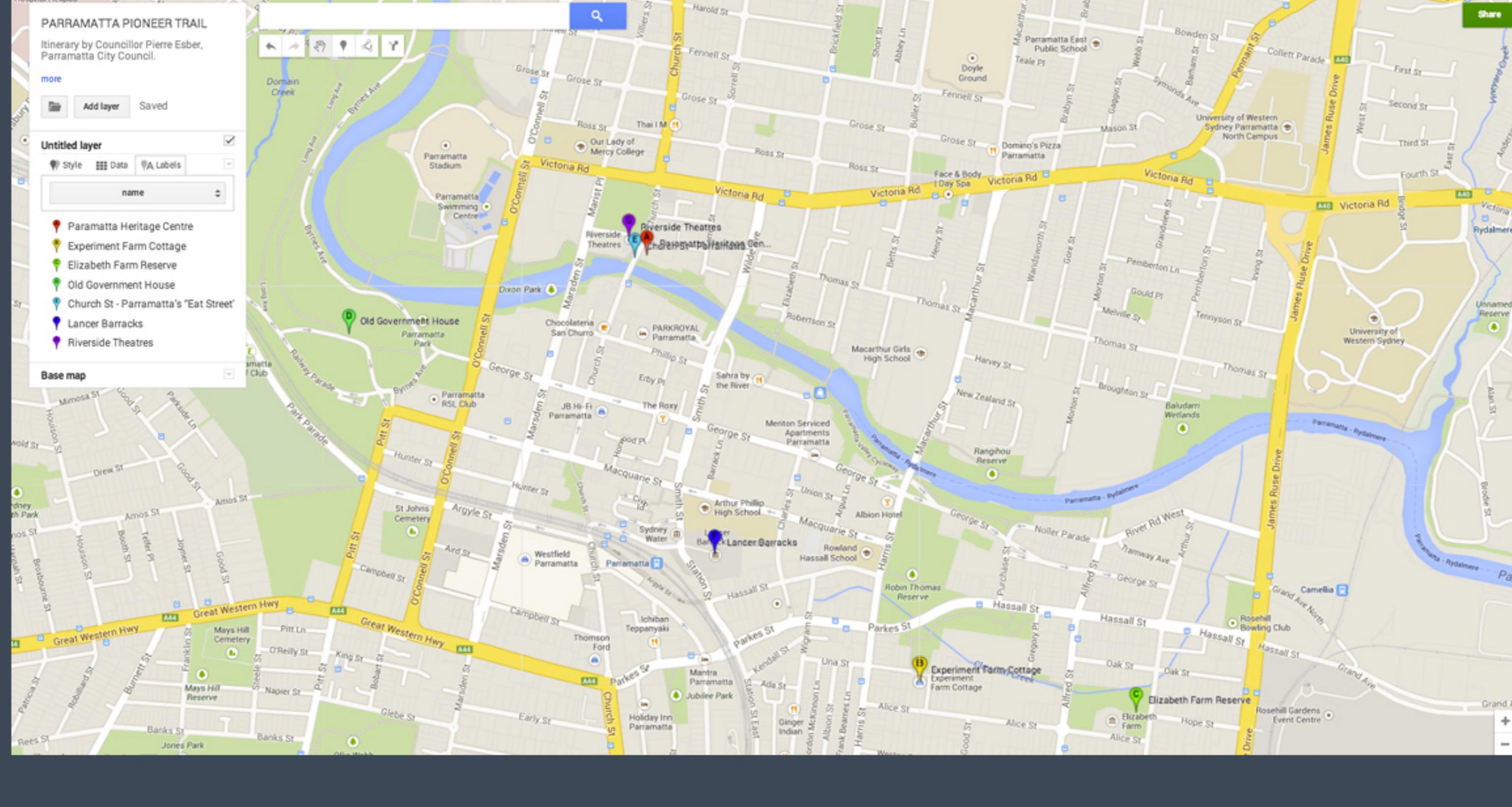


PARRAMATTA PIONEER TRAIL

If you've ever wondered about the early days of the white settlers, why not spend a day at Parramatta, where you can discover interesting nuggets about the country's convict past as well as its Aboriginal connections.

**PARRAMATTA HERITAGE CENTRE**

The best way to get to Parramatta is to take the RiverCat. It's a 50-minute journey from Circular Quay to Charles Street wharf at Parramatta. From there your first stop should be the Heritage & Visitor Centre, which is just a 10-minute walk from the ferry. Here you'll find tourist information and exhibitions and plenty of tips on the best way to explore Parramatta.

ELIZABETH FARM

You're sure to be directed first to Elizabeth Farm as it's one of the most popular attractions. Here you'll learn about the industry that kept Australia afloat for many years – wool. The farmhouse, which was built in 1793 for wool pioneers Elizabeth and John Macarthur, is now a museum and is the oldest surviving European building in Australia. You're encouraged to try different activities to see how the country's pioneers lived and you can either explore at your own pace or join a guided tour. The traditional morning tea in the Tearooms is a must.

OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE

If you fancy adding a bit of political history to your day, then Old Government House will fit the bill. The building is the oldest surviving government building in Australia and for more than 70 years, was the official country residence of 10 governors. It's been restored over time and is now furnished to reflect the early 1820s – around the time Lachlan Macquarie was governor. Energetic kids can let off steam running around Parramatta Park where the house is located while the big kids can stroll in the gardens.

LANCER BARRACKS AND LINDEN MUSEUM

Parramatta played a major role in Australia's military history and a visit to the Lancer Barracks – the country's oldest mainland military barracks – will provide you with some insights that date back to 1820.

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

Parramatta City Council was one of the first to issue an apology to Indigenous people and you'll find a number of initiatives that tell the story of Aboriginal history. In fact, the word "Parramatta" comes from the local Darug people's word for the area "Baramada" or "Burramatta", which means "the place where eels lie down". Make sure you check out the riverside walk on the banks of Parramatta River, which features a winding concrete path with designs that tell the history of the region from an Indigenous perspective.

EXPERIMENT FARM COTTAGE

Just a little walk away is Experiment Farm. As the name suggests, this farm was set up as an experiment to see if the colony could become self-sufficient. The former convict, James Ruse, was given the task of making it work and it was a huge success. Kids can take part in some hands-on planting to see how they'd cope in such an environment. Everyone leaves knowing a little about the workings of a colonial household.

CHURCH STREET

It's time to refuel and the best spot is Parramatta's "Eat Street" [Church Street]. Here you'll find cuisine from every country you can think of, including Italian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Indian and Japanese. The iconic Harry's Cafe de Wheels has even found its way here. You can either dine alfresco or pick up a takeaway and spread yourself out in Prince Alfred Park, which adjoins Church Street.

RIVERSIDE THEATRE

A visit to the Riverside Theatre will round your day out nicely. You can either grab a quick bite back at Church Street or if you have time, Phillip Street offers more fine-dining options. The theatre has popular events running all year round so there's sure to be something that suits. Then it's a short walk to catch the ferry home.