

## APPENDIX A- HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### 1.1. Environmental Context and Aboriginal History

#### 1.1.1. Pre-European Environment

This section predominately draws on information gathered from a previous Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) written for the nearby Paint Shop within the Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct by Artefact Heritage (2022), in which the CME study area was a part.<sup>1</sup>

The topography of an area, including its natural resources, landforms, and wider landscape setting, has a significant influence on the nature, location, and form of Aboriginal occupation, usage patterns and interactions with the land. The physical context therefore dictates and influences the locations and forms of tangible values and physical sites that main remain across the landscape. The physical setting of a location also provides meaningful landscape context for intangible heritage and connection to Country.

The study area is situated within the Blacktown soil landscape with underlying Ashfield Shale and Hawkesbury Sandstone. Soils on the Blacktown landscape vary from shallow to moderately deep (>100cm) hard setting clay loam on plastic, mottled clay.<sup>2</sup> Soils within this landscape can be subject to moderate erodibility, have poor fertility and are poorly drained.

The study area is a predominantly level or gently sloping landform, at the base of a very mild rise to the northwest. Due to the higher ground/ridgeline that runs north-south from Central Station to Eveleigh, it is believed this may have been used as a natural Aboriginal walking track between locations across the landscape.<sup>3</sup>

Several swamps and lesser waterways were present within the low-lying areas of the dune landscape around the Redfern and North Eveleigh areas. An example is Boxley's Lagoon swampland, thought to be located to the east of the study area, where Redfern Park is today. The study area is also located approximately 1.5km from the historical shoreline of Blackwattle Bay and 1.6km from the historical shoreline of Cockle Bay. No watercourses, however, are known to have passed directly through the study area.

Redfern and the surrounding area would have been an abundant source for resources. Nearby Cockle Bay and Blackwattle Bay would have been a place to gather shellfish and seafood, and the streams that flowed into Cockle Bay would have provided fresh water and other fish species. The vegetation around the area would have provided various tree and plant species that supplied seeds, nectars, fruits, roots and bark for tools to the local Aboriginal communities. The forests would have been home to native animals that could be eaten and used for tool making.<sup>4</sup>

#### 1.1.2. Aboriginal Ethnographic History

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<sup>1</sup> Artefact Heritage, 2022, *Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study*. Prepared for Transport for NSW

<sup>2</sup> Bannerman & Hazelton 1990

<sup>3</sup> Daniel, S., 2018, *Walking in their tracks: How Sydney's Aboriginal paths shaped the city*, ABC News, accessed at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-17/curious-sydney-aboriginal-pathways/9676076>

<sup>4</sup> Artefact Heritage, 2022, *Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study*. Prepared for Transport for NSW

Much of the evidence of traditional Aboriginal lifestyle and economy was disrupted in the early years of European colonisation and understandings of Aboriginal groups and their lifeways prior to European settlement is in part reliant on historical records and documents written by early European settlers. One of the first to document of Aboriginal people was Lieutenant Watkin Tench, who, whilst known for his objective commentary on Aboriginal life, was unaware if his observations were of local Gadigal people or visiting tribes passing through Country.<sup>5</sup> Despite the biases inherent in these historical records, when used in conjunction with other sources of information such as archaeological evidence, we can begin to construct a picture of pre-European Aboriginal life in the region.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in Sydney Cove, the current study area would have formed part of the hunting and gathering grounds of the Eora. The term 'Eora' has frequently been used to refer collectively to the Aboriginal groups occupying the central and eastern Sydney regions, however, the true meaning and history of the term is unclear. It has been suggested, for instance, that the term 'Eora' was used by colonists as a word for 'people' and that there is no evidence in ethnographic accounts for the word ever having been used in the context of describing particular tribes, groups or places.<sup>6</sup>

The Sydney region has two main language groups: Darug (or Dharruk) – with two main dialects, one spoken along the coast and another in the hinterland/Cumberland Plain region of western Sydney; and Tharawal – spoken to the south of Botany Bay.<sup>7</sup> Within the Darug language group, people belonged to smaller familial/territorial groups or clans, through which they were connected to, and occupied, different areas of land across Sydney.

The study area is understood to be situated within the lands of the Gadigal (or Cadigal) people. According to early records of Governor Phillip, the Gadigal lands stretched from "*...the entrance of the harbour, along the south shore, to the cove adjoining the settlement*".<sup>8</sup> The traditional territory of the Gadigal is therefore recognised to extend along the southern side of the Sydney Harbour from South Head, west to approximately Darling Harbour (previously known as Cockle Bay), and south towards Botany Bay.

Despite differences in language, material culture and customs, the various Darug clans would likely have interacted at various times of the year for ceremonies, dispute resolution, trade and marriage arrangement. It has been recorded, for instance, that the Gadigal clans engaged in a variety of important ceremonial rituals. Two such recorded rituals included tooth avulsion - involving the removal of a tooth. This practice was associated with the initiation of young men when they came of age and was also practiced during significant ceremonial activities at ceremonial grounds located near Farm Cove called Yoo-lahng (Figure 1.1). Ceremonial rituals for young women involved the removal of the first two joints of the little finger on the left hand.<sup>9</sup>

Aboriginal clans were associated with specific territories or places and were differentiated by differing customs. Areas associated with water sources were the most densely populated and communities would have travelled across the landscape as the seasons changed and the corresponding resources became available in different locations. Whilst navigating, the stars were an

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<sup>5</sup> Tench, 1788 (1990), *Watkin Tench 1788*. Melbourne: Text Publishing

<sup>6</sup> Attenbrow, V., 2010, *Sydney's Aboriginal Past. Investigating the archaeological and historical records*: 27

<sup>7</sup> Attenbrow 2010

<sup>8</sup> Phillip, A., 1790 [1892], Letter from Governor Phillip to Lord Sydney, Government House, Sydney Cove, February 12th, 1790, in *Historical Records of NSW vol. 1 no. 2 – Phillip 1783-1792*, Government Printer, Sydney: 293-301 [1892:309]

<sup>9</sup> *Unearthed Archaeology & Heritage*, 2019, Cranbrook School, Bellevue Hill, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report, prepared for Cranbrook School and the Department of Planning and Environment.

important tool used to traverse the land and ceremonial grounds. In particular, the Milky Way and Emu in the Sky constellations.<sup>10</sup>

The pre-contact environment of the study area would have been an incredibly valuable location for Aboriginal people, with access to a plethora of important resources associated with the swamplands and creeks. Archaeological excavations at several locations along the original course of Blackwattle Creek (a tidal watercourse situated within the Redfern area) have revealed evidence in the form of isolated artefacts and/or small artefact assemblages indicating short term sporadic use of the area by past Aboriginal groups<sup>11</sup>.

As hunter-gatherers, the local Aboriginal communities living in the area would have pursued a mixed food economy, utilising and relying upon readily available and abundant natural resources. Sydney Harbour (known as Warrane or War-ran<sup>12</sup>), situated approximately 2.5 km north from the study area, would have provided coastal marine resources including fish, shellfish and crustacea which could be gathered from the sea though availability and abundance of resources likely changed seasonally<sup>13</sup>. Cockle Bay would have been an ideal location for fishing expeditions along the harbour via bark canoe, as well as the nearby landscape of Hawkesbury sandstone cliffs eroding into overhangs and rock shelters which would have been suitable for habitation. Tench noted that men tended to fish using spears whilst standing near rocks and women fished from bark canoes, that often also held small fires to cook the fish. Young children would also join their mothers on the canoes.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, the environment associated with locations further inland from the coast resulted in a reliance on the exploitation of possums, kangaroos, plant resources including vegetable roots, berries and seed and freshwater resources such as eels and mullet.<sup>15</sup>

Locations for camping were selected based on an ability to provide shelter from the weather in addition to being in locations with access to plant and animal foods and raw material resources. Based on the distribution of Aboriginal sites in the Sydney region, occupation appears to have been focused along valley bottoms and shoreline contexts and the density and complexity of sites has been suggested to vary in accordance with distance from permanent potable water sources and proximity to food, stone and other resources required for the manufacture and maintenance of tools, equipment and other cultural items.<sup>16</sup>

Early settlers noted a 'road' linking Cockle Bay to Botany Bay that acted as an important corridor for trade and movement for Aboriginal people in early Sydney. The area along this corridor between Cockle Bay and Botany Bay is described in 1788 by Governor Arthur Phillip as being occupied by wood and beyond that, a kind of heath- sandy and full of swamps. The same area is later described in 1792 by Richard Atkins, Judge Advocate of New South Wales, as being associated with immense trees, lofty branches, flowering shrubs, blossoms of vivid and beautiful colours.<sup>17</sup> The current study area is located within this corridor and these early descriptions are consistent with contemporary

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<sup>10</sup> Attenbrow 2010

<sup>11</sup> Dallas, M., 2003, Application for a Section 90 Heritage Report and Permit with Salvage for the Archaeological Investigation of 22-36 Mountain St Ultimo. Report to NSW NPWS; Jo McDonald Cultural Heritage Management Pty Ltd, 2005a,

<sup>12</sup> City of Sydney, 2013, *Barani Sydney's Aboriginal history*. <https://www.sydneybarani.com.au>

<sup>13</sup> Attenbrow 2010: 62

<sup>14</sup> Tench, 1788 (1990) – via Artefact Heritage, 2022, *Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study*

<sup>15</sup> Murray, R. and White, K., 1988, *Dharug and Dungaree: The History of Penrith and St Marys to 1860*. Hargreen Publishing Company in conjunction with the Council of the City of Penrith.

<sup>16</sup> DSCA 2003, p.23

<sup>17</sup> Archaeological & Heritage Management Solutions (AHMS), 2015, *Central to Eveleigh Corridor: Aboriginal and historical Heritage Review for UrbanGrowth NSW*. Unpublished Report, p 13; Comber Consultants Pty Ltd, 2017, 244 Cleveland Street, Surry Hills – *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Report*, p. 10

Aboriginal understandings of the area's importance to past Aboriginal groups utilising the area. According to Professor Dennis Foley an Indigenous Cultural Leader, for instance, the alignment of Cleveland Street (approximately 500m south of the study area) follows a natural ridgeline which formed an old meandering walking track that was used by past Aboriginal people to access important areas within the surrounding landscape.<sup>18</sup>

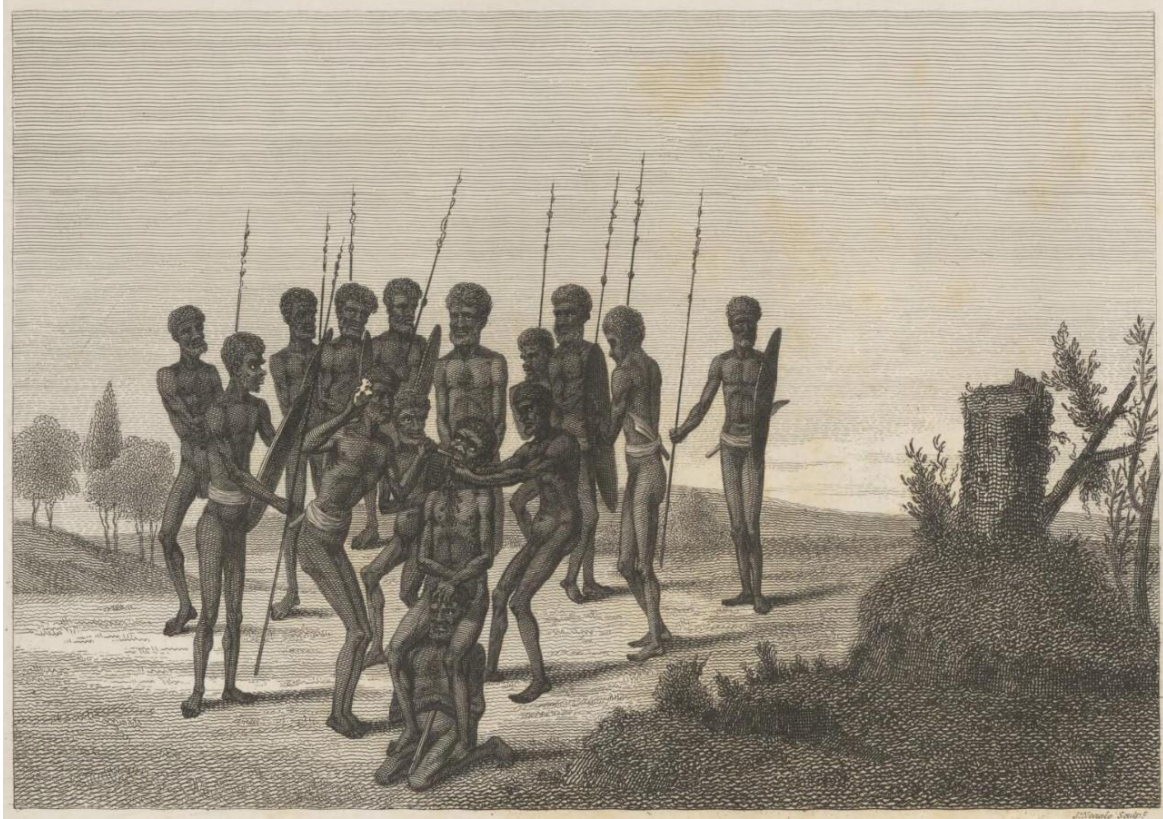


Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document.**1: Yoo-long erah-ba-diag 1795 Farm Cove initiation ceremony: 'striking out the tooth'. Attributed to T Watling (artist), James Neagle (engraver) (Source: National Library of Australia, Neagle, James. (1798). Yoo-long erah-ba-diag. (S11111/22))<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Information obtained from notes taken by SJB architects following a conversation with Professor (Uncle) Dennis Foley regarding Aboriginal use of land in and around the study area. (Pers. Com. Between SJB architects and Professor (Uncle) Dennis Foley on 27 April 2022).

<sup>19</sup> Retrieved May 4, 2022, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-143787504>





Figure Error! No text of specified style in document.:2: Cockle Bay, now Darling Harbour (1819-1820) (Source: State Library of NSW, ML 941, 447716)

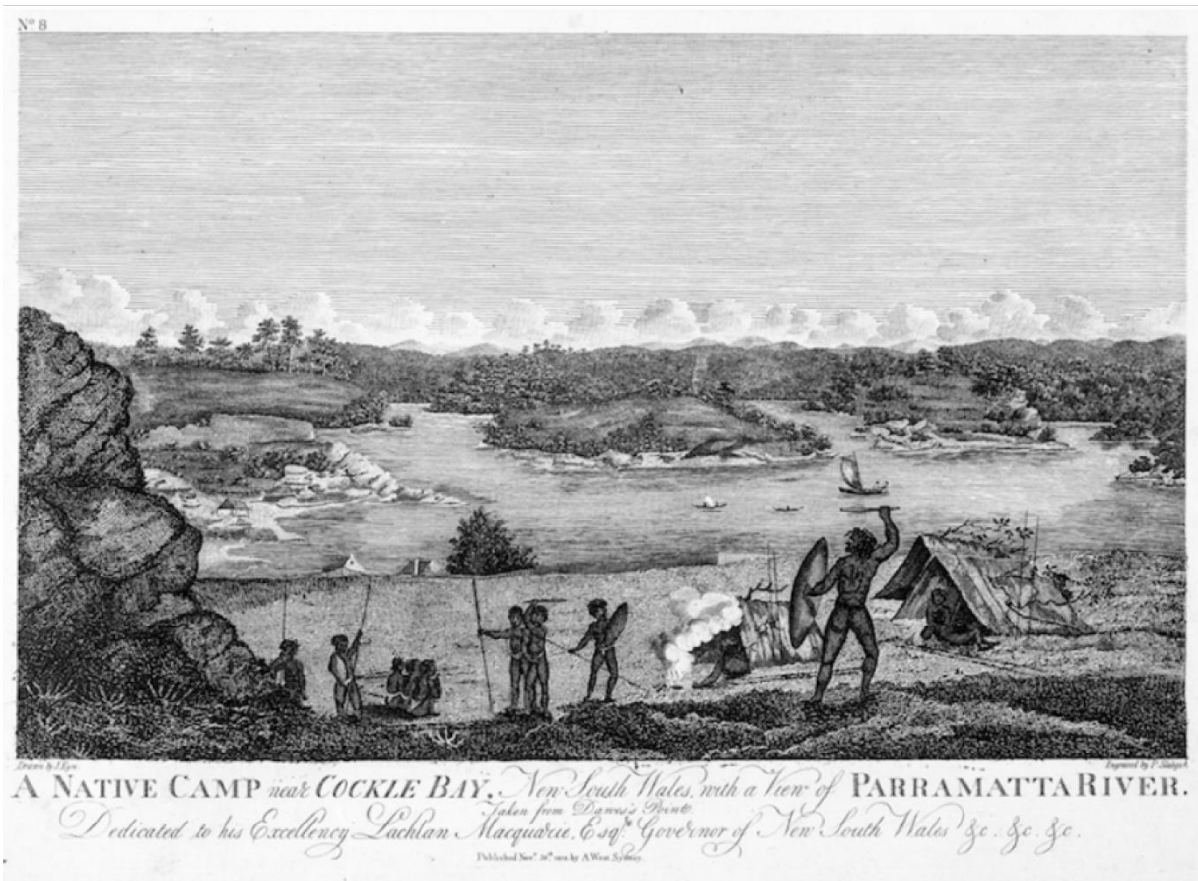


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document.:3: A native camp near Cockle Bay (Source: National Library of NSW, 2657982)

## 1.2. Post Contact History

### 1.2.1. Post- Contact Aboriginal History

Following Captain James Cook's voyage to Botany Bay in 1770, the First Fleet arrived on the eastern Australian shoreline in January 1788. Soon after arrival it was determined that Botany Bay was unsuitable for establishing a colony and Governor Arthur Phillip thus moved the fleet further north to Port Jackson where a colony was then founded at Sydney Cove.<sup>20</sup>

At the time of the arrival of the First Fleet in January 1788, it is estimated that at least 1,500 Aboriginal people may have lived along the coastal region between Broken Bay and Botany Bay. The arrival of the First Fleet and the Berewalgal (meaning people from a distant place; the Europeans<sup>21</sup>) devastated the lives and activities of Aboriginal people in the Sydney area, restricting access to areas traditionally used for hunting and gathering, shelter, and for ceremonial purposes, while also introducing devastating diseases such as smallpox. It is estimated that almost half of Sydney's Aboriginal population died in the first smallpox epidemic recorded in the colony in 1789.<sup>22</sup>

During the early days of the settlement, the Tank Stream was dug to provide freshwater for the colony which consisted of approximately 1,000 people living in huts, tents, or wattle and daub houses within Sydney Cove.<sup>23</sup> According to early British accounts, the initial reactions of the local Aboriginal people to the British colonists were mixed. Sometimes local Aboriginals were openly antagonistic with shouting and angry gesticulations while at other times they appeared to be curious and friendly even showing early colonists to locations of freshwater.<sup>24</sup>

Overall, initial interactions between the early colonists and Aboriginal groups were perceived as peaceful by those documenting events. The British settlers engaged in gift giving with the aim of encouraging integration into the colony while also deterring any potential opposition to the establishment of the European settlement.<sup>25</sup> While Phillip had hoped that the local Aboriginal groups would visit the colony freely assisting the colonists in learning more about the way of life in this new environment, soon after these initial interactions most local Aboriginal groups generally avoided the area.<sup>26</sup> Within a year of settlement, the population of the colony had more than doubled, during which time an additional settlement was established at Parramatta where fertile land provided for more productive farming. As the colony expanded many of the original walking tracks used by local Aboriginal groups, including the east-west walking track which meanders along Cleveland Street, were adopted by the colonists and used as transport corridors. The expansion of the colony and

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<sup>20</sup> NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW NPWS), 2003, "The Bioregions of New South Wales: their biodiversity, conservation and history". NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Hurstville. Available at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Bioregions/SydneyBasin-RegionalHistory.Htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Bioregions/SydneyBasin-RegionalHistory.Htm)."

<sup>21</sup> City of Sydney. 2013

<sup>22</sup> Hinkson, M. & Harris, A., 2010, *Aboriginal Sydney: a guide to important places of the past and present*, 2nd ed, Aboriginal Studies Press Canberra.

<sup>23</sup> Ho and DUAP 1996

<sup>24</sup> Bradley 1786-1792[1969], p.59, Tench 1789: 53-54[1979, p.35] cited in Attenbrow 2009

<sup>25</sup> Karskens, G., 2016, Phillip and the Eora. Governing race relations in the colony of New South Wales. *Sydney Journal*, Vol 5, No 1. 39-55. pp. 43-44

<sup>26</sup> Attenbrow, V., 2009, 'Aboriginal placenames around Port Jackson and Botany Bay, New South Wales, Australia Sources and uncertainties'. In: *Aboriginal Placenames: Naming and re-naming the Australian landscape*. Koch, H. and Hercus, L. (eds). ANU Press, Canberra, p.11

limited meaningful dialogue between the British colonists and the local Aborigines resulted in increased conflict between settlers and the local Aboriginal people.

In December 1788, for instance, a number of Aboriginal people were captured by force at the orders of Governor Philip, including an Aboriginal man named Arabanoo who later died of smallpox in April 1789. In November 1789, Colbee and Bennelong, a member of the Wangal clan, were captured though escaped soon afterward. Early interactions between Governor Philip and Colbee and Bennelong led to the spearing of Governor Phillip at Manly Cove which turned out to be a pivotal turning point in the relationship between colonists and local Aboriginal groups. Following the spearing, Governor Phillip, decided to engage in negotiations rather than retaliation, a decision which ultimately led to good relations between Phillip and Bennelong and his friends and family who later moved into the colony.<sup>27</sup>

In an attempt to understand the dynamics and population of Aboriginal communities, Governor Macquarie established the 'Blanket Returns' initiative in 1814. This aimed at collecting information about the Aboriginal people living within the region, gather individual's names, approximate age, family members and tribes.<sup>28</sup>

Aboriginal people who survived epidemics and displacement continued to live a semi-traditional life often on the margins of European settlement, occasionally supplementing their resources with supplies from new settlers.<sup>29</sup> The Aboriginal population continued to decline and by 1827 it was estimated that the population had declined to roughly a third of the original populace that had existed at the time of the colony's establishment in 1788.

Despite their displacement, Aboriginal communities continued to utilise the land around the increasing spread of European colonisation. A watercolour painting by Joseph Lycett looking towards Sydney from Surry Hills in 1819 shows a small group of Aboriginal people camping on the margins of the colony demonstrating the continued use of the Sydney area by Aboriginal groups (Figure 4). The general location of the RNE study area is believed to have continued ceremonial use, as noted in Artefact 2022:

*Today's Belmore Park and Central Station were important cultural grounds for ceremonial practice during the 1790s, with David Collins describing a 'clear spot between the town and the brickfield' being utilised for one such ceremony in December 1793.<sup>30</sup> Collins noted the continuous use of this space as a ceremonial site, noting that the Aboriginal community 'derived so many comforts and so much shelter in bad weather' at the site.<sup>31</sup> Moore Park, south-east of the subject site, was another key place for continuing cultural practices; colonists would travel to watch 'payback rituals' take place in the area, where Aboriginal people would resolve grievances through ritual and punishment.<sup>32</sup> Until the mid-1800s, the area of Prince Alfred Park (known then as Cleveland Paddocks) was an Aboriginal campsite where Gadigal lived until the coming of the railway in the 1850s. As the first railway*

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<sup>27</sup> Karskens 2016, p. 48

<sup>28</sup> Irish, 2017, *Hidden in Plain View: The Aboriginal People of Coastal Sydney*

<sup>29</sup> Murray and White 1988

<sup>30</sup> Collins, 1798, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, Volume 1, T. Cadell Jun and W. Davies, London

<sup>31</sup> Collins, 1802, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales from its First Settlement in January 1788 to August 1801*, Volume 2, T. Cadell Jun and W. Davies, London

<sup>32</sup> Cox Inall Ridgeway, 2021, *Central Precinct Renewal Project: Consultation Report for Aboriginal Heritage Interpretation Strategy*. Prepared for Transport for NSW

*terminus at the Cleveland Paddocks was constructed in 1855, the Aboriginal community was dispersed from the campground.*<sup>33</sup>

The presence of a flaked glass artefact from an archaeological site located on the corner of Mountain and Smail Streets at Ultimo (Mountain Street Ultimo; AHIMS ID# 45-6-2663) and situated approximately 900m to the north of the current study area, indicate that land use adjacent to Blackwattle Creek continued following the arrival of Europeans and provides evidence for the adaptation and use of new European materials for the production of artefacts.<sup>34</sup>



Figure 4: Sydney from Surry Hills 1819. Watercolour by Joseph Lycett showing an Aboriginal group camping (Source: State Library of New South Wales [a928334 / ML 54]<sup>35</sup>)

### 1.2.2. Early Land Grants and Development

Eveleigh is located between two major waterways that played important roles in the early development of the area and colony. Located north of Eveleigh included land that drained to Blackwattle Swamp Creek while to the south was land, including Eveleigh, that drained to the Shea's Creek catchment. Both areas became popular for heavy industry as they offered water supply for trades that were banned in 1848 within the city.<sup>36</sup> An abattoir operated in Blackwattle swamp between 1835 to 1860, and Shea's Creek became home to trades such as wool washing, tanneries and boiling down works. The industries activities took a toll on the natural environment and heavily contributed to the mass pollution of these water ways.<sup>37</sup>

A number of early land grants were located within and surrounding the Eveleigh area. A section of land that now forms part of Eveleigh was granted to John Davis in 1794 and later cancelled.

<sup>33</sup> Artefact, 2022, *Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study*. Prepared for Transport for NSW

<sup>34</sup> Dominic Steele Consulting Archaeology (DSCA), 2003, Final Aboriginal Archaeological Excavation Report. Quadrant Development Site, Broadway and Mountain Streets, Sydney, NSW, Containing NPWS Site #45-6-2629 and Associated Areas of PAD. Report to Australand Holdings Limited and College Square Residential Pty Ltd.

<sup>35</sup> Retrieved May 4, 2022, from <https://archival.sl.nsw.gov.au/Details/archive/110327850>

<sup>36</sup> OCP, 2002. *Eveleigh Carriageworks Conservation Management Plan*: 26

<sup>37</sup> Ibid



Following this, James Chisholm, a Scottish soldier and later merchant and landowner, arrived in the colony in 1790 with the NSW Corps, and was granted a 62- acre land grant in 1822 within the area known today as Eveleigh (**Error! Reference source not found.**).<sup>38</sup> Chisholm cleared areas of his estate to use as farming allotments and built 'Calder House' in the northeast corner of the estate (previously located west of the subject site) sometime between 1820 to 1830 (Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document..6**, Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document..7**, Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document..8** and Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document..10**).<sup>39</sup> After the death of Chisholm in 1837, his family continued to live at Calder House until 1855 when the Chisholm Estate was bisected by the construction of the main western rail line from Sydney to Parramatta. Calder House was then leased to J.F Castle and became known as a private school for boys which was later leased to Dr Sly in 1865 and named 'Dr Sly's Academy' until the 1878 land resumption (Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document..9**).<sup>40</sup> Following the establishment of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops (ERW), Calder House was used as a residence for the Locomotive Works Manager and Chief Mechanical Engineer of the ERW until it was destroyed in a fire in 1923 and its remains later demolished in 1924 (Figure **Error! No text of specified style in document..12**).<sup>41</sup>

Located directly north of Chisholm's estate was a 52-acre land grant to William Hutchinson in 1819, an ex-convict and successful businessman and in the same year, a 95-acre land grant was given to William Chippendale, an early free settler and land holder, located east of the Chisholm estate. By 1821, Chippendale's grant was sold to Solomon Levey. Other known early land grants surrounding the Chisholm's Estate include Dr William Redfern's (1816) 100-acre estate located to the east, John King's (1794) 30-acre land grant, also known as Kingsclear, located south and Nicholas Devine's 1794 land grant to the west.

The Eveleigh-Redfern area was subdivided into farmyards and middle-class villa estates during the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>42</sup> By the mid- 1850s land on the Hutchinson and Chippendale estates was divided further for residential developments. The modern suburb of Redfern encompassed much of the Redfern Estate in which ownership was retained by the Redfern family until the early 1840s.

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<sup>38</sup> OCP Architects, 2022. *Eveleigh Railway Workshops Overarching Conservation Management Plan*: 24

<sup>39</sup> Sources vary regarding the exact date of original construction of the Calder House cottage, reporting variously from c.1820 to the late 1830s.

<sup>40</sup> OCP, 2002. *Eveleigh Carriageworks Conservation Management Plan*: 29

<sup>41</sup> OCP Architects 2017b, *North Eveleigh West- Conservation Management Plan*.

<sup>42</sup> OCP Architects, 2022. *Eveleigh Railway Workshops Overarching Conservation Management Plan*: 23

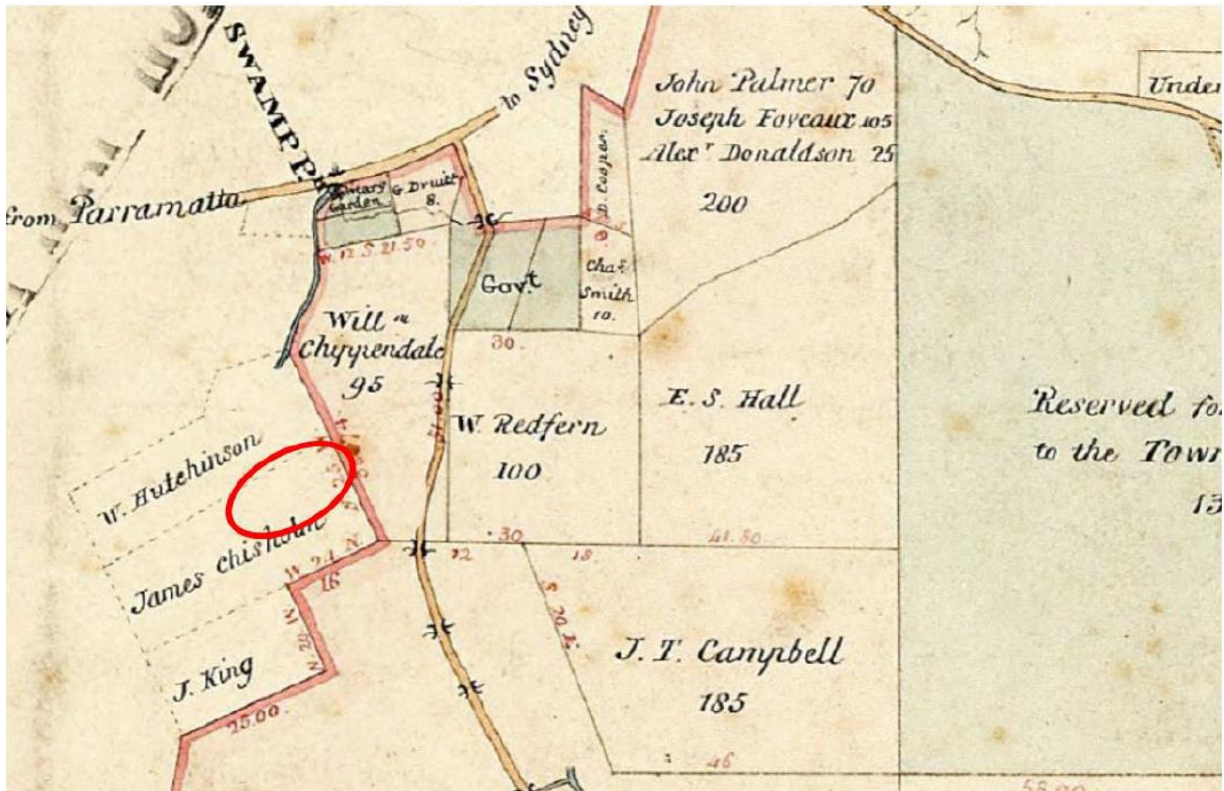


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document.4: Undated map of Parish of Alexandria, early land grants. General area of the CME Building indicated in red (Source: Historical Lands Record Viewer)



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document.5: Plan of Part of Chippendale Estate. North eastern corner of Chisholm's estate in 1844 with Calder House visible. Area circled in red (Source: State Library of NSW, Z/M4 811.1819/1844/1)

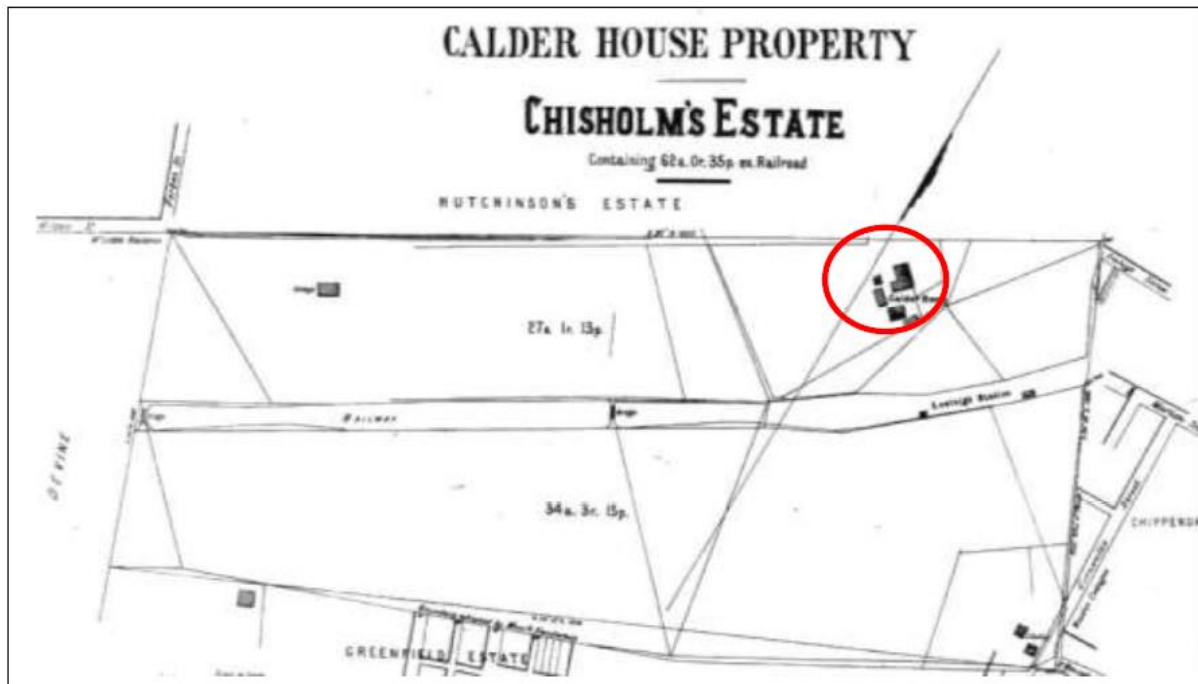


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document.:6: Chisholm Estate, Calder House circled in red (Source: State Library NSW)



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document.:7: Calder House, 1921 (Source: State Library NSW)





Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..8: Calder House and grounds (Source: State Library NSW, ML 2719 Campbell, Alfred Branch, 'Old Calder House School', 1921.PXB583)



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..9: School students at Calder House pre 1878 (Source: National Library of Australia, City Photo Company)



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..10: Front façade of Calder House (Source: State Library NSW, Royal Australian Historical Society photonegatives 1866-1910. ON 260/209-234, item 215)



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..11: Interior of Calder House (Source: State Library NSW, PXB 583)



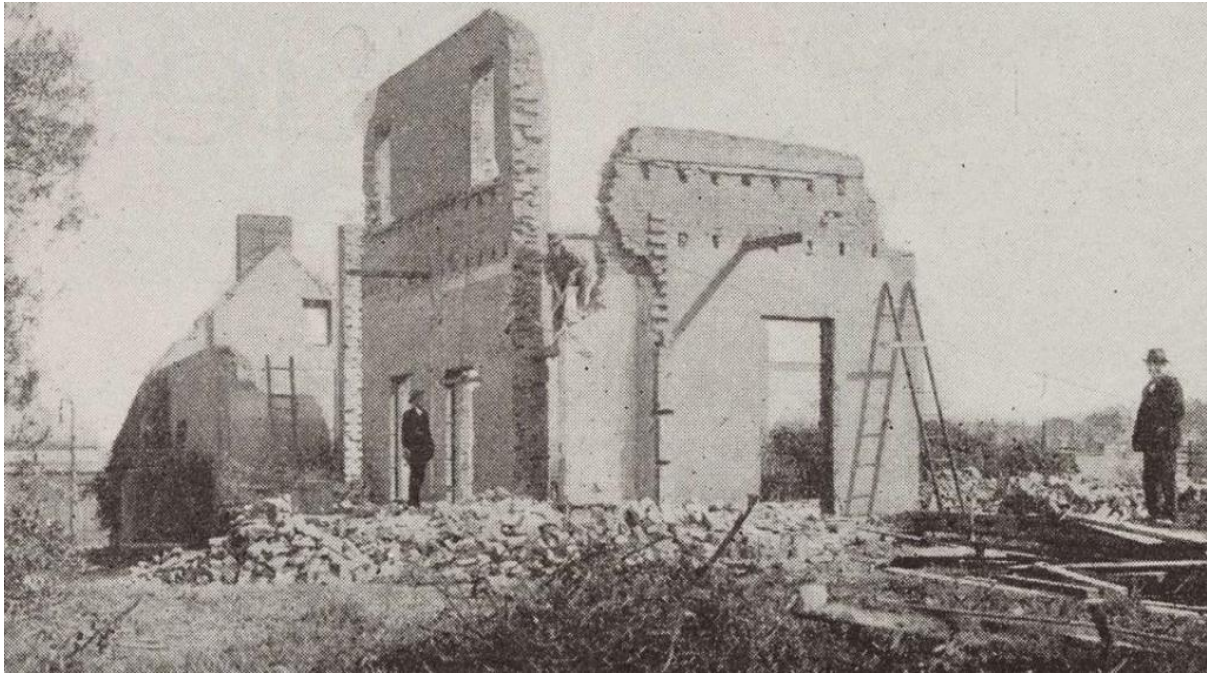


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..12: Calder House a few minutes before demolition of the eastern wall facing the railway line (Source: State Library NSW, Sydney Mail 14 May 1924, BN336)

### 1.2.3. Industrialisation of Eveleigh

In 1849, the Sydney Railway Act was passed which allowed the Sydney Railway Company to establish a railway from Sydney to Goulburn and Bathurst. After Sydney's first railway line was completed and opened in 1855, the growth and demand of rail infrastructure and transportation increased dramatically into the later nineteenth century.<sup>43</sup>

*"Following public pressure for cost effective railway transportation, private efforts were made to establish the necessary infrastructure. By the early 1850's railway lines had been constructed with financial and legal assistance provided by the Government. However, the high costs of construction, coupled with technical and logistic problems, called into question the capacity of private enterprise to effectively establish a large-scale transportation system as required by the colony's industry and population. (Dr L. Taksa & J Kent, 1996)<sup>44</sup>*

A Select Committee stressed in 1854 the importance of the Government's role in getting more involved in the emerging railway industry and the position it should take on, including greater responsibility for the costs.<sup>45</sup> The Government's more hands-on role was a critical factor in allowing the opportunity for local manufacturing and skilled engineering companies to thrive.

The small groups of rail workshops that were established at the original Sydney Terminal yards, previously located at Devonshire Street, consisted of corrugated iron sheds and a two-storey building that included a small pattern and turning workshop.<sup>46</sup> The site quickly could not support the growing operational and maintenance needs of Sydney's increasing suburban traffic. From 1875,

<sup>43</sup> OCP, 2002. *Eveleigh Carriageworks Conservation Management Plan*: 34

<sup>44</sup> Taska & Kent, 1996. *Eveleigh Workshops Management Plan for Moveable Items and Social History*: 5

<sup>45</sup> Rappoport, P & Caldis Cook Group Pty Ltd 1997, *Chief Mechanical Engineer's Building, 327 Wilson Street, Chippendale. Eveleigh Locomotive Workshops, Conservation Management Plan*: 85.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid: 85

recommendations were made for a larger site intended for the maintenance of rolling stock. In addition to this, in 1879 Locomotive Engineer R. Burnett stated:

*"The absence of the necessary shed room for the locomotives, not only places these costly machines at a great disadvantage by exposing them to the injurious effect of dust and weather..., but also adds, in no small degree, to the cost of wages - notably in that for cleaning - owing to the great difficulty the men experience in doing their work when exposed in the open air, and, especially at night, to the wind and weather, with the imperfect light of hand-lamps". (Dr L. Taksa & J Kent, 1996) <sup>47 48</sup>*

The planning phase of a new government owned maintenance facility began in 1875, later to be known as Eveleigh Railway Workshops (ERW). The bisection of Chisholm Estate in 1855 by the Sydney to Parramatta railway line meant the North Eveleigh land was left undeveloped into the 1860s and 1870s, the main form of activity within the area was the school at Calder House until Chisholm Estate was resumed in 1878. The government purchased the land for a compensation price of 100,000 pounds in 1879 and agreed to the construction of the workshops at North Eveleigh for 250,000 pounds in 1880.<sup>49</sup> The decision of the sites location was focused on the affordable cost of land which was cheaper due to the soil landscape of marshes and lack of agricultural capability. The excavation and land levelling at Eveleigh began in the early 1880s in preparation for the construction of workshop facilities, which later begun in 1885.<sup>50</sup>

The Annual report released in 1881 included the general arrangement of the ERW and confirmation of the planned construction of carriage shops, wagon shops and general railway stores located north of the railway line (North Eveleigh).<sup>51</sup> The area north of the railway line became known as the Eveleigh Carriage Workshops which consisted of a number of buildings that were crucial to the repair and construction of carriages and wagons. The ERW was divided in two: the Locomotive Workshops (south) and the Carriage Workshops (north). The reasoning behind the split of the complex was to allow the Locomotive and Carriage Workshop facilities to operate independently of one another to avoid interference with rail traffic but still allowing adequate communication between the two workshops.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Taska & Kent, 1996. *Eveleigh Workshops Management Plan for Moveable Items and Social History*: 6

<sup>48</sup> Rappoport, P & Caldis Cook Group Pty Ltd, 1997. *Chief Mechanical Engineers Building CMP*: 85

<sup>49</sup> Curio Projects, 2022. *RNE Precinct Paint Shop Sub-Precinct: Non-Aboriginal Heritage Study*: 48

<sup>50</sup> Simpson Dawbin, 2003. *Large Erecting Shop CMP*: 9

<sup>51</sup> Curio Projects, 2022. *RNE Precinct Paint Shop Sub-Precinct: Non-Aboriginal Heritage Study*: 44-45

<sup>52</sup> OCP Architects, 2022. *Eveleigh Railway Workshops Overarching CMP*: 28-29



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..13: 'Turning of the first sod' for Sydney's First Rail Terminus (original Redfern Station), July 1850 (Source: Mitchell Library SLNSW-ML 244)

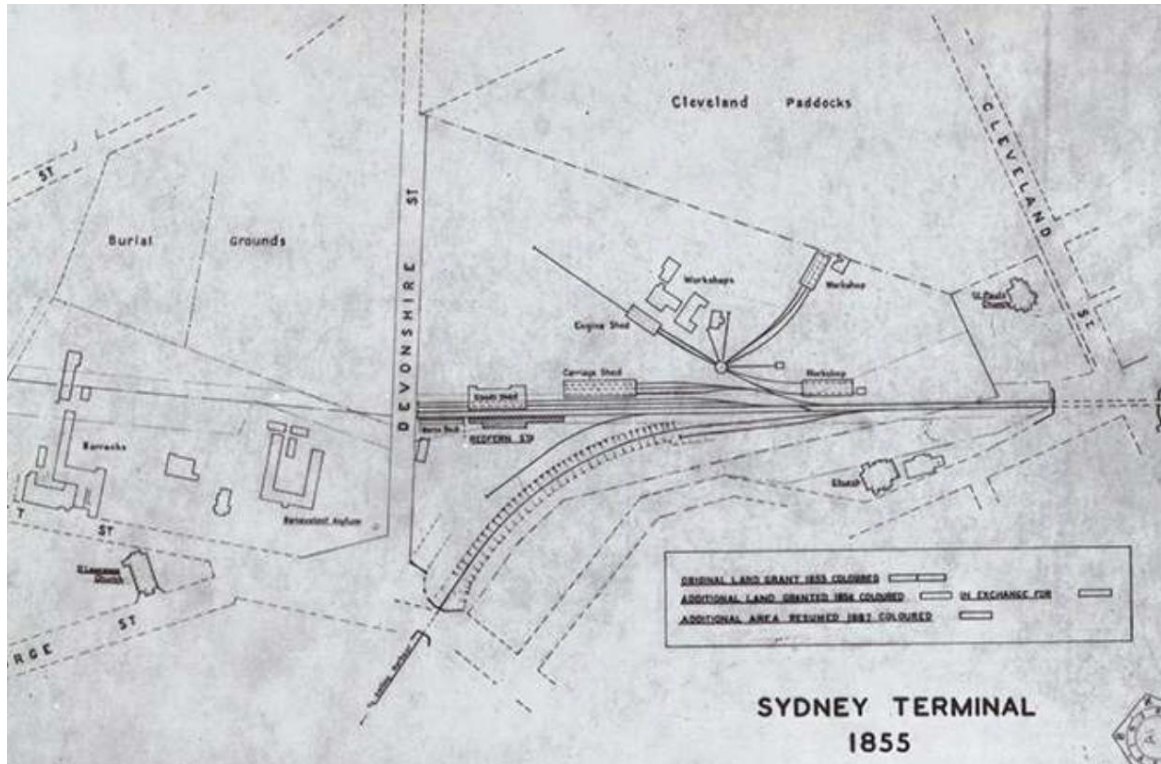


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..14: Sydney Terminal 1855. Early plan of original Redfern Station and Sydney's first rail yard ('Workshops'. (Source: NSW State Archives, Digital ID 17420\_a014\_a014001376a)

### 1.3. Eveleigh Railway Workshops (ERW)

#### 1.3.1. Rise of the Industrial Age

The ERW began to formally open as buildings were completed, starting with the Locomotive Workshops located south of the railway line, (Bays 1-4 opened first in 1887, followed by Bays 5-15 – later that year), and on the northern side of the railway line Bays 16-25 of the Carriage Workshops which opened later that year (**Error! Reference source not found.**).<sup>53</sup>

The 2022 *Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Paint Shop Sub-Precinct: Non-Aboriginal Heritage Study* by Curio Projects states:

*The opening of the ERW represents a fundamental phase of railway development in NSW. From the commencement of workshop activities in 1885, ERW was a major contributor to the establishment, operation, and growth of the NSW railway system, and in turn, was an essential part of the growth and development of the state of NSW from the late 19th century onwards.'*<sup>54</sup>

Below includes a list of key structures and components that contributed to the function of the Eveleigh Carriage Workshops site that were constructed between 1884 and 1895.

- Fan of Tracks (c.1882)
- Carriage and Wagon Workshops (1887)
- Locomotive Workshops (1887)
- Paint Shop (1887)
- Chief Mechanical Engineers Office (1887)
- Brick Retaining Wall (pre-1887)
- Stores No.1 and 2 (1883) (located in North Eveleigh West)<sup>55</sup>

Below includes a description of the character of the original buildings at the ERW.

*The pinnacle of design and construction quality on the Eveleigh site was centred on the Locomotive Workshops, the Carriage and Wagon Workshops and Paint Shop. These buildings not only demonstrated the most up-to-date iron and steel technology but were given brick facades of a high quality, both in aesthetic and technical terms. The timber structures of the Stores Buildings (Stores 1 and 2) were comparably well detailed.*

*Perhaps the fact that the Government was able to justify the substantial expense for these carefully detailed and solidly constructed buildings reflected the fascination of the public with the still new and developing railway technology. In addition, the project was highly visible to commuters, and it seems likely that the Government wished to provide a showcase for its investment in this new technology. The quality of the buildings probably also reflects that they were designed and built during the*

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<sup>53</sup> Godden Mackay Logan 2013, *Australian Technology Park CMP Vol.1*: 10-12

<sup>54</sup> Curio Projects, 2022. *RNE Precinct: Paint Shop Sub- Precinct: Non-Aboriginal Heritage Study*: 45

<sup>55</sup> Curio Projects, 2022. *RNE Precinct Paint Shop Sub-Precinct: Non-Aboriginal Heritage Study*: 48



*boom period of the 1880s when obtaining funding for construction was presumably relatively easy'.<sup>56</sup>*

The ERW continuously adapted and evolved through the late 19<sup>th</sup> and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century which was evident in the changing use of buildings and construction of new ones to handle the rising demand on the railway system. The ERW would soon become known as the largest railway workshop facility in the southern hemisphere and in the late 1880s became one of the largest employers in the state.<sup>57</sup>

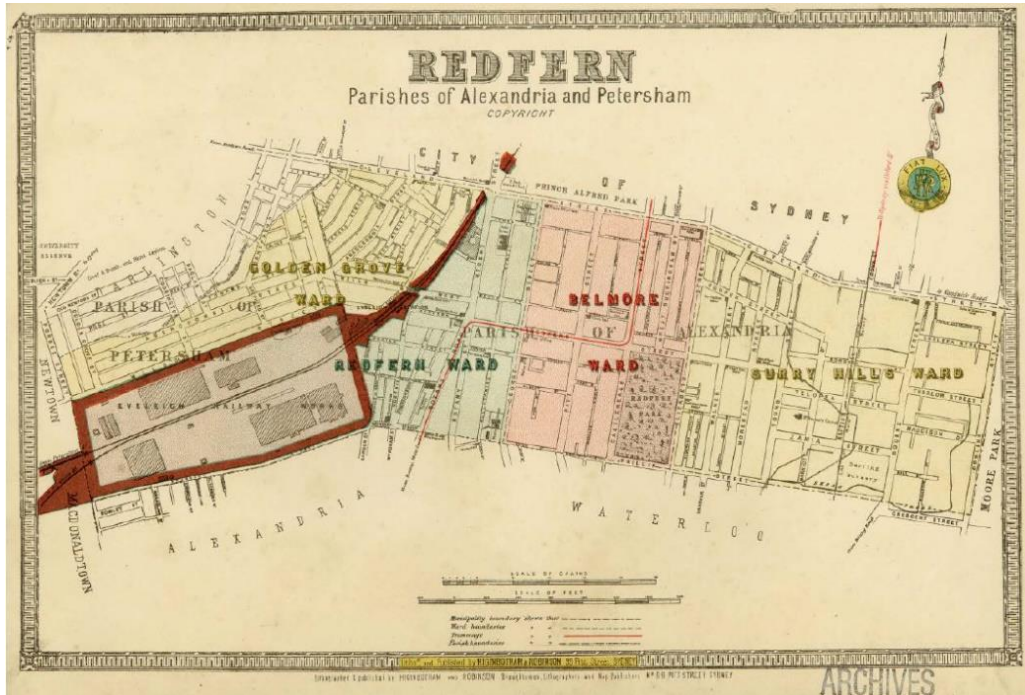


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..15: Undated Parish of Alexandria and Petersham Map of Redfern. Highlights of the resumption of land by the Government for the ERW (Source: State Library of NSW, 1172084)

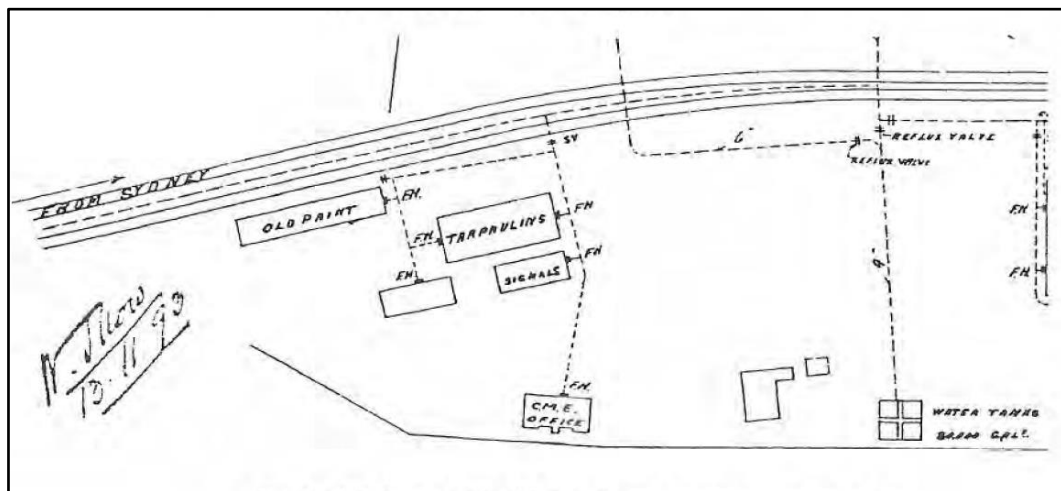


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..16: 1893 layout of the CME Building including the surrounding buildings and railway line (Source: SRAO, Drawing 4224)

<sup>56</sup> OCP Architects, 2022. *Eveleigh Railway Workshops Overarching Conservation Management Plan*: 28

<sup>57</sup> OCP, 2002. *Eveleigh Carriageworks Conservation Management Plan*: 31



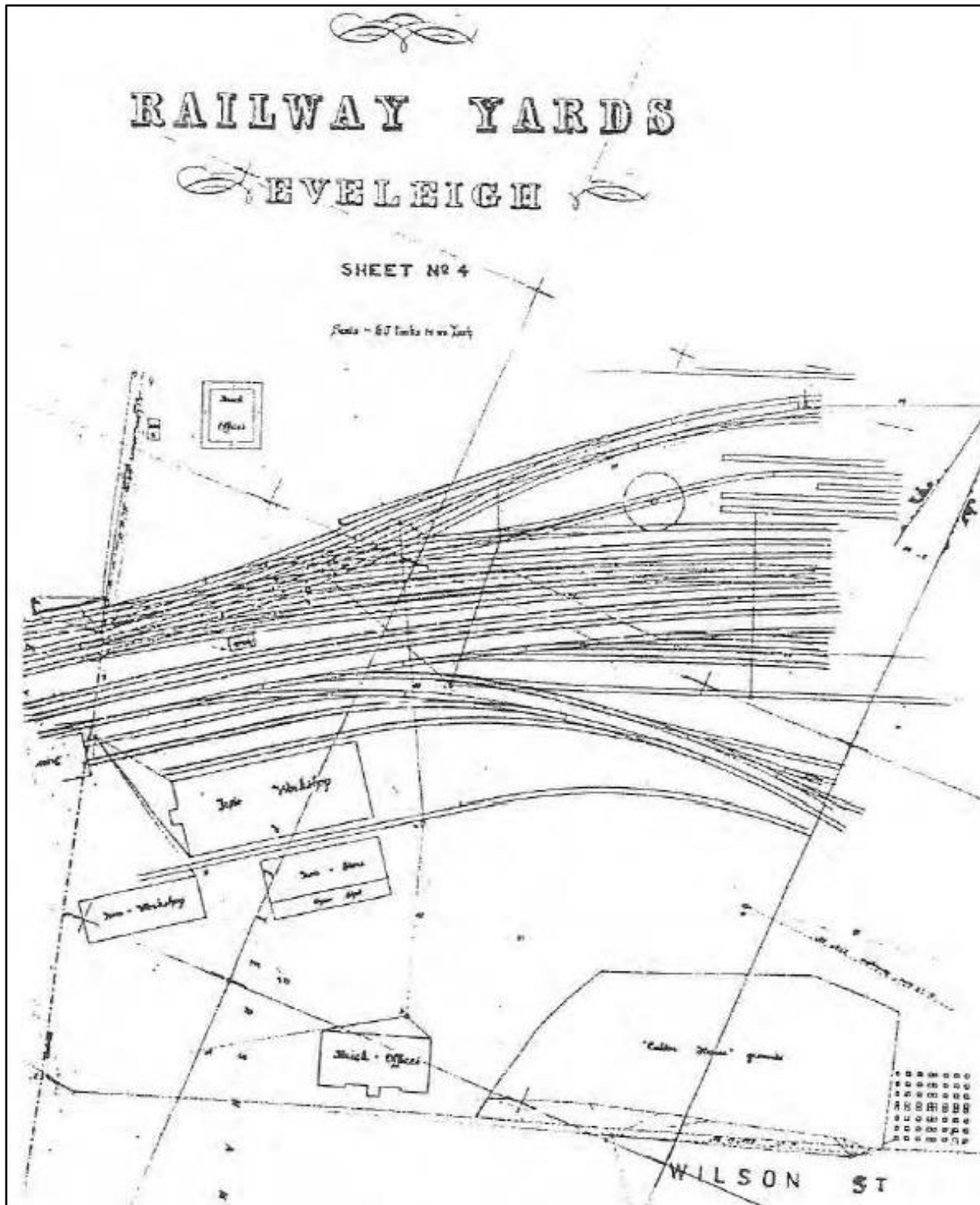


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..17: 1897 layout showing the CME Building denoted as brick offices, in relation to the Calder House grounds (Source: Rappoport & Caldis Cook Group, 1997)

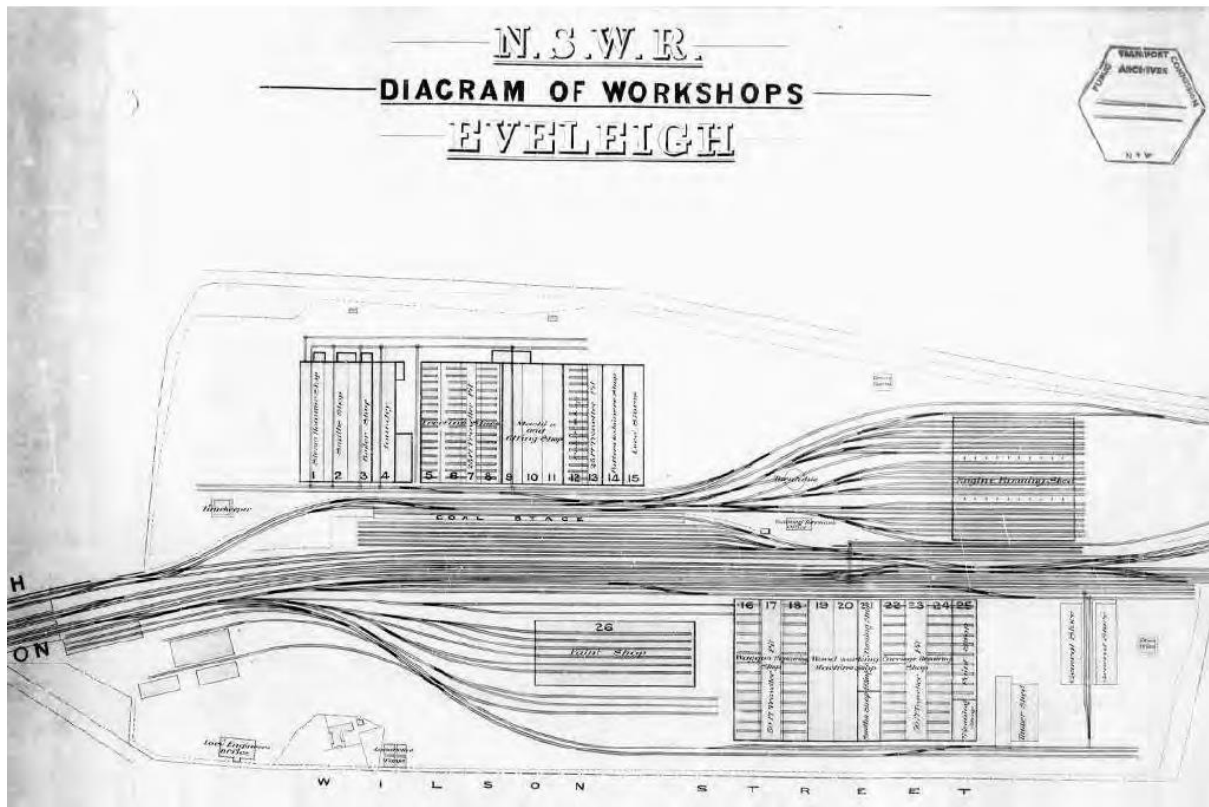


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..18: NSW Railways Diagram of Eveleigh Workshops, 1887 (Source: NSW State Records, R5601117)

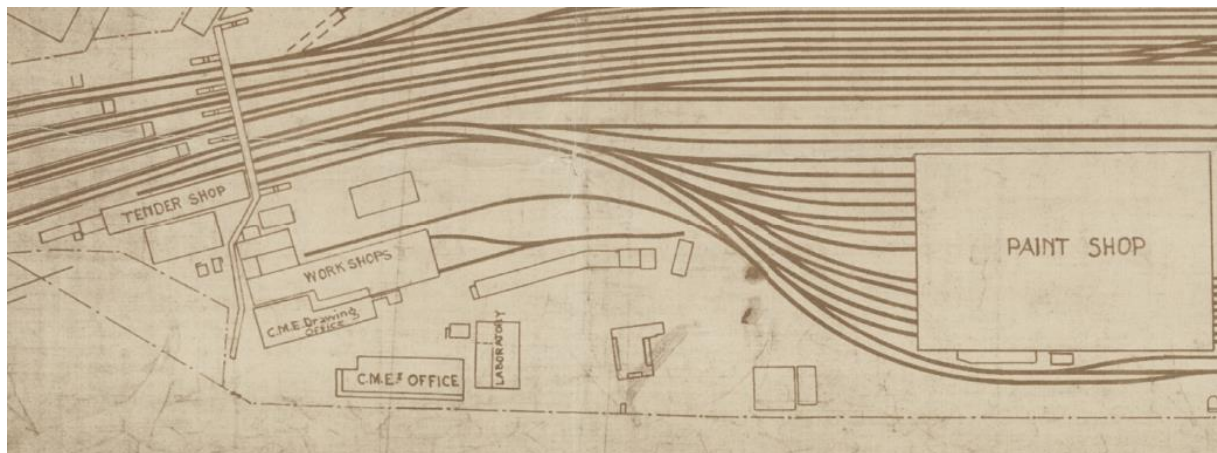


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..19: Detail from NSW Plan of Eveleigh Yard, Dated 8.9.1924 (Source: SLNSW Z/SP/E12/3, <https://collection.slnsw.gov.au/digital/PpDwGz3VOWRVl>)



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..20: Construction of the Illawarra Steam Dive, view south from southern footbridge towards ERW (undated)  
(Source: NSW SRA Archives, Digital ID:17420\_a014\_a0140001075)

### 1.3.2. South Eveleigh

Using the most advanced metal-working technology of the era, the Locomotive Workshops in South Eveleigh became a key player in the growth of Australian industry and infrastructure. From its construction in 1887 the facility was greatly responsible the development of the railway network throughout the state of NSW. The South Eveleigh site comprised four primary structures, each responsible for a different aspect of locomotive construction and maintenance.<sup>58 59</sup>

The four main structures of the South Eveleigh Workshops were:

- **The Locomotive Workshops:** The largest and arguably the most important structure in South Eveleigh, made up of 16 equally sized bays, iron trusses and columns, and a corrugated iron-roof. Here the individual parts of the locomotives were manufactured and maintained, with engines being constructed in Bays 6-9. This Workshop originally consisted of two separate structures, separated by a laneway in what is now Bay 4a.
- **The Large Erecting Shop:** Built in 1899, it was here the individual parts manufactured in the Loco Workshops were assembled to create a functioning locomotive engine. Engines would

<sup>58</sup> OCP Architects, 2022. *ERW Overarching CMP*: 28-29

<sup>59</sup> Note that a number of other buildings central to the operations of the workshops have since been demolished, including the Foundry, Wheelpress Shop, the Pattern Shed and the Smith's Shop.

also be both repaired and eventually dismantled here, making the LES a kind of 'hospital' for locomotives, as the location for their birth, care, and death.

- **The New Locomotive Shop:** This ultra-modern workshop was built in 1908 for the manufacturing of new locomotive engines solely on-site, as opposed to merely assembling, maintaining and repairing locomotives imported from Great Britain.
- **The Engine Running Sheds:** These sheds could hold up to 126 engines at a time, and were responsible for cleaning, repairing, and servicing.<sup>60</sup>



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..21: View of the Locomotive Workshop before 1910, looking southwest  
(Source: State Rail Authority Archives, State Archives NSW, c53214-15923-NID601/1)

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<sup>60</sup> Simpson Dawbin, 2003. *Large Erecting Shop CMP*: 52





Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..22: Eveleigh Locomotive Workshop (undated image) (Source: State Rail Authority Archives, State Library of NSW, 15924-NID601/7)



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..23: Eveleigh Railway Workshops, November 1916 (Locomotive Workshops) (Source: NSW State Archives, 15309\_a015\_000042)



### 1.3.3. Redfern Station

What is now known as Redfern Station was originally known as 'Eveleigh Station' and constructed in c1886-1887. This was the second 'Eveleigh Station' replacing an earlier building constructed 200 metres to the west in 1876. The site was officially renamed 'Redfern Station' in 1906.<sup>61</sup>

From its inception Redfern Station had a close functional connection with the ERW up until their closing in the 1980's which was heavily used by the workers of the entire ERW for their daily commute. The station underwent several extensions over the years, adding new platforms as well as a steel footbridge at the station's southern platform end providing access between North and South Eveleigh as well as providing a shortcut route over the railway line for pedestrians and students.<sup>62</sup> The footbridge was demolished c1996 followed by the final closure of the ERW.<sup>63</sup>

Surviving examples of the interconnection between the station and the Workshops remain in the 'Elston's Sidings', located at the western end of the station platforms in North Eveleigh, and the remains of the footbridge footings in North Eveleigh. Elston's Sidings was named after the Car and Wagon Superintendent Henry Elston. Constructed as a repair facility and later workshop for rail carriages, the track section served as the delivery points for carriages entering and leaving the workshops from the railway system via a shunting engine.<sup>64</sup> The assigned name 'Elston's' would have enabled a differentiation from the siding's on the Locomotive Workshops side of the railway<sup>65</sup>. The Telecommunications Equipment Centre (TEC) located west of Platform 1 and adjacent to the sidings and was built in 1912 as a workshop to facilitate signaling between both sides of the Railway Workshops, as well as the Railway system as a whole<sup>66</sup>. Elston's Sidings, the TEC and the remaining footbridge footings showcase the close relationship between ERW and Redfern Station and demonstrate the importance of viewing the structures collectively within their heritage context.

In c1999, Redfern underwent a significant upgrade to its northern end including the construction of a new footbridge and stairways. The Redfern Riots in 2004 caused significant damage to the station's Lawson Street ticket office and heritage building, which prompted the windows to be bricked up and then later reinstated with iron barring to prevent any future damage.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Curio Projects, 2020. *Redfern Station Conservation Management Plan*: 66

<sup>62</sup> Ibid: 40

<sup>63</sup> Curio Projects, 2020. *Redfern Station Conservation Management Plan*: 67

<sup>64</sup> OCP, 2002. *Eveleigh Carriageworks Conservation Management Plan*: 107

<sup>65</sup> Ibid: 82

<sup>66</sup> Ibid: 64

<sup>67</sup> Tonkin Zulaikha Greer, 2021. *Redfern Station Upgrade HIP*: 16



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..24: Overhead Booking office at Redfern Station, view from Platform 1, 1916 (Source: SLNSW, FL8961177)



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..25: Southern footbridge across railway at Redfern Station, connecting North and South Eveleigh (Source: State Rail Authority Archives, State Archives NSW, NRS21573\_2\_PR000642\_c)



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..26: View north across Redfern Station during the 1917 strike depicting the increasing number of ERW workers using the station (Source: NSW State Archives and Records)

#### 1.3.4. North Eveleigh

While the South Eveleigh Locomotive Workshops served as the workshop area for the NSW Railways locomotive engines, the North Eveleigh Carriage Workshops was primarily responsible for the construction and maintenance of the train carriages that the locomotives would tow. North Eveleigh also housed the primary administrative and managerial staff for the Railway Workshops, although both North and South Eveleigh had individual Works Managers and related clerks on the respective sides of the railway tracks.

The primarily buildings located in the North Eveleigh consisted of:

- **Carriage and Wagon Workshops:** Built as the primary workshop for constructing and maintaining carriages and wagons.
- **Paint Shop:** After construction and/or repair, carriages would be sent over a traverser to the nearby Paint Shop for painting, polishing, and varnishing. All further beautifications and outfitting would also take place in the Paint Shop, after which the carriage was placed back onto its original undercarriage via crane and made ready for return or introduction to the railway system.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> OCP, 2002. *Eveleigh Carriageworks Conservation Management Plan*: 109

- **Blacksmith's Shop:** Built in c.1907-1909, the Blacksmith's shop opposite the Carriageworks was responsible for creating the carriage and wagon parts that would then be constructed in the main Carriage Workshop.
- **Chief Mechanical Engineer's Building:** The office of the Chief Mechanical Engineer was the primary administrative building for the whole ERW, as it was under his supervision that both the Railway Workshops operated. The building also housed offices for ordinary engineers, overseers, inspectors and various clerical staff.
- **Scientific Services Building:** Located directly west of the CME, this building was constructed in 1916 and contained laboratories for railway-related testing and research, such as material and design testing.<sup>69</sup>
- **Stores 1 & 2:** Located west of the Carriage Workshops were the facilities for movement, handing and storage of goods relating to the Railway Workshops.<sup>70</sup>



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..27: Eveleigh Carriage Sheds, July 1910 (Source: State Library of NSW, Government Printing Office 1-12020)

<sup>69</sup> OCP, 2002a. *Eveleigh Carriageworks Conservation Management Plan*: 69

<sup>70</sup> Curio Projects, 2022. *RNE Paint Shop Sub Precinct Non-Aboriginal Heritage Study*: 45





Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..28: View from Cornwallis Street across rail line to the south eastern end of Carriage Works. South Eveleigh Managers Office and Tower in the foreground, undated (Source: OCP CMP 2002)

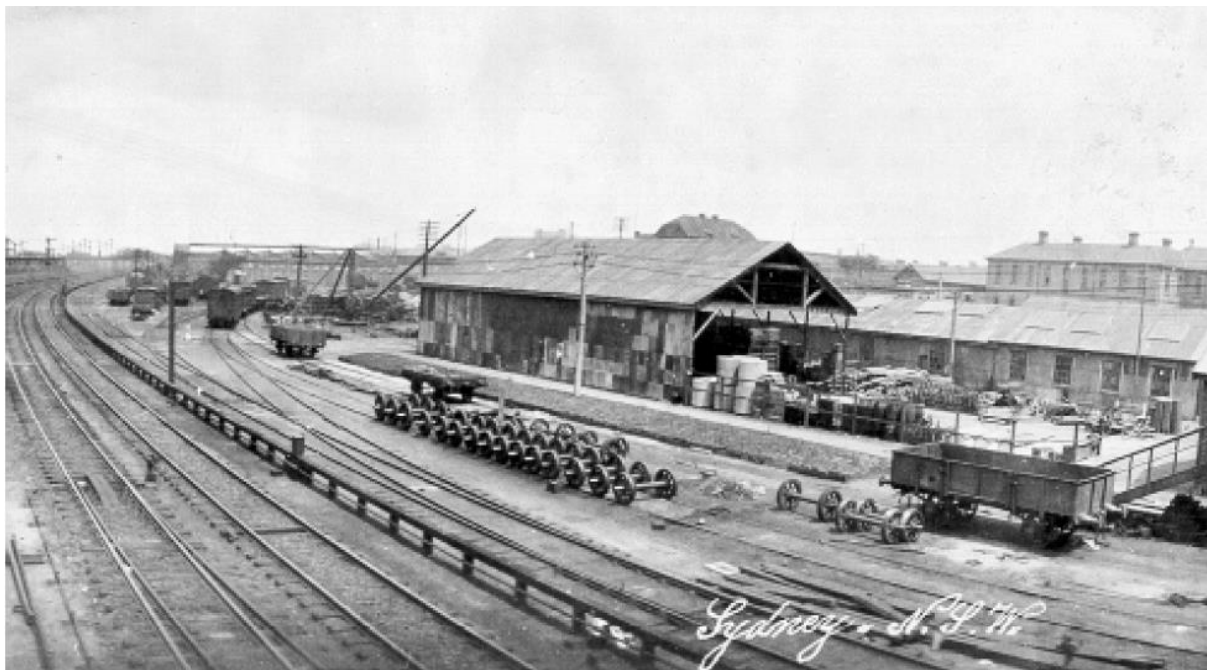


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..29: View of North Eveleigh taken from the Redfern station railway line, 1920. Building visible include the Tarpaulin Shed (c1895-c1920), roof of Calder House, Signals Workshop located adjacent to the Tarpaulin Shed and in the background the CME Building is visible. (Source: SRAO & OCP 2002 CMP)



### 1.3.5. Neighbourhood Context

#### *Darlington*

North of the subject site, across Wilson Street, is the suburb of Darlington, which is bounded to the north by City Road and Cleveland Street, to the east and south by Abercrombie Street, and to the west by Golden Grove Street. The latter street gives its name to the Golden Grove Heritage Conservation Area, which is contained predominantly within the current borders of Darlington, in the area directly north of North Eveleigh.

This part of Darlington, called the 'Golden Grove Estate' in the mid 1870's-1880's, aligns with what was once the majority of Hutchinson's 1819 land grant.<sup>71</sup> The major increase in residential development in the area after 1887 aligns with the opening of the ERW the result of housing demand from workers wishing to live close to the workshops. The areas north of the subject site predominantly comprises a variety of terraces valued for their aesthetic consistency and value<sup>72</sup>, summarized by Heritage NSW as:

*'...predominantly comprises two-storey late Victorian terrace houses which respond to the original subdivision. Terrace housing ranges from grand rows to narrow sweated terraces on Wilson Street including some rare two-storey weatherboard terraces. There are small groups of single storey terrace houses. A fine group of Victorian shops exists on Abercrombie Street, while the Federation period is represented in small groups of terraces, shops and hotels. The area is interspersed with factory buildings mostly dating from the Interwar period.'*<sup>73</sup>



<sup>71</sup> Currently includes a number of working and middle-class Victorian residential properties

<sup>72</sup> Heritage NSW 'Golden Grove Conservation Area'

<sup>73</sup> Heritage NSW, Golden Grove Heritage Conservation Area.

Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..30: View northeast along Wilson Street, Darlington, CME building in the right (Source: Curio 2021)

### Redfern

To the east of the subject site is the suburb of Redfern, Cleveland Street to the North, South Dowling Street to the East, and Phillip Street to the south. Part of Redfern's western boundary abuts the subject site directly at Little Eveleigh Street and Ivy Lane, before turning along Lawson Street around Redfern Station and ending at Cornwallis Street on the border of South Eveleigh.

Redfern was divided into a smaller section to the west and a larger section to the east by the creation of the Sydney to Parramatta railway line in 1855, with the smaller western section overlapping with the Darlington Conservation Area (which in turn abuts the subject site's northeast face). The larger eastern section contains the Redfern Heritage Conservation Area and is made up of a dense combination of two-story Victorian and Federation era terraces, cottages, corner shops, pubs and industrial areas along the suburbs northern boundary of Cleveland Street. Many of Redfern's houses have rear-end lanes and very narrow allotments.

Redfern also has highly significant importance to Sydney's Aboriginal community as a hub of activism, work opportunities and self-determination from the 1960's and 1970's onwards, making it a symbolic heartland for a variety of Aboriginal peoples from across Australia. In particular, the group of houses bound by Vine, Eveleigh, Caroline, and Louis Street known colloquially as 'The Block' were and continue to be home to a members of the Aboriginal Community<sup>74</sup>, and currently contain a variety of community buildings.

## 1.4. Evolution of Eveleigh

### 1.4.1. Expansion of Eveleigh

The rail and industrial technology evolution directly impacted the use, function and facilities of ERW which is visible in the changing use of land and structures across the site (depicted in illustrations outlined in Appendix B).<sup>75</sup> OCP Architects discussed the growth of Eveleigh in the 2022 *Overarching ERW CMP* and stated the following.

*'By the end of the nineteenth century approximately 1500 men were employed at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops. By 1900 the Eveleigh Railway Workshops was one of the biggest employers in the state, accounting for 10% of the total rail workforce in NSW.<sup>76</sup> A total of 3,720 workers were employed at Eveleigh by 1912. At its peak, the Eveleigh Railway Workshops employed more than 7000 workers on site.<sup>77</sup>*  
(OCP, 2022: *Overarching CMP*:31)

The majority of developments, including large alterations and additions at ERW, occurred in the years up to c1927. Later developments were characterised by smaller, cheaper, and more temporary structures as a solution to space limitations as the fleet of locomotives, carriages and wagons grew.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Curio Projects, 2022. *RNE Precinct Paint Shop Sub-Precinct: Non-Aboriginal Heritage Study*: 149-150

<sup>75</sup> Ibid: 149-150

<sup>76</sup> Taksa, 1998. *Social Capital, Community and Citizenship at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops in Sydney, 1880-1932*.

<sup>77</sup> OCP, 2022. *Overarching Eveleigh Railway Workshops Conservation Management Plan*: 31

<sup>78</sup> OCP, 2022. *Overarching Eveleigh Railway Workshops Conservation Management Plan*: 30

Between c1895 and c1927, the following buildings that were established at North Eveleigh:

- Chemical Laboratory, known known as the Scientific Services Building No.1 (1910)
- Carriage Shop Extension, later Cable Store (c1911)
- General Store, later Clothing Store (1913)
- Spring Store (1911)
- Store No 3 (1926)

One of the drivers for the expansion of the ERW during this period was the shift from undertaking only the maintenance and repair work of locomotives to the manufacture of locomotives locally. The maintenance work on rolling stock occurring at ERW was predominantly carried out on imported engines from England and later America. Subsequently issues were raised regarding the high cost of maintenance work and the difficulties faced due to import delays. The first Chief Mechanical Engineer, William Thow, stated in 1889 that the high cost for repair work and the unreliable supply of imported locomotives was affecting his performance in keeping the trains running.<sup>79</sup>

Thow's appeal in 1887 requesting greater funding for the workshops at Eveleigh highlight the political and economic pressure on the Government at the time to mitigate the issues of insufficient stocks and expensive repair and maintenance work.

*"The means which we have for executing the repairs to locomotives are now insufficient. The work is not done with the rapidity and economy desired. The increasing use of large and more powerful locomotives has outgrown existing facilities and should be provided for by an extension of workshops and suitable machinery. Our present erecting shops are taxed beyond their economic capacity, and much time and labour are (sic) lost in getting our large and heavy engines into and out of shops which were designed and fitted with machines for dealing with much smaller engines. In pursuance of policy observed for some years past. of employing one powerful engine where two smaller ones were employed before, it is manifest that the stock of large heavy engines must increase, and I venture to suggest that suitable provision should now be made for economically repairing them. (William Thow in Taksa & Kent, 1996))<sup>80</sup>*

The Royal Commissioners in 1904 suggested the existing workshops at ERW were to be updated to include the manufacture of locomotives as well as their maintenance and repair. This idea initially received criticism from the managers at Eveleigh. Works Manager H. B. Howe stated that the construction of new buildings (rather than refurbished) with the purpose to build new engines was more preferable as it could avoid any overcrowding in the existing workshops.<sup>81</sup> The Government eventually arranged for private enterprises to receive a large sum of local manufacture while the government were to receive a small involvement (Figure 1.31). This decision was supported by the unions, including the Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Employee's Federation. The unions did not agree however, with the large number of orders placed with Clyde Engineering up until 1911. Clyde Engineering had become one of the largest private companies to work with the supply of locally

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<sup>79</sup> Rappoport & Caldis Cook Group, 1997. *Chief Mechanical Engineer's Building CMP*: 86

<sup>80</sup> Taska & Kent, 1996. *Eveleigh Workshops Management Plan for Moveable Items and Social History*: 8

<sup>81</sup> Rappoport & Caldis Cook Group Pty Ltd, 1997. *Chief Mechanical Engineer's Building CMP*: 86

constructed rolling stock under Government tender. A total of 225 locomotives had been built or were on order for NSWGR with Clyde Engineering by 1913 which was valued at a total of £1,335,707.

Year	Total No. of new loco's delivered	No. bought overseas	No. manufactured locally by industry	No. from Govt. workshops
1904	46	46	0	0
1905	10	10	0	0
1906	20	20	0	0
1907	1	0	1	0
1908	36	25	11	0
1909	98	70	18	10
1910	66	45	16	5
1911	31	2	16	13

Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..31: Table illustrating the figures of locomotive imports, locally manufactured locomotives by the industry and by the government between 1904 to 1911 (Source: David Burke, 1886. 'Mon of Steam')

In 1912, repair work and manufacturing of new locomotives was occurring concurrently with manufacturing taking place under night shift and repairs and during the day shift.<sup>82</sup> The Railway Commissioner stated he was pleased that the State railway could reach the public and industry needs for railway services.

*"Election of the State's first Labor Government in 1910 increased the emphasis on letting locomotive contracts at home. Eveleigh's role as a builder alongside that of the Clyde Company (Clyde Engineering), seemed to be assured. Government enterprise on the one hand, private enterprise on the other – a pattern that was to recur in Australian commerce and industry". (D. Burke, 1986. Man of Steam pg. 4)<sup>83</sup>*

A total of 3,270 people were employed at ERW in 1912 and to deal with the growth of local manufacture, many existing buildings at Eveleigh underwent extensions and additions, including the following:

- **Large Erecting Shop (LES)**- A new erecting shop was constructed in 1899 at South Eveleigh to offset the increased demands for locomotives in Bays 6-8 of the Locomotive Workshops. The LES was extended in 1906 and a new foundry was established adjacent to it.<sup>84</sup>
- **New Locomotive Shop**- designed and constructed for manufacturing new locomotives. Extended in 1914.
- **Locomotive Workshops**- Reconfiguring internal arrangement of workshop and adding new building and annexes made of corrugated iron.
- **Alexandria Goods Yard**- two long corrugated iron sheds on land resumed south west of South Eveleigh
- **Additional Foundry & Pattern Shop** established in 1919 in South Eveleigh
- **Macdonaldtown Gas Works (Eveleigh Gas Works)**, 1891/1892 until 1950s to provide gas to ERW e.g., lighting in carriages & railway workshops. ERW began to use electric power at

<sup>82</sup> Rappoport & Caldis Cook Group Pty Ltd, 1997. *Chief Mechanical Engineer's Building CMP*: 87

<sup>83</sup> David Burke, 1986. *Man of Steam- EE Lucy- Gentleman Engineer in the Great Days of the Iron Horse*: 4

<sup>84</sup> OCP, 2022. *Overarching Eveleigh Railway Workshops Conservation Management Plan*: 30



Ultimo Power Station upon its establishment in 1901 which begun the introduction of electrification of workshops machinery which continued over the next 15 years.<sup>85</sup>

A huge shift to electrification of Sydney suburban lines, City Railway and the Harbour Bridge was undertaken in the 1920s which provided a large amount of work for ERW. This included converting existing carriages to electric power and the installation of lighting at the Eveleigh Carriage Workshops.<sup>86</sup>

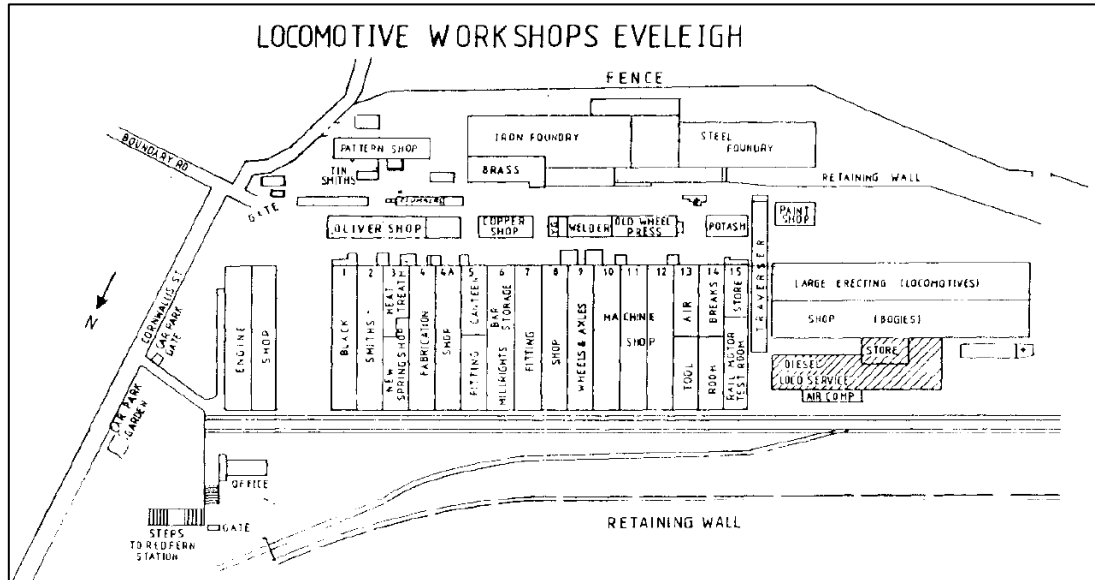


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document.:32: Eveleigh Locomotive Workshops, South Eveleigh, 1984 (Source: Don Godden Associates, 1990 ERW Heritage Report)

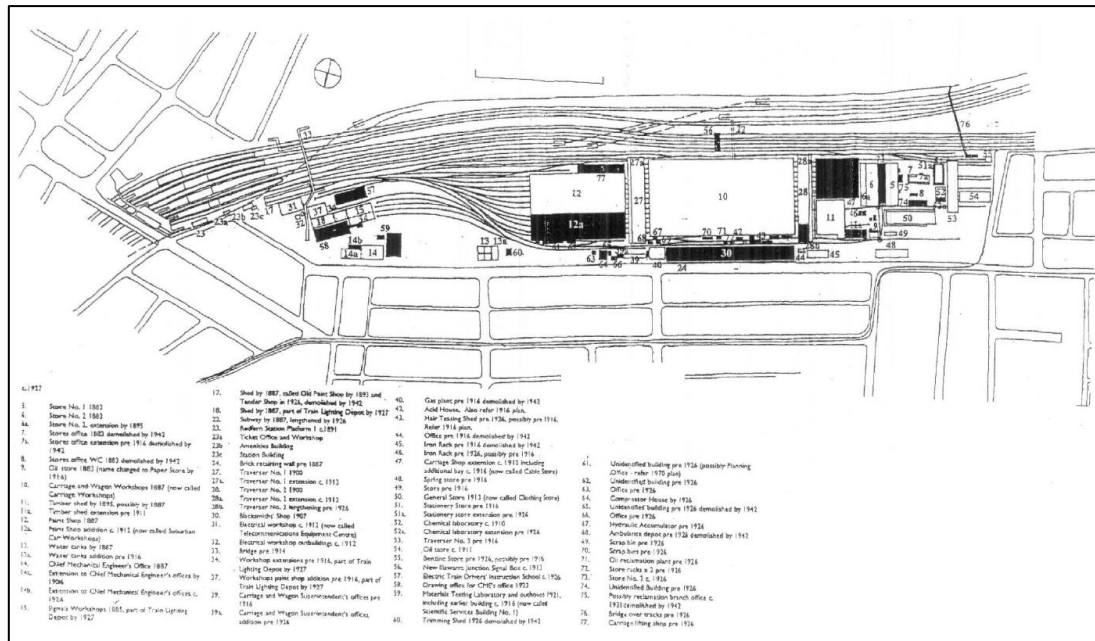


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document.:33: North Eveleigh 1927 (Source: OCP Architects, 2002 CMP)

<sup>85</sup> OCP, 2022. *Overarching Eveleigh Railway Workshops Conservation Management Plan*: 30

<sup>86</sup> Ibid: 30

### Aboriginal Workers

From the c1940s to c1960s the government enforced assimilation policies that limited the opportunities available for Aboriginal people to access education and training as labourers. Due to this, Aboriginal workers in the city were usually employed as unskilled labourers, even continuing up into the 1960s.<sup>87</sup> From its establishment in 1887, the ERW were Sydney's largest employer for Aboriginal people living in Sydney and included work in the foundry and boiler shops, as well as areas requiring unskilled labourer jobs such as loading items into carriages at the Alexandria Goods yard.

The combination of cheap rent surrounding ERW, and its vast employment opportunities saw a multitude of people, including Aboriginal people, drawn to and settle in the area which continued into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>88</sup>

Industrial activism became a reoccurring event at Eveleigh, and Aboriginal workers in particular that were struggling with unequal pay and work conditions found support at ERW. The 1917 strike has been said to be key in influencing Aboriginal people's involvement in political movements.

*That strike occurred at a time when there was a growing awareness of, and concern by unions and Aboriginal peoples' organisations about the poor wages and conditions experienced by Aboriginal workers. The Eveleigh Railway workshops were one of the focal points for meetings and rallies in support of workers' rights, supported by the railway union shop committees. By the 1940s nearby Redfern was becoming a focal point for Aboriginal activism more widely.<sup>89</sup>*

Aboriginal people received equal pay after World War II once they had served with military forces and became employed in essential industries.

*When the war ended, many Aboriginal people refused to return to the inequalities of the past. As Aboriginal people formed their own networks and groups to campaign for improved conditions, some unions supported them, including those at Eveleigh.<sup>90</sup>*

From the 1940s onwards, Redfern became the central point for Aboriginal activism including political rallies and protests.

### Migrant Workers

Post-World War II saw an increase of migrant workers arriving to Australia seeking work and new opportunities. Eveleigh was popular to those seeking work and the residential buildings in the surrounding suburbs of Eveleigh were more available during this time. An English language class was established in 1969 for migrant workers with the assistance from the Australian Railway Union to support the assimilation of migrant workers into the railway workshops workforce.<sup>91</sup>

### Strikes & Workplace Rights

The ERW was not a safe place to work, as the work conditions often involved dangerous work with exposure to intense heat by machines and forges, constant noise, dirt and dust etc. There was no urgency to address the safety conditions of workers at the ERW which led to the rise of industrial

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<sup>87</sup> OCP, 2022. *Eveleigh Railway Workshops Overarching Conservation Management Plan*: 35

<sup>88</sup> Michael Davis Consultants, 2012. *Aboriginal Connections with Eveleigh*: 5

<sup>89</sup> Michael Davis Consultants, 2012. *Aboriginal Connections with Eveleigh*: 5

<sup>90</sup> OCP Architects, 2022. *Eveleigh Railway Workshops Overarching Conservation Management Plan*: 33

<sup>91</sup> Ibid

activism at Eveleigh over the history of ERW as workers and unions fought for improved conditions.<sup>92</sup> Important political movements occurred at Eveleigh, such as the Australian Labour Movement with the Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Service Association in 1886 and the major general railway strike in 1917. The 1917 strike lasted 82 days where over 3,000 railway workers left site due to the introduction of the Taylor Card System which was aimed to measure efficiency and cost.<sup>93</sup>

*"Nevertheless, the workshops did provide a favourable climate for collectivism. Many workers were united either by craft traditions or the permanent nature of the Department's work. In hard times, such camaraderie contributed to the emergence of solidarity which sustained extensive industrial action, as was evident in the approximately twenty- one strikes which occurred in railway workshops between 1915 and 1917".<sup>94</sup> (Taksa & Kent, 1996)*

Wage rationing and award rates cut occurred between 1929 and 1930 which saw over 1,600 retrenchments in the early 1930s.

### **Women at Eveleigh**

Women were employed at ERW continuously from 1887 until the sites closure in 1988. The types of roles women at Eveleigh worked in were secondary such as office cleaners, upholstery and in the laundry.<sup>95</sup> In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Paint Shop in North Eveleigh included a room dedicated to upholstering work, for all the cloth and leather cushions in carriages, and included four sewing machines for women to work.<sup>96</sup> Women in these roles of work were not included in opportunities for promotion or career progression. After women's involvement in World War I, the women at Eveleigh were given more opportunities to take up positions in administration such as clerical work and typing.

*"I think the first we saw of a woman in the workshops, was a foreman's clerk... She was a one and only for a long time."* John Robert Bruce, former Eveleigh worker<sup>97</sup>

During World War II, women were conscripted into industrial employment and employed as process workers for the manufacturing of artillery shells. Following World War II Eveleigh also saw an introduction of female nurses on site at Eveleigh.

*"At Eveleigh, for the first time we had the employment of women in the production of shells and they had men as well working side by side. They got on quite famously and took part in several stoppages. Which were quite a novelty as far as the workshops were concerned at that time. The women brought some new life into the workshops."* Stan Jones, former Eveleigh worker<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> OCP, 2002. *Eveleigh Carriageworks Conservation Management Plan*: 34

<sup>93</sup> OCP, 2022. *Eveleigh Railway Workshops Overarching Conservation Management Plan*: 31

<sup>94</sup> Taksa & Kent, 1996: 22

<sup>95</sup> OCP, 2002. *Eveleigh Carriageworks Conservation Management Plan*: 99

<sup>96</sup> OCP, 2002. *Eveleigh Carriageworks Conservation Management Plan*: 128

<sup>97</sup> Taksa, L. 1999. 'Handmaiden of industrial welfare or armed combatant? Considering the experience of industrial nursing at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops', *Health and History: Journal of the Australian Society for the History of Medicine*, 1: 298–329.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid

From the mid twentieth century there was an increase of women on site via roles at the canteen facilities and as train cleaners. The 1970s and 1980s saw the opening of apprenticeship roles for women at NSW Railways.



Figure Error! No text of specified style in document..34: An industrial nurse treating worker inside the Eveleigh First Aid Room, 1960s. Previously located in South Eveleigh (Source: NSW State Archives and Records, NRS-21573-2-8-PR4493)

#### 1.4.2. War Efforts

World War I saw 8,500 railway workers enlist in the war and the function of the Carriage Workshops were focused on carriage conversions to support the war effort. In the years following WWI there was an increase in passengers and goods that led to the railway system and its resources being overloaded and overstretched.<sup>99</sup>

During WWII, guns, ammunition and tank parts were manufactured in Bays 5 and 6 in the Locomotive Workshops at ERW and later discontinued in 1945. Trains were used to transport goods for the war effort which were loaded at the Alexandria Goods Yard. The Carriage Workshops continued focusing on railway related work during all hours of the day and even through blackouts. Concrete air raid shelters were also established on each end of North and South Eveleigh between 1942 and 1943.<sup>100</sup>

#### 1.4.3. Post-War ERW

After World War II, despite efforts made in attempt to keep the Eveleigh Railway workshops running, works at Eveleigh remained gradually decreasing after 1945. A number of attempts were made to prevent this, such as updating machinery, retaining workers and including overhaul of diesel engines. New buildings were constructed like the Boilermakers Shop in 1964 west of the Carriage Workshop

<sup>99</sup> OCP, 2002. *Eveleigh Carriageworks CMP Vol.1*: 30

<sup>100</sup> OCP, 2022. *Eveleigh Railway Workshops Overarching Conservation Management Plan*: 30



and a service running shed was constructed at the Locomotive Workshops in 1968.<sup>101</sup> Work decreased at the ERW due to the following reasons:

- The time required to repair carriages decreased as workshops and material technologies advanced which meant there were less carriages needing repair at ERW.
- Changes to the build and size of carriages and wagons occurred which meant that the workshops became less efficient for their use because they were designed for small timber carriages and wagons from the 1880s and were trying to service different builds that impacted the function and productivity of the workshops.
- Eveleigh lost large amounts of experienced workers who were offered better wages from private companies which led to labour shortages.<sup>102</sup>

#### 1.4.4. Decline of ERW

The Railway Workshops at Eveleigh underwent a gradual decline from the mid-1920s onwards which would eventually lead to the complete closure of the workshops by the year 1989. There was no single factor that was responsible for the decline, but rather a combination of circumstances, events and decisions coming together in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century that simply made the Workshops redundant in a rapidly changing world<sup>103</sup>.

Although regarded as a marvel of modern technology since its inception, the NSW Railway system was undergoing significant pressures by the beginning of the 1920s. The introduction and subsequent increase in the sale of private motor cars and lorries meant that passenger numbers on the Railways was rapidly dropping. As an example, from 1924 to 1930, the number of registered motor cars on NSW Roads nearly tripled from 74,000 to 213,000. Furthermore, new highways such as the Sydney to Newcastle direct road, noted in the 1930 Annual Report, presented new options for long distance commuters, and led to even further losses in passenger numbers<sup>104</sup>. These declines were exacerbated by restrictions placed on the railways by the NSW Government that hindered its ability to manage the limited demand that remained. These restrictions included the mismanagement or denial of funds to finance the demands for rolling stock, which led to goods and passenger traffic transferring to the ever-increasing road network and eventually the airways a shift in which the railways never recovered<sup>105</sup>.

Aside from a simple loss of railway passenger demand, the Eveleigh Railway workshops themselves were becoming redundant or simply falling behind the increasingly technological improvements in Railway expertise. By the 1920's rail carriages were beginning to be made from steel instead of timber, lessening the value of Eveleigh workshops and its artistic process of making wooden carriages. Other workshops specialising in steel electric-powered carriages, like those in Chullora, opening in 1926, would gradually take over as the wooden carriage technology fell out of use between 1927 and 1945. Despite this, the carriage workshops at Eveleigh still had use as a place for the conversion of wooden stock to steel carriages and would be involved in this process up until the 1970's and 80's, as well as some level of general maintenance on carriages<sup>106</sup>. On the Locomotive Workshops side, the introduction of diesel engines in 1935 led to a much faster and simpler

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<sup>101</sup> OCP, 2002. *Eveleigh Carriageworks CMP Vol. 1: 35*

<sup>102</sup> Ibid

<sup>103</sup> Ibid: 58-60

<sup>104</sup> Ibid: 58

<sup>105</sup> OCP, 2022. *ERW Overarching Conservative Management Plan: 37-38*

<sup>106</sup> Ibid: 38

overhaul time, meaning the locomotives needed less maintenance, took less time while in the Workshops, and required less men for the process<sup>107</sup>.

After a long decline before and after the post-WW2 era, the Eveleigh Workshops were becoming increasingly haunted by poor productivity and ever-increasing inefficiency. This decline in railway operations also triggered a wider deterioration in the suburb of Eveleigh itself, and as the reduction in workshop operations and relocation of its traditional operations worsened, so too did the surrounding population of workers and the suburbs relative prosperity decreased.<sup>108</sup> In the 1970s, restrictive work practices such as the '*darg*', a fixed quota on work that could be done, were being put in place by unions in order limit production output, with the goal of preventing work running out and maintaining the dwindling jobs<sup>109</sup>. This lack of productivity, in combination with outdated and worn-out buildings and facilities, led to the newly formed Workshops Branch of the State Rail Authority (replacing the previous Mechanical Branch)<sup>110</sup> officially deciding, in 1973, to begin the process of closing the workshops and 'quit the Eveleigh site', although work would continue for more than 15 years, albeit with progressively lower productivity.

Counter to accusations of workers hindering productivity, the Combined Unions Shop Committee at Eveleigh claimed that the SRA intentionally ran down work at the site's Foundry in order to force idleness and lack of tasks among workers, which was in turn used as a justification for closure.<sup>111</sup> This shows that the circumstances that led to the site's closure cannot simply be blamed on either management nor the workers, and that both side's lay the blame at each other's feet.

By the 1980's the Eveleigh Workshops were beginning to close for good and staff were beginning the process of being relocated to other areas of the rail system. While some were forced by circumstance to accept lower-pay grades as car cleaners or labourers, some chose to resign or retire outright and leave the railway system for good. In 1980 the Alexandria Goods Yard in South Eveleigh officially ceased being used as a storage site and the site's western section was to be redeveloped as public housing under the control of the NSW Housing Commission, with the eastern side turned into a carpark for Paddy's Markets. The Locomotive Workshops survived on until their final closure in 1987, with the Carriage Workshops being retained as a Suburban Car Workshop until 1989, marking the cessation of all works at the ERW and the complete closure of the complex<sup>112</sup>.

#### 1.4.5. Post-Closure

Since the closure of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops in 1989, the functions and tasks once undertaken there are no longer carried out under the supervision of specific government bodies and are now often completed overseas. Locomotive and carriage construction and maintenance is today typically done at decentralised fleet locations at various spots within the NSW Railway system, and is mostly completed by external, private contractors who design and then construct the trains after winning bids via tenders<sup>113</sup>.

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid: 37

<sup>108</sup> Annable & Cable, 1995. *South Sydney Heritage Study Volume 2: Historical Background, Tropman and Tropman Architects*: 367

<sup>109</sup> OCP, 2022. *Eveleigh Railway Workshops Overarching Conservative Management Plan*:38

<sup>110</sup> Agency: AGY-1646 | *Workshops Branch I*, NSW State Archives and Records.

<sup>111</sup> OCP, 2002. *Eveleigh Carriageworks CMP Vol.1*: 77

<sup>112</sup> Curio Projects, 2022. *LES Non-Aboriginal Heritage Study*: 40

<sup>113</sup> Heritage Group, 1995. *State Projects Eveleigh Railway Yards Locomotive Workshops Conservation Management Plan*: 22

The site of South Eveleigh has undergone a variety of changes and redevelopments for continued use in the railway system since the total cessation of workshop operations. In 1996 the Diesel Loco Servicing Depot, located to the west of the Locomotive Workshops and North of the Large Erecting Shed, was modernised and developed into a maintenance depot for all surviving Endeavour and X-plorer class trains. The diesel-locomotive refuelling station within the Service Depot was also removed during this period. Similarly, in 2002 the Eveleigh Air-Conditioned Depot (ACDEP) to the far west of the Locomotive Workshop, was also redeveloped into the Eveleigh Maintenance Centre for the service of Millennium and Oscar class trains. While a number of buildings within the former Locomotive Workshops were demolished, all of the Locomotive Workshop building's bays were subsequently acquired by the City West Development Corporation, as well as the New Locomotive Shed and the Works Manager's Office<sup>114</sup>.

The NSW Government declared its intention to turn the South Eveleigh site into a Technology Park in 1991, in union with the nearby University of Sydney and University of Technology. The eastern parts of the Alexandria Goods Yard to the south of the Locomotive Workshops would be transferred to this new Australian Technology Park (ATP), with the western section being redeveloped into housing. These houses and streets to the west of the ELW, that of Aurora Place, Explorer Street, and Rowley Street, still exist today. Within the Locomotive Workshops building itself, bays 5-15 were converted for and occupied by Paddy's Market's until 1994, when the Markets returned to their original location of Haymarket. In 2016, MIRVAC obtained the ATP site for use as a retail and business centre and has since renamed the site to simply 'South Eveleigh, which opened in 2021<sup>115</sup>.

Unlike South Eveleigh, North Eveleigh was excised from any State Railway function at the closing of the ERW in 1989 and has remained largely underutilised. Most of the site's workshop and mechanical buildings have been removed or demolished, aside from a select few such parts of the Carriage workshops and the Chief Mechanical Engineer's Office. In 2008, the Carriage Workshops building was redeveloped into the Carriageworks urban multi-arts precinct, and to its immediate west, the North Eveleigh West Affordable Housing Development was undertaken in 2015, now called the Platform Apartments. Also in 2008, a concept plan was approved by the Minister for Planning for a potential mixed-use cultural, commercial, and residential precinct in the wider North Eveleigh area, making use of the site's significant heritage material and natural planning<sup>116</sup>.

## 1.5. Contemporary History

### 1.5.1. Aboriginal Association with the Eveleigh Railway Workshops

The railway arrived in Sydney in 1855 and resulted in the rapid growth of the railway industry across Sydney. However, the introduction of the railway further contributed to the displacement of Aboriginal communities across Sydney, including the study area and its previous Indigenous use. One prominent industrial hub was the Eveleigh Railway Workshops, in which the CME Building study area is a part of. Development of the Workshops began in 1875, resulting in the resumption of the Chisholm estate, land levelling and construction of the Workshops, which opened in 1887.<sup>117</sup>

As a result, Eveleigh became one of the biggest employers for Aboriginal people in Sydney. They worked in a variety of locations around the workshops, including the foundries, boiler rooms and locomotive workshops. With the railway established, this allowed for several other companies to

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<sup>114</sup> OCP, 2022. *ERW Overarching Conservative Management Plan*: 39

<sup>115</sup> Ibid

<sup>116</sup> OCP, 2022. *ERW Overarching Conservation Management Plan*: 38-39

<sup>117</sup> Curio Projects, 2022, *Large Erecting Shop – Rezoning Proposal: Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study & Statement of Impact*. Prepared for TAHE

move into the area, who also employed the local Aboriginal people.<sup>118</sup> Gadigal Elder Allen Madden, who was an employee and Redfern resident, recounts his time working at Eveleigh unloading trucks:

*Most of my work here was on kegs. That's what I specialised in more or less. Didn't like drinkin' 'em, although you couldn't drink the bloody things anyway, but handling them was good. Not only working here, I used to get sent down to Darling Harbour [Goods Yard], because they used to do the same things.*

*There were specialised black fellas where we worked, some worked with salt, paprika, prunes, and they were the jobs where these fellas knew what they were doing.*

*Like, for argument's sake, if you were to come in now and start unloading salt, you wouldn't know how to pick 'em up or how to bend your back, it'd be really hard. But these were jobs that we specialised in more or less. Unloading and loading the carriages.<sup>119</sup>*

Employment at Eveleigh provided a solid foundation for Aboriginal people to secure financial stability, strengthening the community as a whole by providing previously lost autonomy for themselves. Allen Madden states:

*Everything that you ever wanted was right here. You were happy, you were content – sure there were hard times and there were good times – but as kids you really didn't understand the hard times that your parents went through.<sup>120</sup>*

Whilst a great number of Aboriginal people were able to work at Eveleigh in a variety of roles throughout the precinct, there is very little evidence of their presence at the railway yards, with names of individual employees and photographs difficult to locate.<sup>121</sup> Employment register records also have been noted to include Aboriginal workers without names and under the category of 'Boy'.<sup>122</sup>

Like elsewhere in society, Aboriginal people were subject to discrimination in the Eveleigh workplace. Aboriginal people still only made up a small portion of the Eveleigh workforce, and it was therefore difficult for them to voice their concerns through the unions.<sup>123</sup> It is believed that Aboriginal workers would have participated in the 1917 general strikes, not only due to the growing awareness of worker's rights throughout Eveleigh at this time, but to also fight for political change and improvement to their treatment and conditions.<sup>124</sup>

### 1.5.2. The Growing Community at Redfern and Eveleigh

Redfern became an increasingly popular area for Aboriginal communities to reside in after the instatement of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops and surrounding factories and work opportunities.

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid

<sup>119</sup> Cox Inall Ridgeway, 2021, *Brief Aboriginal History of the Botany Road Corridor and Surrounds*. Prepared for City of Sydney; Eveleigh Stories, *Indigenous Connections – Railway Day*. Accessed at: <https://eveleighstories.com.au/stories/indigenous-place/indigenous-connections-railway-days>

<sup>120</sup> Eveleigh Stories, *Indigenous Connections – Railway Day*. Accessed at: <https://eveleighstories.com.au/stories/indigenous-place/indigenous-connections-railway-days>

<sup>121</sup> Michael Davis Consultants, 2012, *Aboriginal Connections with Eveleigh*. Prepared for Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority

<sup>122</sup> Ibid (via Taksa, L. 1999, *From Steam Trains to Information Superhighways*, Workers Online, Issue 12)

<sup>123</sup> Eveleigh Stories, *Indigenous Connections – Railway Day*. Accessed at: <https://eveleighstories.com.au/stories/indigenous-place/indigenous-connections-railway-days>

<sup>124</sup> Artefact, 2022, *Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study*. Prepared for Transport for NSW



The Great Depression of the 1930s spurred a migration of many Aboriginal people from regional New South Wales, who sought refuge with relatives in Redfern, due work in rural areas becoming increasingly scarce.

Redfern became a place where a significant community of Aboriginal people could come together and connect with each other, where they could all feel welcomed and safe in a time of poverty and discrimination. An Aboriginal community member, Gary Foley was interviewed in the documentary *The Redfern Story* in 2014:

*The one thing we all had in common, was that we were all poor. Redfern was regarded, by the rest of Sydney I suppose, as the slums, and despite there being some fairly dodgy landlords, it was a place where Aboriginal people could actually get somewhere to stay.*<sup>125</sup>

This growing sense of community was an important foundation that allowed for Aboriginal members to reconnect with long lost family members from the Stolen Generation, as well as form strong bonds with other members of the community. A significant location where Aboriginal people would go to find and meet up with new-found family members was the Empress Hotel.

*The Empress Hotel was a place where people gathered. People would go there with their suitcase, looking for friends, looking for family to stay with. That was really a meeting place, that hotel. But of course, it wasn't such a safe place." Bronwyn Penrith, interview in the Redfern Story (documentary)*<sup>126</sup>

Communication was an important aspect of Aboriginal life and connectedness within the community. The predominate system in place for communication was referred to as the 'blackfella grapevine', where messages were swapped between people at pubs and social gatherings. A Gadigal elder, interviewed by Cox Inall Ridgeway in 2020, stated:

*Back in the old days when the blackfellas would come down from the country. Didn't have land lines, so had to turn up and look around. Go to the pubs where blackfellas drink and things like that, like the Empress.*<sup>127</sup>

Social clubs also became a prominent part of Redfern life during this time, with the establishment of the Aboriginal Football Club in 1944 and the Redfern All Blacks rugby team.<sup>128</sup> The club was extremely beneficial to the Aboriginal community as it supported their welfare through sport, training, employment, accommodation, and social events.<sup>129</sup>

By the mid to late 1960s the Aboriginal population in Redfern had grown to roughly 35,000, and was fully established as the centre for Aboriginal communities to reside in. In the words of Gary Foley, Redfern became "the biggest Aboriginal community that's ever existed in the 60,000-year history of Australia."<sup>130</sup> With the growing community, there became the need for a variety of community-managed services to be established within Redfern, including Aboriginal Housing Company, Murawina childcare centre, the Block housing development, the Aboriginal Legal Service, the

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<sup>125</sup> Cox Inall Ridgeway, 2021, *Brief Aboriginal History of the Botany Road Corridor and Surrounds*. Prepared for City of Sydney

<sup>126</sup> Ibid

<sup>127</sup> Cox Inall Ridgeway, 2021, *Selected research by Cox Inall Ridgeway – A brief history of the Redfern/Central area*

<sup>128</sup> AHMS, 2015, *Central to Eveleigh Corridor Aboriginal and Historical Heritage Review*. Prepared for UrbanGrowth NSW

<sup>129</sup> Cox Inall Ridgeway, 2021, *Brief Aboriginal History of the Botany Road Corridor and Surrounds*. Prepared for City of Sydney

<sup>130</sup> Foley interview (film) in Johnson, 2014, *The Redfern Story* (via Cox Inall Ridgeway, 2021, *Brief Aboriginal History of the Botany Road Corridor and Surrounds*)

Aboriginal Medical Service and the Black Theatre. The establishment of these community-controlled services provided a sense of self-determination within the community.

The closure of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops in the 1980s significantly impacted upon the Redfern Aboriginal community, with many people losing their jobs and only source of income to provide for their families. This caused a lot of increased struggle and strife for families in the area, with Aboriginal community members being particularly vulnerable to a variety of other struggles, such as the Sydney heroin epidemic in the late 1980s.<sup>131</sup>

*In the early 1980s, this place was so beautiful, it was the caring and sharing. Our people used to sit around together of a night-time, go to sleep with their doors open. It was a beautiful community. But as you know since the 1990s, the drugs started creeping into the community and we ended up with this vicious cycle of drug-related issues, crime-related issues. It was a vicious cycle.*<sup>132</sup>



Figure 1.35: Redfern All Blacks player Mick Williams leaps over a team-mate, Redfern Oval 1946 Source: State Library NSW  
<https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/stories/redfern-all-blacks-1946>

<sup>131</sup> Artefact, 2022, *Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study*. Prepared for Transport for NSW

<sup>132</sup> Mundine (November 2006) "Oral History Interviews about the Block", published on Redfern Oral History website



Figure 1.36: Young boys, Redfern All Blacks supporters at Redfern Oval 1946 Source: State Library NSW  
<https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/stories/redfern-all-blacks-1946>

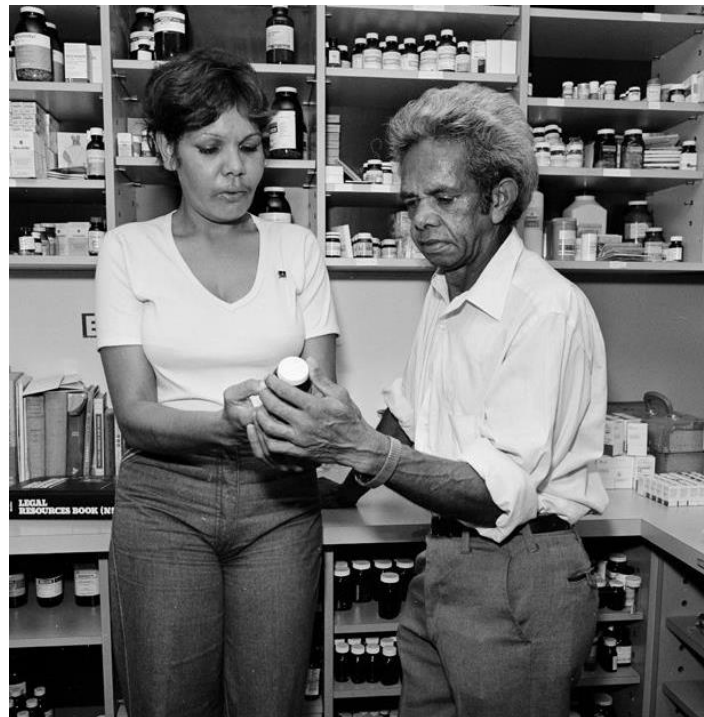


Figure 1.37: Aboriginal Medical Service, Redfern 1980 Source: National Archives of Australia  
<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/DetailsReports/ItemDetail.aspx?Barcode=11439644&isAv=N>

### 1.5.3. Activism and Social Change

Redfern became the birthplace of Aboriginal Activism during the 1960s and 1970s. Aboriginal communities became active members of political protest movements, including Aboriginal rights, civil rights, land rights and anti-racism. A prominent figure head, William (Bill) Ferguson became one of the first Aboriginal members to be elected into the Aboriginal Welfare Board in 1943.<sup>133</sup> Bill also established the Aborigines Progressive Association, as well as lead significant civil rights events such

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<sup>133</sup> AHMS, 2015, *Central to Eveleigh Corridor Aboriginal and Historical Heritage Review*. Prepared for UrbanGrowth NSW

as the 1938 National Day of Mourning and held meetings in both the Redfern Town Hall and Boot Trade Union Hall.<sup>134</sup>

Robert 'Bob' Bellear was another Aboriginal activist who was associated with the formation of the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC). An area of Redfern, known as 'The Block' (bordered by Caroline, Eveleigh, Hugo and Louis Streets), was one of the first areas for the establishment of Aboriginal housing companies in NSW. However, in the 1970s, protests arose due to landlords conducting campaigns to evict and displace Aboriginal families. Bob successfully convinced the Whitlam government to provide grants so that the AHC could purchase back 'The Block' properties for displaced Aboriginal people.<sup>135</sup>

Police harassment and violence was a key factor behind the formation of the Aboriginal Legal Service and other community-controlled organisations.

*The war between Aboriginal people was constant. You know, it was a crime to be black. It didn't matter what the charge was. The real charge was 'walking while black.'*  
- Marcia Langton, interviewed in *The Redfern Story* (documentary)

*The police harassment had a significant role in politicising all of us.* - Gary Foley, interviewed in *The Redfern Story* (documentary)<sup>136</sup>

The Eveleigh Rail Workshops provided support for Aboriginal rights to healthcare and wage/social equality through promotional material in their local newsletter, *The Eveleigh News*. An article stated:

*No "dinkum" Aussie will deny that one of the most shameful features of our Australian history has been the tragic treatment of our Aborigines. Although we all have a very bad conscience about our inhuman behaviour to-wards the original Australians, our authorities continue to deny them economic, social & political equality, & enforce their existence as an underprivileged minority in their own Country.*<sup>137</sup>

In 1977, the NSW Aboriginal Land Council was established as a result of a Land Rights conference at the Black Theatre site on Cope Street in Redfern, with the aim to put pressure on NSW Government to take action on Aboriginal land rights.<sup>138</sup> By 1983, the Aboriginal Land Rights Act was put in place, with the Metropolitan LALC established two years later.<sup>139</sup>

The Redfern Aboriginal community continued to prove to be a strong one that unceasingly demonstrated their resilience against struggle through political and social activism throughout the remainder of the twentieth century. A significant place for this activism is Redfern Oval, with several major events occurring in association with the park and its community. These included the Aboriginal resilience march from Redfern Oval to Hyde Park in 1988 as well as being the location for Prime Minister Paul Keating's speech on dispossession in 1992.

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<sup>134</sup> Cox Inall Ridgeway, 2021, *Brief Aboriginal History of the Botany Road Corridor and Surrounds*. Prepared for City of Sydney

<sup>135</sup> Ibid

<sup>136</sup> Ibid

<sup>137</sup> Michael Davis Consultants, 2012, *Aboriginal Connections with Eveleigh*. Prepared for Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority (via Artefact Heritage 2022)

<sup>138</sup> Cox Inall Ridgeway, 2021, *Selected research by Cox Inall Ridgeway – A brief history of the Redfern/Central area* (via Artefact Heritage 2022)

<sup>139</sup> Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, 2015. History of Metro LALC. Accessed at: <https://metrolalc.org.au/about-us/our-history/>





Figure 1.38: Aboriginal Housing Company (Robert Belleair on the right) after successfully purchasing 'The Block' Source: Members of the Aboriginal Housing Company 1974 <http://cdn.sydneybarani.com.au/assets/Aboriginal-Housing-Company-NAA-11889343.jpg>



Figure 1.39: Launch of International Year of the World's Indigenous People in Redfern Park 1992 – Prime Minister Paul Keating addresses the Aboriginal communities Source: City of Sydney Archives

#### 1.5.4. Redfern and Eveleigh Today

Over the last few decades, suburbs like Redfern and Eveleigh have become subject to rapid gentrification as new residential developments replaced industrial land use in the area.<sup>140</sup> This forced members of the Aboriginal community to move out of the area due to increased costs of

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<sup>140</sup> Cox Inall Ridgeway, 2021, *Brief Aboriginal History of the Botany Road Corridor and Surrounds*. Prepared for City of Sydney

living that came along with the redevelopment works to these previously low income areas. A Senior Aboriginal community representative interviewed by Cox Inall Ridgeway in 2020 stated:

*Moving people out to] Mount Druitt [was part of the] displacement model, in the 1970s. Lots of our people.<sup>141</sup>*

Today, Redfern has continued to a significant place of history and community for Aboriginal people, providing strong associations for individuals to connect to their identity and past. Important organisations, services, cultural bodies and businesses remain and are still active within the area and provide a sense of community. The cultural significance of the area has been actively passed down from generation to generation of Aboriginal people, with the continuation of parents bringing their children to Redfern to educate them on the history of their community and help encourage a strong sense of connection and place in the future.

Today, the land around the study area continues to intrinsically hold great significance for the Aboriginal community and provides a deep spiritual and historical connection:

*The roots put down by Aboriginal people over generations continue to flourish and blossom today. The land itself, beyond the buildings and roads, beneath the footpaths and concrete, still contains the stories of ancestors, and the wisdom of Elders. It is this deep connection to culture and customs that regenerates and innovates in the rapidly changing world. This history is an integral part of Country here.<sup>142</sup>*

There are also many opportunities and places within Redfern and the surrounding area that not only illustrate Aboriginal cultural heritage but are an important legacy for present and future generations of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.<sup>143</sup> One such example of this is The Carriageworks at North Eveleigh, which provides a space for Aboriginal artists to showcase their works with the wider community. Carriageworks partners with the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence to commission artists works through a variety of programs such as The National: New Australian Art, Klub Koori, the Yellamundie Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Playwriting Festival and the South East Aboriginal Arts Market.<sup>144</sup> There are also a variety of Aboriginal resident dance and performing arts companies, Marrugeku and Moogahlin Performing Arts.<sup>145</sup>

Recently, Redfern and Eveleigh have been subject to various strategic urban renewal projects to preserve and sustain Aboriginal-led organisations and communities and have heavily involved the community through consultation processes. A significant area in Redfern, referred to as 'The Block' is bound by Hugo, Louis, Caroline and Eveleigh Streets. The Aboriginal Housing Company announced that this area would be redeveloped into a mixed-use site, including more affordable housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, childcare, a gallery and commercial spaces in 2011, and is known as the Pemulwuy Project.<sup>146</sup> One of the buildings in this precinct is the Redfern Community Centre. It is a place that focuses on bringing together Aboriginal people of all ages to participate in

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid

<sup>142</sup> Cox Inall Ridgeway, 2021, *Selected research by Cox Inall Ridgeway – A brief history of the Redfern/Central area*

<sup>143</sup> Curio Projects, 2022, *Large Erecting Shop – Rezoning Proposal: Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study & Statement of Impact*. Prepared for TAHE

<sup>144</sup> Artefact, 2022, *Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study*. Prepared for Transport for NSW

<sup>145</sup> Carriageworks 2018, <https://carriageworks.com.au/about/>

<sup>146</sup> Aboriginal Housing Company, 2021. The Pemulwuy Project. Accessed at: <https://pemulwuyproject.org.au/about-us/> (via Artefact 2022)

social and cultural activities.<sup>147</sup> Another initiative to reinforce the Aboriginal community and their culture was through the establishment of a Native Rooftop Farm at South Eveleigh, designed by Yerrabingin in 2019. The farm “uses principles of Indigenous knowledge, collaborative design and permaculture to create and maintain Australia’s first rooftop farm for urban food production”.<sup>148</sup>

Overall, the Aboriginal community surrounding the CME study area is one that is extremely rich and has a long history in association with not only the land, but the suburbs and their social and industrial uses.



Figure 1.40: Jurrungu Ngan-Ga (Straight Talk) performance by Marrugeku at Carriageworks 2022 Source: <https://carriageworks.com.au/events/marrugeku/>

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<sup>147</sup> Sydney Barani, 'Redfern Community Centre', accessed at: <https://www.sydneybarani.com.au/sites/redfern-community-centre/>

<sup>148</sup> Yerrabingin, 2019. South Eveleigh Native Rooftop Farm. Accessed at: <https://www.yerrabingin.com.au/projects/rooftop-farm>





Figure 1.41: Dispensing sanitizer and masks, Black Lives Matter protest during Covid-19 pandemic 2020 Source: City of Sydney Archives



Figure 1.42: Redfern Community Centre opening, Hugo Street, Redfern 2004 Source: City of Sydney Archives





Figure 1.43: Young women on Eveleigh Street, Redfern 2004 Source: City of Sydney Archives



Figure 1.44: Yerrabingin Rooftop Farm at South Eveleigh Source: <https://www.yerrabingin.com.au/projects/rooftop-farm>

