two masonry buildings constructed on the allotment during this period were recorded on a plan of Parramatta made in 1844. These were constructed on land that was formerly on within the curtilage of George Street until the road was narrowed from 205 feet (62.48m) to the 60 feet (18.20m) in the period between 1810-23. The buildings were used to house the Officer's Mess of the 17<sup>th</sup> Regiment until the 1840s (AHMS 1999). The 17<sup>th</sup> Regiment had a reputation for its skilled regimental band.

Reminiscing some 60 years later, a resident, Mr John Taylor, recollected of the time:

Every evening at 6 p.m. the bugler sounded at the top barracks for mass. A few minutes afterwards he would sound at the corner of Church and Macquarie streets for officers' mess. The officers' mess-room was the house opposite Ritchie's property in George-street and owned by the Byrnes family and now occupied by Mr. DeSaxe. The band played every evening in front of the house during the mess-dinner. (*The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate*. 'The Sixty Years in Parramatta.' 19 June 1897, 5)

At the time of construction of the Red Coats Mess, the military presence in Parramatta had increased dramatically. By the end of the 1830s there were 276 men and 12 commissioned officers of the Regiment residing permanently in the town to guard the convict work gangs, government institutions and Government House (AHMS 1999). This pattern of growth was however curtailed as a result of a number of events during the 1840s. This included the British Government's decision to end the transportation of convicts to New South Wales and to permit limited representative government, resulting in a reduction in regimental numbers. This event coincided with an international economic depression that constricted private investment in the local economy and contributed to the bankruptcy of a number of prominent businessmen (Dyster 2022).

By the 1850s it appears that the military had either leased or divested themselves of the building and it was used to house a school run by Mr Underwood. Such usage appears to have been short lived however because by 1861 the distinguished Scottish surgeon Dr George Hogarth Pringle had purchased the property for £1800 and established a surgery in the building. Pringle was surgeon at Parramatta Hospital in the 1860's and served for a time as visiting medical officer to the Catholic Orphanage. He had trained in Scotland where he was an associate of Joseph Lister and house surgeon at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. During his years in Australia, he developed a reputation as a colonial pioneer in the use of antiseptics in surgery. The first instance was described in a letter to the Sydney Morning Herald in which Dr. Pringle recounted an incident on October 18, 1867, when a young man accidentally discharged his shotgun while hunting wallabies, severely injuring his wrist. After being transported twelve miles on a mattress in a spring cart, the man was weak from blood loss. Standard practice at the time would have been immediate amputation to prevent infection, but Pringle applied a new approach informed by Joseph Lister's antiseptic principles. Having removed loose tissue, bone fragments, and other debris from the wound, Pringle then applied a lint dressing soaked in carbolic acid and glycerine and splinted the arm. Thirty-four days later, Pringle found that the wound had fully healed, successfully turning a compound fracture into a simple one.

Shortly after settling in Parramatta he married Annie Oakes, daughter of Joseph Byrnes who was trained as a nurse and was matron of Parramatta Hospital. Dr Pringle set up his home and a surgery, presumably as part of his private practice, in the old Red Coats Mess. Pringle's medical practice operated from the building in George Street until he left Australia to return to Scotland in 1872.

**Figure 44.** Illustrations of the 17<sup>th</sup> Regiment uniform, contemporaneous with the time the Regiment were stationed at Parramatta.

Source: Webb, E.A.H., 1912. *A History of the Services of the 17th (the Leicestershire) Regiment*.



DRUM-MAJOR, 1830.



BANDSMAN (WITH SERPENT), 1830.



OFFICER,  
GRENADE COMPANY,  
1831-45.

OFFICER,  
BATTALION COMPANY,  
1830.  
(Summer Dress)

OFFICER,  
LIGHT COMPANY,  
1831-45.



## A.5 The Red Cow Inn

The Red Cow Inn once stood under part of the present Eat Street Carpark, adjacent to the Block 3 area. One of Parramatta's earliest and most important colonial social pubs, it is thought to have taken its name from the red cows that once grazed the town's pastures. The inn's early significance is noted in an 1803 advertisement, and by 1817, it was one of the 12 licensed inns in Parramatta, under the management of Charles Walker.

Over the years, the inn grew in prominence, attracting mail coach trade and becoming known for its spacious yards, stables, and a lush garden that was a town attraction. The inn played a vital role in the local community, hosting important events like the 1822 dinner that marked the establishment of the Royal Agricultural Society, with key figures like the Governor Sir Thomas Brisbane in attendance. 'Upwards of eighty Gentlemen of the first rank and opulence in the Territory, sat down, at six o'clock, to a most splendid dinner', where the society rules were finalised and Governor Brisbane addressed the gathering, pledging government support and promising a grant of land near Parramatta for an experimental farm.

After Charles Walker's death in 1826, his widow, Hannah, managed the inn and it grew in importance as a locale for social gatherings and community functions due to its 'long room' and other function spaces. By 1831, it was so embedded in the structure of the town that a local meeting at the courthouse to petition the King about land sale regulations was adjourned by the sheriff to "... Mrs. Walker's long room, adjoining that most comfortable of temporary domiciles for man and beast, to wit, the Red Cow Inn, where some about 145 persons crowded in".

An 1889 (*Illustrated Sydney News*, 17 October 1889) newspaper article recounted one visitor's impressions:

As to the 'Woolpack's' companion Inn, the 'Red Cow,' the following notice occurs of it in its best days: 'After passing a particularly pretty garden, in which stood a long, low house with a spacious piazza in front, I was surprised by my husband's driving up to the door, and still more so on finding that this was our inn where we had engaged rooms. My belief, that it was a private residence was natural enough, for the sign of the "Red Cow" on the roof had escaped my notice; but we were most comfortably accommodated in every way.

The garden was full of beautiful flowers particularly the bright scarlet blossoms of the pomegranate, the soft and fragrant oleander, the quantities of pink and crimson China roses. An enormous prickly-pear (I think it must be twenty feet high) grew near the house, and was full of yellow blossoms and dark red fruit, in picking up some of which to taste, I stuck my gloves so full of the fine, penetrating prickles that it was some days before I extracted them all from my hands. Two beautiful birds were living tame in the garden, they were called curlew, but I doubt if correctly; and several of the native parrots were caged in the verandah.

The inn was eventually demolished to make way for the Commercial Bank Building. Despite its demise, the inn remains a significant part of Parramatta's early history, especially for its connection to the town's agricultural roots and its role as a gathering place for community over time.

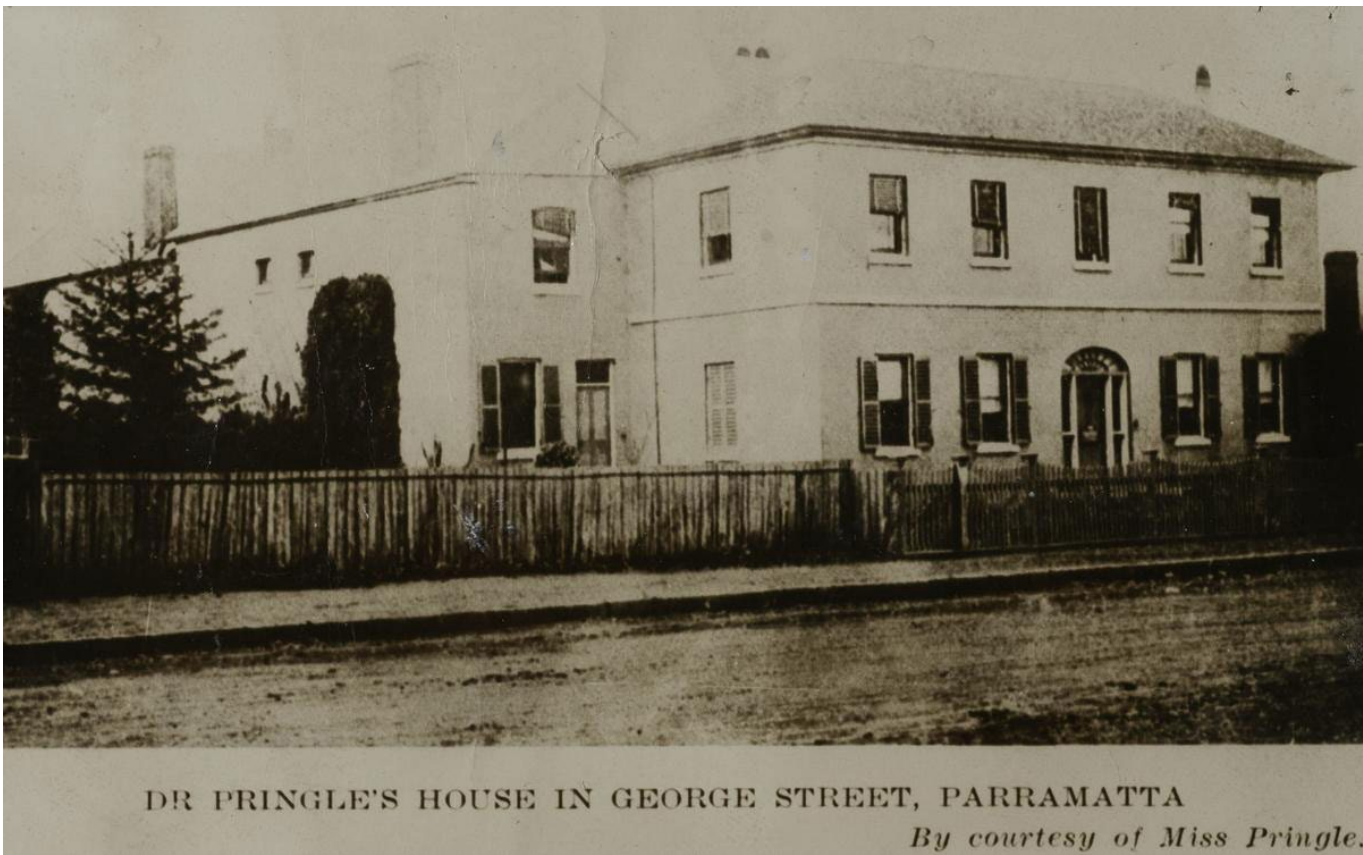
[FROM A CORRESPONDENT.]  
**PARRAMATTA.**—There is joy here in every countenance. The fine band of the 17th Regiment played from their barracks to our neat church and back, this morning. In the expectation of this treat, all the forenoon was consumed (by old and young, rich and poor), in preparing to meet this unusual gratification; all was bustle, and the first question asked, "do you think that the Governor will allow them to remain in Parramatta?" Our venerable and respected pastor never before preached to so large or genteel an assemblage. Some of the band joined our vocal choir, and considering it was the first time, did equal justice to their well-known fame. Yes, our Governor, who has spent a good portion of his time amongst his friends of Parramatta, will allow the band of the 17th foot to continue with them. I need not say that we have a Government-house; that our's is the second town in this flourishing colony—but look at the beauty of the surrounding country. I pledge myself, that the "gallant Colonel," "his lady," and the rest of the officers and ladies of this fine corps, will join heart and hand with the inhabitants, to implore His Excellency to allow the band of the 17th Regt. to remain with us.

**Figure 45.** Article describing the 17<sup>th</sup> Regiment band at Parramatta, 1831.

Source: *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* (NSW: 1803 - 1842), 15 February 1831, p. 3.

**Figure 46.** Residence of Dr George Hogarth Pringle, George Street, Parramatta, view of front exterior of two storey building, ca. 1870. Note Red Coats Mess building at right angles at rear of house.

Source: City of Parramatta Research & Collections, LSP00645.





## A.6 Business and community in the twentieth century and beyond

At the turn of the century, the George Street and Phillip Street frontages became increasingly commercial. L. J. Anschau & Sons, originally tanners and bootmakers at Margaret Farm in St Marys, relocated their operations to Parramatta in 1910. By 1914, the family business, run by several brothers, was officially registered at George Street. They quickly expanded, building a factory on Phillip Street by 1916, which became known for its ample yard space, stables, and a mix of personal and industrial facilities. The family business grew in prominence, but in 1920, a fire destroyed part of their factory. Despite this, they continued to operate, with Rupert Anschau managing the Phillip Street site. The factory remained active until the late 1920s when the properties were mortgaged and eventually sold to Charles Albert Henry Freestone, who converted the space into a fibrous plaster works. The Freestone family held onto the properties until the 1960s, when they were sold and redeveloped.

Meanwhile, the George Street allotment, adjacent to the factory, was purchased by the Salvation Army in 1917. By 1919, a new hall was constructed, providing much-needed space for the local branch. The premises opened on 11 January 1919. A description was given in *The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate* the preceding week:

This fine block of buildings is in a good position in George-street. The main hall is built of brick and is 26 feet by 56 feet. At the back of the hall there are two good rooms, one for the band, the other an office. The young people's hall is also built of brick and is 20 × 40 feet, the primary room is 20 × 20 feet. In the rear of the grounds is a nice six-roomed cottage for the use of the officers (*The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate* 'The New Citadel' 4 January 1919, 6).

This hall, along with other buildings on the site, was eventually demolished in the late 1960s to make way for the northern extension of Horwood Place.

Also fronting George Street, Allotment 92 was acquired in 1910 by Harold William Day leasing it to Samuel and Albert Bennington, who were involved in the moving picture business. The site became a cinema hub when it was sold to Bennington Pictures Limited in 1913, serving as a cinema throughout much of the twentieth century. Ownership passed through several hands, including Parramatta Cinema Ltd in 1921 and Western Suburbs Cinemas in 1930, before Australian Property Units Management Pty Ltd took over in 1960. By the early 1960s, the land behind the cinema was repurposed as a car park to serve an increasing population and access to the shops and services in the centre of Parramatta.



**Figure 47.** Detail, Horwood Place view from Council Chambers, 1969. Looking north, before extension of Horwood Place to Phillip Street. Salvation Army Hall at centre, Roxy Theatre at right (Source: City of Parramatta Council. PRS110/004/012).

**Figure 48.** Parramatta Civic exterior, 1942, view north east. Dr Pringle's Cottage at right (Source: SLNSW FL1332722).

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