

78–96 Arncliffe Street, Wolli Creek Preliminary Heritage Assessment—November 2009

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Preamble

Godden Mackay Logan (GML) has been commissioned by Nahas Constructions Pty Ltd to prepare a Preliminary Heritage Assessment (PHA) to accompany the submission of a Project Application to the Minister for Planning, pursuant to Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW) (EP&A Act).

The subject site is located at 78–96 Arncliffe Street and 31–47 Princes Highway, Wolli Creek within the Rockdale City Council area. The site is bounded by the Princes Highway to the south, Brodie Spark Drive to the east, Arncliffe Street to the north and industrial commercial business to the west (see Figure 2).

The site currently contains assorted workshops and light industrial buildings that front the Princes Highway and Arncliffe Street and date from the mid twentieth century. The overall site covers 12,451 square metres and includes Lots 1–9 DP 24018 and Lots 3 and 4 DP 1032962.

The Project Plan proposes the construction of a supermarket and other retail with associated carparking. It is proposed to retain the existing masonry walls that front Brodie Spark Drive and Arncliffe Street as part of the new structure. It is proposed to demolish all other built elements.

The Director General's Requirements (DGRs) under the EP&A Act that relate to the proposed development, issued on 15 September 2009, do not require the preparation of a PHA or HIS. The DGRs require that all relevant Environmental Planning Instruments, policies and guidelines be addressed, including the *Rockdale City Council Local Environmental Plan 2000* (Rockdale LEP 2000).

1.2 Methodology

This PHA identifies and assesses the nature and degree of heritage impacts relating to the current development proposal for the site (see Sections 3.0 and 4.0) against the background of the statutory controls (see Section 1.4, below) and, where appropriate, provides recommendations for mitigative measures and consent conditions (see Section 5.0).

The PHA has been prepared having regard to the methodology outlined in the *NSW Heritage Manual 1996*, produced by the NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and the NSW Heritage Office.

The report also incorporates relevant principles and processes of *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999*. In doing so, it provides a basis for informed decisions that have regard to the assessed significance and specific values of the site and its setting.

1.3 Heritage Items within the Vicinity

The Rockdale City Council LEP 2000 lists the Tempe House Precinct as the only heritage item in the immediate vicinity of the subject site. Tempe House and St Magdalenes Chapel is also listed under the *Heritage Act 1977* (NSW) on the State Heritage Register.

The Sydney Water Pumping Station to the west of the site on Arncliffe Street is not listed.

1.4 Statutory Controls

The statutory controls relating to development in the vicinity of a heritage item are contained in Part 8 of the Rockdale City Council LEP 2000. They are as follows:

Clause 58 Objectives of the heritage provisions

The objectives of this Part are:

- (a) to conserve the environmental heritage of the City of Rockdale, and*
- (b) to integrate heritage conservation into the planning and development control processes, and*
- (c) to provide for public involvement in the conservation of the areas environmental heritage, and*
- (d) to ensure that any development does not adversely affect the heritage significance of heritage items and their settings.*

Clause 60 Development within the vicinity of heritage items...

The consent authority must take into consideration the likely effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of a heritage item, heritage conservation area, archaeological site or a potential archaeological site, and on its setting, when determining an application for consent to carry out development on land in its vicinity.

2.0 Description of the Proposal

The proposed development comprises the construction of a supermarket and associated retail functions with ground level car parking. The existing single storey industrial and workshop buildings that occupy the western section of the site will be demolished, but the front wall that runs along Arncliffe Street will remain, as will the existing walls which run along Brodie Spark Drive and east-west along the site.

Stage one of the proposed development comprises approximately 4,835m² of retail space which consists of a 4,000m² supermarket, 216m² loading dock and two separate retail stores of approximately 635m² and 200m² respectively. A car park consisting of 184 car spaces (including 12 disabled car spaces) and motorcycle park spaces will be located to the south and east of the supermarket.

This PHA is based on the DA drawings prepared by Marchese + Partners International as follows:

Drawing Number	Date	Title
DA 01.03	21.05.08	Ground Floor Plan
DA 02.01	21.05.08	Elevation North

3.0 Heritage Impacts

3.1 Heritage Impacts on the Subject Site

There are no identified heritage items within the subject site. The historical analysis of the site contained in **Appendix A** indicates the existing structures on the site date from the mid twentieth

century. An aerial photograph reproduced in Appendix A from 1951 shows none of the current development on the site, but by the 1970s nearly all the current structures were present.

The workshops facing Arncliffe Street are typical of the increasing industrialisation of the Wolli Creek area in the postwar period. Of particular note is the large structure at 92 Arncliffe Street, featuring a curved roof and raised roof lantern, constructed with what appears to be a wide-span steel frame with masonry cladding (see Figure 8). Despite its large scale, this structure is not unusual for the period and perhaps indicates a past use for large-scale industrial production.

The existing smash repairs and commercial car yard structures along Princes Highway are also typical of the development of the area from the 1960s. The existing structures are not individually considered to have heritage value warranting their retention.

The scale of the proposed new development is of single storey, and retains the general overall pattern and scale of the existing site. The development would also retain the majority of the existing external masonry walls on two elevations, and the existing open space along the Princes Highway frontage, with the addition of several vehicular entry and exit points.

The proposed new building will not be out of place adjacent to other low-scale mixed industrial structures including the commercial operations along the Princes Highway and the high-rise residential accommodation adjacent to the north and west. As such the current proposal represents a neutral heritage impact.

The Sydney Water pumping station adjacent on the western boundary on Arncliffe Street is not a heritage item. The proposed development would result in this feature being adjacent to the Arncliffe Street vehicular entry road. This would have no impact upon the setting or heritage values of the pumping station.

3.2 Impacts on Heritage Items within the Vicinity

This section considers the impacts of the proposed development on the adjacent Tempe House precinct as identified in Schedule 1 of the Rockdale LEP 2000.

Tempe House is an important early example of an intact 1830s colonial villa designed by architect John Verge. The St Magdalenes Chapel is also important, representing the long period of occupation by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict. The Tempe House precinct is of Exceptional social significance in the local area and displays landmark qualities that can be appreciated from a wide surrounding area. The precinct is identified in the Rockdale LEP 2000 and on the State Heritage Register and is an important part of the history and heritage of the Wolli Creek area.

In 2002, large-scale residential development occurred on the southwestern area of the precinct. These structures effectively form a barrier between Brodie Spark Drive and the remainder of the Tempe House precinct and its identified views and setting. The subject site is located to the rear of the existing new residential development directly across Brodie Spark Drive.

The proposed development would not be visible from within the Tempe House precinct due to its low scale in comparison to the adjacent residential buildings (see Figure 11). It would not have a visual or scale impact on the precinct itself and, as such, would have no heritage impact on the precinct.

4.0 Conclusion

There are no identified heritage items located on the subject site. The existing structures are seen as typical of the mid-to-late twentieth-century development of the area and are not individually considered to have heritage values worthy of their retention. The proposed development will be of a scale and character similar to the existing site structures and, as such, represents a neutral heritage impact.

The physical and visual separation of the subject site from the only heritage item in the vicinity, the Tempe House precinct, means that there would be no resultant impact on this item.

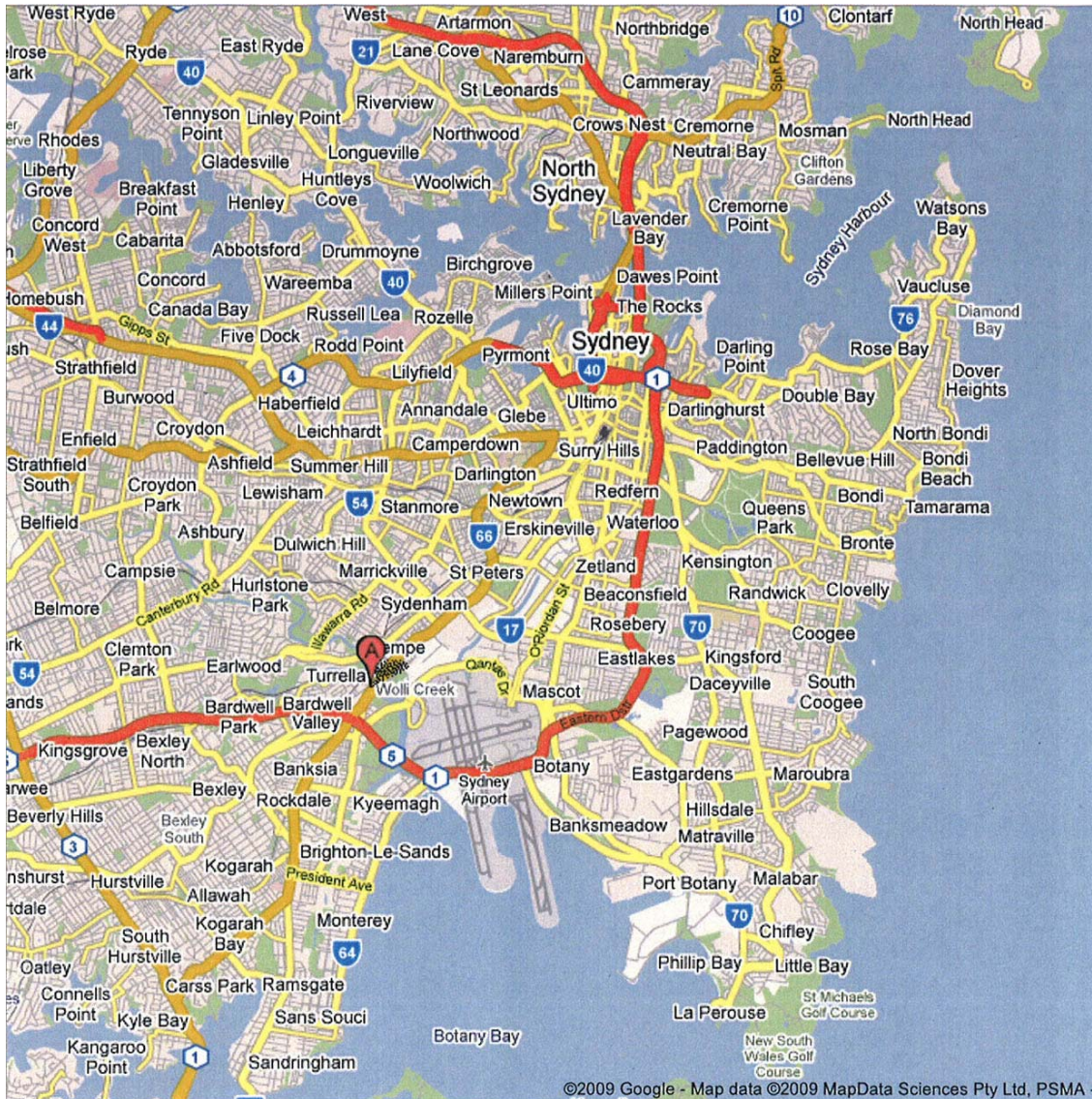


Figure 1 Map showing the general location of Wolli Creek within the Sydney metropolitan area. (Source: Google Maps)



Figure 2 Aerial photograph of the subject site, which is marked in yellow. (Source: Google Maps)



Figure 3 Existing site with mixed warehouses lining Arncliffe Street. These masonry external walls are proposed to be retained in the new development. (Source: GML 2009)

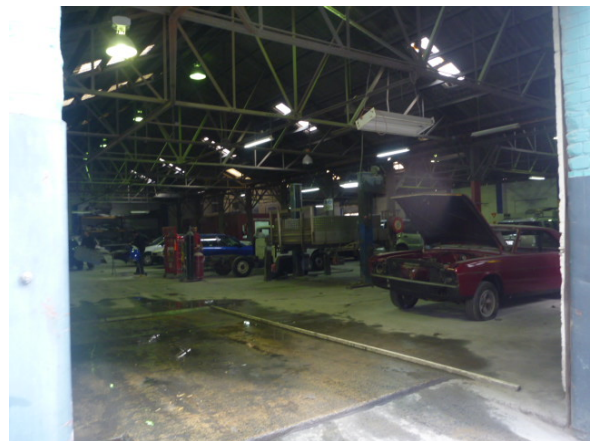


Figure 4 Typical interior of existing Arncliffe Street buildings (80-82 Arncliffe Street shown here). (Source: GML 2009)



Figure 5 The westernmost structure on the Arncliffe Street side of the site. This structure is proposed for demolition and replacement by a new entry and exit road. (Source: GML 2009)



Figure 6 Sydney Water pumping station adjacent to the subject site on the western elevation at Arncliffe Street. (Source: GML 2009)



Figure 7 Existing smash repairs and spray-painting works behind 47 Princes Highway. (Source: GML 2009)



Figure 8 Rear view of warehouses facing Arncliffe Street. Wide span and curved roof of 90–92 Arncliffe Street shown. (Source: GML 2009)



Figure 9 The current relationship of the site to Brodie Spark Drive which will be enhanced by the proposed new retail addressing the street. (Source: GML 2009)



Figure 10 The existing masonry façade of this structure, 96 Arncliffe Street, is proposed to be retained and modified with new openings to allow truck access to the proposed delivery dock. (Source: GML 2009)



Figure 11 Tempe House precinct looking southwest towards the subject site. The proposed development will not be visible.

Appendix A—Brief Site History

Pre-contact Aboriginal History

The area that is today the suburb of Tempe forms part of a wider expanse of land occupied by the Cadigal (or Gadi, Gadigal) people, who were known to early European settlers as ‘the Botany Bay tribe’.¹ Cadigal country extended across most of the Sydney peninsula, taking in the land between what are today Darling Harbour and South Head and including Port Jackson, Botany Bay and Port Hacking.² The Cooks River area would have been an important resource to the Cadigal people, providing a source of fresh water and attracting a range of flora and fauna.³

Given that the area was beyond the colonial boundary of Sydney town during the early nineteenth century, it is possible that Aboriginal occupation and use of this area continued into this period.⁴ The dunes and wetlands of the area would have been considered less than ideal by the early settlers seeking land for farming and settlement.⁵ By 1810 the first grants were being made in the area; hunters, fishermen and timber cutters had begun to visit the region⁶; and by c1840 it seems that very few Indigenous people remained in the area.⁷ Local tracks avoided the various swamps, and presumably developed by following existing Aboriginal paths.⁸

William Packer and Alexander Brodie Spark 1810–1857

The site of 78–96 Arncliffe Street is within the boundary of two parcels of land of 30 and 100 acres on the Cooks River, belonging to William Packer (granted in January 1810). Packer was a sergeant in the NSW Corps, living in Pitt Street. By 1804 he was advertising the sale of general goods and chattels from his house in Pitt Street with his wife Sarah. After his grant of land it appears that Packer split his time between Pitt Street and his Cooks River farm which he had named ‘Bundelwarren’. By 1812 he was living on the site at least part of the time, advertising for labourers to apply to him for work at the farm. He was offering payment in bags of lime, which he was producing on site, probably using the shell deposits from Aboriginal middens along the foreshore.⁹ He had previously notified the residents of Sydney that they were not to trespass on his farm at Cooks River for the purpose of taking either timber or lime from the site and any caught would be punished as the law directs. Packer died in 1819 and his estate was handled by his wife Sarah.

In 1826 the merchant Alexander Brodie Spark purchased Packer’s Bundelwarren farm and added it to two other portions to form his Tempe estate. Spark built a temporary sandstone cottage on the site while he planned the construction of a large villa. Census records from 1828 show there were six people working on the estate at this time with this number rising to 31 by 1831. In 1831 Spark commissioned the architect John Verge to design Tempe House, a substantial villa overlooking the river which was completed by c1836. To the south of the villa, Spark had a large artificial hill built to act as a picturesque backdrop to the new house. He named this new feature ‘Mount Olympus’. He also landscaped the riverfront with gardens and lawns, adding a wharf at which visitors could alight.¹⁰

In 1839 a dam was constructed across the Cooks River with the intention of providing a fresh water supply to the town of Sydney. Sadly the water was found to be brackish and unsuitable for drinking, but the dam wall provided a link to the northern shore of the river and to the Cooks River road that led back to Sydney. With this in place Spark proceeded to build a carriage drive, new coach house, stables and grooms’ quarters.¹¹ The dam wall was later converted to a bridge, close to the site of the current Cooks River Bridge.

Spark cultivated his land, experimenting with grape vines and later planting apricots and plums, figs, peaches and nectarines as well as ornamental flowers and shrubs. In 1844 a fire destroyed the stables and outhouses but they were rebuilt in the following years. By this time Spark was in serious financial trouble, having mortgaged the estate in 1841 and declared himself bankrupt in 1843. By 1847 the mortgage had been transferred to the Australian Trust Company, although he continued to live at the estate until his death in 1856.¹²

In 1859 the Australian Trust Company advertised the house for sale in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, noting the house as being a beautiful stone built villa, with an extensive collection of outbuildings including a large kitchen, laundry, store, bakery, stables and other buildings.¹³ The sale advertisement describes these as being substantial buildings built primarily of stone, with all the outside work being of hardwood of the best description. A sale plan of the estate from 1859 shows the second set of outbuildings and stables running in a line south from the house site. Of these, one is shown across the newly formed Arncliffe Road (later renamed Brodie Spark Drive) and to the east of Illawarra Street (later renamed Arncliffe Street) within the study site area (see Figure 3.2).

Beyond Tempe House to the south, some other estates and farms had been granted which, by the 1840s, were also being subdivided. The Village of Arncliffe subdivision was set out in 1844 and was accessed first via Illawarra Road to the west and then by Rocky Point Road, first surveyed and built in the late 1830s and formalised in the 1850s. This was later to become the Princes Highway and forms the eastern boundary of the study area.¹⁴

Jacobs Hotel Development 1883–1920

With the subdivision of the Tempe Estate and development around Arncliffe further south, traffic along Rocky Point Road gradually increased and a number of small inns began to be built to serve the passing traffic. By 1883 the corner of Illawarra Road and Arncliffe Road (now Princes Highway and Brodie Spark Road) was occupied by a hotel known alternatively as the Tempe Hotel or Jacobs Hotel. A sale plan for allotments around Tempe House in 1883 shows the hotel site on the corner. A second plan from 1885 of 'Jacobs Tempe Estate' shows a large building facing the Illawarra Road and running back along Arncliffe Road, with a detached outbuilding facing Arncliffe Road close to the position of Spark's stable building (as shown in Figure 3.2). This plan appears to show the hotel with two shops or terraces adjacent to it to the south along the highway frontage. It would appear that this particular sale did not proceed, as the plan includes a new street called 'Jacobs Street' which was never laid out. It does, however, show what would become Arncliffe Street, which on this sale was called 'Illawarra Street' (see Figure 3.3).

The hotel was built around 1870 and was originally known as the 'Tempe Family Hotel'. Meetings were held here in 1870 for the forming of the Rockdale Municipality. By 1883 the hotel was owned by GR Jacobs and was called the 'Tempe Hotel'. A sale plan for 1885 refers to the area around the hotel, including the study site, as 'Jacobs Estate'.

By 1897 the hotel had been renamed the Gladstone Hotel, with a Tempe Hotel having opened further towards St Peters during this period. The hotel continued to trade on the site until 1909, after which it was converted to shops and a residence. The *Sands Directory* for 1885 shows that adjacent to the hotel (on the southern side) was the farrier and blacksmith H McHugh, who continued to operate on the site until 1909. At this time a Lee Wah, storekeeper, was also listed as being on site in the building next door to the former hotel. Lee Wah continued on site until c1916.

In 1920 the former hotel was occupied by Mrs Margaret Willich (31 Rocky Point Road), with a WH Crook & Co Coloured Tinfoil Manufacturer also operating from the site. This small industrial enterprise may have been utilising the hotel or the associated yard for its works.

Site Development 1930–2009

An aerial photograph from 1930 appears to show some buildings occupying the corner block facing the Princes Highway, with the remainder of the site being an empty, undeveloped block. An aerial photograph from 1943 shows cars parked on a strip on the highway, possibly belonging to employees of Crook & Co; buildings facing the highway; and, like in the one from 1930, the remainder of the site is empty.

Aerial photographs from 1951 show the first development on the Arncliffe Street frontage with a square building, probably a warehouse, on the corner of Arncliffe Street and Brodie Spark Road. It is not known what this building was used for but it was probably for light industrial or warehouse storage which was developing in response to the growing airport nearby.

Aerial photographs from 1971 show the site fully developed on both the Arncliffe Street and Princes Highway frontages, with small industrial and factory sites across the subject area. The old hotel building has been demolished from the corner of the Princes Highway. Of interest is an arched-roofed, hangar-like building, maybe a relocated air force hangar from military surplus. The remainder of the buildings are a mix of brick and iron factory sites.

The buildings shown in the 1971 aerial photo remain on site with little changed in layout or use since this time.

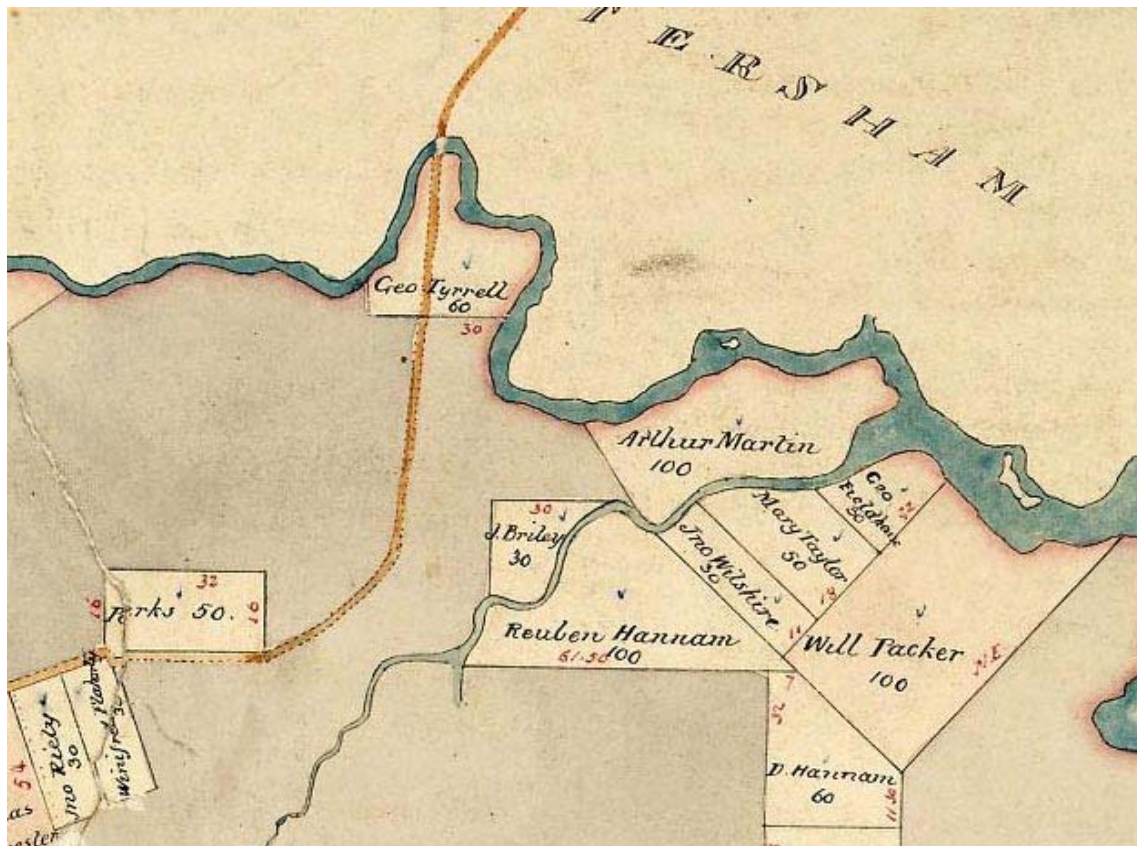


Figure 1 Plan of part of Parish of St George showing William Packer's 100 acres. (Source: Department of Lands)

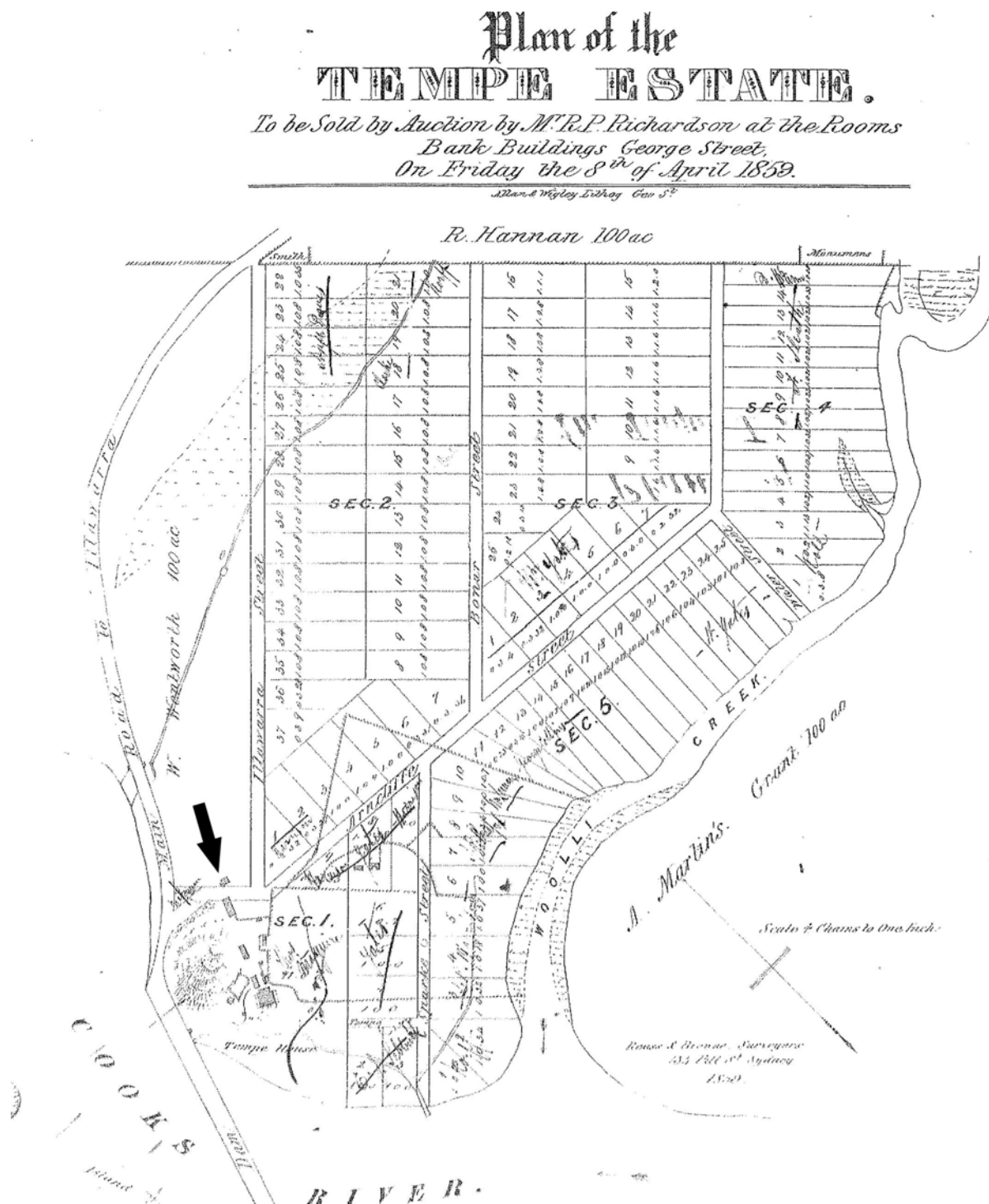


Figure 2 1859 subdivision plan of Spark's Tempe Estate showing Tempe House and the proposed allotments. The arrow shows the rear stable or outbuilding of the Tempe House group which is positioned to the south of the new road within the study area. (Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW)

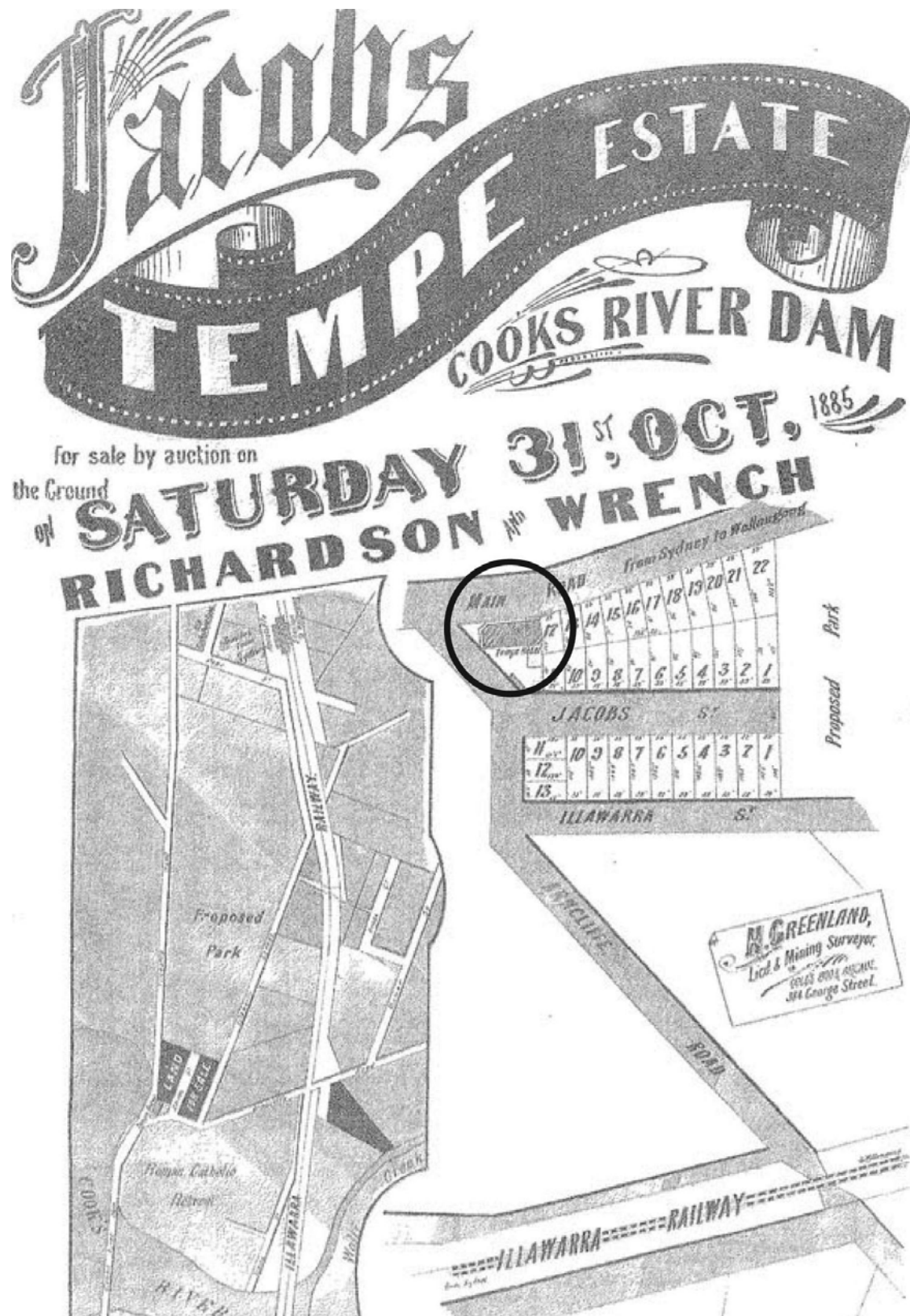


Figure 3 1885 subdivision plan of Jacobs Tempe Estate with GR Jacobs's Tempe Hotel shown circled on the corner of the main road and what was then Arncliffe Road. A small outbuilding can be seen facing Arncliffe Road near the corner of Jacobs Street (shown here), which was never laid out. This subdivision sale did not proceed. (Source: Mitchell Library, State Library NSW)

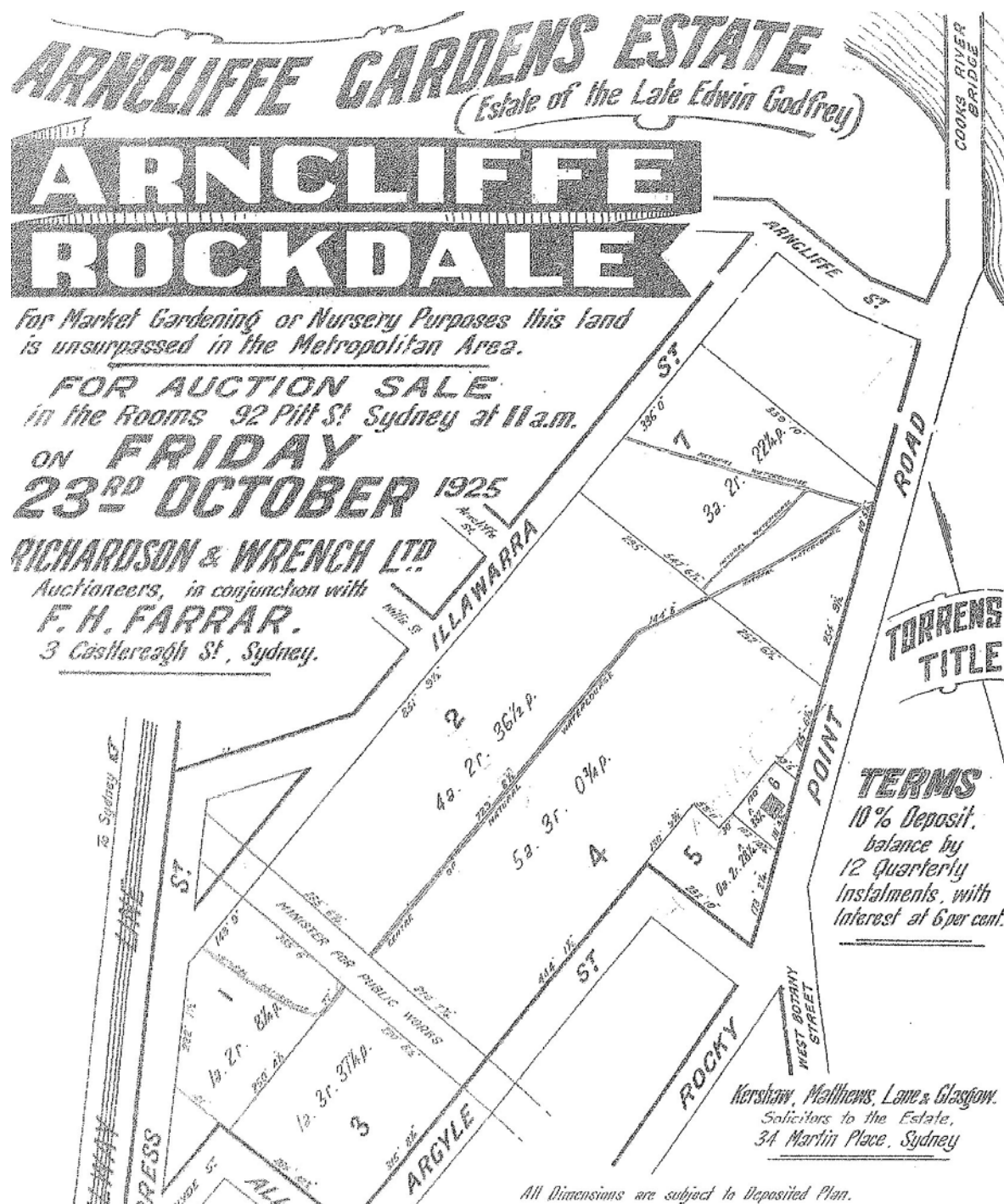


Figure 4 1925 subdivision plan of the Arncliffe Gardens Estate immediately to the south of the study area. Note the land is for sale as market gardens, suggesting there has been little to no development in this area to this time. The study area is shown bounded by Rocky Point Road, Arncliffe Street and Illawarra Street. (Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW)



Figure 5 1930 aerial photograph showing the study area (circled). What appears to be the former Tempe Hotel can be seen on the corner with the remainder of the site vacant. (Source: Department of Lands)



Figure 6 1943 aerial photograph showing the former Tempe Hotel site (circled). By this stage the site was being used for light industrial manufacturing. The parked cars are probably those of the workers. The remainder of the site remains undeveloped. (Source: Department of Lands)



Figure 7 1951 photograph with the first of the buildings currently on site on the corner of Arncliffe Road (arrowed). From this period the site was gradually developed as an industrial area. Note also that the highway has been realigned (compare to Figures 3.5 and 3.6). (Source: Department of Lands)

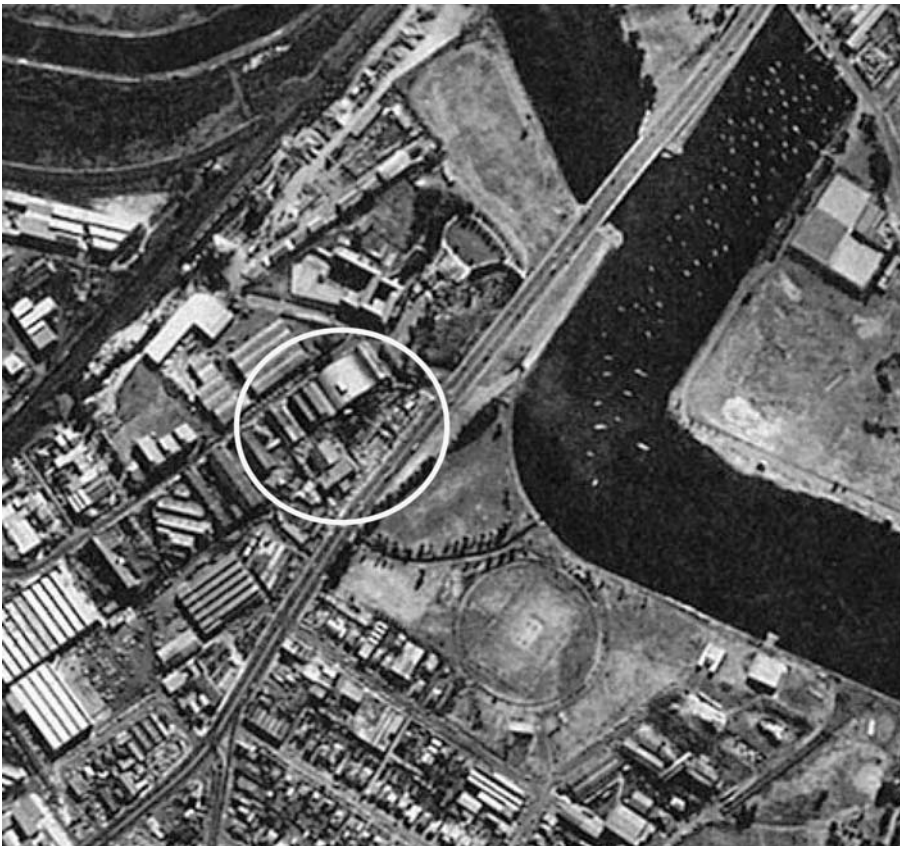


Figure 8 1970 aerial photograph with the study area circled. Note in comparison to Figure 3.7 the site is now fully developed with light industrial sheds and warehouses. (Source: Department of Lands)

Endnotes

- ¹ Attenbrow, V 2002, *Sydney's Aboriginal Past*, UNSW Press, Sydney, p 22.
- ² Centennial Park, Moore Park, Queens Park, State Heritage Register Listing, 2008.
- ³ Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions 1999, Baseline Archaeological Assessment Report 1200mm Mains Renewal at Centennial Park, Sydney NSW, prepared for Australian Water Technologies and Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust, p 8.
- ⁴ Godden Mackay Logan 1996, Moore Park Showground Fox Studios Development, Archaeological Assessment, prepared for Fox Studios, p 6.
- ⁵ Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions, 1999, op cit, p 8.
- ⁶ Lynch, WB and FA Larcombe, *Randwick 1859–1976*, Council of the Municipality of Randwick, Sydney, p 5, cited in Godden Mackay Logan 1996, op cit, p 6.
- ⁷ Elder, B 1988, *Blood on the Wattle: Massacres and Maltreatment of Australian Aborigines since 1788*, National Book Distributors, Brookvale, p 8, cited in Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions 1999, op cit, p 8.
- ⁸ Ashton, P and K Blackmore 1988, *Centennial Park: A History*, UNSW Press, Kensington, p 12, cited in Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions 1999, op cit, p 8.
- ⁹ *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 18 April 1812.
- ¹⁰ Tempe House and St Magdalenes Chapel, State Heritage Register, No. 5045451.
- ¹¹ *ibid.*
- ¹² *ibid.*
- ¹³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 April, 1859.
- ¹⁴ Walker, M and T Kass, 'Rockdale Heritage Study', prepared for Rockdale Municipal Council, 1991, p 7.

