

Statement of Heritage Impact – Hill View Conservation Area

The Proposal

Goodman International Limited (Goodman) proposes to develop a four storey warehouse at 17 O’Riordan St, Alexandria, Sydney. The warehouse facility is for the Australian Red Cross Blood Service and will house laboratories, storage and administration facilities, as well as delivery docks for incoming and outgoing blood products. The site of the proposed development is opposite the Hill View Conservation Area (CA55) to the east of O’Riordan St on Reserve St, Beaconsfield. O’Riordan St and the McConville Nature Reserve separate the proposed development from CA55. This Statement of Heritage Impact addresses potential impacts arising from the proposed development on the heritage significance of the Hill View Conservation Area.

The proposal has been identified as a ‘major project’ under part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* 1979 (EP&A Act).

Prepared For

Goodman International Limited
Level 10, 60 Castlereagh St
Sydney NSW 2000

Address & Property Description

Hill View Conservation Area (CA55) is bounded by Johnson St to the north, Reserve St along its southern and western boundaries and includes some buildings on the eastern side of Queen St, in the Sydney suburb of Beaconsfield. The conservation area comprises the western portion of the original Hill View Estate (see Historic Context).

Prepared By

This report has been prepared by Tessa Boer-Mah, AMBS Project Officer. Jennie Lindbergh, Senior Project Manager, provided technical advice on impact assessment and management, and reviewed the report.

References

- Annable, R. and Cable, K. (1995) *South Sydney Heritage Study*. Prepared for South Sydney Council.
- Betteridge, Chris Musecape Pty. Ltd. 2004. *Draft South Sydney Weatherboard Buildings Survey Report* Prepared for South Sydney City Council.
- Frith, S. (2004). ‘From Tanning to Planning: An Industrial History of Green Square’. In Karskens, G. and Rogowsky, M. (2004). *Histories of Green Square*. University of NSW Publishing: Sydney.

Karskens, G. and Rogowsky, M. (2004). *Histories of Green Square*. University of NSW Publishing: Sydney.

Kirk, I. (INHERITage). (2006). *Weatherboard Cottage Study Review*. Report to City of Sydney Council.

South Sydney Council. (n.d.). *Everyone Knew Everyone: History and Memories of Green Square*.

Heritage Context

South Sydney LEP 1998 (as amended)

Part 4, Division 1, Clauses 22-27 of the South Sydney LEP provides specific requirements for the management of heritage significance. Clause 24 requires that the impact on heritage items or conservation areas in the vicinity of proposed developments is assessed, and should address:

- the heritage significance,
- the curtilage and setting of the item,
- the heritage significance of buildings within heritage conservation areas,
- the heritage significance of the streetscape
- the heritage significance of an actual or potential archaeological site; and
- significant views from the heritage item, heritage conservation area or streetscape.

Conservation Area CA55 is identified on Schedule 2A 'Heritage conservation areas' of the LEP and identified on the LEP map for Alexandria titled (*Amendment No. 3*) - *Heritage Conservation*, gazetted on the 28 July 2000 (see **Figure 1** for detail).

This SoHI has been prepared in fulfilment of Council's requirement that the impact of the proposed development of a heritage item or place is assessed. This SoHI forms part of the supporting documentation in an application to the NSW Department of Planning as a 'major project' under Part 3A of the EP&A Act.

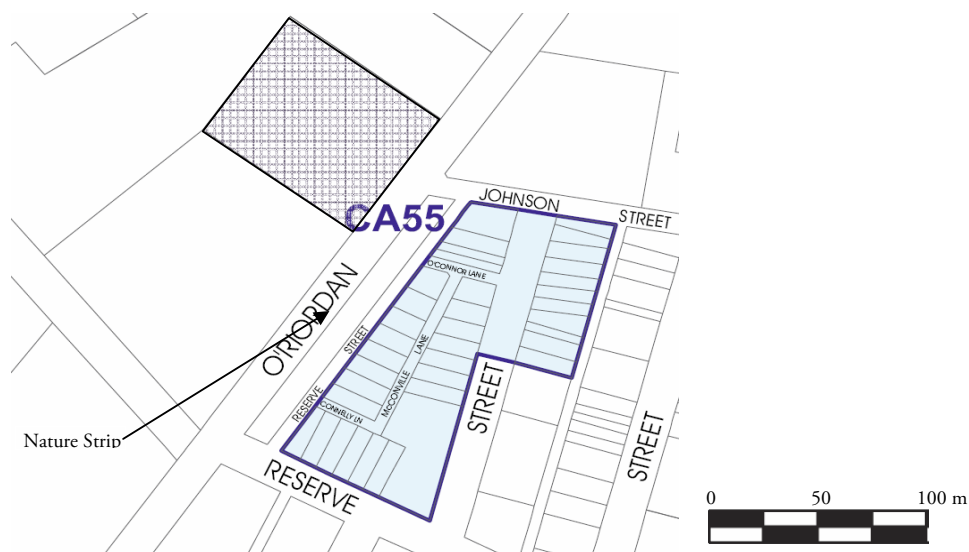


Figure 1: Boundaries of the Hill View Conservation Area (shaded), Goodman development area (hashed). Source: LEP 1998 amendment 3.

Draft South Sydney Weatherboard Buildings Survey Report

The Draft South Sydney Weatherboard Buildings Survey Report identifies weatherboard cottages within CA 55 as having local heritage significance (Betteridge *et al* 2004). The cottages within the Hill View Conservation Area were examined and it was concluded that: “all weatherboard buildings identified in this survey as being of local heritage significance.”

Kirk was commissioned to review the Draft South Sydney Weatherboard Buildings Survey report in 2006. Kirk’s review confirmed the results of the Betteridge *et al* report, and recommended that the cottage at 21 Queen St be added to the identified cottages within CA55. This additional weatherboard cottage is located in the western portion of CA55.

Historic Context

Timber in the Sydney region provided a number of challenges to early settlement; ironbarks were very hard and blunted the early settlers’ tools and softer wood materials were often warped and split by the heat of the sun. Cabbage tree palms, which grew in the sheltered coastal gullies were used in early construction and rooves were clad with grass or rushes similar to English thatched cottages. Wattle and daub construction techniques were also used in the early settlement. By the 1820s slab huts became more common. Slab hut construction involves the felling of larger trees as well as splitting the timber with wedges and hammers to produce slabs of timber. These early traditions developed into more sophisticated weatherboard construction and incorporated a variety of weatherboard cladding including: paling, clapboards, Dolly Varden Siding, shiplap, lapboards and vertical weatherboards. Most of the weatherboard cottages which survive today date from 1880’s and later, although some would have been built around earlier constructions.

Weatherboard cottages are important to the social and economic history of the area. The original Waterloo-Alexandria-Beaconsfield landscape was estuarine, comprising the Waterloo swamp which was joined by Shea’s Creek (Figure 2). In 1820, the Lachlan and Waterloo flour mills were constructed to grind wheat to produce flour for the colony. In 1827, these were converted to wool mills responding to the growth of the wool industry. These mills required large numbers of workers who lived on the land with their families, probably in slab hut style accommodation. There were still areas of open space toward the end of the nineteenth century. A health board inspector’s report in 1876, suggests that large parts of the area were sparsely populated and semi-rural in nature, with many market gardens (Annable and Cable 1995:218). Toward the end of the nineteenth century industrial and residential growth transformed the area into working class suburbs.



Figure 2: Hill View Estate (blue polygon), Parish Map circa 1886.

The 1884 subdivision plan indicates that the Hill View Estate was placed on the market on 15 November 1884 (**Figure 3**). The original Hill View Estate was bounded by Botany Road, Reserve Street and Johnson Street (the western portion of the original estate is now within CA55). Lots on sale had 15 feet frontages and were around 100 feet deep. Larger Lots in the northern portion of the Estate along Botany Road, were already marked with the names Healey, Moore and Tuen, as well as the hotel of the Empress of India (Annable and Cable 1995:221). Much of the Hill View Estate is likely to have been inhabited by working class families, who were employed locally at companies such as the Goodlet's Brick Works, or the Brick and Drain Pipe Factory situated on Botany Road. To the south of Hill View was the Beaconsfield Estate which was advertised as the 'Working Man's Model Township' which went on sale in January 1884, as a 30 year leasehold.

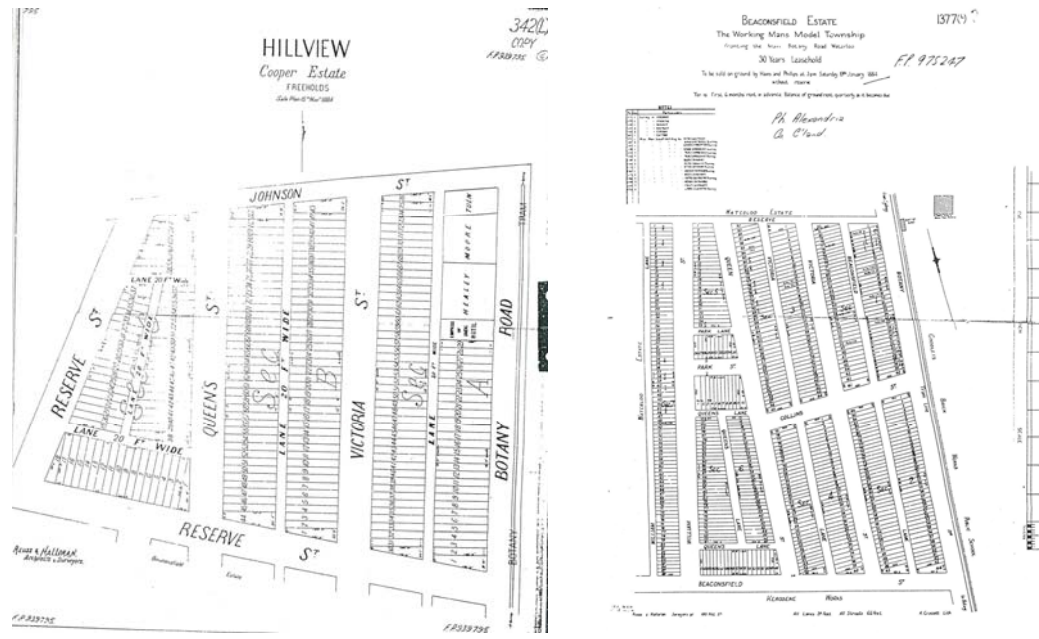


Figure 3: Allotments for Sale on the Hill View Estate 1884 (left). Allotments for sale as 30 year leaseholds on the estate immediately south of Hill View, advertises the area as the “Working Man’s Model Township” (right).

From the late eighteenth century the area becomes more industrialised to include breweries, wool washing, soap works, brickworks, dairy, market gardens, tanneries, glass works, tallow works, amongst others, although market gardens also continued in the area (Annable and Cable 1995:225). The *Royal Commission of Inquiry into Noxious Trades* outlined some of the industries that existed in 1883 (Frith 2004:51). Among them was Mr James Johnson’s Wool-washing and Fellmongering based at Waterloo, it boasted a steam engine with two boilers, sweating room and soak pit, employing forty men and six boys. Around 5,000 bales were processed each year, including wool scraped from skins (Frith 2004:51).

From the 1900s industrial activities increased in scale, aided by increased demand during World War 1. In particular, the purchase of wool and beef was guaranteed by the British government for the duration of the war. The growth in industry attracted many people to the area. By 1944 there were 342 factories in the Municipality of Alexandria employing 22,238 workers, with around half the area taken up by industry (Figure 4). The mixed industrial and residential character of this part of Sydney has continued to the present.



Figure 4: 1943 aerial photograph showing a warehouse in the allotment of 17 O'Riordan St (white rectangle), CA55 marked (white polygon), red line marks the boundary between Beaconsfield and Alexandria.

Summary

The Hill View Conservation Area (CA55) includes weatherboard cottages constructed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The construction methods, materials and design of these buildings provide a link to the historic development of housing in Sydney. Whilst weatherboard cottages would have been a common building form in the nineteenth century, government resumptions between the 1890s and 1900 for slum clearance destroyed hundreds of timber buildings (Betteridge *et al* 2004:24). As a result, weatherboard cottages are now amongst the oldest buildings surviving in the inner city suburbs.

Weatherboard cottages are an integral part of the history of housing and in some senses epitomise a tradition of timber clad constructions which have their antecedents in the early European settlement of Sydney. One of the remarkable features of the area is the strong sense of community, where 'everyone knew everyone' (South Sydney Council n.d.) The weatherboard cottages in the CA55 reflect much of the character, history and development of the area.

The Current Proposal

The Hill View Conservation Area includes weatherboard cottages constructed predominantly in the 1880s and 1920s. Development in the area over the last 100 years has resulted in the demolition of many weatherboard buildings, thus those cottages within CA55 are among the few examples of such constructions remaining in the South Sydney area. Six cottages identified in the Betteridge *et al* (2004) report face on to Reserve St (west) and thus are closest to the proposed development (see Figure 5).

Goodman proposes to construct a 4 storey warehouse at 17 O'Riordan St, Beaconsfield, Sydney. This is two storeys higher than the present warehouse on the site and thus will be about double the height. This proposed development is located on the west side of O'Riordan St and is around 30 metres from the northern portion of CA55 (Figure 1). At present, there is a nature strip (McConville Reserve) approximately 10 metres wide and 150 metres long with mature trees which currently buffer CA55 from O'Riordan St. McConville

Reserve and will continue to act as a screen from the proposed development (Figure 6). Shadow diagrams provided by Goodman indicate that only in the late afternoon in winter will the proposed development shade a small portion of CA55 (Figure 7). However, mature trees within McConville Reserve already shade this portion of CA55 and none of the weatherboard cottages identified as having local heritage significance will be affected by shade from the current proposal. For the greater part of the year CA55 will not be overshadowed at all by the development.

Goodman has designed the development in accordance with the height requirements of the Green Square Development Control Plan which stipulates a maximum height of 18 metres. The proposed development at the 17 O’Riordan site has been used for warehouses in the past (Figure 4), thus the current proposal is not out of character with previous development in the area.



Figure 5: Weatherboard cottages on Reserve St (west) which are specifically mentioned in Betteridge *et al* (2004) report and are closest to the proposed development (numbers correspond to the street address for these cottages)



Figure 6: Photographs of Hill View Conservation Area and the Proposed Development

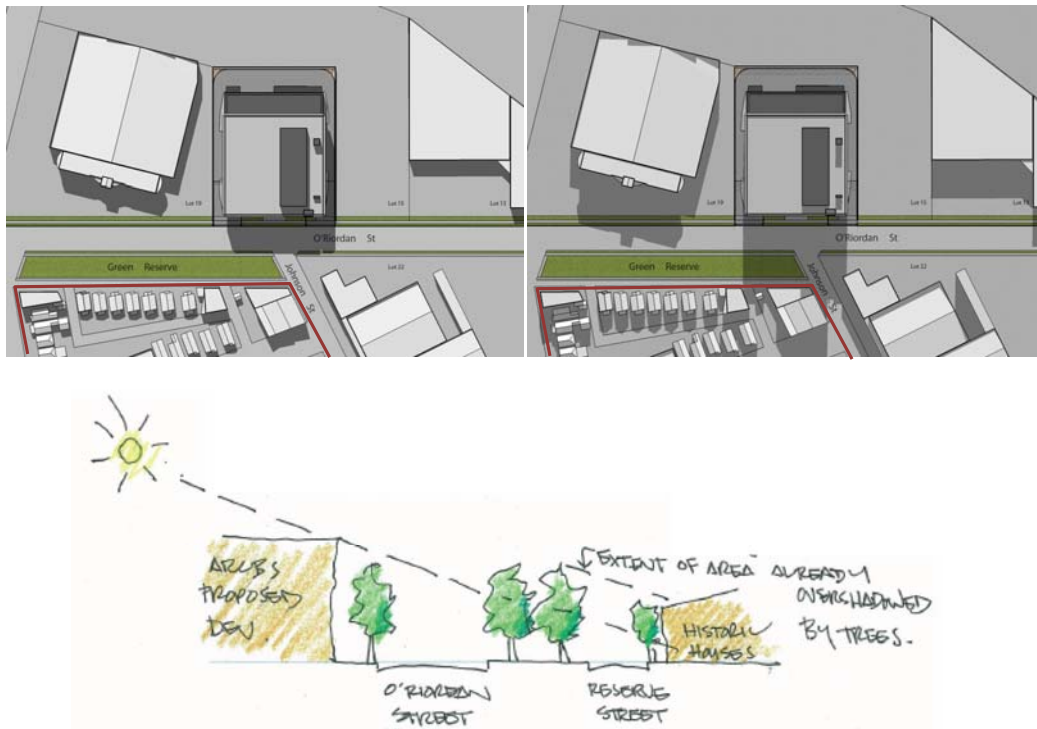


Figure 7: Shadow Diagrams, shadowing will be most extensive in the afternoon, 21 March (left) 21 June (right), CA55 outlined in red. N.B. Mature trees within McConville Reserve overshadow CA55. None of the weatherboard cottages will be shaded by the current proposal.

Assessment of Heritage impact

The following aspects of the proposal respect the heritage significance and environmental values of the site as a whole for the following reasons:

- The Beaconsfield landscape is a mix of residential and industrial uses. The current proposal is consistent with the traditional industrial uses within the area. The character and significance of CA55 will be maintained.
- O’Riordan Street and McConville Reserve separate the current proposal from CA55. Mature trees within McConville Reserve screen CA55 from the current proposal, thus the character and significance of CA55 will be maintained.

The following aspects of the proposal have some detrimental impact on the heritage significance the site as a whole:

- The proposed warehouse is greater in height than the existing buildings at 17 O’Riordan St. Whilst this will have a minor impact on the O’Riordan streetscape, the heritage significance of CA55 will not be compromised.
- Shadow diagrams demonstrate that there will be some shading, during winter, of the northern portion of CA55, which is occupied by relatively modern light industrial buildings. Mature trees within the McConville Reserve already cast shadows across Reserve Street at this time of year, and there are no weatherboard cottages in this portion of CA55,

The following unsympathetic solutions have been considered and discounted for the following reasons:

- The specific requirements of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service are such that no alternative options have been considered.

Statement of Heritage Impact

The weatherboard cottages within the Hill View Conservation Area were constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as housing for workers, and are among the few remaining in the local area. The significance of such cottages is associated with their place in a tradition of timber clad buildings which began with the initial settlement of Sydney. These cottages are also an important part of the social fabric and history of the area. The cottages are representative of the modest dwellings of working class people, and form a material testament to the families which inhabited the area who were known for their community spirit.

The proposed development will be substantially higher than the existing warehouse on the site; however, the nature strip, McConville Reserve, currently screens CA55 from O’Riordan St and will mitigate the visual impact of the proposed development.

Whilst the current proposal will change the nature of the O’Riordan streetscape, it will not compromise the heritage significance of the weatherboard cottages within the Hill View Conservation Area (CA55). The proposed development is consistent with the industrial character of the area, and as an Australian Red Cross Blood Service facility, will perform an essential community function.

This SoHI forms part of the supporting documentation in an application to NSW Department of Planning for approval as a ‘Major Project’ under Part 3A of the EP&A Act.