

# APPENDIX G HERITAGE INTERPRETATION STRATEGY

Powerhouse Museum







POWERHOUSE PARRAMATTA

# HERITAGE INTERPRETATION STRATEGY

SEPTEMBER 2020



Museum of  
Applied Arts  
& Sciences



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### Acknowledgement of Country

The Powerhouse acknowledges Australia's First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and gives respect to the Elders – past and present – and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Grindstone and mill stone, Australia, c. 1900, Powerhouse Collection.  
Gift of Dr G A Machattie, 1993. Photo: Ryan Hernandez



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences has since 1881 celebrated and interpreted the shared histories of Australian ingenuity and innovation. Powerhouse Parramatta will maintain and expand this commitment to continue to tell local stories of Greater Sydney within the context of its new home in Parramatta.

The site in which Powerhouse Parramatta is located contains a rich history with strong connections to its diverse communities and cultures. This Heritage Interpretation Strategy outlines the approach to, and commitment made by Powerhouse Parramatta to the ongoing heritage interpretation of its site in several forms.

This Strategy takes into consideration the feedback received during the exhibition of the Powerhouse Parramatta State Significant Development Application (SSDA) and outlines:

- History of the site and its peoples;
- Policies and guidelines informing the Strategy;
- Consultation process undertaken to identify key principles for heritage interpretation;
- Commitment to themes for heritage interpretation within the site;
- Elements based on the themes; and
- Future programs proposed to realise ongoing heritage interpretation of the site.

The Powerhouse Parramatta Heritage Interpretation Strategy will continue to be developed through an ongoing consultative process to define the interpretive elements of the Strategy prior to the opening of the new museum. These consultative processes will not conclude at the opening of Powerhouse Parramatta but continue as key component of the ongoing programming of the museum in partnership with local and NSW communities. Heritage interpretation will include:

### **Powerhouse Parramatta Permanent Heritage Interpretation**

- Landscape design
- Buildings and public domain
- Powerhouse Collection

### **Powerhouse Parramatta Ongoing Museum Program Heritage Interpretation**

- Exhibition Program
- Public Program
- Research Program
- Local Oral History Program
- Rooftop Garden
- Powerlab Kitchen
- Culinary Archive
- National Indigenous Science Centre
- Education Program

### **Powerhouse Parramatta Collaborative Heritage Interpretation**

- Partnerships
- Cross-institutional collaborations



## INTERPRETATION PLANNING PROCESS

**Stage 1** of the Interpretation planning process provides a broad overview of the thematic and strategic process for developing the interpretation for the site and includes initial consultation with the relevant stakeholders regarding interpretive themes and opportunities.

**Stage 2** of the Interpretation planning process relates to the development of the final interpretation outcomes both tangible and intangible, which includes further consultation with the key stakeholders and the preparation of content for the chosen interpretive products. During this stage of the process the interpretation is prepared in consultation with the appropriate stakeholders (i.e. collaboration with the Aboriginal community will ensure any text and content for any interpretation regarding Aboriginal cultural heritage is endorsed).

At this stage it is important to finalise any tangible locations of interpretive outcomes, consider the long-term maintenance impacts of any interpretation proposed to be implemented and to ensure that the interpretive products fit within the final design of the proposed development. This stage generally occurs concurrently with the preparation of the construction certificate documentation and will include the initial consultation with artists and other contractors relevant to the interpretive products proposed.

**Stage 3** of the Interpretation planning process is the final design, production and implementation of the interpretive elements on site. This stage of the process includes the finalisation of the fabric, materials and manufacturing of the interpretive elements to be implemented. These works will be integrated into the development works at the site and are required to be completed to the satisfaction of the relevant consent authority prior to the issuing of the occupation certificate.

**Stage 4** of the Interpretation planning process involves the ongoing consultation with community, long term relationships and collaboration with partners and the programmatic commitment to the principles outlined in this document.



Photograph of Church Street, Parramatta, Kerry and Co, Sydney, c. 1884–1917 (detail). Powerhouse Collection



## 2.0 POWERHOUSE PARRAMATTA SITE HISTORY

For thousands of years prior to European settlement, the clan that occupied the area now known as Parramatta were the Burramattagal, from which Parramatta derives its name. The Burramattagal clan belonged to the Dharug, a wider language group that originally extended as far as La Perouse, Bathurst and the Hawkesbury River. 'Burramattagal' is thought to be derived from the Aboriginal word for 'place where the eels lie down' to breed, in reference to eels in the Parramatta River. The Burramattagal people have a close connection with the river, from which they caught fish, eels, and enjoyed a variety of foods created by the convergence of fresh and salt-water within the Parramatta River.

The lifestyle of the local Aboriginal people in Parramatta was dramatically impacted by Governor Phillip's arrival with the First Fleet in 1788. The colonisation of the land resulted in displacement of the traditional owners from the region that they had inhabited for thousands of years. Conflicts between the Aboriginal groups and the settlers were common, the local Aboriginal population decreased as they faced disease, starvation and the breakdown of traditional cultural and social practices and were forced to move into the territories of other Aboriginal clans. Some records provide information about the local Aboriginal population in the early 1800s, however such information appears scarce by the 1850s.

Following the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, British exploration began in search of arable land for the establishment of a convict settlement. The Parramatta area was identified as an ideal location for settlement and farming and as such is the second oldest city in Australia, established as farming land only ten months after Sydney was founded. In 1799, the Old Government House was established, making Parramatta the heart of social and political development in the Western Sydney area during the 18th and 19th centuries. Lachlan Macquarie became Governor of the colony in 1810 and undertook town planning improvements, such as the construction of public buildings and establishment of new streets.

Photograph of Parramatta River from Sydney Harbour,  
1880-1890, photographer Henry King, Powerhouse Collection.  
Gift of the Royal Australian Historical Society, 1981



The following hundred years in Parramatta was characterised by rapid industrialisation and urban growth. Institutions in the Parramatta area that have been identified as key historically significant monuments for Australia's Indigenous and colonial pasts include the Experiment Farm Cottage in Harris Park, Parramatta Gaol, Parramatta Park, and the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct, which have been nationally and internationally recognised as sites that reflect early colonial life and society. During the early to mid-20th century, no new significant developments were constructed in the area, although the use of existing structures and the land had changed to support the evolving role of Parramatta from its initial establishment as an important civic precinct of the colony to becoming Sydney's Central River City.

While Parramatta is a site of major historical significance for Australia's colonial history, it also remains an important meeting place for Aboriginal people. In early colonial times, many Aboriginal people were brought to Sydney and Parramatta as an underpaid workforce in domestic service and building infrastructure. This migration resulted in a large Aboriginal population in inner-city Sydney and Western Sydney, and Western Sydney now claims the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) population of any region in Australia.

Parramatta is also one of the most diverse cultural communities in the world due to its history of multicultural waves of migration, from the first arrival of Europeans, to the wave of migration in the 1820s with contract labour, through the 19th and 20th centuries to the present day. A number of Chinese migrants

were employed during the 1820s on contracts as servants, artisans and labourers. While many of them simply returned home once their contracts were up, others stayed. Australia's first permanent Chinese immigrant, Mak Sai Ying, arrived in Parramatta in 1818 and took up a land grant under a British scheme to address labour shortages by issuing land grants to free settlers. The discovery of gold in Australia attracted at least 42,000 Chinese migrants between 1851 and 1860; 26 Chinese men are documented having settled in the Parramatta area in the 1861 census. In the late 1890s, a Lebanese woman named Rosie Broheen migrated to Australia and eventually purchased land in Parramatta. Rosie is believed to be the first of the Kfarsghab community, Parramatta's sister city, to settle in the region, beginning the wave of Lebanese immigration to Parramatta over the 20th Century. As well as Lebanese migrants, there are accounts of Greek and Maltese communities living and trading in Parramatta in the 1920s and 1930s.

The present-day demographics of the region reflect Australia's identity as a settler immigrant nation. Parramatta is today a vibrant, diverse global city has been shaped by its complex and often troubled past, the continuing presence of the Indigenous population, and the successive waves of immigration. The landscape and the architecture of the site stand as monuments to its interwoven Indigenous, colonial, and immigrant histories.

For a complete history of the site please see: Historical Archaeological Research Design, Powerhouse Parramatta | Infrastructure NSW, April 2020, Curio Projects Pty Ltd.



### 3.0

## POWERHOUSE PARRAMATTA HERITAGE INTERPRETATION APPROACH

'Powerhouse Parramatta ... will be a place designed to constantly evolve in response to the needs of its growing communities ... It will be a place of collaboration, a mirror of its communities, forever embedded in the contemporary identity of our city and our State.'<sup>1</sup>

As an institution profoundly qualified in telling the stories that connect objects, people and place, Powerhouse Parramatta is uniquely placed to undertake a consultative, innovative and multifaceted approach to heritage interpretation. Heritage interpretation will manifest as both permanent heritage interpretation alongside an ongoing programmatic and strategic commitment to heritage interpretation.

The Heritage Interpretation Strategy is underpinned by the Powerhouse Precinct Indigenous Perspectives Document<sup>2</sup> and the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Australian Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Protocol which recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the 'primary guardians, interpreters and decision makers with deep cultural connections and authoritative values and perspectives.'<sup>3</sup> These documents summarise processes and guidelines for the Display of Cultural Material, Engagement Methodology and Archaeology.

The Powerhouse Precinct Indigenous Perspectives Document states: 'Continuity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is built on enduring rights that relate to the ownership of context and interpretation; and the rights to protect, control, benefit from and maintain, revitalise and advance ongoing practice.' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'ownership of cultural material – both tangible and intangible – is acknowledged, honoured and upheld.'<sup>4</sup> This Heritage Interpretation Strategy is based on ongoing consultation (guided by Statements of Understanding) with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Traditional owner and custodian groups.



### 3.1 INTERPRETATION PRINCIPLES

#### Interpretation Principle 1: CONNECTING COMMUNITIES WITH THE PARRAMATTA RIVER

The Parramatta River is central to the cultural story of Parramatta. The River, with its terrestrial, riparian, freshwater and estuarine habitats supported many species such as the bar-tailed Godwit, the striped marsh frog, Eastern long necked turtle, the southern myotis and the powerful owl. After European settlement, The River functioned as a transit corridor and trade route, connecting arable land with the Eastern settlements. The surrounding fertile land, once cared for by firestick farming practices by the Aboriginal inhabitants, became increasingly unregulated. During the twentieth century, the River, like the lands adjacent to it was subject to processes of firstly Western farming practices, and later, significant industrialisation which saw the quality of the River and the ecosystems it supports diminish significantly.

Photograph of Parramatta River, Swain & Liddy, Sydney (detail)  
Powerhouse Collection





The contemporary Parramatta River is a site of renewal. Programs such as the Our Living River<sup>5</sup> endeavour to make the River swimmable by 2025 and reimagine the River as the vital cultural gathering place it once was. Through habitat protection, habitat management and habitat creation the species native to the River and its surrounds will once again flourish. Today, the River functions as a dynamic connective corridor, linking several green, cultural historical and urban spaces within Parramatta.

- The Powerhouse recognises that 'Aboriginal concepts of the Parramatta River extend beyond the project borders and modern understanding of the River.'<sup>6</sup> This includes the fact that 'the complex intrinsic connection between Aboriginal culture and land and waterways is tied directly to belief systems that hold land and waterways as living entities.'<sup>7</sup>
- The River represents an important connective corridor linking green, social, cultural and urban precincts. The River will serve a vital function connecting cultural precincts such as the Parramatta Gaol Precinct, Parramatta Female Factory Precinct and important cultural and civic facilities including St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta Riverside Theatres and the Parramatta Heritage Centre.
- Powerhouse Parramatta will provide cultural amenity to provide opportunities for diverse cultures to continue their own cultural practices at the museum precinct adjacent to the river.
- Powerhouse Parramatta will be an active caretaker of the river through heritage interpretation, public domain development and engaging and educating communities with the science of river health.

Boating on the Parramatta River  
Photo: Chris Poole/Alamy Stock Photo



**Interpretation Principle 2:  
CONNECTING LOCAL HISTORIES WITH  
THE POWERHOUSE COLLECTION**

There are many intersecting points between the histories of Parramatta and the history of the Powerhouse Museum. Through exhibitions, programs and ongoing collection development the Museum will place local stories of ingenuity and innovation into a broader national and international framework.

- Powerhouse Parramatta's mandate is to ensure 'the history of scientific discovery and materials science research carries forward' will enable interpretation that is both site and institution specific.
- The Powerhouse Collection will be a safe keeping place for items of cultural significance.
- Powerhouse Parramatta has a unique ability to embed interpretation within curatorial and archival strategies of the Museum, thereby manifesting as permanent components of the collection.
- Powerhouse Parramatta will continue to actively collect items of significance that tell the stories of Parramatta and Greater Sydney.



Photograph of two workmen holding up two eels, photographer possibly Arthur Phillips, Australia, c. 1900. Powerhouse Collection. Gift of the Estate of Raymond W Phillips, 2008





### **Interpretation Principle 3: COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**

Powerhouse Parramatta, through the Heritage Interpretation Strategy, will critically evaluate its own institutional legacies that have prioritised certain forms of knowledge over others.

- Interpretation will align with the Powerhouse Indigenous Perspectives framework.
- Powerhouse Parramatta will reflect upon some of its foundational stories, recognising, addressing and reframing complicity in colonial processes of the collection, categorisation and cultural objects, knowledges and stories.
- Creation of structures that support ongoing dialogue, collaboration and engagement across diverse communities.

Chair, owned by Governor Lachlan Macquarie,  
attributed makers John Webster (carver),  
William Temple (cabinet maker),  
New South Wales, 1820–1821. Powerhouse Collection.  
Gift of the Vancouver City Museum, Canada, 1961

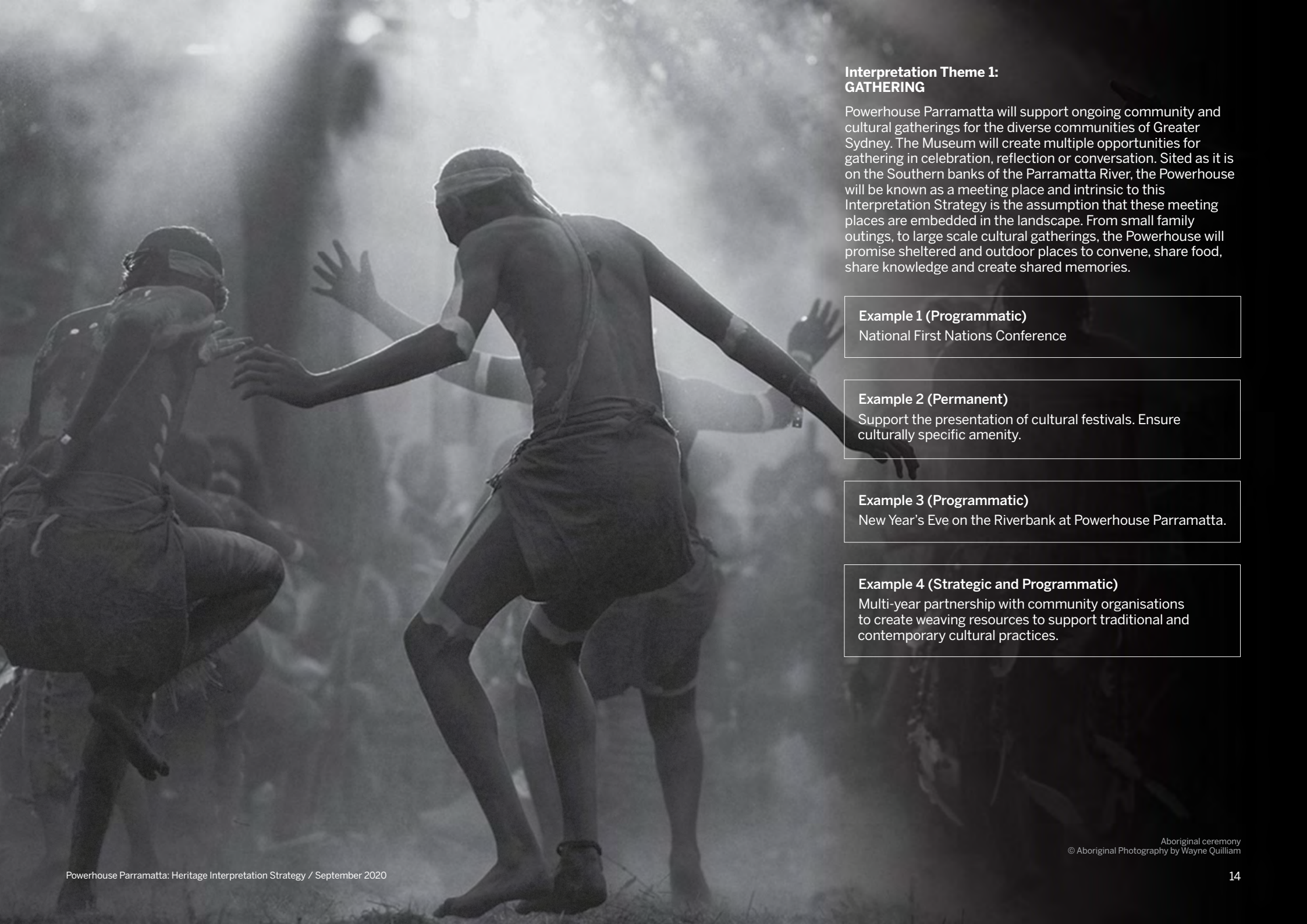


### 3.2 INTERPRETATION THEMES

Powerhouse Parramatta proposes five interpretation themes, that sit within the National and State Thematic Framework as the basis for future interpretive elements. These themes will support ongoing interpretive program opportunities whilst recognising the rich and diverse history of the site, place and its people.

Postcard, Parramatta River, published by Swain & Co.  
Sydney, New South Wales, 1906 (detail).  
Powerhouse Collection. Gift of Elizabeth Bullard, 1967





## **Interpretation Theme 1: GATHERING**

Powerhouse Parramatta will support ongoing community and cultural gatherings for the diverse communities of Greater Sydney. The Museum will create multiple opportunities for gathering in celebration, reflection or conversation. Sited as it is on the Southern banks of the Parramatta River, the Powerhouse will be known as a meeting place and intrinsic to this Interpretation Strategy is the assumption that these meeting places are embedded in the landscape. From small family outings, to large scale cultural gatherings, the Powerhouse will promise sheltered and outdoor places to convene, share food, share knowledge and create shared memories.

### **Example 1 (Programmatic)**

National First Nations Conference

### **Example 2 (Permanent)**

Support the presentation of cultural festivals. Ensure culturally specific amenity.

### **Example 3 (Programmatic)**

New Year's Eve on the Riverbank at Powerhouse Parramatta.

### **Example 4 (Strategic and Programmatic)**

Multi-year partnership with community organisations to create weaving resources to support traditional and contemporary cultural practices.



## Interpretation Theme 2: AGRICULTURE

Powerhouse Parramatta will tell the stories of agriculture and food production that has defined the character of Parramatta. The fertile land of Parramatta and its surrounds is still referred to as the food bowl of Sydney, and the museum will explore the rich history of convict free-holdings, settler farms, market gardens and multicultural food culture, traditions and innovations for which contemporary Parramatta is renowned.

### Example 1 (Strategic and Programmatic)

Partner with the Parramatta River Catchment Group to activate the Parramatta riverbank and engage communities with river health.

### Example 2 (Strategic, Programmatic and Permanent)

Connecting Parramatta's Food Histories, Producers and Communities: A series of Oral Histories and Public Programs, connecting to Powerhouse Culinary Archive and Powerlab Kitchen.

### Example 3 (Permanent)

Incorporation of relevant mature trees such as ginkgo biloba and eucalypts into landscape design that link history the Powerhouse Museum with Powerhouse Parramatta and its new site drawing on:

Early donations to the Powerhouse Collection from Kew Gardens.

The botanical specimen collecting of Paramatta based botanist George Caley (1770–1829) and Burramattagal man who acted as Caley's guide Daniel Mowattin (1791–1816).

The eucalypt collections of the Powerhouse Museum.



Glass bottles containing eucalyptus oils and assorted oils from plants, made by the Technological Museum, Sydney, 1900–1940. Powerhouse Collection



### Interpretation Theme 3: TIME

Drawing on cultural knowledge garnered from 40,000 years of continuous occupation as well as archaeological research and climate science, geology, astronomy and archaeology, Powerhouse Parramatta will tell the stories of the Parramatta river from transforming from a small creek to a major body of water – the Sydney Harbour we know today.

#### Example 1 (Strategic and Programmatic)

Exhibition of consolidated pre-settlement and post-settlement archeological artefacts from the collection and adjacent sites.

#### Example 2 (Programmatic)

Exhibition exploring different notions of time drawing the Powerhouse Collection.

#### Example 3 (Programmatic)

Exhibition telling the story of how Parramatta was formed through processes of significant climactic change, drawing on geological, archaeological and climate science.



Transit telescope, made by Edward Troughton, England, 1800-1821, used by Parramatta Observatory, Sydney Observatory Collection, 1983



#### Interpretation Theme 4: FAMILY RELATIONS

*Family Relations* will tell the stories of everyday life in Parramatta. Births, deaths, marriages and the importance of day to day family life lived through generations. The shops, the restaurants and the community clubs that hold significance for generations past, present and future in Parramatta.

##### Example 1 (Permanent and Programmatic)

Documenting stories of Willow Grove

##### Example 2 (Programmatic)

Parramatta oral history program

##### Example 3 (Strategic and Programmatic)

Sport as Family: A social history exhibition and publication of the role sport has played in Greater Western Sydney.

Our Lady of Mercy Convent Parramatta Ball at  
Wentworth Cafe, Sydney, 1939. Photograph by Tom Lennon.  
Powerhouse Collection





## Interpretation Theme 5: BELONGINGS

*Belongings* will tell stories of adaptation and survival, territorialisation and the complex ramifications of institutionalisation throughout the last two centuries. *Belongings* represents important opportunities to collaborate with new cultural partners such as Parramatta Gaol and the Female Factory Precinct.

*Belongings* will tell the stories of people and objects that reflect the waves of migration to Parramatta and Greater Western Sydney shaped by global forces, from labour migration to family reunions to chain migration, from refugee resettlement to temporary and skills-based migration.

### Example 1 (Programmatic)

Partnership with Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council to engage communities with the histories of Parramatta Gaol.

### Example 2 (Programmatic and Strategic)

Partnership with Parramatta Female Factory Precinct

### Example 3 (Programmatic and Strategic)

Data and digital map of Greater Western Sydney showing demographic, cultural and linguistic flows.

Photograph of colonial boiler for Parramatta Gaol.  
Clyde Engineering Pty Ltd, Australia, 1898–1918.  
Photographer unknown. Powerhouse Collection.  
Gift of Clyde Engineering Pty Ltd, 1988



### 3.3 KEY HERITAGE INTERPRETATION

Following the SSDA Response to Submissions, Powerhouse Parramatta will make significant commitments to Heritage Interpretation before the Stage 2 development and implementation of the Interpretation Plan.

#### **RELOCATE AND PRESERVE**

##### **Element: Permanent**

Develop a Heritage Management Strategy for the realisation of the relocation of Willowgrove to include selection of site, adaptive reuse and reconstruction program.

#### **RETAIN THE SIGNIFICANT MONTEREY CYPRESS**

##### **Element: Permanent**

Retain the significant *Cupressus Macrocarpa* (Monterey Cypress) in situ (which forms part of the Willow Grove landscape) will symbolically and visually connect the heritage of the site with its future. This tree 'can be seen as a semi-mature specimen in archival photos from circa 1890s and was most likely planted as part of the original Willow Grove landscape.'<sup>10</sup>

#### **ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

##### **Elements: Permanent and Programmatic**

An archival social history recording of Willow Grove and St George's Terrace including an oral history project tracing surviving voices of Willow Grove throughout the twentieth century that will be integrated into the Powerhouse Parramatta Archive for perpetuity.

Monterey Cypress  
Photo: Marince Kojdanovski





## 4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

An Interpretation Plan will be developed that will outline the interpretive elements to be included at Powerhouse Parramatta. The Interpretation Plan will be informed by:

- Consultation with a range of stakeholders, including but not limited to:
  - Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council
  - Dharug Strategic Management Group
  - Traditional owners
  - City of Parramatta Council
  - Local History Organisations
  - Cultural Organisations
  - Local and regional community members
- Further research to discover historical stories of the Powerhouse site, Parramatta and its peoples.
- Any archaeological discoveries on site.
- The emerging museum program for Powerhouse Parramatta.

The Interpretation Plan will include:

- A summary of consultation outcomes;
- Results of further research and any archaeological discoveries;
- Commitments to the interpretive elements that could be physical and included within the design or programmatic, relating to the broader Powerhouse Parramatta program;
- A commitment to continual updating to ensure interpretation remains a living element of the institution; and
- A resource commitment and detailed implementation plan.



*W. Marshall, del.*

**EUCALYPTUS DEXTROPINEA. R.T.B.**

A STRINGYBARK.

Illustration from the book  
'A Research on the Eucalypts and their Essential Oils'  
Powerhouse Research Library



## 5.0 CONSULTATION

Powerhouse Parramatta has commenced an expansive community consultation process that will be ongoing throughout its development and continue to inform all elements of the institution. This Heritage Interpretation Strategy has been informed by consultation undertaken to date (particularly in relation to the themes outlined in Section 3).

The following community members and stakeholders have been engaged in ongoing consultation. Their feedback has been incorporated into the ongoing design development and Heritage Interpretation Strategy of Powerhouse Parramatta. In total over 300 stakeholders have been consulted from the below list.

---

### GROUPS CONSULTED

Arts Leaders from Western Sydney  
Australia Council for the Arts  
Burwood Council  
Canada Bay Council  
City of Parramatta Council  
Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council  
Destination NSW  
Dharug Strategic Management Group  
Greater Sydney Commission  
Local and regional community members  
Local Business Stakeholders  
Multicultural NSW  
Museums and Galleries NSW  
National Trust  
Neighbouring property owners  
NSW Aboriginal Land Council  
NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer  
NSW Department of Education  
Parramatta Business Chamber  
Parramatta Koori Agency  
Parramatta Park and Western Sydney  
Parklands Trust

Riverside Theatre  
Strathfield Council  
Students from UNSW  
TAFE NSW  
Tapestry Creative  
The Hills Shire Council  
Western Sydney Business Chamber  
Western Sydney University

Consultation facilitated by  
Information + Cultural Exchange, with  
community groups comprising:  
— Asian and Arabic Speaking Women  
— Granville Boys High School (Arabic  
Speaking and South Asian youth)  
— Female and non-binary young artists  
from New Age Noise Collective  
— Disability and Aged Care Sector  
— Pasifika, African and South Asian  
Community leaders  
— City of Parramatta Council,  
ATSI Advisory Committee

Powerhouse Community Reference Group  
comprising membership from:  
— Arab Theatre Studio  
— Independent Traditional owners  
— ParraParents  
— PWC  
— Gastronomica  
— NSW Council for Pacific Communities  
— Dharug Strategic Management Group  
— Arthur Phillip High School  
— Coleman Greig Lawyers  
— Information + Cultural Exchange  
— Local residents



The following feedback and ideas were provided by community and stakeholders during the consultation:

#### **Aboriginal perspectives**

- Listening and learning;
- Recognising and respecting associations with place;
- Recognising and respecting the substantial Aboriginal histories of Parramatta and the Parramatta River;
- Recognising the River as a living entity;
- Acknowledging the limitations of post settlement development methods that contradict Aboriginal cultural values;
- Allowing for the continuation of storytelling rather than static elements that only represent a point in time;
- Providing a space for associations to be recognised and celebrated; and
- Not shying away from past atrocities.

#### **Colonial**

- A desire for the retention of colonial heritage elements within the site including Willow Grove and St George's terraces;
- Desire for retention of landscape elements that exist within the site;
- Recognising the broader heritage of Parramatta, including its world heritage assets;
- Recognising desire to draw connection across these sites;
- Exploring convict and settler histories;
- Use of Parramatta River to establish the colony; and
- Farming/Old Government House.

#### **Post-Colonial**

- Recognising Australia's waves of migration;
- Parramatta as a home for many refugees, and the institutional structures that support them. Desire to make links to these communities;
- Celebrating cultural diversity and its continual evolution in Parramatta and surrounds; and
- NSW second major city, 'Central River City'.

#### **Realising Interpretation**

- Creating programs rich in science, technology, engineering and education experiences;
- Creating ongoing living heritage programs that are unique to Parramatta, its region and its people; and
- Ensuring heritage interpretive elements are constantly evolving and are not just static.

#### **Connecting**

- Using interpretation as a tool to link heritage landmarks throughout Parramatta;
- Building on the foundation of interpretive elements that already exist in Parramatta; and
- Learning from past projects and developments to connect histories.

Consultation to date has inspired and informed the heritage themes to be interpreted at Powerhouse Parramatta (as outlined in Section 3). These consultations are ongoing across all stakeholder groups.



## 6.0 REVIEW OF POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The following policies and guidelines have been reviewed in the development of the Powerhouse Parramatta Heritage Interpretation Strategy.

### NSW HERITAGE DIVISION

The NSW Heritage Council *Interpretation Policy Statement (2005)* notes that:

The interpretation of New South Wales' heritage connects the communities of New South Wales with their heritage and is a means of protecting and sustaining heritage values. Heritage interpretation is an integral part of the conservation and management of heritage items and is relevant to other aspects of environmental and cultural management and policy. Heritage interpretation incorporates and provides broad access to historical research and analysis. Heritage interpretation provides opportunities to stimulate ideas and debate about Australian life and values, and the meaning of our history, culture and the environment. The Heritage Office, Department of Planning, is committed to encouraging imaginative, inclusive and accurate interpretation of the heritage of New South Wales and to establishing and sustaining best practices in content, methodology, implementation and evaluation of heritage interpretation.

The Heritage Office aims to:

- Promote the interpretation of the heritage in New South Wales;
- Integrate heritage interpretation in environmental and cultural planning in state and local government organisations;
- Encourage high standards and skills in heritage interpretation; and
- Acknowledge the associations and meanings of heritage to the community.

The NSW Heritage Office has also developed *Interpreting Heritage Places and Items – Guideline (2005)* that outlines requirements for interpreting heritage within NSW. The Guideline outlines 'ingredients' by which best practice heritage interpretation should be undertaken in NSW. The ingredients include:

1. Interpretation, people and culture
2. Heritage significance and site analysis
3. Records and research
4. Audiences
5. Themes
6. Engaging the audience
7. Context
8. Authenticity, ambience and sustainability
9. Conservation planning and works
10. Maintenance, evaluation and review
11. Skills and knowledge
12. Collaboration

### AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION – NATIONAL THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

#### The National and State Historic Thematic Frameworks<sup>8</sup>

In order to provide a consistent framework for determining appropriate historic themes for a place of cultural significance, the Australian Heritage Commission published a national framework of historic themes in 2001. Nine national key theme groups were identified, with a subset of 84 national subthemes and a further sub-sub set of 116 themes. These themes form the basis of NSW Heritage's assessment and placement of a place and its significance within a broader Australian context.

The established themes determine what are the historic events, places, people and stories that are considered significant at a local, and then possibly State and National level.

The key National historic themes, from which the NSW State themes flow, are identified as:

1. Tracing the Natural Evolution of the Australian Environment
2. Peopling Australia
3. Developing Local, Regional and National Economies
4. Building Settlements, Towns and Cities
5. Working
6. Educating
7. Governing
8. Australia's Cultural Life
9. Marking the Phases of Life

#### State Historic Themes

The NSW Heritage Council developed a series of NSW State-specific themes that are linked to the Australian National Historical Themes (NSW Heritage Council 2001), considering the intent of the national sub-themes. The 36 State historic themes provide the overarching framework for a sub-set of local themes, which are generally relevant to Local Government Area boundaries and smaller subgroups, that have social or local community boundaries.



Table 1: National and State Historic Themes

| Relevant Australian Theme                            | Relevant NSW Theme                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Tracing the natural evolution of Australia        | Environment- naturally evolved                                                                                                                                                     |
| 2. Peopling Australia                                | Aboriginal cultures and interaction with other cultures; Convict; Ethnic Influences; Migration                                                                                     |
| 3. Developing local, regional and national economies | Agriculture; Commerce; Communication; Environment-cultural landscape; Events; Exploration; Fishing; Forestry; Health; Industry; Mining pastoralism; Science; Technology; Transport |
| 4. Building settlements, towns and cities            | Towns, suburbs and villages; Land tenure; Utilities; Accommodation                                                                                                                 |
| 5. Governing                                         | Defence; Government and administration; Law and order; Welfare                                                                                                                     |
| 6. Developing Australia's cultural life              | Domestic life; Creative endeavour; Leisure; Religion; Social Institutions; Sport                                                                                                   |
| 7. Marking the phases of life                        | Birth and Death; Persons                                                                                                                                                           |

## BURRA CHARTER PRINCIPLES<sup>9</sup>

In 1999 the Burra Charter was revised in order to emphasise the importance of interpretation to the process of conserving significant cultural heritage sites and places. 'Interpretation' as defined by the Burra Charter means 'all ways of presenting the cultural significance of the place'.

Article 24.1 of the Burra Charter states that:

Significant associations between people and a place should be respected, retained and not obscured. Opportunities for interpretation, commemoration and celebration of these associations should be investigated and implemented.

Article 25 also notes that:

The cultural significance of many places is not readily apparent, and should be explained by interpretation. Interpretations should enhance understanding and enjoyment and be culturally appropriate.

This Interpretation Strategy has been developed in consideration of the Burra Charter principles.

## CITY OF PARRAMATTA COUNCIL – DRAFT HERITAGE INTERPRETATION GUIDELINES<sup>10</sup>

City of Parramatta Council is developing Heritage Interpretation Guidelines for application on projects within the local government area. The Powerhouse Parramatta Heritage Interpretation Strategy has utilised a draft of Council's guidelines to assist in shaping the outcomes for interpretation on the site. The draft Guidelines contain principles from which strategies should draw in developing concepts for interpretation:

- **Thematic and meaningful:** communicating site-specific stories that build meaning and connection to places or things;
- **Engaging and provocative:** drawing out the stories for targeted audiences, while dealing frankly and honestly with challenging matters;
- **Inspiring and experiential:** inviting people to smell, taste, listen, see, touch, think, learn + share, encouraging them to become ambassadors;
- **Flexible and interactive:** with the capacity to be dynamic and responsive to audiences and other influences;
- **Relevant and revealing:** providing points of connection between people and heritage, and between people and people;
- **Connected and site-specific:** incorporated into overall design decisions, building on the sense of place and connecting with people's life and activities;

- **Relatable:** not too abstract, able to be understood to some degree no matter how much background knowledge you have;
- **Negotiated:** inviting stakeholder participation in concept development, and respecting cultural and intellectual property protocols;
- **Empowering for residents and visitors:** encouraging participation in the life of the City; providing orientation to the stories and the layout of the City; promoting exploration and thought; building partnerships and networks across the City, and
- **Evaluated and maintained:** regular and ongoing evaluation and maintenance of all interpretive elements, including regular assessment of the ongoing relevance of content, media and interventions (at a minimum every 5 years). Adaptions should be made as appropriate. Interpretive digital overlays should be reviewed and refreshed much more frequently. A plan for evaluation and maintenance must be included in all interpretive projects.

In addition, the draft Guidelines provide broad themes from which project-specific interpretive themes or elements can be developed. These broad themes include:

- **A Landscape of Stories** embraces Parramatta's river, its tributaries and tides, its valley and surrounding swamps, with their abundant and diverse plants, animals and soils. They are the reason people have gathered here for centuries and continue to do so. The landscape and environment are fundamental to the evolution of this place.
- **Dharug Country:** Dharug People are inextricably entwined. Country always provides for people, and people use and manage Country. This relationship endures, in spite of many obstacles. Connections are celebrated, stories shared and seasonal rhythms observed.
- **Gathering Place** for all time, Parramatta encourages all kinds of people to come together, to work, to learn, to trade, to create, to worship, and to build a nation and, of course, to face challenges together. People have gathered here for thousands of years and continue to do so.

- **Fertile Ground** in so many ways, Parramatta provides its residents and visitors with a rich and varied experience of culture, ideas and food. Dharug, settlers, convicts and newcomers from all corners of the world, can still enjoy the benefits. It hasn't always been easy, but Parramatta remains fertile ground for many.
- **Experiment, Enterprise, Governance** is at the heart of Parramatta's extensive and dramatic growth. It is built on new ideas and opportunity. Each innovation reflects the needs of its time. Parramatta has incubated new concepts and inventions: some fundamental to its existence, most well-intentioned, but some less successful, even detrimental.
- **Waves of People** have made Parramatta their home over thousands of years. Aboriginal people from across Australia came to Parramatta, there were waves of convicts and colonialists, then migrants and displaced peoples – each had their own futures to create. In the last few centuries, people from all over the world have settled in Parramatta and influenced the growing city.



## 7.0 REVIEW OF EXISTING HERITAGE INTERPRETATION IN PARRAMATTA

The following provides an overview of existing heritage interpretation in Parramatta. In some instances, these examples of heritage interpretation are artworks, and in others they are traditional 'heritage interpretation'.



Photos: Agatha Gothe-Snape

### Riverwalk, 2000

Artist: Jamie Eastwood, Ngemba  
Northern side of Parramatta  
RiverForeshore

This artwork has been hand painted onto the Parramatta River foreshore walkway. It traces the history of the Parramatta area from the perspective of the local Burramatta clans-people of the Dharug tribe. The artwork includes the story of Buladarri and the Frontier Wars in a graphic visual style. Of the artwork, Eastwood stated: 'I hope to maintain the Dreaming into the future, and for a peaceful and harmonious relationship for the future of both black and white Australians.'



Image: Google Maps

### Parramatta Heritage and Visitor Information Centre

346A Church Street, Parramatta

Parramatta City's Heritage Centre holds archives dating back to 1860, access to library books, and pamphlets and journals relating to the development of the Parramatta Local Government Area, plus primary resources relating to Parramatta and Western Sydney. Their services include:

- Visitor information on exhibitions, events and educational programs
- Local Studies and Family History Library
- Heritage Collections Online, including archives and a searchable database of our cultural collections
- Heritage Centre Research Services, including archival information, the Local Studies Library, Cultural Collections and blog entries on Parramatta's heritage.



Photos: Agatha Gothe-Snape

### Lennox Bridge Pedestrian Path

Lennox Bridge  
Church Street, Parramatta

The Lennox Bridge Pedestrian Path, completed in 2015, extended public access along the River front on the Northern side of the River, cutting a tunnel through the otherwise solid Lennox Bridge. The experience of moving through the pathway is like walking a cross section through time – explaining its layered history. A pier from the earlier 1804 Gaol Bridge was discovered during the archaeological dig and is recorded in the works. The sequential construction of the separate halves of Lennox's bridge and the interim retaining wall that divided them are also marked. People can now walk through Lennox's original western wall that has been buried beneath Church Street since 1939. Adjacent to the exposed archeological layering, there is large scale digitally printed didactic panels that express divergent views on the architectural merit of the bridge.



Photos: Agatha Gothe-Snape

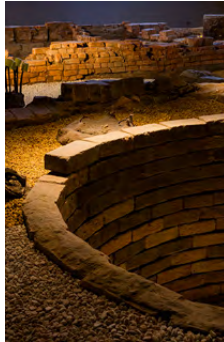
### Parramatta Reconciliation Sound Sculpture

Northern bank of Parramatta River  
at intersection with Lennox Bridge

Near Lennox Bridge Portal, two speakers and a plaque 'share Indigenous stories, language, song, music and thoughts to present some of the culture and perspectives of Indigenous people. The Sound Sculpture is a project of Parramatta City Council.'



Images: vheritagecentre.com.au



### **The Philip Ruddock V Heritage Archaeology Display Centre** 45 Macquarie Street, Parramatta

Open to the public in 2017 the site is located beneath a new residential development<sup>11</sup> and houses evidence of Parramatta's foundations as a penal settlement, or 'Gaol Town' in 1790. The site was researched and excavated in 2005 by Edward Higginbotham & Associates and contains four particularly important relics:

- Footings of a convict hut
- Evidence of occupation by a wheelwright (wheel craftsman)
- Remains of the cellar of the Wheatsheaf Hotel (c1801), one of the earliest remnants of a hotel building in Australia
- Footings of a colonial period cottage, complete with well



Image: storybox.co

### **Storybox Parramatta, 2020** Parramatta Square and online Esem Projects, City of Parramatta, Western Sydney University, ABC and Story Factory

Storybox, yet to be installed, is a project that manifests as a group of digital screens installed in Parramatta Square. The screens display content contributed by the community that respond to a series of themes available on the project website.



Photo: Agatha Gothe-Snape

### **Story Walls, 2009** Artists: Greg Stonehouse and Susan Milne River Foreshore, Southern side, near ferry wharf

Artists Stonehouse and Milne have used quotations to bring the history of the River to life. This heritage interpretation and public art project provides connections with the many diverse communities that are connected to the Parramatta River.



Photo: Agatha Gothe-Snape

### **Sentry Box, 2009** Artists: Greg Stonehouse and Susan Milne River foreshore, Southern side near Gasworks Bridge

This artwork references the early role of Parramatta as a colonial outpost at the head of the harbour. The sentry box signifies the entry point to Parramatta with Government House at the head of George Street commanding the opposite end.



## 7.1 HERITAGE SITES IN ADJACENT PRECINCTS



Image: Creative Commons (CC BY-SA 2.5)

### **Parramatta Gaol**

Corner of O'Connell and Dunlop Streets,  
North Parramatta

The Parramatta Correctional Centre, initially called Parramatta Goal, is a heritage-listed former medium-security prison for men in North Parramatta. Parramatta Gaol was the third gaol to be built in Parramatta and was completed in 1842.

Due to declining entries into the penal system, the gaol was disestablished in September 1918 and the property given over to the inspector of mental hospitals. By 1927 however the gaol was rehabilitated. Up until its closure in 2011, the Parramatta Correctional Centre was the oldest gaol in original use in Australia. It has the most intact of the pre-1850s gaols of Australia and a history of strong documentation.

In 2015 the site was returned to the Deerubin Local Aboriginal Lands Council as part of a historic lands grant.



Image: parrapark.com.au

### **Old Government House (National Trust)** Parramatta Park, Pitt Street Entrance

Old Government House, situated on the traditional lands of the Burramatta Dharug and in the heart of Parramatta Park, is the oldest surviving public building in Australia. Built by convicts, it served as the 'country residence' for the first ten Governors of New South Wales and was the centre of decision-making in the colony.

Today, it is open to the public as a museum managed by the National Trust of Australia. It is furnished in the style of the early 1820s and the grounds are relatively undisturbed colonial-era reserve. The practice of 'firestick' land management conducted by the Dharug tribe is evident from certain scars to be seen on trees still standing (their bark being removed to build canoes), and shells used to strengthen the mortar in the House's construction have been found to originate from Aboriginal middens.



Image: Creative Commons (CC BY 3.0)

### **Experiment Farm Cottage (National Trust)** 9 Ruse Street, Harris Park

Experiment Farm Cottage, one of Australia's oldest standing properties, embodies the story of James Ruse's transformation from convict to pioneer of the land. Ruse, a farmer from England, was shipped with the First Fleet as a convict to Sydney Cove. At the completion of his sentence in 1789, he was granted an acre of land by Governor Phillip who was in need of farming expertise to aid the struggling colony. Ruse produced the colony's first wheat harvest, and eventually expanded his holding. He became a symbol of the reformed convict in Australia and later sold his land to surgeon John Harris in 1793.

In 2000, the National Trust landscaped and planted the immediate grounds, using evidence from early paintings, plant catalogues and photographs to recreate an authentic setting for the cottage. Guided tours are available and a permanent display tells the story of the site from Indigenous, to colonial, to the present day.



Image: sydneylivingmuseums.com.au

### **Elizabeth Farm (Sydney Living Museums)** 70 Alice Street, Rosehill

An historic estate situated on the traditional lands of the Burramatta Dharug, Elizabeth Farm was the family home of wool pioneer John Macarthur and his wife Elizabeth. Built in 1739, the site is a monument to a tumultuous past that witnessed the toppling of governors, a convict rebellion, and the birth of the Australian wool industry.

The Elizabeth Farm house is part of the oldest surviving construction in Australia and a rare historical monument to the earliest period of colonial architecture.

In April 2015 the Elizabeth Farm house hosted the Eel Festival as part of the Sydney Living Museums New Aboriginal Action Plan.



Photo: Greg Davis

### Parramatta Female Factory Precinct

The Parramatta Female Factory Precinct represents two adjacent historic sites. The earliest, the Parramatta Female Factory (1821–1847), was an assignment depot, prison and 'workhouse' for convict women. In 1844 a new Roman Catholic Orphan School was built on land adjacent to the Factory. This government owned orphanage is among the earliest institutions associated with Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children, who are known today as the Forgotten Australians.

An initiative of Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Association the Memory Project brings together artists, historians, academics and former occupants to document, record and interpret the history,

heritage and legacy of this institutional precinct. The aim of the project is to transform this once inaccessible institutional precinct into a place of shared cultural heritage that acknowledges the significance it holds for First Nations people, women, Forgotten Australians, Stolen Generations and in the provision of mental health services, by connecting past to present and memory to action through social history and contemporary art. It aims to activate this historic institutional precinct into a place of public memory as a creative, cultural hub in the heart of Western Sydney through a diverse program of contemporary art and social history projects that foster agency for former occupants to document and interpret the institutional experience and its legacy.



Photos: Agatha Gothe-Snape

### Parramatta Park

A major urban park and historical site in Parramatta, the area was gazetted as a public park in 1858 on the site of the former Parramatta Government Domain. The park is part of the territory of the Dharug people. It covers 85 hectares, including significant cultural and natural heritage areas. The Park receives over 2 million visits each year and is one of the 11 historic places that together form the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage property.



Image: discoverparramatta.com/Carla Dibbs

### Harris Park Heritage Trail

As the agricultural heart of the new colony, Harris Park played a vital role in the development of Parramatta. The self-guided 2.4km Heritage Trail heads east along the River from Parramatta Wharf to Harris Park. Along the Trail are some of Parramatta's most noteworthy and significant historical properties and landmarks, including Elizabeth Farm and Experiment Farm Cottage. Signposts along the way guide the walkers through Parramatta's Indigenous and colonial history so that they can experience life as it was in the early days of Parramatta.



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