

THE PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY AND INSANE ASYLUM

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A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CUMBERLAND MENTAL HEALTH PRECINCT

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Introduction

Geoff Barker



Parramatta Hospital for the Insane, fountain courtyard, 1883-1890, Parramatta City Council, LSP00124

Like many other government institutions the change from the prison style Female Factory to a nineteenth century asylum for mental health patients was not an easy one. From 1848 through to the middle of the 1880s buildings for a new style of asylum were erected, but Greenway's 1821, Female Factory building, and the prison cells built by Governor Gipps, remained unchanged at the heart of the precinct.

In 1850 the old Female Factory officially became the 'Parramatta Lunatic Asylum'.^[1] But the catalyst for substantial change to the site came in 1866 with the purchase of the adjacent thirty three acre 'Vineyard Farm' and the construction of substantial new purpose-built structures to house male and female patients separately.^[2] The first of these was the male weatherboard division, built in 1869-1870, and this was soon followed by a number of others.^[3] Over the same period improvements and extensions were also made to the existing buildings to bring conditions in line with new ways of thinking about mental health.

But through all these early changes Greenway's iconic Female Factory and the gloomy sandstone prison cells built by Governor Gipps were increasingly seen as redundant icons of an antiquated method for dealing with mental health. After the male patients were moved to the male weatherboard division, and the women to a similar wooden building in the northern part of the precinct, both of these Female Factory buildings were destroyed.

In August 1883 the green light was given for the destruction of the 1838-1839 penitentiary wing and the stones from this building were used to make the new 'No. 1 Male Ward' now the 'Institute of Psychiatry' building.^[4] Patients were moved in around 1885 and this building remains in use to the present day.^[5] A dining room which is also still on the site was built behind this block around the same time.^[6]

Greenway's old Female Factory was deemed beyond repair for the new asylum and demolished in 1885-1886. Its stones were used for the foundations of a 'religious services and recreational activities' area.^[7] A recreation hall was finally built near the Parramatta gaol in 1890 but it is not certain if this is on the site where the foundations had been laid in 1886. The recreation hall was built by patients and staff of the hospital so it is possible that it was the same location and used the same materials but this has yet to be verified.^[8]

This move to a medical rather than prison and convict administration saw the site change its name a number of times right up to the present. As a result of the Lunacy act of 1878, the 'Parramatta Lunatic Asylum' was renamed the 'Parramatta Hospital for the Insane' and put under the direction of the Inspector General for the Insane. The first Inspector was Dr. F. N. Manning (1878-1898).^[9] Manning was replaced by Dr. E Sinclair (1898-1920s).^[10]

The late 1800s and early 1900s saw an increased focus on the surrounding gardens and in 1916 the hospital changed its name to the 'Parramatta Mental Hospital'.^[11] From 1962 to 1983 it was known as the 'Parramatta Psychiatric Centre' and finally from 1983 till the present it has been part of the 'Cumberland Hospital'.^[12]

Endnotes

[1] Conservation Management Plan and Archaeological Management Plan, Cumberland Hospital East Campus and Wistaria Gardens, Edward Higgenbotham & Associates PTY Ltd, Geoffrey Britton & Terry Kass, 2010, p.27

[2] Purchase cost was two thousand five hundred pounds. James Jervis, 'The mental Hospital Parramatta, Royal

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Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings, 1933, p. 192

[3] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, p. 66

[4] James Jervis, 'The mental Hospital Parramatta, Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings, 1933, p. 197

[5] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, p. 61

[6] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, p. 64

[7] Weatherburn 1990, citing Annual Reports of Inspector-General of the Insane 1885 and 1886. Kass, Liston (1998) and others mix up which building was demolished and therefore which stone is the source of No 1 Male Ward, cited in Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, p. 64

[8] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, p. 64

[9] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, p. 59

[10] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, p. 61

[11] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, p. 59

[12] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, p. 59

The First Female Factory, Prince Alfred Square, 1803 – 1821

Geoff Barker



*Bridge over Parramatta River, (the prison was on hill to right), from lithograph *Vue d'un pont a l'entree de Parramatta*, De Sainson, H. Vander Burch, 1833, Parramatta City Council, LSP00328*

Initially the female factories in Australia were not just places of incarceration, they also provided a space where women could work for rations, find refuge and for some find a place to sleep. However over time this gave way to a system where classification, observation and separation were seen as the building blocks to reforming those whom colonial administrators felt were causing social unrest, or did not fit their own preconceived attitudes about woman's roles in society.

This Pentonville model of surveillance, silence and separation was more noticeable in the Port Arthur Female Factory but was also adopted by administrators at the second Parramatta Female Factory. However they had little success in preventing the growth of the prisoners' subculture or from keeping the classes separate and the Parramatta factory was in fact strange hybrids of prison, refuge, workplace, school, home and, in its latter stages, asylum.^[1]

In addition early Australian Governors felt convict women were a problem because their skills were not as exploitable as the physical muscle of their male counterparts. And as a result they saw convict women as a drain on the colony's resources and economy.

To remedy this administrators married off convict women, or assigned them as servants. But in the absence of a specialised refuge those who were unassigned as servants or married were often forced to either cohabit with a male, or earn their money through prostitution to pay for quarters. Another problem was that women with no fixed abode found it difficult to protect their weekly rations and many spent the last days of the week without any food.

In an effort to solve this problem Governor King incorporated a plan to build a mill for weaving wool in the Colony and establish a suitable industry to employ women convicts and well as provide a refuge for homeless women and their children.

Before King had left England in 1799, he had engaged a master weaver, Thomas Wise, to help establish the weaving industry, but he drowned on the outward voyage. In 1801 King started the embryo workshop with women manufacturing rough woollen blankets but the industry really began in earnest after August 1803, when King entered into a contract with George Mealmaker (1768-1808) to manage work at new premises built on the old Parramatta gaol.^[2]

By trade Mealmaker was a hand loom weaver and was transported as one of the 'Scottish Martyrs'. It was also agreed that he would be paid for every loom that he constructed for the factory.^[3]

This idea of creating a 'Female Factory' had begun in 1803 during the construction of the Parramatta gaol (in

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what is now Prince Alfred Square) when King suggested the idea of adding an additional storey. This was to be used as a holding and working-space for newly arrived convict women and became known as the first 'Female Factory'.

The northern wall of the gaol was altered and a courtyard added to it along with a second floor above with two large rooms about eighty feet long and twenty wide [24 x 6 metres] with no access to the gaol itself. Women prisoners were free to come and go from the refuge after they had completed the work assigned to them each day.

By August 1804 Mealmaker had nine looms operating; two each at fine linen, duck and wool, one each at sailcloth and sacking and one for variable jobs. Some 1935 metres of cloth had been bartered for wheat through the commissariat.[4]

Mealmaker gradually increased the number of looms at the factory to twelve. Unfortunately Governor Bligh, when he succeeded to the administration from King, was disinterested in industry and the impetus in weaving was almost lost.

A fire in the factory in 1807 accelerated Mealmaker's death that was fast approaching because of a propensity for whisky and snuff. He died in absolute poverty and was buried in St John's cemetery, unrecognised as the forerunner of the weaving industry in Parramatta.[5]

In May 1809 The Sydney Gazette published an article informing the public that the Factory was re-established under the direction of Benjamin Brewer. It also made it clear that the new administration wanted to continue the emphasis on work at the factory for it claimed it was

... open for the reception of Wool and Flax for the Fabrication of Woollen and Linen Cloths, on the same terms as when under the Superintendence of the late Mr. Mealmaker [6]

The work produced by the factory was however not enough to establish anyones fortunes and its standing within the community continued to be problematic right up until its demise under the administration of Mr. Oaks and Richard Rouse. This was made clear in 1818, some 14 years after it was built, when Rev. Samuel Marsden made the following observations on the factory.

The number of women employed at the factory under Mr. Oaks, the superintendent is 150. They have seventy children, and there is not any room in the factory that can be called a bedroom for the women and children. There are only two rooms, and these are both occupied as workshops; they are over the; gaol, and are about eighty feet long and twenty wide. In these rooms there are forty-six women employed daily, twenty spinning wool upon the common wheel and twenty-six carding. There are also in them the warping machine, etc., belonging to the factory. These rooms are crowded all day and at night such women sleep in them as are confined for recent offences, amongst the wheels, wool, and cards, and a few others who have no means whatever of obtaining a better abode. The average number of women who sleep in the factory is about thirty on the whole. Many of these women have little and some no bedding. They all sleep on the floor. There is not a cradle or bedstead belonging to the factory. I do not deem 'it either safe or prudent for even thirty women to sleep in the factory which has been crowded all day with working people, could this be avoided, as the air must be bad and contagious. Were the magistrates to compel even half the number of women, (with their children) to sleep in the factory which belongs to it, they could not exist. Not less than 120 women are at large at night to sleep where they can. I might further notice that many of the male and female convicts are much addicted to insobriety, and that the great number of licensed houses to sell spirituous liquors considerably increases the number of crimes. There are, on the whole, under the two principal superintendents, Messrs. Oaks and Rouse, one hundred and eight men, one hundred and fifty women, and seventy children, and nearly the whole of them have to find lodgings for themselves, when they have finished their Government task.[7]

In August 1816 the architect, Francis Greenway, and the Superintendent of Public Works, Richard Rouse, were asked to make a report on repairing the old gaol and Female Factory. By this time the two small rooms were barely able to accommodate the 200 women now trying to live and work in the space. [8] By 1817 only 60 out of 200 women using the factory were housed on the premises. [9] In October Greenway reported the following to Captain Gill,

The men [in the prison] have access to the women above by what information I can obtain which should be done away with as soon as possible by removing the Factory entirely, as the present state of it is really disadvantageous and has a very bad moral tendency ... [10]

As a result of this report a larger, second Female Factory, in North Parramatta [Cumberland Hospital East Precinct] was given the green light by Macquarie. This would be designed by Francis Greenway and was completed in 1821 by Isaac Payten in partnership with William Gooch.[11]

Endnotes

- [1] Kay Daniels, *Convict Women*, Allen and Unwin, 1998, p.104
- [2] John McClymont Collection, original text, donated to the Parramatta Heritage Centre, 2014
- [3] A. Chisholm (ed), *Australian Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 9, p. 309; G. Linge. *Industrial Awakening*, p. 31; King to Hobart, 1 Mar 1804, *HRNSW*, vol. 5, p. 337
- [4] *Ibid* Vol. 5, King to Hobart, 1 Mar. 1804, pp. 425–6
- [5] M. Rowe, in *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 43, pt. 6, 1957, George Mealmaker, the Forgotten Martyr, pp. 292–298
- [6] *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* (New South Wales 1803 – 1842), Sunday 7 May 1809, p. 1, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/627737>
- [7] John White, *The female Factory* (continued), *Fifty Years Under the Lash*, *Cootamundra Herald*, 9 June, 1906, p.4, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/139451177>
- [8] J Broadbent and J Hughs, *Francis Greenway Architect*, Historic Houses Trust, Sydney, 1997, p.36
- [9] Kay Daniels, *Convict Women*, Allen and Unwin, 1998, p.110
- [10] Greenway to Gill, 12 October 1816, Mitchell Library, Bonwick Transcripts T20, pp. 3328–3329
- [11] John McClymont Collection, original text, donated to the Parramatta Heritage Centre, 2014

The Second Female Factory: 1818–1848

Geoff Barker



Female factory, Parramatta, Illustrated Sydney News, 3 Oct 1889

In his 1816 report on the, first Female Factory at Gaol Green (Prince Alfred Square) the architect Francis Greenway made it clear there was a need to improve the crowded accommodation above the Parramatta goal.[1] Macquarie was prompted to ask for the report by Samuel Marsden, who, with growing dismay, had complained about the disorderliness of the women convicts. He had continually written letters to the social reformers Wilberforce, Lord Bathurst, Elizabeth Fry, lobbied Governor Macquarie, and while in England in 1808, discussed the problem with the archbishop and the secretary of state. [2]

This report and Marsden's concerns must have resonated with Governor Macquarie for in January 1817 he placed the construction of a new Female Factory building on the list of essential public buildings. In March 1817 Greenway was given orders to

... make out a ground plan and elevation of a factory and barracks sufficient to lodge 300 female convicts, on an area of ground of four acres, enclosed by a stone wall nine feet high'. [3]

As Macquarie's favoured architect Greenway was kept extremely busy. At the beginning of 1818 Macquarie had him working on the South Head lighthouse, the government stables, the Sydney military barracks, and St Matthew's Church (Windsor).[4] Finally a site was chosen on the north side of the Parramatta River, just up from the weir constructed for the government mill.

This site was on the original grant given to Governor Bligh, but resumed by Macquarie after Bligh's departure under a cloud of scandal.[5] In December 1817 Major Druitt, the recently appointed Chief Engineer, called for tenders based on Greenway's plans and specifications.[6] The contract was handed over to William Watkins and Isaac Payten in April 1818 under the condition they would complete it in eighteen months for the sum of 4778 pounds.[7] On 9 July 1818 Governor Macquarie laid the foundation stone but the work was not completed until January 1821.[8]

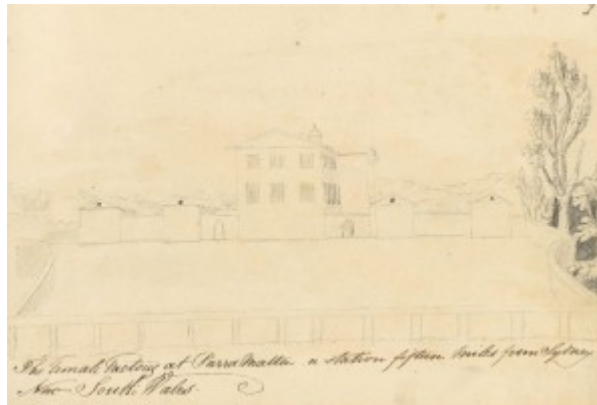
On 1 February 1821 Macquarie and Commissioner Bigge visited the new building to watch 109 women and 71 children removed from the old gaol and lodged in the newly completed 'Female Factory'. Bigge who was at this time conducting an enquiry into wastage of funds in the colony appears to have been less than impressed and doubted such an expensive new barrack had been necessary.[9]

Bigge described the principle building as consisting of three stories broken into two separate wings by the central staircase and cupola which aided in ventilating the whole. On the ground floor were the dining rooms while the upper floors were for sleeping. The whole was surrounded by a wall which the main building divided into a inner and outer courtyard. Inside these yards were variety of smaller buildings used to house the administrators, a small hospital,

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kitchens and a room for weaving cloth.[10] A good idea of the layout of the factory can be gleaned from the maps drawn by Standish Lawrence Harris, in 1823, shortly after the building opened.[11]

This original building covered 1.6 hectares with a three story main barrack or dormitory building with single story service buildings on either side of a front courtyard. The workshop and service buildings faced into a rear courtyard where there was also access towards the river.[12] The design was simple and lacking ornament and in this was similar to the Hyde Park barracks, also designed by Greenway. However one of the primary faults in the design proved to be its close proximity to the riverbank which, as Bigge pointed out, had a breach which threatened the foundations of the wall and required a deep buttress to protect the foundations.[13] In fact the late decision to build a perimeter wall and the flood measures required to ensure the wall wasn't washed away increased the overall costs by 1200 pounds sterling.[14]



Parramatta Female Factory, pencil sketch, 1823, Robert Charles Harry, National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an6239017

Greenway's Female Factory was by no means the final solution and as demand, and attitudes, to convict women and medical treatment changed so did the factory and the precinct around it. One of the major faults of the original design was it did not allow for separation of different classes of convicts. This led to the modification of the stairwell to divide the first class and third areas. New workshops and a privy built on the river-side of the complex are clearly visible in the S. L. Harris elevation and plan of the buildings. Even so the original building was too small to contain all the needs of the precinct and in 1823 Governor Brisbane added a two-storey building in a separate yard to the north-west to act as a prison wing to hold 60 female convicts.[15]

Another issue was caused by that fact the Female Factory' in the 1820s treated most of the women in the colony that required medical attention. There was a hospital ward in the outer courtyard but surgeons treated women in the open courtyard. In 1829 they requested a verandah be installed to give them some protection. The 1833 plans suggest they occupied the right hand range of buildings in the outer yard and by 1861 it appears a second storey had been added. These buildings are still standing.[16]

Over the ensuing years a courtyard and surrounding buildings were modified to suit the changing needs of the administrators and inmates. Separate buildings and enclosures were erected and maintained by the Royal Engineers and in 1825 buildings were constructed for women sentenced for crimes by the Sydney law courts. These were essentially prison accommodation for what were termed 'third class' inmates and who were kept separate from the other 'first' and 'second' class women housed in the older sections of the Female Factory.[17]

Under Governor Darling each class was provided with its own kitchens, workshops and accommodation. These were built around a series of courtyards and walls surrounding the main building. In 1828 a pump and internal water system was installed removing the need for women to go outside to get water. At the same time the height of the wall was raised to 16 feet presumably reflecting the move toward a more prison-like precinct.[18]

In June 1838 the Royal Engineers, under Captain Barney, started work on a new building to the east of the first female factory building which would create a more punitive environment for the inmates. This was described in 1906 by Charles White, in his newspaper serial, *Fifty Years Under the Lash*,

In 1839 the Factory was remodelled, extensive alterations and additions being made, under the order of Governor Gipps. The number of cells was increased to seventy-two, and they were built on the plan of the American separate system. The total cost was £3767, and the Governor reported that; under a new Act that

was passed for the better regulation of the female prisons, order, cleanliness, perfect obedience, and silence prevailed in the establishment to a degree scarcely surpassed in any prison in England.[19]

This three storey cell-block was completed in September 1839 and although clearly built to suit its purpose of imprisoning inmates the bottom floor was criticised by Her Majesty's Prison Inspector for being too dark. As a result new windows had to be cut into the concrete walls.[20] Gipps was clearly interested in reforming the conditions at the factory and along with the new building he also introduced two new administrators, selected by the English reformer, Elizabeth Fry. It was during this period under Governor Bourke and Governor Gipps that the factory came to be seen primarily as a prison. [21]

In 1840 transportation to New South Wales stopped and in 1841 assignment of convict women to the factory ceased.[22] By 1846 there were 250 women in the factory and the government began to move a new group of inmates into the building as it was re-purposed as an asylum for the insane. By 1848 the administrative positions of the Female Factory, including those of matron had been abolished.[23] It was also at this time that the precinct was renamed the 'Parramatta Lunatic Asylum'. [24]

In 1849 Dr Patrick Hill who oversaw the asylum chaired a committee to consider future locations for 'convict lunatics'. While he suggested the Female Factory could really only deal with 'lunatics' of one sex the rest of the institution could perhaps take 50-70 male mental health patients.[25] Hill further suggested the precinct become the institution for 'uncurables' of both sexes.[26]

By 1850 the Greenway designed 'female factory' and most of the outlying buildings were incorporated into the new insane asylum precinct. Today there you can still find some remnants of walls, courtyards and outlying buildings but sadly Greenway's original building and the 1838-1839 penitential extensions were demolished around 1883 when the asylum was redesigned. The sandstone from the penitential extensions appear to have been used to construct the James Barnet designed, 'No. 1 Male Ward', now the 'Institute of Psychiatry' building.

Patients moved into this new building in 1885, and it is still standing on the site with what is thought to be a turret clock from the old Female Factory building mounted in the spire.[27] Greenway's old Female Factory was deemed beyond repair for the new asylum and demolished in 1885-1886. Its stones were used for the foundations of a religious services and recreational activities area.[28]

Surviving Buildings



Parramatta Female Factory, Building 103, Parramatta City Council, Maribel Rosales and Sally Chik, 2015

One part which did survive, although it has undergone many modifications, was the store (building 103) originally flanking a courtyard and the superintendent's quarters for the factory. Built between 1818 and 1821 it is currently used as the Institute of Psychiatry lecture rooms.[29] One of a pair of buildings (building 111 is the other) the north-east section had a second storey added sometime around 1865. More additions were made over the course of the 1900s, including bay windows and a porch around 1915.[30]

A second surviving portion, although not part of the original Greenway building, is the former prison 'Sleeping Ward' (building 105). Made up of two joined sections this was part of the first major extension to the factory for 'Third Class' female convicts and was built by the Royal Engineers around 1825. It was originally two storied with a stair-well in the south-eastern room. In 1863 a verandah was added to the western side and the upper floor was removed in the



North Parramatta, Female Factory, Sleeping Ward', built about 1825, photo Parramatta City Council, Peter Arfanis, 2015

1880s and it was around this period that gothic revival timber elements were added in an attempt to make its profile more picturesque. The second section, the north wing, was constructed around 1890 and was used as the 'Wet and Dirty Ward No 8'. [31]

Also still in existence although heavily modified over the years is the store building which originally sat adjacent to the matron's quarters and female factory Library. This originally featured a verandah across the entry to the courtyard. In 1865 it appears an attic was added to the single story section and the dormers still in place were completed. The two story section still retains the original stone work with bevelled details to the edges to prevent inmates climbing the walls. Side additions were added in the 1930s and 1940s and a skillion addition in the 1950s. [32]



Cumberland Precinct, Ward 1, clock tower, Parramatta City Council, Maribel Rosales, 2015

Still surviving also is a Thwaites and Reed turret clock which is thought by some to have come from Greenway's original Female Factory building. According to most research this clock was removed sometime around 1885 and put into the newly constructed tower of the male asylum ward. There is however some reason to question this assumption as the current turret clock has more than one face and the old Female Factory only one. This would suggest the current clock is either a heavily modified version of the first or even perhaps a new Thwaites and Reed clock. We would be interested if anyone could cast more light on this as the clock remains in the clock tower to this day.

Probably the most impressive section of the old female factory precinct still intact is the sandstone walls which were built around 1838, to create a walled courtyard around the central female cell block. Although these were subject to modification in the 1860s when it was used to house mental health patients. This high sandstone wall still completely encloses the space adjacent to the Roman Catholic orphan school although there is obvious wear and tear to some parts of the wall. The blocks themselves are all convict sandstone and each bears the individual marks of its maker. [33] Sections of these walls were also rebuilt in the 1860s and in the 1880s. [35]

Another reminder of the old Female Factory cited by Higginbotham and Associates in their 2010 Report is the former 'dead house' erected in 1838 as a small building adjacent to the entrance of the Artisan's Yards. [36]

Endnotes

[1] J Broadbent and J Hughs, Francis Greenway Architect, Historic Houses Trust, Sydney, 1997, p.64

[2] A. Yarwood, Samuel Marsden, p.188.



Parramatta Cumberland Health Precinct, Female Factory prison, sandstone blocks, courtyard wall, Parramatta City Council, Geoff Barker, 2014

- [3] J Broadbent and J Hughs, Francis Greenway Architect, Historic Houses Trust, Sydney, 1997, p.18
- [4] J Broadbent and J Hughs, Francis Greenway Architect, Historic Houses Trust, Sydney, 1997, p.18
- [5] Kerr, Liston, McClymont, Parramatta a Past revealed, Parramatta City Council, 1996, p.97
- [6] Sydney Gazette, p.1, a, 20 Dec 1817, John McClymont (c), #13 – 3/97 – 9000 – Map
- [7] J Broadbent and J Hughs, Francis Greenway Architect, Historic Houses Trust, Sydney, 1997, p.64
- [8] Conservation Management Plan and Archaeological Management Plan, Cumberland Hospital East Campus and Wistaria Gardens, Edward Higginbotham & Associates PTY Ltd, Geoffrey Britton & Terry Kass, 2010, p. 19
- [9] J Broadbent and J Hughs, Francis Greenway Architect, Historic Houses Trust, Sydney, 1997, p.65
- [10] J Broadbent and J Hughs, Francis Greenway Architect, Historic Houses Trust, Sydney, 1997, p.65
- [11] Conservation Management Plan and Archaeological Management Plan, Cumberland Hospital East Campus and Wistaria Gardens, Edward Higginbotham & Associates PTY Ltd, Geoffrey Britton & Terry Kass, 2010, p.20
- [12] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, 52
- [13] J Broadbent and J Hughs, Francis Greenway Architect, Historic Houses Trust, Sydney, 1997, p.66
- [14] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, 52
- [15] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, 54
- [16] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, 56
- [17] Conservation Management Plan and Archaeological Management Plan, Cumberland Hospital East Campus and Wistaria Gardens, Edward Higginbotham & Associates PTY Ltd, Geoffrey Britton & Terry Kass, 2010, p.21
- [18] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, 59
- [19] Conservation Management Plan and Archaeological Management Plan, Cumberland Hospital East Campus and Wistaria Gardens, Edward Higginbotham & Associates PTY Ltd, Geoffrey Britton & Terry Kass, 2010, p.21
- [20] Conservation Management Plan and Archaeological Management Plan, Edward Higginbotham & Associates PTY Ltd, 2010, p.21
- [21] Kay Daniels, Convict Women, Allen and Unwin, 1998, p.117
- [23] Kay Daniels, Convict Women, Allen and Unwin, 1998, p.67
- [23] Kay Daniels, Convict Women, Allen and Unwin, 1998, p.67
- [24] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, 59
- [25] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, 59
- [26] Government Medical Officer Letterbook AONSW 2/676, p. 11, cited in Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, 59
- [27] Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, 61
- [28] Weatherburn 1990, citing Annual Reports of Inspector-General of the Insane 1885 and 1886. Kass, Liston (1998) and others mix up which building was demolished and therefore which stone is the source of No 1 Male Ward, cited in Casey and Lowe, Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct, 2014, 64
- [29] Conservation Management Plan and Archaeological Management Plan, Edward Higginbotham & Associates PTY Ltd, 2010, p.88
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The Parramatta Lunatic Asylum 1848-1878

Geoff Barker



Parramatta Lunatic Asylum, Covered Dining Area, June 1861

Around 1839 Sydney opened a new asylum for destitute women and the insane at Tarban Creek near Gladesville but hopes that this would solve the colonies problems for this group proved short-lived.[1] Instead the numbers of destitute women, and people with mental health issues continued to grow and by 1846 the Tarban Creek Asylum was over crowded.

In contrast the stopping of transportation to New South Wales and problems with the facilities at the 'female factory' meant there were only 250 women in the Female Factory.[2] This combined with the ongoing demands to spend money wisely, impelled the Colonial Government to look at converting the 'female factory' into an asylum.[3]

Change was clearly in the wind and the falling numbers at the factory saw Edwyn Statham, the last superintendent of the Female Factory have his position abolished in 1848. But perhaps this wasn't such bad news for Edwyn as he, and his wife, were immediately appointed to superintendent to the 'Parramatta Lunatic Asylum'. Positions they held until around 1878, when the name and administration changed again.[4]

There was clearly room at the factory for more inmates and pressure on existing asylums made it inevitable that some should be moved to the newly named 'Parramatta Lunatic Asylum'. The only issues appears to have been what kind of patients could the current facilities hold and what modifications would need to be made to take more.

In 1849 Dr Patrick Hill chaired a committee to consider locations for 'convict lunatics'. He suggested that while the Female Factory could really only deal with lunatics of one sex, the rest of the institution could perhaps take 50-70 male mental health patients.[5] Hill further suggested Parramatta become the institution for 'uncurables' of both sexes.[6]

On 18 July 1849, Governor Fitzroy released an article on the Colony's finances in which he outlined the following:

... it is the intention to remove from Tarban Creek to the building at Parramatta, known as the Female Factory, incurable chronic lunatics. This arrangement, urgently required as a means of desirable classification and of relieving the present greatly overcrowded state of the Asylum, is also a measure of economy, as it will save the expense of upwards of £3000 required by the Superintendent at Tarban Creek, for the accommodation of the increased number of lunatics, now under his charge; no increase is anticipated in the expense of provisions and contingencies, beyond that hitherto provided for the establishment at Tarban Creek. By relieving the Asylum of all the chronic cases, it is confidently hoped that its efficiency as a curative establishment may be materially improved.[7]

This process went ahead and the new arrivals were fitted into the existing buildings and in 1850 the site officially became the 'Parramatta Lunatic Asylum'.^[8] This quickly revealed inadequacies which had to be overcome by the minor works and extensions as more and more patients were squeezed into the old factory grounds. In 1852 Patrick Hill became the first Surgeon Superintendent of the Asylum, but this appointment was short-lived as Hill died soon after and was replaced by Dr Richard Greenup.^[9]

In 1855 the asylum acquired twenty-three acres from the Government Domain, on the western side of the river, for use as a farm, and a further 6 acres were acquired for private access.^[10] In 1856 Dr Greenup requested a steam boiler to heat the buildings instead of using open fires which could be dangerous for patients.^[11] A 30 yard section of the poorly built sixteen foot high wall separating the refractory women from the gardens fell down 6 November 1856. This was later replaced with a wooden fence.^[12]

But all of this did little to change the ongoing need for accommodation and treatment areas to be redesigned for asylum inmates and not convicts and criminals. In fact it appears that throughout the 1850s most of the new arrivals were made up from the destitute and low risk mental health patients.^[13]

In 1861, the first major addition was built on a site to the north eastern side of the main entrance. Often referred to as the 'Criminal Lunatics Building', this was a new block of cells to house the criminally insane separately from the other patients.^[14] By this time Superintendent Statham was looking after about 200 male patients while Mrs. Statham looked after around 200 females.^[15] Given the following description made by visitors in May of that year they were clearly doing a reasonable job given their limited resources,

[We] entered the grounds of the asylum, this pre dates extensions, a warm pleasant day and once inside the inmates all made their way to them to talk. ... one active little man pushed his way to us and claimed our attention ... "Do not listen to these madmen," he said, "you see these marks prove- the fact," tearing, open his shirt bosom as he spoke. "I was made Pope of Rome a thousand million years ago, by the Lord Jesus Christ! I made Napoleon King and yet I am kept here locked up with these madmen."^[16]

After talking with the inmates in the yard the correspondent commented on the conditions describing the cleanliness of the place, and how the inmates were locked in their separate dormitories at sundown. When they entered the hospital wing they found only eleven patients there. The inmates received a pint of soup, half a pound of meat, and bread, vegetables and tea each day and on fine days the meals were served outside under the large courtyard shed erected for that purpose. Most were granted a liberal amount of freedom during the day but there were extreme cases which needed to be confined. For example they found one man in the courtyard

... whose hands and legs were constantly chained; he was a most violent man – had murdered his wife some years before, and was hopelessly, dangerously mad.^[17]

Conditions for the women appear to have been worse as they were the ones occupying the old Female Factory prison cells. But even so they found,

The women were scattered about the courtyard, standing in the shelter of trees, which adorn it, or seated in the covered compartment where, as in the men's side, their meals are served in fine weather. All was scrupulously clean, some talking and laughing, others gazing silently at us.^[18]

In 1864 a second storey was added to the Criminal Lunatics building and the third between 1868 and 1869.^[19] Designed originally with 19 to 20 individual cells, each floor had a 'keeper's' room.^[20]

Vineyard Farm

In 1866 the Asylum purchased the adjacent forty-three acre Vineyard Farm from George and Ellen Blaxland.^[21] This provided an administration building in the form of the old Bett's family house and gave the administrators enough new land to enable the construction of new purpose-built structures to house male and female patients separately. The first of these was the male weatherboard division (also known as Temporary Asylum, and Central Male Block), built in 1869-1870.^[22]

The male weatherboard division

Between 1869 and 1870 The male weatherboard division was erected on five acres of land separated from the old asylum by a narrow band of uncultivated ground. Designed by the Colonial Architect James Barnett it was enclosed

with wooden palisading. When the building was reviewed in the Freeman's Journal in 1877, it was described as being ... *on the whole well adapted to the purpose for which it was erected*.^[23]

On the 26 February, 1870, the Sydney Mail, gave a very detailed description of these new premises which were managed separately by Superintendent Dr Wardley, and Mr. J.Rr. Firth, Assistant-Superintendent,

... entering the exercise yard by a side gate at the southern boundary, the visitor finds himself at the end of a spacious verandah floored with cement, and running down the entire front of the building, a distance of over 300 feet. [the kitchen] this is a roomy and lofty chamber, cement floored and fitted with a large patent stove, together with a large copper, etc. At the back of this is a large store, divided by a transverse partition, and to be used, one half for the reception of linen, cutlery, etc., and the other portion for wine, spirits, and such-like articles.^[24]

The first men were moved there in the early part of 1870 and although designed to house 200 patients by 1872, it housed 250.



Parramatta-Hospital-for-the-Insane-Dining-Yard-1875-1895-Parramatta-City-Council-LSP00171

In 1877, The Freeman's Journal, gave the following description of the premises,

The pavilion plan is adopted here with the greatest possible success; the inmates and their attendants having free access to all parts of the building without the inconvenience of crossing the yards in all weathers, which is unavoidable in other divisions of the institution. The terrible prison features which I have alluded to as being conspicuous elsewhere are absent in this weatherboard building; there are no bars, no high walls, but a fine area of land, which is neatly laid out as an immense flower garden, and merely enclosed in front by an open paling fence. The building itself is ingeniously designed, and consists of three or four day rooms with dormitories running at right angles. The former can be thrown into one, or partitioned off into separate apartments at pleasure, and consequently some means of classification is at hand did the medical attendant care to avail himself of them.

The division being constructed of wood no whitewash brush is required and the whole place was, sweeter, cleaner, and in every way pleasanter to gaze upon than other portions of the asylum. I have described. The master attendant, who resides at the northern end, has the immediate supervision of the weatherboard building and is assisted by one senior attendant, a cook, a night-watchman, and ten junior attendants.^[25]

Built on the northern end of the site it was surrounded to the north by a kitchen, stores, and Chief Attendant's residence, which were added between 1877 to 1880 to support female weatherboard units.^[26]

In the 1890s more buildings were added to this area and at some stage before 1930 the Chief Attendant's residence was pulled down. From 1934 onwards the old male division weatherboard buildings were replaced with brick ones with a similar footprint. These modifications finally ended in the 1960s.^[27]

1875-1876 additions

By the 1870s the Asylum had grown to be the largest Government establishment in Parramatta, housing around 800 inmates. Of these 245 were housed in a new wing on land adjoining the main building.^[28] Between 1875 and

1876 a range of stone buildings replaced some of the old Female Factory buildings and improvements were made to the yards. These included one dormitory for 60 patients, 34 single cells and two corridors.[29]

By 1878 the males who were quiet, harmless or senile were housed in the 'weatherboard division'. The buildings were surrounded by a number of open air yard labelled by the 1878 Report as being the, 'Quiet and Orderly', 'Sick Epileptic and Aged', 'Noisy and Violent', and the 'Intermediate Yard' which contained an aviary, fountain and trees. [30]

These buildings were all on the north side of the main Female Factory over the eastern part of the third class penitentiary yard and were referred to as the 'spinal range' or 'Ward No 2' and 'Ward No. 3', they are now referred to as Building 104.[31]

Even with all these additions the composite nature of the site, the re-purposing of buildings and the pressing need to accommodate such a broad range of psychiatric patients still presented numerous problems for the asylum. Frederick Norton Manning after touring the world to look at asylums elsewhere gave Parramatta a damning review in General report on Asylums, report card, stating,

I have not seen anything so unsatisfactory and so saddening as Parramatta, except at Cairo.[32]

As a result of the Lunacy Act of 1878 the 'Parramatta Lunatic Asylum' was renamed the 'Parramatta Hospital for the Insane' and put under the direction of the Inspector General for the Insane, the first of which was Dr. F N Manning (1878 – 1898).[33] Manning was replaced by Dr. E Sinclair (1898 – 1920s).[34]

Endnotes

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- [15] Parramatta Lunatic Asylum, *Australian Home Companion and Band of Hope Journal*, 1 June, 1861.
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- [19] T Smith, *Hidden Heritage; 150 years of public mental health care at the Cumberland Hospital, Parramatta, 1849-1999*, Greater Parramatta Mental Health care Service, Westmead, 1999, p.12, cited in Higginbotham, 2010, p.34
- [20] Casey and Lowe, *Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct*, 2014, p.61
- [21] Casey and Lowe, *Cumberland Precinct and Sports & Leisure Precinct*, 2014, p.60
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- [24] Lunatic Asylum Parramatta, *Sydney Mail*, 26 February, 1870
- [25] The Parramatta Lunatic Asylum, *Freeman's Journal*, 1 September, 1877, p.17
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Parramatta Hospital for the Insane, Destruction of 'Female Factory' buildings 1878 -1983

Geoff Barker



Parramatta Lunatic Asylum, about 1885

Throughout the 1870s a number of women patients were housed in the inappropriate prison cells constructed by Governor Gipps in 1838-1839.[1] Dr. Manning, the 'Inspector of the Insane', conducted two reports (1868 and 1877) which challenged the current system and appears to have been one of the main factors in upgrades being made to the buildings and structures over the 1880s.[2] The following conditions in the old prison yard were described in 1877:

The lunatic women, whether free, convict or criminal, occupied one large yard surrounded by high prison walls. The yard was partly grassed, but had no gardens and was divided by a paling fence which separated the aged and sick from the others. The aged and sick occupied three rooms and the others slept in 'the old factory', described as a 'gloomy, three-storied building' with cells, the internal corridors of which are so dark that it is never brighter than twilight on the sunniest day. This is thought to be the 1838-39 punishment cell wing. The entrance door was only 18 inches wide and there was no glass in the windows.[3]

By August 1882 a large single story weatherboard complex for women had been completed and the patients moved in.[4] The building was in the northern part of the Vineyard estate acquired from John and Ellen Blaxland, and once the property of Reverend Samuel Marsden. But the movement of the patients was to have a momentous effect on the old Female Factory precinct.

As a result of the movement of the female patients into their new accommodation approval was given in August 1882, to destroy the 1838-1839 prison cell complex they had vacated.[5]

By 31 May 1884 the walls of a new Asylum building (now known as the 'Institute of Psychiatry Building') were up and workmen were completing work on the roof. Rather than waste the sandstone blocks from the old Female Factory cells the administration appear to have used them in the construction new buildings. The new psychiatry building was erected just south of the old Female Factory buildings and was completed in June 1885; it is still standing on the site today.[6]

A dining block behind the Psychiatry Building was completed at the same time and this is also still standing on the Cumberland site.

Ward 4, the 'wet and dirty' building for those suffering from incontinence was built in 1889. This building had special drainage and ventilation and was attached to the original 'female factory' dormitory building erected for third class female convicts around 1825 (both still stand today although in a modified state). [7]

While construction of buildings was a focus of changes to the asylum it was around this time that the grounds and

gardens also started a new phase of re-design. Central to this was the appointment of William Cotter Williamson as Assistant Medical Superintendent in 1883. Cotter's interests in the Sydney Gardening Movement, ensured the gardens, and the beneficial effects of these areas for the patients were more fully acknowledged.[8] One of the first areas to be redeveloped was the site of the former Female Factory which was laid out as gardens and shrubbery after the demolition.[9]

Even these new buildings were not enough to alleviate the pressure and on the 10 July 1887, official visitors to the Parramatta site addressed a letter to the Colonial Secretary about conditions at the Parramatta Asylum.[10]

In an attempt to deal with the increasing demand for psychiatric services 'Callan Park' in Rozelle had been opened in 1884. But even this could not alleviate the demand and in 1888 the Protestant Orphan School at Rydalmere was acquired and converted to an Insane Asylum.

Over 1889 and 1890 an impressive new sandstone building was erected on the grounds at Parramatta. This building referred to in some reports as Male Ward 4 (or building 106) was on the western side of the original precinct and faced onto the river. Housed here were the dangerous and refractory non-criminal males.[11]

By 1892 the buildings were already over-crowded and in 1903 the additions made to No. 4 Ward were completed at a cost of 2703 pounds along with extensions to the laundry.[12] The removal of the old entrance gates around 1909 saw the central complex of the Asylum opened up and the new visiting and office block which replaced them was completed in 1910. The staff dining room and kitchen were completed in the same year.[13]

By 1934 there were 700 women patients crammed into the buildings. The 'Criminal Lunatic Ward No 5' was demolished in 1963 and was replaced with a staff car park and walls were demolished as a part of a new open ward policy. Construction of a new medical centre to become the central medical unit began in 1966 and was completed in 1967.[14] This was followed by the intensive care facilities and renovation of the 'chronic male block' and wards; 9, 10 and 11.[15]

In 1970 replacement of the weatherboard 'female division' allowed the patients to be moved out and the old buildings were then demolished.[16] The name of the complex was changed to Cumberland Hospital in 1983.

Endnotes

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Asylum Gardens, North Parramatta

Alison Lykissas



Cumberland Hospital Precinct, Yard 1, Female Factory fountain, Parramatta City Council, Maribel Rosales, 2015

The front gardens in the eastern section of the Cumberland Health precinct may look unassuming but the design and plantings reflect a long and interesting history. Before its current incarnation as part of the Cumberland Health campus, this precinct bore witness to early colonial land grants and a succession of institutions devoted to caring for the less fortunate.

The first European owner, Charles Smith, sold his farming land to the Reverend Samuel Marsden who oversaw the building of the government water mill near the old Roman Catholic Orphan School. A mill race was dug to bring water from the river to the mill's pond and it traversed several precincts within the Cumberland Hospital site. The original alignment ran along the western border of the gardens however this was diverted to the area north of the gardens in the 1820s. Of additional significance is that this mill race seems to have been incorporated into a drainage system for later institutions, such as the Female Factory and the Parramatta Hospital for the Insane.[1] On the eastern side of the gardens is Fleet Street and this was named after the mill race or 'fleet' for the mill.[2]

This garden precinct has remained the main entry point for successive institutions built on the Cumberland precinct from the mid-1800s to the present day. The landscaping of the site was originally intended to be read as a whole and it was designed to maximise views of the Parramatta River and surrounding farmland. By the 1890s, the basic framework of the gardens had been established. According to a National Trust of Australia report,

...the pathway system, garden areas and shrubberies throughout the hospital were established with orchards, vegetable gardens and vineyard on the periphery. Trees were supplied by the Botanic Gardens and plants listed as being supplied in the 1870s such as the *Schinus terebinthifolia* and Plane Trees still survive on the site today. [3]

Between 1818 and 1848 the Female Factory was the first institution to occupy the site between Fleet St and the Parramatta River. It was designed by Francis Greenway as a series of sandstone buildings to house female convicts. In the late 1840s the Colonial Government made the decision to turn the Parramatta Female Factory into the Asylum for Invalid and Lunatic Convicts (1848 – 1849) after the nearby Tarban Creek facility (in Gladesville) had reached capacity. For the duration of the Asylum, the administrative offices, residences for officials and stores were all clustered near the Fleet Street entrance gates.[4]

In 1852 Dr Richard Greenup was appointed as the first Medical Superintendent. He believed that engaging patients in meaningful work was beneficial and during the day patients were involved in tasks such as cleaning, sewing,



*Front gardens along Greenup Drive by E.W.Searle, about 1935,
National Library Australia, vn4654261-v*

laundry, along with maintaining the buildings and gardens. Unfortunately, his humanitarian approach to mental health care came to an abrupt end when he was killed by one of his patients. During his time at the Asylum, Greenup was involved in discussions about encouraging patients back into the community but his murder put a halt to this and the institutionalisation of mental health patients continued apace. Greenup Drive on the western side of the gardens is named after him.[5]

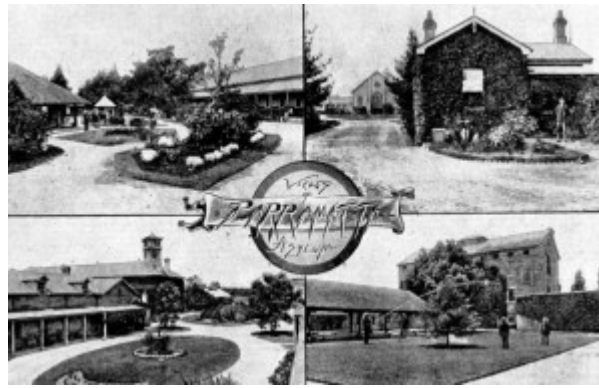
In 1876, Dr Frederick North Manning was appointed the first Inspector General of the Insane New South Wales. Following a study tour of institutions in the United States, England, France and Germany, Manning introduced the Lunacy Act 1878. This resulted in major improvements to mental health care in the colony and the precinct was renamed Parramatta Hospital for the Insane. This period saw major modifications with changes to the layout of the site, additions and replacement of older buildings. Manning advocated for mental health to be treated as an illness rather than a crime. He encouraged public visitation to the hospitals in an effort to break down the stigma. At Parramatta, one of the primary aims of the improvements was to encourage patients to take part in healthy outdoor activities.

A large sports oval and cricket ground was created in 1879 with an open air shelter pavilion added the following year to encourage healthy participation in physical activities. This amenity, along with a bowling green in front of Ward 1, became important social venues for activities between patients and staff and visiting teams from other institutions. With landscaped park-like grounds, an aviary, fountains, terraced riverbanks, formal gardens and new buildings, some re-using the stone from earlier structures, the Asylum environment was considerably enhanced. The ha-ha kept patients within the grounds, but afforded views of the landscape and a sense of freedom. Windows, although barred, were given decorative treatment, rather than prison-like bars. [6]

Reporting in the *Australian Town and Country Journal* of 1885, the Parramatta Asylum is described as being about a mile above Lennox Bridge and covering about 120 acres on both sides of the Parramatta River. Within that land parcel, 30 acres was devoted to a farm growing fruit and vegetables, 60 acres as pasture for the animals and the remainder comprised buildings, private enclosures and recreation grounds. The main entry through the Fleet Street gates is described as follows:

What strikes the visitor on entering the main gates is the exquisitely clean and neat appearance of the buildings and their surroundings. Closely shaven lawns, well-rolled gravel paths, and flower-beds bright with coloured walls covered with ivy and the climbing ficus, and in some cases the gorgeously-tinted bougainvillea, all be token a great amount of case on the part of the gardener and his assistants, and show that amongst other curative, or palliative measures used, that of beautiful surroundings holds no small place in the system adopted. Ornamental fountains and statuary, some the work of attendants, are also frequently met with: one of the former especially worth attention having been constructed by an attendant out of clinkers from the steam boiler furnaces.[7]

Changes to the site continued in the early 1900s, and are still evident today. Between 1901 and 1960, the site was known as the Parramatta Psychiatric Hospital. The Government Architect, Walter Liberty Vernon was responsible for



Gardens inside the Parramatta Lunatic Asylum. Source: Australian Town and Country Journal, 12 Jan 1895, page 26

designing a series of buildings on the site that interacted and celebrated the importance of the garden setting in mental health care. His planning was informed by the Garden City Movement and there remains a significant collection of plants which have been attributed to the involvement of Joseph Henry Maiden, Director of the Royal Botanical Gardens between 1896 and 1924. During this time, the Royal Botanic Gardens supplied many government institutions with plant materials and advice.[8] The importance of the garden setting can still be seen today in the nomenclature of the buildings throughout the whole site using non-scientific botanical names, such as Rose, Figtree, Wisteria, Willow, Acacia, Banksia, Jarrah and Pine.

Evidence of the major 1900s hospital redevelopment phase includes the substantial group of plantings that dominate the precinct and forms a major part of the plant collection within the campus notable for its extant and botanical diversity. It includes six species that represent an impressive campus-wide collection of Australian rainforest species. A species of the Mexican/Southern USA genus *Beaucarnea* (syn. *Nolina*) is rare in cultivation and certainly at this age. The rare *Beaucarnea* and some of the Australian rainforest species were probably used by the Botanic Gardens as an exercise in testing the cultural application of species hitherto little used horticulturally in Australia. [9]

The Department of Environment and Heritage describes the site as housing a rare and substantially intact public landscape designed between 1860 and 1920. Included within the grounds are rainforest species, both native and exotic, conifers and palms. Of particular note are five large specimens of Canary Island pine trees (*Pinus Canariensis*). Scattered throughout the grounds are shrubs and climbers that represent 1800s and early 1900s garden design.[10]

As Medical Superintendent during the period 1900 to 1921, Dr William Cotter Williamson was another strong advocate for the inclusion of landscaped grounds within and around the institution, believing they were an essential part of patient care and therapy. In 1907, at a Council meeting, Dr Williamson requested permission to plant a row of plane trees in the gardens along the Fleet Street. His request was granted as it was recognised that Dr Williamson had contributed greatly to the hospital and its grounds.

His Worship stated that Dr Williamson had done much and was doing much, not only to improve the grounds (and to make them a place well worth visiting for the sake of their own attractiveness), but also to improve that part of Parramatta North in the vicinity of the Hospital. [11]

To undertake the improvements, Dr Williamson utilised patient labour for both practical and therapeutic reasons. A newspaper article in 1917 reported that:

...patients are privileged to work but are never forced to do it. There are recreation grounds where cricket and tennis can be played. Outdoor exercise is necessary for the well-being of some of the patients, and these often find an outlet for their energies in helping with gardening work or other undertakings in the hospital. [12]

Patient labour is also evident in the low stone wall between the gardens and Fleet Street. It was built during the depression (1929 and 1932). Extending along both sides of the entrance, it was constructed by groups of patients using stone rubble obtained from the former Fleet Street quarry across the road. The walls follow the alignment of Fleet

24 The Parramatta Female Factory and Insane Asylum

Street and are interspersed with small capped piers. Much of the wall along the north and south points of entry from Fleet Street are overgrown with garden. The north part of the stone wall follows the contours of the front garden area to the hospital.

Of note inside the front gardens are two brick buildings and a water fountain. Upon entering the Fleet Street garden precinct, the first building on Greenup Drive is a toilet block. It is a small brick building with a gabled roof of terracotta tiles. It was constructed in 1955 and is surrounded by grass apart from a large tree immediately adjacent and several palm trees close by.



Public Toilet block built about 1955, photograph by Alison Lykissas, Parramatta City Council, 2015

The next building along Greenup Drive houses a Mental Health Services Unit, the former Administration block for the Parramatta Hospital for the Insane. Designed as part of the Walter Liberty Vernon master plan, it was built in 1909. Located on the western side of Greenup Drive the building is the most prominent within the front garden precinct. It is a single storey brick building with sandstone details and a hipped slate roof. The front of the building has a recessed front porch supported by round sandstone columns.



GPMS Mental Health Services Unit (former Administration block Parramatta Hospital for the Insane), photograph by Alison Lykissas August, Parramatta City Council, 2015

The old entrance gates of the Female Factory, which were then part of the Parramatta Lunatic Asylum, were demolished to make way for the building. The building's alignment is with the original central axis of the Female Factory and it used to have direct visual and axial connection to the Parramatta River. Visiting today one can see the surviving portions of the Female Factory buildings flanking each side. Facing the gardens and directly in front of the building is a large Chinese Holly (*Ilex cornuta*) tree which continues the central axis of the layout (which can be seen in the preceding planting layout by Geoffrey Britton).[13]

To the north-west of the administration building is an abandoned water fountain with three tiers, which is thought to have been built by asylum patients. The exact date of construction is unknown however it is thought to be prior to 1909 when the Administration block was built, and the fountain was moved north to make way for the construction.[14] Water fountains, and later drinking fountains, were an integral part of the overall garden design within the precinct. The image below shows the original location of the water fountain at the entrance gates to the Parramatta Lunatic Asylum. The following photo, in its new location, shows it overgrown and surrounded by lawn.

From the 1960s to present day, the site has been under the management of Cumberland Hospital. Very little additional changes have been made. However, given the extensive European activity on this site since the early 1800s, several archaeology and landscape assessment reports have been conducted. In addition to the above ground sites mentioned



Fountain at entrance to Parramatta Lunatic Asylum about 1885, Parramatta City Council, Local Studies P00124



Rusticated fountain, Greenup Drive, Cumberland Precinct, photograph by Maribel Rosales, Parramatta City Council, 2015

in this precinct, Archaeologist Edward Higginbotham has detailed the significant below ground archaeology of the historic sites that were located within the garden precinct, including,

...the sites of a former gatehouse and a residence ...located on the Fleet Street frontage, north of the main entrance. The site of a house and outbuildings is located within the front gardens, opposite Albert Street and on the north side of the present main entrance. It was built prior to 1876. By the early twentieth century, the house seems to have been replaced by a gatehouse, now also demolished.[15]

As well as containing several important botanical species, it is additionally important to consider the front garden precinct as part of the overall landscape for the Cumberland Precinct.

The extent, layout (evidence of spatial planning), integrity, plant diversity and maturity of the study site landscape constitutes a major component of the setting of the place. Along with the traditional views of the river corridor and surrounding areas such as Parramatta Park and Wistaria Gardens this setting should be conserved. [16]

Endnotes

- [1] Higginbotham, E 2010, p.80
- [2] Higginbotham, E 1992, p.29
- [3] National Trust, 2014, p.6

- [4] Higginbotham, E 2010, page 34
- [5] Edwards, G 1972, p.6
- [6] Betteridge, M 2014, p.54
- [7] Australian Town and Country Journal, 1885, p.26
- [8] Higginbotham, E 2010, p.335
- [9] Ibid, p.340
- [10] NSW Department of Heritage, 2015
- [11] The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, 2 Feb 1907, p.6
- [12] Jago, W The Wingham Chronicle and Manning River Observer, 13 Jan 1917, p.2
- [13] Higginbotham, E 1992, pp.279 – 281
- [14] Higginbotham, E 2010, p.280
- [15] Higginbotham, E op cit, p.22
- [16] Betteridge, C 2014, p.30

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Room to recover: expansions to the 'Parramatta Mental Hospital'

Catherine Thompson



*Parramatta Hospital for the Insane Nursing Staff c.1907,
Parramatta Heritage Centre, LSP0006*

The passing of the 1878 *Lunacy Act* had a significant effect on what is today the Cumberland Hospital Precinct. The Act was a consolidation of two previously existing Colonial acts: the *Act to Provide for Custody and Care of Criminal Lunatics of 1861* and the *Dangerous Lunatics Act, 1868*. [1]

This later Act was heavily based on a comparative study of lunatic asylums and their conditions written by Dr Frederic Norton Manning, the then Superintendent of the Tarban Creek mental facility. The report did not reflect well upon the present state of Asylums and called for a radical overhaul of their management and methods of care. Essentially, Manning called for a more humane approach to caring for the insane. To achieve this, he wanted to

... secure for the management of such an asylum, the highest medical talent, the largest amount of experience, and the greatest benevolence. [2]

Manning's proposals also called for a professional inspector to oversee the institution, named the General Inspector of the Insane, who would have executive and legal capacity over the asylums of the State.[3]

On 1 January, 1878, Dr Manning was appointed as the first Inspector General of the Insane in New South Wales. In a report he delivered on the Parramatta Asylum, Manning reiterated his criticisms of a decade earlier, especially those relating to the old Female Factory buildings. He noted the poor conditions of overcrowding with multiple patients often confined to a single cells and characterised the so-called "airing yards" as being "unpleasantly suggestive of arrangements at the Zoological Gardens." [4]

Despite these criticisms, Terry Smith, a former Cumberland Hospital Nurse, noted that "following the proclamation of the Lunacy Act, The *Parramatta Lunatic Asylum* became known as the *Parramatta Hospital for the Insane*." Smith explains that this change in terminology was a surprisingly significant marker, reflecting the changing attitudes towards mental health and its treatment." [5]

Men of Vision: The Inspector-General for the Insane and the Architect

Executing Norton Manning's plans to improve the quality and quantity of available accommodation and treatment facilities at the Parramatta Hospital for the Insane proved to be a slow process. However, by 1883, a large, single-story weatherboard complex had been built in the northern part of the old 'Vineyard' estate acquired from John and Ellen Blaxland, which had once been the property of Reverend Samuel Marsden.[6]

Following Manning's retirement as Inspector General for the Insane, Dr. Eric Sinclair was appointed to the role. Under his tenure, the site's facilities continued to expand, with their layout reflecting the theories of Dr Sinclair himself, in their departure from overly institutional aesthetics. Instead, the new buildings were constructed under the principle that "build composition[s]" must "emphasise a community for homes within a predominately landscaped setting." [7]

The area now known as the "Hospital for the Insane Precinct" is notable for being constructed from a single, integrated master plan in which access, buildings, and landscaping were coordinated as part of the broader hospital expansion from 1899 to the 1910s.

During this period, Dr. William Cotter Williamson, the medical superintendent of the Parramatta Hospital for the Insane, presided over a series of extensions located along the river bank to the north west of the existing weatherboard division, as well as numerous new wards, all under the direction of Government Architect Walter Lindsay Vernon.

Plans for a new Admissions and Hospital Block were prepared in 1908. According to an entry in the *1912 Public Works Report*, contractor J L Thompson completed the construction for the sum of £8384. The report also noted that

The erection of this building will complete the new mental hospital, which consists of two pavilions, one for male and one for females, an Administration block with accommodation for nursing staff on the upper floor. [8]

Dr Williamson also initiated a program in which patients themselves were involved in further beautifying the hospital grounds. By late 1911, the Precinct was described as "one of the show-places of Parramatta; and this is not at the expense, but the material benefit of the patients." [9] This construction phase also included a dedicated TB treatment facility on the pre-existing Asylum farm orchards.

The layout and form of the building's featured uniquely curved alignments, which reflect the curve of the river, where the ward buildings radiate out from the central axis of the Administration building. The departure from the "enclosure and isolation" paradigm of institutional structures allowed Vernon to design buildings that were designed as integrated "elements in a landscaped setting that related to and addressed the river and the campus." [10]

Precinct Features

In 1893 Medical Superintendent Edwin Godson noted that many of the female staff still slept in rooms off the patients dormitories. He wrote of the need to provide a separate dining room for the nurses, and to provide a detached cottage, particularly for the night nurses, as they were constantly disturbed by noise during the day. [11]

Unfortunately this was not acted upon until 1911, when the Inspector General of the Insane reported that the "department had altered its policy concerning the accommodation of staff within the hospital for the insane," deciding that staff accommodation should be positioned as far from patients as possible. [12]

Jacaranda House was constructed soon after, providing new nurses' quarters as part of a series of hospital extensions that were carried out in the early twentieth century. The design was based on a suburban villa, with the ground floor accommodating two sitting rooms, a dining room, kitchen, pantry, and lavatory, while the upper floor featured another sitting room and several bedrooms for nursing staff. Jacaranda House itself was surrounded by landscaped lawns and sat at the end of a camphor laurel-lined avenue to the south.

Admissions Building (currently the Transcultural Mental Health Centre)

This building was initially an admissions building, forming the axis from which the associated male and female wards radiated. Designed by Government Architect W.L. Vernon, with assistance from G. McRae, it was completed in 1909. The building was designed to be in symmetry with its surrounds, and to be closely linked to the two adjacent ward buildings. The original portion of the building maintains its federation features and character, with gabled ends and a continuous veranda that looks out over the riverfront. In 1929, an x-ray plant was installed on the ground floor. This plant serviced all New South Wales mental hospitals.

Female and Male Wards No.7 (Formerly the Wistaria Centre, currently the Centre for Addiction Medicine and Work skills Program Buildings)

The number 7 Female and Male Wards were also constructed in 1909 under the design of W.L. Vernon. These buildings were constructed concurrently with the female ward to the north of the new Admissions building and the male ward sitting to the south at the junction of Eastern Circuit and Bridge Road. Each of these wards featured a continuous veranda along the western façade facing the river front and associated garden areas. The original buildings have now had a number of extensions, however the interiors still retain a number of original pressed metal ceilings, stained glass panels and curved bay windows. The modifications made in 1933 resulted in a new rectangular shaped wing at the eastern end of the male ward building. This was extended again in 1964 following the construction of a



Admissions Building, Parramatta Psychiatric Hospital c.1920, State Library of NSW, bcp_01641r

southern wing and additions to the south western end of the building. Similar modification were made to the female ward. Unfortunately, these modifications effectively enclosed the courtyards, and blocked the views from the original 1909 building to the river.

Tuberculosis (TB) Ward (Currently the New Street Adolescent Services)

Situated to the far north-west of the Admissions building, the current building occupying this site was constructed about 1935 as a TB treatment ward. It replaced an earlier timber framed building that was burnt and demolished. Its location however, generally responds to Vernon's master plan and is surrounded by landscaped lawns and a number of mature trees and plantings.

Timber Wharf/ Boat Shed

There is little known about the timber wharf and boat shed remains on the banks of Toongabbie Creek in this precinct. Perhaps it was utilised to move quickly between the upper precinct of the Parramatta Mental Hospital and the Wistaria Gardens across the water. A similar wharf was constructed at the Gladesville Hospital to allow residents the opportunity to participate in short day-trips on the river.[13]

Glass House and Nurseries

These buildings are dated from approximately 1950 and are located on the river bank area that was previously part of the hospital farm. A resident reflected upon his time working at the hospital farm in the February 1952 Edition of the Wisteria Journal:

"It is with pride that I state that the vegetables grown in our garden constitute the greater part of our requirements, the only exception being potatoes, which are not grown here... We have growing at present vegetable marrows, pumpkins, spinach, tomatoes, beetroot, lettuce and onions. An orchard, which runs in conjunction with the vegetable garden. We have glasshouses for raising the delicate little seeding, and bamboo trellis on which we grow chokos"[14]

Extensions and Changing Purpose

Today, the vast majority of buildings found in the Hospital for the Insane Precinct have had significant alterations or additions to the original structures. However, these buildings have also retained a number of their original features and architectural qualities. The precinct thus continues to reflect the architectural and design innovations of its initial construction, and is still closely integrated within its Parramatta River setting.

Endnotes

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- [2] C. J. Cummins, The Lunatic Asylums, p.37.
- [3] C. J. Cummins, The Norton Manning Report, p.41.
- [4] Frederic Norton Manning, Parramatta Lunatic Asylum (1878), quoted in Terry Smith, Hidden Heritage:150 years of public mental health care at Cumberland Hospital Parramatta 1849-1999, Westmead, Greater Parramatta Mental Health Services, 1999, p.18.
- [5] Terry Smith, Hidden Heritage:150 years of public mental health care at Cumberland Hospital Parramatta 1849-1999, Westmead: Greater Parramatta Mental Health Services, 1999, p.24
- [6] Casey & Lowe, Baseline archaeological assessment & statement of heritage impact historical archaeology:

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[7] Edward Higginbotham & Associates, Conservation Management Plan & Archaeological Management Plan: Cumberland Hospital East Campus & Wisteria Gardens, Perumal Murphey Alessi, Heritage Consultants, 2010, p.244

[8] Report of the Department of Public Works, for the year ending 30 June, accessed online 4 August 2015 <https://www.opengov.nsw.gov.au/publications/11931;jsessionid=5226E51DAFBB379E0CCF0287BE00ECA9> p.32

[9] Margaret Betteridge, Parramatta North Urban Renewal and Rezoning: Baseline Assessment of Social Significance of Cumberland East Precinct and Sports and Leisure Precinct and Interpretive Framework, Randwick: Musescape Pty Ltd. 2014, accessed 25 June 2015, <http://urbangrowthnsw.com.au/downloads/file/ourprojects/8PNURSociaSignificanceFINAL.pdf>

[10] Edward Higginbotham & Associates, Conservation Management Plan & Archaeological Management Plan: Cumberland Hospital East Campus & Wisteria Gardens, p.244.

[11] T. C. Hou, Conservation Plan and Schedule for Works: Jacaranda House Cumberland Hospital (1991) quoted in Terry Smith, Hidden Heritage: 150 years of public mental health care at Cumberland Hospital Parramatta 1849-1999, Westmead: Greater Parramatta Mental Health Services, 1999, p.23.

[12] E. Godson, Hospital For the Insane Parramatta – Report, 1893, Journal of the Legislative Council 1894, quoted in Terry Smith, Hidden Heritage: 150 years of public mental health care at Cumberland Hospital Parramatta 1849-1999, Westmead: Greater Parramatta Mental Health Services, 1999, p.23.

[13] Wistaria Journal Quarterly Magazine for the Parramatta Mental Hospital, May, 1956, p.13.

[14] Wistaria Journal Quarterly Magazine for the Parramatta Mental Hospital, February 1952, p.13.

'Parramatta Lunatic Asylum' Male and Female Wards 1848–1956

Caroline Finlay



Aerial View showing the Female Wards, 1943, Parramatta City Council

The Parramatta Lunatic Asylum, took over the buildings of the Female Factory in 1848. One reason for this was outlined in the history of the Parramatta Lunatic Asylum:

... by 1846 the Tarban Creek Asylum near Gladesville was overcrowded compelling the Colonial Government to look for a solution. In 1847 Governor Sir Charles Fitzroy agreed that “lunatic” and invalid convicts be placed in one institution.

The Parramatta Lunatic Asylum precinct comprises a number of buildings that distinguish it from other sites and reflect its character and purpose. A major architectural feature is the central block of the Male Asylum which includes the dining room, day rooms, and 1800s verandah remnants.

The former central male block was originally constructed in the late 1800s, and was bricked in the 1930s. Separate male and female timber wards were built during the 1870s and 1880s as part of the building program within the asylum precinct. The main reason for this was outlined by Dr Frederick Norton Manning in 1868, when he described Parramatta Lunatic Asylum ... as unfit as a residence for those with mental afflictions.

The layout of the buildings conformed with contemporary designs for hospitals, with main services located in the spine and dormitory wards and rooms connected to the centre block. The central male block complex has largely retained this courtyard design. The central sections were demolished and rebuilt close to the original design in 1934–35. The front verandah, dining and day rooms were preserved. [1] Day and dining rooms tended to have unbarred windows. These and other windows in ward blocks were altered in the late 1800s, and replaced with tall thin windows were installed, so that patients couldn't climb out.

Also of significance is the former canteen, now Harriett Ward, which began construction in 1956. It was built with recycled bricks, salvaged from the Sydney Exhibition building which was destroyed by fire in 1882. The bricks had been kept by the Royal Australian Historical Society who in 1955 donated them for construction of the Canteen. The after-care association – which ran the canteen from its opening in 1957 – relinquished control of the building in 1996. It is assumed that this is when the building was renovated and became the Phoenix Café. [2]

The precinct also has a gardener's cottage with a bush house and nurseries and painted brick walls and a corrugated iron roof. It was constructed in 1899, with additions made in 1910 by the Government Architect Walter Liberty Vernon. These additions included a drawing room to the west of the cottage, and an additional room added to the east. Vernon who also designed the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and was responsible for additions to the Customs

House building in Sydney, is known for using the most advanced materials and construction methods available at that time.

The gardener's cottage was originally a timber framed and weatherboard structure with two brick chimneys. A detached wash room was located to the north west of the building. [3] The verandah and roof have now been extended and enclosed, and the chimneys and detached wash room were removed at some stage. Stained glass windows to the rear of the building are still intact.

The former female block buildings includes the 'Kitchen Block' (now a nurse education area) built between 1881-1883. This building has painted brick walls, and a painted corrugated iron roof. There is also a free standing timber shelter with a corrugated roof behind the building. The southern section of the building previously contained a bakehouse, and was adjacent to a store room. There is a painted chimney in the southern section of the building.

The building was converted into 'occupation work rooms' in 1928, and had further modifications in 1943. Uses of the building since World War Two include being used as wards and sewing rooms. [4]

The laundry block and boiler house were designed by the Colonial Architect James Barnet, and were completed in 1883. These were located in the female precinct, as laundry work in the 1800s was considered the domain of women. The laundry was often located near the boiling room and had four main components: ... *receiving and distribution rooms; wash house; ironing rooms and drying racks and closets.*[5]

The widespread idea at the time was that germs spread through the air, so the laundry was commonly kept at a distance from other buildings. The laundry at the asylum was purposely built to the north of the female precinct. The Laundry Block was modified in 1901, and remains largely intact.

In the 1870s and 1880s the female precinct was initially dominated by a timber building which had replaced the inappropriate older female factory buildings. These lighter and more open buildings conformed to the contemporary ideas for the design of hospitals and barracks and ensured services in the dormitory wards and rooms connected to the centre block. This asylum block was demolished during the 1970's.

Endnotes

[1] Higginbotham, E 2010, p.199

[2] Higginbotham, E 2010, p.214

[3] Higginbotham, E 2010, p.226

[4] Higginbotham, E 2010, p.193

[5] Department of Public Works and Services 1998, p.158

References

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Asylum Recreational Facilities

Caroline Finlay



Recreation Hall and Chapel, Cumberland Mental health Precinct, photograph by Sally Chik, Parramatta City Council, 2015

The Parramatta Male and Female Lunatic Asylum was not designed to imprison patients but to cure and restore health to the mentally ill. Access to sunlight, gardens and recreational activities were seen as an important part in assisting the recovery of the patients and this is reflected in the construction of recreational buildings and landscaping.

Recreation Hall and Chapel

The Recreation Hall and Chapel was constructed in response to the prevailing idea that patients required a hall and chapel in order to improve their physical and mental health. It was also believed that it should be some distance from the main buildings to ensure patients received some exercise. Chapels were not normally consecrated, and so had a dual purpose of being a recreation hall and place of worship.

The construction of the Recreation Hall and Chapel adjacent to the Female Asylum precinct began about 1887, but was not completed until 1892 due to lack of funds. Activities that took place here included readings, dancing, concerts and talks. The building has both gabled and flat roofs clad in corrugated iron, with the main gabled roof having a central vented steeple; further additions were made in 1967. The building also has brick arches over timber doors, and the south-eastern side features original Gothic styled pointed arch windows. The building over the years has had many modifications, however the original form and details remain.

Cricket

The Parramatta Asylum also had shelter sheds that were constructed to provide covered outdoor areas for patients. The former 'Male Asylum Shelter Shed' in the recreation grounds was originally constructed in the 1860s, and later altered in 1933. The original structure was most likely smaller and possibly had its timber columns replaced in 1933, as the internal face of one of the posts is marked with 'cc 1933'.^[1]

It was also known as the Cricket Shelter Shed, and is one of two male shelter sheds still remaining on the site. This building played a significant part in the cricket matches and recreational activities at the asylum.

The cricket oval, as well as the 'Cricket Shelter Shed', were marked out and constructed in 1880. Much of the landscaping from this period survives around the oval. Photographs of the site indicates that trees, figs and pines were regularly planted around the building.

The Sport Pavilion

The Sport Pavilion was constructed in 1952 and is located at the southern end of the Oval. It was designed as a pavilion and staff amenities block.

The Swimming Pool

The swimming pool complex was constructed in 1966 and has a change room and other facilities. The complex

also features two former air raid shelters that were installed about 1940. These are located in the northern and southern corner of the northern site boundary. [2]

Endnotes

[1] Higginbotham, E 2010, p.207

[2] Higginbotham, E 2010, p.222

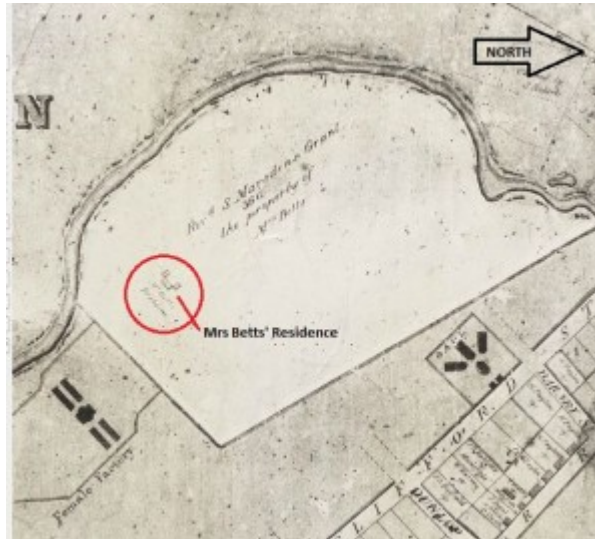
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'Betts' and 'Blaxland' House, 1830-1948

Anne Tsang



Enlarged image of 'Plan of the town of Parramatta and the adjacent properties / as surveyed by W. Meadows Brownrigg surveyor, 1844 , State Library of New South Wales, a3705001

Sometime between 1820 and 1830 Reverend Samuel Marsden (1795–1838)[1] built a house for his third daughter Mary Marsden (1806–1885) on his 36 acre property known as ‘Mill Dam Farm’ or ‘Vineyard Farm’. In 1928 G. G. Reeve described Mary as the “beauty of the family”, “both good looking in physical features and intellectual.”[2] She was born on 1 July 1806 in Parramatta to Marsden and his wife Elizabeth (nee Fristan) (1772–1835). From 8 March to 27 May 1830, she accompanied her father on one of his trips to New Zealand to visit his Maori mission at Rangihoua Bay.[3]

A few months later on 23 September 1830, Mary married John Betts at St. Johns' Church in Parramatta. John Betts (1804–1852) was a tutor originally from Potton, Bedfordshire, England who arrived in Sydney, Australia on 1 September 1829 aboard the ship *Eamont*[4]. Upon settling in Parramatta he opened a school and was later joined by his younger brother Josiah Allen Betts (1814–1863). [5] His brother arrived on 20 March 1834 per *Planter* [6] and five years later, on 19 February 1839, Josiah married Mary's youngest sister Martha (1811–1895).[7]

After the birth of Mary and John's first child, Sarah Elizabeth, on 27 August 1831, Mary received a land grant of 1280 acres in Molong, New South Wales as a marital incentive from the Government to encourage young married couples and free settling women in the colony to set up home in the outback.

While in Molong, he built a house at Vale Head called “The Roundhouse”.[8] After this the Betts family travelled between Molong and Parramatta, and when at ‘Vineyard Farm’ they resided in the cottage known as ‘Mrs Betts’ House’. Tragedy struck the young family on 31 January 1837, when their two month old son, Alfred Musgrave died at Vineyard Farm[9].

Samuel Marsden died on 12 May 1838 and the Vineyard Farm was inherited by Mary and her husband. Unfortunately this was soon followed by the 1840s 'Depression' which brought financial hardships for the Betts. In an attempt to resolve this they decided in 1841, to subdivide the land, instructing the estate agent James Brynes to sell their 'valuable property well known as the Vineyard or Old Mills Dam Farm' in allotments. Below is the proposed subdivision plan by Surveyor C. E. Langley.[10]



*Plan of the Vineyard or Old Mill Dam Farm, Parramatta, State
Library of New South Wales, c012990001*

According to one of the many sale notices that ran from late 1841 through to June 1842, this property was described as containing:

...upwards of FIVE THOUSAND VINES, reared from the choicest cuttings, and in excellent bearing; another very important feature which this property possesses is the abundance supply of FRESH WATER. The entire western side being bounded by the pure and never-failing Waters of the Parramatta River, when the present Dam is raised (for it generally understood the Government intend doing it immediately) it will throw up the Water several feet above its present level, which will render the Water deep enough for any of those manufacturing purposes which cause water frontages to be so very VALUABLE, even at present almost the entire of the northern part of the Town is supplied with FRESH WATER from that part of the River on the Property, it being the only Unoccupied First-rate Frontage in the neighbourhood. The Land is partially wooded, and in many places a little beneath the surface, there is abundance of excellent brick earth, so that the manufacture of bricks can be carried on to a great advantage ... There is also a Splendid Quarry of Freestone on the Property, a right of which will be reserved for public purposes... The whole of this Property being advertised, has been divided into Allotments ... one of these containing about half an Acre, comprises the site of an Old Flour Mill, the Stone Foundation and Timbers of which are in a state of high preservation, and with a few repairs could be converted into an excellent Residence, while the land adjoining it has been in cultivation more than once, it being a WATER FRONTAGE, it might be converted into a capital NURSERY, and many other profitable purposes.[11]

The sale by auction on 21 December 1841 was a disaster and only resulted in the sale of 6 lots. Instead, in June 1842, the Bettses were forced to mortgage the entire property for £2000, to John Blaxland (1799–1884), son of Blue Mountain explorer Gregory Blaxland (1778–1853). Unable to make repayments, Blaxland acquired the property in lieu of payment in 1845.[12]

Blaxland renamed the property as 'Redbank Mill Farm' and enlarged and improved the former Betts' house, which he also renamed 'Redbank' house. On 1 January 1853, Gregory Blaxland who was staying at 'Redbank' house committed suicide.[13] By 1865, there were two more tenants on the farm, Reverend William Gore and George Langley, Clerk of the Court of Petty Sessions.[13]

In 1866, the Blaxland land was acquired by the government as part of plans to expand the neighbouring Parramatta Lunatic Asylum. The former Betts/Blaxland house was by then a substantial two storey residence and was designated as the Medical Superintendents' residence. This continued until 1910 when a new superintendent's residence 'Glengarriff' (designed by Government architect Walter Liberty Vernon (1846–1914) was erected on the south side of the river in the Wistaria Gardens.[14]

In 1871, the renamed 'Parramatta Hospital for the Insane' received plants from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, for planting around the old estate. These included rare Brazilian Peppercorn trees (*Schinus terebinthifolius*),

which in the 1998 survey of the grounds was listed as one of the few remaining survivors from this period.[16] Later extensions to the house, including fern gardens installed 1880-1895 have long since disappeared.

More free standing buildings were constructed around the old farm site in 1909-1910. Including a Federation brick building designed by Walter Vernon for use as the Staff Dining Room and Kitchen (the current Building 70 – the Phoenix Café) and the simple timber and fibrous cement cottage used as the accommodation for waitresses (current Building 69 – Wattle Cottage)

In 1948 the former Medical Superintendent's Office and outbuildings were demolished to make way for 'Male Ward No. 9'. This large H-shaped brick building facing River Road was built close to the original location of Betts/Blaxland house. It was later renamed 'Gungurra' and used as the Centre for Population Health. A simple brick cleaners' store named 'Palm House' was constructed around 1955. The orange grove next to this building has been removed and direct access to the river from the house is now blocked by another new building 'Bunya', built in 1997. [xvi]



1943 aerial map of Betts/Blaxland House, North Parramatta, Parramatta City Council

Endnotes

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- [5] John Betts, Diary, 12 April 1829-16 August 1833, State Library of New South Wales, digital order no. Album ID: 823493, <http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/item/itemDetailPaged.aspx?itemID=441817#>
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- [7] Jane Catherine (1808-1885), the Chaplain's fourth daughter, married her second cousin Thomas Marsden (1806-1837) on 7 April 1831. Thomas and Jane owned 'Broughton House', part of Rev. Marsden's Newlands estate. G. G. Reeve, 'Chaplain Samuel Marsden and his five famous daughters', chapter iv, *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 10 August, 1928, p. 5. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article85928026>
- [8] Note: The Vale Head Roundhouse was later destroyed by a fire and demolished in 1970.
- [9] Family Notices, The Sydney Herald, 2 February 1837, p. 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12861425>
- [10] C. E. Langley, Plan of the Vineyard or Old Mill Dam Farm, Parramatta [cartographic material], for sale by auction by James Byrnes, on Tuesday 21 December, 1841. Available online from National Library of Australia <http://nla.gov.au/nla.map-f159>; or State Library of NSW <http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/album/albumView.aspx?itemID=1214697&acmsid=0>, Digital order number c012990001
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1849–1999, 1999, Westmead, New South Wales, Western Sydney Area Health Services, p. 5

[14] Casey & Lowe, Baseline archaeological assessment & statement of heritage impact historical archaeology : Cumberland precinct, sports & leisure precinct, Parramatta north urban renewal – re-zoning: report to Urban Growth New South Wales, 2014, Leichhardt, N.S.W. : Casey & Lowe Pty Ltd.<http://urbangrowthnsw.com.au/downloads/file/ourprojects/6PNUREuropeanArchaeologyFINAL.pdf>

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The Thwaites and Reed turret clock

Geoff Barker



Clock Tower, Cumberland Precinct, photograph by Maribel Rosales, Parramatta City Council, 2014

The front of the original 1821 Female Factory building had a clock thought to be one of the oldest public clocks in Australia. It was made by Thwaites and Reed who are best known for their turret-clocks which throughout the 1900s found their way into the clock towers of cities around the globe.[1]

For over 30 years they were also responsible for rebuilding and looking after what is arguably the most famous clock in the world 'The Great Clock' at the Palace of Westminster, more affectionately known as 'Big Ben'.[2]

Here in Australia people would be more familiar with Thwaites and Reed's 'Royal Clock' in the 'Queen Victoria' building. While in Parramatta residents have for over a hundred years kept time using its twin, the turret clock located in the steeple of St John's Cathedral.

The turret-clock in the original Female Factory building was one of five, all made to the same specifications, which were gifted to the Colony by King George. When this clock arrived in Australia it was installed in the newly completed 'Female Factory', while another was installed in St John's Cathedral.[3]

Anne Mathews, a volunteer here at the Heritage Centre, has found an interesting document that throws some light on problems installing the clock in the 1821 Greenway building. A directive made in 1827 by Governor Darling to Alexander Macleay, directs Mr Robertson to install a clock currently in the Female Factory commissariat. But whether there was an empty hole for the clock in the building's frontage for some six years, or whether the clock had been removed and was reinstalled at this date remains unclear.

Many researchers believe that in 1885 this Female Factory clock was reinstalled into the Asylum Building on the same site. However when I visited the site recently I noticed this clock, which can still be seen in the tower has at more than one clock face. This would suggest that the old Female Factory clock which had only one clock face was heavily modified or a new purpose-built turret clock with similar clock faces was installed into the new psychiatry building instead. We would be very interested if any other researchers were able to help us shed some light on this.

Still a listed company today 'Thwaites and Reed' are reputed to be the oldest clock-making company in the world with founder Aynsworth Thwaites first opening the doors in 1740.[4] They became 'Thwaites and Reed' in 1816 when John Thwaites formed a partnership with George Jeremiah Reed.[5] Although very successful and owning their own workshop in Clerkenwell, England, it appears they also contracted out a lot of their work to other prominent clock-makers on their behalf. Included in this list are names like 'Barraud and Lund', Dutton, Ellicot and Earnshaw.[6]

By the time this clock was made the company was already one of the most respected in Britain and this was undoubtedly one of the main reasons they were commissioned to produce the five clocks for Australia.

Some 90 years later the Australian astronomer John Tebutt, who certainly knew his chronometers, praised the quality of the 'Thwaites and Reed' turret-clocks, including the one installed at the 'female factory'. [7] In 1932, William Freome was still praising the quality of these timekeepers claiming that,

The old clocks in the towers of St. John's, Parramatta, and St. Matthew's, Windsor, still keep excellent time, despite the fact that they are over 111 years old, and both have narrowly escaped being struck by lightning.[8]

In 1912 Mr Fred Burgin, who had been attendant for the St John's church clock for over 40 years, wrote to the Cumberland Argus and described in detail the workings of the clocks.

The clock was made by Thwaites and Reed, Clerkenwell, London, in 1821. The works measure 2 ft. 6 in. x 2 ft. x 2 ft. The pendulum is 6ft. long. The outside dial is 6 ft. in diameter. The striking weight is round, and measures 2 feet long x. 9 inches diameter and weighs 9 cwt. The time weight is 1 foot long x 9 in. in diameter, and weighs 5cwt. The clock is wound with a crank-key, like a windlass. It goes six days, the weights falling 25 ft.

He also stated that,

The clock was placed in St. John's tower by the Government, in 1821. Similar clocks were also erected at the following places at the same time: Parramatta Government Factory (now Parramatta North Hospital), Sydney Town Hall, Church of England at Campbelltown and the Victoria Barracks, Sydney [9]

In 1912 St John's Clock, was given a complete overhaul with the face being repainted and the mechanical workings sent to Sydney for repairs.

Endnotes

[1] <http://www.onlinegalleries.com/artists/d/thwaites-%26-reed-of-clerkenwell/626>

[2] <http://www.onlinegalleries.com/artists/d/thwaites-%26-reed-of-clerkenwell/626>

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[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thwaites_%26_Reed

[6] <http://www.onlinegalleries.com/artists/d/thwaites-%26-reed-of-clerkenwell/626>

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[9] Fred Burgin, The Clock in the Old Church Tower, The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Saturday 10 August 1932, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/86133029> <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticlePdf/86133029/3?print=n>

[10] St Johns Clock, The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Saturday 9 November, 1912, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/86141884> <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/printArticlePdf/86141884/3?print=n>

North Parramatta, The First Land Grants

Peter Arfanis



Map showing Smith's Grant and the mill race cutting through the north east corner, State Library, New South Wales, a3995001h

The North Parramatta Cumberland Hospital precinct area was the site of the earliest land grant made in North Parramatta. This was made on 29 November 1792, to Charles Smith who was granted 30 acres of land on what is now the Cumberland Hospital Precinct. Smith was transported to Australia, arriving in June 1790 and two years later became a free settler after receiving both an Absolute Pardon and his 30 acre land grant.

By 1801, Smith was living entirely off his land, producing wheat, maize and pigs. During Smith's occupation of the farm a mill race was cut through the north east corner of his land heading south to the site of Parramatta's first mill, located on what was to later become Governor Bligh's land grant.



Early Land Grants, North Parramatta, Google My Maps, 2015

42 The Parramatta Female Factory and Insane Asylum

Sometime between 1803 and 1806 Samuel Marsden purchased Smith's land with the aim to construct his own mill. Marsden also acquired additional land between the northern part of Smith's grant and the Darling Mills Creek. Between 1810–1812 Marsden constructed his watermill adjacent to Smith's grant and it operated at least until Marsden's death in 1838.

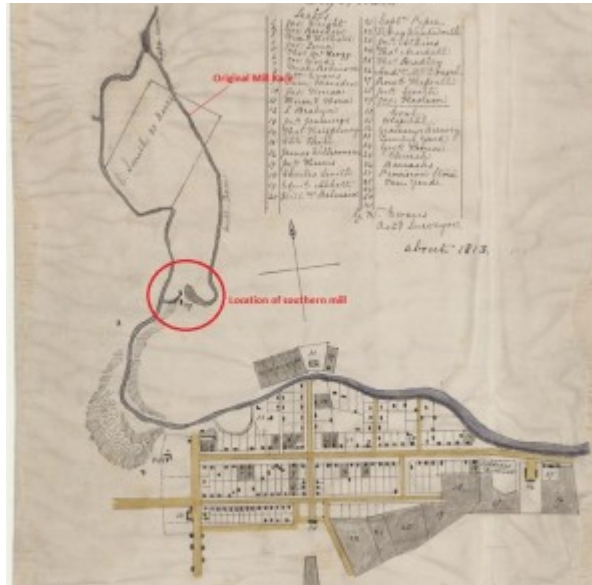


*Plan of the Township of Parramatta in New South Wales 1814
showing Bligh's land grant at the east' State Library, New South
Wales, a1528520*

The other grant which occupied a large part of the site, was the 105 acre grant to Governor William Bligh which extended down to the site of the Kings School and included the site of the first botanical garden.

The First Government Water Mill, North Parramatta, 1792

Geoff Barker and Peter Arfanis



Plan of the Township of Parramatta (showing mill race and location of mill). State Library, New South Wales, a3995001h

A problem faced by the early settlers in Sydney and Parramatta was a lack of wind or water powered mills with which to grind cereal crops. One of the earliest actions taken to address this problem was the engagement of Thomas Allen, previously employed at King's Mill, Rotherhithe on the Thames. In 1792 he was engaged at a salary of £52 per annum, to work as master-miller for the colony and arrived in Sydney on the *Royal Admiral* where he commenced duty 6 October 1792, supervising a mill being built at Parramatta.[1] The following year a millwright, James Thorpe, arrived as a free settler on the *Bellona* and was appointed master-millwright at Parramatta at a salary of £105 pa. However progress appears to have been slow, and this wasn't helped by Thorpe who apparently didn't measure up and was dismissed by the Governor, Francis Grose.

By 1800 the lack of a fully functioning mill persisted and Governor Hunter listed machinery suitable for either a wind or a water mill brought from England in his 'Return of Public Buildings' of 25 September 1800. But it was Governor King who saw the project to its completion as it appears Hunter had been over-optimistic in his assessment of progress. Instead King, who had successfully constructed both a wind and a water powered mill on Norfolk Island, was more cautious. he advised that work would continue with it but that it would take ten months to complete the dams.[2]

Hunter had chosen to harness water power, locating the site in the centre of the Parramatta farming district, on the upper reaches of the river where a stone barrier across the river formed a natural dam and allowed a causeway to be constructed to supply water to power the mill-wheel. Despite continued attempts, the mechanism was reported faulty and the mill stood mostly idle.

This posed a very real problem for King as demand for an operational mill was becoming urgent as more grain was harvested and the population expanded. He hoped the problem might be solved by a master carpenter on Norfolk Island, Nathaniel Lucas, who wished to *relinquish his situation there* and return to the mainland, and King reported to Lord Hobart that *his abilities in constructing mills* would soon rectify the situation.[3]

In the meantime gangs of convicts had been employed in cutting a race for the water-mill and on 15 January 1804 it announced that:

... the Water-Mill at Parramatta will shortly be completed and the stone works were in great forwardness. The design of constructing a spacious granary over it will essentially add to the utility'. The article went on to extol the idea of incorporating in the mill a building to store grain which would also better preserve grain from weevil infestation.[4]

As a show of his determination to get the mill functional King also had Alexander Dollis, the master boat-builder on Norfolk transferred to Parramatta to assist Lucas. The two men found the existing mill so badly constructed that they had to dismantle and re-build it. George Caley, who was living on an adjacent piece of land to the described it to Banks as ...

.. a large three storied stone structure, with an overshot wheel eighteen feet in diameter and eighteen inches in breadth.

Caley could not report on the mechanism as he had not seen it, but according to other reports he believed that the construction was bad and the mechanism (probably '*taken from some ancient and simple plan*') was too slow.[5]

Given Caley's comments it was no surprise that the mill was not a success. But the choice of site was also to blame as the flow of water at this part of the river was at times so low it couldn't turn the wheel. Even the laborious construction of a water-channel from what was to become known as 'Darling Mills Creek' to the site of the mill failed to solve these water supply problems. By the end of 1804 King seems to have become less enthusiastic and writing to England admitted defeat, claiming that the mill would not '*recompense the labour expended on it*'. [6] Less than a year later it was clear lack of water was not the only problem with the site. Heavy rains on 15 and 16 January, 1805 had caused the river to flood and this in turn destroyed part of the mill-dam.

The mill was operated for a time by George Howell but it was finally destroyed in 1820.[7] No further attempts were made to revitalise the mill and instead it was Samuel Marsden who successfully built and operated a watermill upstream from the Government Mill site at the junction of the Darling Mills Creek and the Parramatta River.[8] Marsden, in his capacity as Superintendent of Works at Parramatta had been overseeing the work of Lucas and Dollis, and seeing an opportunity a new mill which wisely avoided the original site chosen by Hunter. Howell continued to work as a miller and later operated one of Parramatta's best known landmarks, Howell's wind and water mill, which operated successfully from a site downstream, near the Queen's Wharf, from 1828 to the early 1860s.



1904 map of Parramatta showing mill race in relation to Asylum and streets, and the site where the mill was believed to have been located, Parramatta City Council Archives

Appendum

There is some conjecture as to the actual location of the Convict Mill. The 1904 map of Parramatta shows the mill race cutting west through the grounds of the Asylum and exiting just south of the first weir. However, recent research by Casey and Lowe indicates, according to the notes of Surveyor Edward Ebsworth, that the mill race followed a natural watercourse through the eastern side of the Girls Industrial Training School, exiting at the second weir further south placing the watermill between the Industrial School for Females and Cumberland Oval.

Endnotes

- [1] Norman Selfe, 'Some notes on Sydney Windmills', in *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 1, pt 6, 1902-3, p. 97.
- [2] Hunter to Under Secretary King, *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. 4, 25, September 1800, Enc. No, 3, p. 154.
- [3] King to Hobart, 20 Dec 1804, *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. 5, pp. 517-18.
- [4] *Sydney Gazette*, Jan 15 1804, p. 3 a.
- [5] Quoting Caley's comprehensive report to Banks on the saga of the mill. Norman Selfe, 'Some notes on Sydney Windmills', in *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 1, pt 6, 1902-3, p. 38
- [6] King to Hobart, 20 December 1804, *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. 5, pp. 516-17.
- [7] Terry Smith, *Hidden Heritage*, Greater Parramatta Mental Health Service, 1999, p.5.
- [8] Darling Mills Creek falls abruptly from today's Broken Back Bridge. There are a series of rocky rapids before the creek joins the river. Marsden took advantage of this feature to collect water for his mill.
- [9] Casey & Lowe, *Baseline Archaeological Assessment & Statement of Heritage Impact Historical Archaeology Cumberland Precinct Sports & Leisure Precinct Parramatta North Urban Renewal, Rezoning Parramatta*, 2014, retrieved 30 July 2015 <http://urbangrowthnsw.com.au/downloads/file/ourprojects/6PNUREuropeanArchaeologyFINAL.pdf>

Reverend Samuel Marsden's Mill and Mill Dam Farm

Geoff Barker



*North Parramatta, Darling Mills Creek, Vineyard Farm,
photograph by Geoff Barker, Parramatta City Council, 2014*

This area at the north of the Cumberland Hospital Precinct and running along the bank of the Parramatta River and Darling Mills Creek is most often associated with the 36 acres granted to Samuel Marsden.[1] The land included a portion Marsden purchased from Charles Smith who occupied land in this area from 1792 to 1900.[2] This land title of thirty-six acres was recorded by Governor Lachlan Macquarie as being allocated to Marsden on 25 August 1812. According to these records the farm was,

... bounded on the South East side by part of Bligh's Farm, On the South West and North sides by the Parramatta River and on the East side by a Deep Dyke designed as a Mill Race.

After Marsden acquired it the area was commonly referred to as 'Mill Dam Farm' because of the water mill (one of the Colony's earliest) which Marsden erected sometime between 1810 and 1811 near the junction of the Darling Mills and Toongabbie creeks.[3]

According to an archaeological report conducted in 2009 there are two principal sites associated with this grant. They are the site of the old water mill (including its original cottage, workers buildings and the mill) and the old farm house.[4] However there appear to be other sites of interest also sprinkled across this area. One of these is mentioned in the subdivision map of the site drawn up for James Byrnes in 1841. This map includes the location of the old mill and cottages as well as citing a quarry on what appears to be 'Darling Mills Creek.[5]

Given all this information you would think locating these sites would be easy but over the intervening 150 years reuse, and in some areas long term neglect, have made identification of sites difficult.

One of the key sources for identifying the possible sites is a painting credited to John Lycett and done around 1820. In this image we can clearly see Marsden's three story mill house and the associated cottage at what looks like the juncture of the Parramatta River and Darling Mills Creek.

Given the nice open space surrounding the building in the picture and its relationship to the river it would seem easy to identify this site. But when we paid a visit to the site in early 2015 it became clear why this was not so easy.

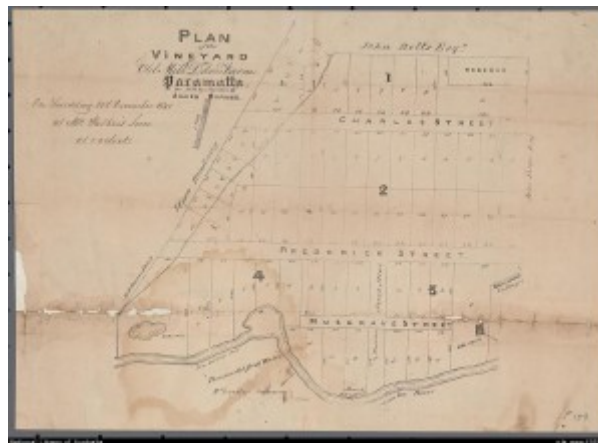
Continuous use of some parts of the site, along with neglect and the resulting overgrowth was one problem. Another is the way weirs, dams and floods have altered the contours of the river and its water levels. These floods also



Marsden's Mill and Cottage, 1820, J Lycett, State Library of New South Wales, PXD41F1, a1120001

appear to have washed away remnants of the original structures. In his 1933 history of Parramatta, James Jervis notes that the weir Marsden built across Darling Mills Creek to supply water to the mill-race was washed away in a flood.[6]

This was not the first mill to try and utilise water from the upper reaches of the river. The Government Mill, situated further downstream, was not a success. Instead Marsden selected this location to take advantage of the improved water flow and secure foundations. While his bad experiences overseeing the construction of the Government Mill, helped him make his decision. His mill seems to have been more successful and remained in operation at least until 1838 when he died.



Subdivision plans, 'Old Mill Dam Farm', about 1842, National Library of Australia, nla map-1159-e

Marsden also established a vineyard on part of the land he had purchased from Charles Smith and this area became known as Vineyard Farm. In 1841 James Byrnes made the following comments on the quality of the soil and the significance of the site for the wine making industry in Australia, as he felt it was,

... his duty to acquaint them that the soil in this property is of the best description, and peculiarly adapted for gardening purposes. As proof of this he has merely to cite that it was in this part of the colony that the cultivation of grapes was first crowned with success, and at present the proprietors vineyard, which adjoins the land now advertised, contains upwards of five thousand vines.[7]

Marsden's daughter Mary appears to have moved onto the site after her marriage to John Betts in 1830 and they built a house at the southern extremity of near the Female Factory. The Australian newspaper description from 1842 made it clear the mill was no longer in operation but that the allotment of about half an acre comprised of:

... the site of the old flour mill, the stone foundations and timbers of which are in a good state of preservation, and with some few repairs could be converted into an excellent residence, the land having been heretofore cultivated, with water frontage, and made very easily into a capital nursery. [8]



*North Parramatta, Sandstone Remnants, Old Mill Farm Precinct,
Parramatta City Council, photograph by Geoff Barker, 2014*

Another site of interest is the quarry located on the banks of Darling Mills Creek and which appears to have provided 'freestone' for the building of the mill and presumably other buildings on the site. When offered for sale in 1841 this quarry was cited as being ... *reserved for public purposes*.^[9]

As we can see from the image above there are a number of archaeological features scattered around the site which may once have used stone quarried the side of the creek bed.

The Blaxland land was eventually acquired by the government as part of the Parramatta Lunatic Asylum in 1866 and from this date had a number of Asylum buildings erected on it. Other parts continued to be farmed and landscaped as it was integrated into the asylum grounds. In 1872 Mrs Betts' house was occupied by the Medical Superintendent of the asylum. It continued to be used as a residence into the 20th century before being demolished in 1948.

Endnotes

- [1] Higginbotham and Associates, Cumberland Hospital, Fleet Street, North Parramatta Archaeological Management Plan (Historical Sites) for Conservation Management Plan, for Sydney West Area Heath Service, 2009, p.22
- [2] Higginbotham and Associates, Cumberland Hospital, Fleet Street, North Parramatta Archaeological Management Plan (Historical Sites) for Conservation Management Plan, for Sydney West Area Heath Service, 2009, p.22
- [3] The Story of Parramatta and District, James Jervis, Shakespeare head Press, 1933, p.42
- [4] Higginbotham and Associates, Cumberland Hospital, Fleet Street, North Parramatta Archaeological Management Plan (Historical Sites) for Conservation Management Plan, for Sydney West Area Heath Service, 2009, p.23
- [5] Map, Plan of Vineyard or Old Mill Dam Farm, 1841, nla p-f159-e
- [6] The Story of Parramatta and District, James Jervis, Shakespeare head Press, 1933, p.42
- [7] Australasian Chronicle, Tuesday 14 December 1841, page 4
- [8] The Australian, Tuesday 14 June 1842, page 3
- [9] Australasian Chronicle, Tuesday 14 December 1841, page 4

The Fleet Street Quarry, Parramatta North

Peter Arfanis



Stairs from Albert Street to Fleet Street. Photograph by Peter Arfanis, Parramatta City Council, 2015

Walking down the steps from the end of Albert Street to Fleet Street, Parramatta North, what is most noticeable, apart from the sudden drop in street levels, is the abundance of roughly hewed sandstone fencing defining the boundaries of properties along the street. This sandstone provides an obvious clue to what was once on this site.

On the eastern side of Fleet Street, between Fennell and Albert Streets, hidden by apartment blocks and government buildings is the remnant of an old quarry from which some of Parramatta's most historic and significant buildings were constructed.

Stone from the Fleet Street quarry was used as early as 1818 to construct the Francis Greenway designed Female Factory which was completed in 1821. The quarry almost certainly supplied the stone for Parramatta Gaol, as well as other buildings located in the precinct including, perhaps, the new Lunatic Asylum which replaced the Female Factory Building. By 1861, once the construction of Government buildings ceased in the locality, the quarry was reserved for gaol purposes.[1]



Parramatta Town Map 1904 showing lots 83 and 84 marking the quarry at Fleet Street. State Library of New South Wales. a6386001

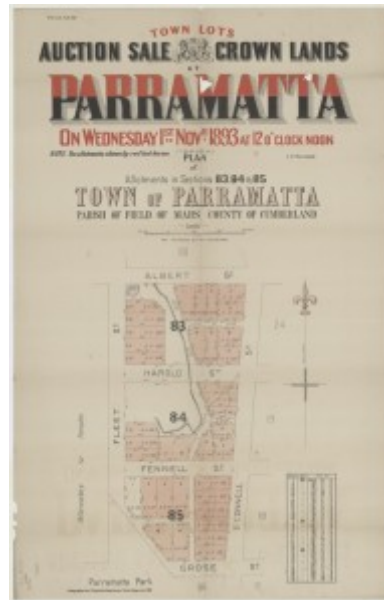
In 1862 the Department of Lands made it known that quarries in the Domain area were being put up for sale. For Parramatta Council the Fleet Street quarry presented many economic advantages for municipal works. The stone

provided a fine hard face and the quarry was within town limits making it easily accessible. Mayor James Byrnes made a verbal request to the Department of Lands for the Fleet Street quarry to be used for municipal purposes.[2]

In October 1862 the Council received a letter from the Department of Lands permitting the Council to “use the stones at the quarry of the Lunatic Asylum.” [3] By 1864 the Surveyor General instructed a survey of the Municipal Quarry be done before it was handed over to the Council in legal form.[4] Following the formal acquisition of the quarry Council began tendering out the removal of stone from the quarry. One such tender, for example, related to the kerbing and guttering of Church Street between Macquarie and George Streets with tenders invited to supply dressed kerbing “and that guttering be procured by the Corporation Labourers at the quarry in Fleet Street...” [5]

By 1890 the face of the quarry was almost 9 metres deep and Albert and Harold Streets had become unsuitable for traffic. There were, by this time, sixteen dwellings fronting O’Connell and Albert Streets, and Council came under increasing pressure by local residents to close the quarry. Blasting operations in the quarry was posing a serious danger to human life and property. Stones from blasting operations had fallen onto the roofs of homes, explosions “were an annoyance for women and invalids”, and children attending school in Harold Street were at risk of injury. The Minister of Lands ordered a report be done by the Surveyor into the causes of the complaints. [6]

The report was completed in May 1892 by Chief Surveyor Twynam. The report confirmed the dangers quarrying works posed to residents and though the site was valuable for stone, quarrying should cease and the land be subdivided with a view to sale. [7]



Auction Poster 1893 showing the subdivision of land around the quarry. State Library of New South Wales, c035480034h

Based on the report the Secretary for Lands decided that the Municipal Council be informed that permission to quarry on the land be withdrawn. [8]

Soon after the closure of the quarry an auction sale of land was advertised. The above 1893 subdivision poster shows subdivided land in and around the quarry. However it appears the quarry land remained in the hands of the government with no development occurring until the 1970s and 1990s.

Endnotes

- [1] The Parramatta Council’s Quarry, The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, June 11 1892, p. 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article86267990>
- [2] Parramatta Council Archives, PRS21/1. Minutes to the Meetings of Parramatta Council. 23 June 1862
- [3] Parramatta, Empire, p. 3, 1862, October 4, p.3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article60517204>
- [4] Parramatta Council Archives, PRS21/1. Minutes to the Meetings of Parramatta Council, 17 March 1864
- [5] Parramatta Council Archives, PRS21/1. Minutes to the Meetings of Parramatta Council, March 1867.
- [6] The Parramatta Quarry, The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, 14 May 1892, p. 2, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article86272880>
- [7] The Parramatta Quarry, The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, 11 June 1892, p. 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article86267990>

[8] The Parramatta Quarry, The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, 11 June 1892, p. 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article86267990>

Parramatta Roman Catholic Orphan School Site

Peter Arfanis



Roman Catholic Orphan School, photograph by Peter Arfanis, Parramatta City Council Heritage centre, 2015

At 1 Fleet Street North Parramatta stands a group of buildings which provides a continuous story of the evolution of child welfare and juvenile justice in New South Wales.

Dating back to the 1840s, this is the site of the Roman Catholic Orphan School which later became the Parramatta Girls Industrial School, Parramatta Girls' Training School, 'Kamballa', and Norma Parker Detention Centre for Women. Despite the site being used for reforming, training and welfare of women and children it has a notorious and troublesome history. A number of Royal Commissions and investigations into the welfare, treatment and allegations of abuse of inmates has been conducted over the course of its history. It also has been the subject of a number of books, and plays based on the oral histories and testimonies of women who spent time there.

The first female orphan school was established in 1801 by Governor King in George Street, Sydney.[1] In June 1818 the girls in Sydney were moved to a new Female Orphan School established by Governor Macquarie at Arthur's Hill, now known as Rydalmere, on the north bank of the Parramatta River and now the site of the University of Western Sydney Parramatta Campus. It later became the Protestant Orphan School. Another Roman Catholic orphanage was established in Waverly in 1837.

Roman Catholic Orphan School

In 1841 construction began on a new orphan school at North Parramatta on the south side of the Female Factory to replace the Male Orphan School at Liverpool. Consisting of a four storey building, and three storey servants' wing designed by Henry Ginn, using stone from a nearby quarry in Fleet Street.

An unexplained change in plans instead saw 113 children transferred from the Waverley orphanage to the new Roman Catholic Orphan School in North Parramatta. A new wing was built around 1850 to accommodate growing numbers of orphans and to also take in male orphans following the closure of the Male Orphan School in Liverpool. This new wing now currently links the chapel with the southern courtyard block.

Further work was undertaken by Architect William Munro from late 1859 including the addition of a wing to the 1850 building and, in 1860, a two roomed cottage for the gardener located against the northern boundary wall that separated the Female Factory. In 1862 Munro called for tenders to construct a hospital on the grounds of the Roman Catholic Orphanage. The hospital was renamed 'Bethel House' in the late 1920s.

A three storey wing was added to the main building in 1866. Other structures built during this period include the South East wing (1857), the South West range (1860) and the chapel (1865).



View of the orphanage from the stone quarry in Fleet Street c.1865. Note the infirmary wing in the left background, the gate keeper's cottage in the left foreground, the boys quarters in the centre and the main building on the bottom right .Parramatta Heritage Centre LSP00190

By the 1870's the school was home to 318 children. Between 1873 and 1874 a Royal Commission on Public Charities condemned the barrack system of large orphanages and indicated that the school needed two more dormitories. The report stated that 62 boys sleep in bedroom 25 x 5.5 metres; 44 boys in bedroom 16 x 6; 43 girls in room 16 x 5.5 metres; 58 girls in room 16 x 6 metres; 33 girls in room 16 x 6 metres. In some cases there was more than one child to a bed. [2]



Children and staff assembled in front of the hospital, 1877, Parramatta City Council Heritage Centre. ACC002/34/23

Following an incident involving one of the girls in the Orphan School the Colonial Architect ordered a fence be constructed between the orphan school and the Lunatic Asylum.

In 1881 the government passed the State 'Children Relief Act' responsible for boarding out children to homes and added a new wing south of the main building. When the Orphan School was closed in August 1886 there were 41 children living there.

Industrial School For Females

Twenty years earlier the 'Industrial Schools Act' of 1866 had established a Girl's Industrial School in Newcastle. This school was relocated in 1871 to a former prison located at Cockatoo Island. There it was proclaimed a Public Industrial School and was known as Biloela Public Industrial School for girls. It remained there until 1887 when its ninety girls were moved to the site of the former Roman Catholic Orphan School at North Parramatta. A Department of Public Instruction Report of 1888 recorded 145 girls enrolled with 42 under the age of 14 years of age. By 1905 only girls older than 8 years of age were committed to the school.

A 1910 'Official Handbook of the Parramatta Industrial School stated:

The Parramatta Industrial School is designed to deal with neglected and uncontrollable girls between the ages of 13 and 16 years, more particularly that type of girl whose companionships or home associations have resulted in her developing immoral tendencies or criminal instincts. Experience has shown that, as an institution, it is especially valuable to parents whose daughters have, much to their sorrow, got beyond control, and conceived an infatuation for the society of immoral or dangerous companions. [3]

Girls' Training School

Under the provisions of the 1905, 'Neglected Children and Juvenile Offenders Act', 'Bethel House' the former hospital became 'The Girl's Training Home' in 1918. Girls classed as "immoral" were sent to the Industrial School and those as "uncontrollable" to the Training Home. This arrangement continued until 1923 when the Child Welfare Act came into force and the Training School was merged back with the Industrial School.

In 1934 a new Hospital Block, a narrow single-storied structure, located parallel to the western boundary behind Bethel House, was constructed. It included two dormitories with sleep-out verandahs, an administrative and treatment centre, kitchen, dining and ablutions wing.

Parramatta Girls Home

Ministerial reforms in 1956 saw the Department of Child Welfare separated from the Minister of Public Instruction and combined with Social Welfare under its own minister. 'Bethel House' was refurbished as a privileges cottage and renamed 'Bethel Cottage' in 1967. The laundry was turned into a modern commercial style laundry to assist in preparing girls for employment in the industry. A new classroom block boasting facilities for home economics, arts and crafts and sewing, hairdressing and typing was completed in 1970.

Kamballa and Taldree

In 1974 the Department began planning to divide the school into a junior remand centre for boys and a unit for girls with emotional and behavioral problems. The boys' section was known as Taldree and accommodated boys in the 1930's hospital block and Bethel Cottage. The remainder of the girls Training School made up of the courtyard buildings, main building and laundry became known as Kamballa.

Kamballa was transferred to the Department of Corrective Services in 1980 and renamed the Norma Parker Detention Centre for Women. Taldree remained under the control of Department of Youth and Community Services and used for staff training. Since 2010 the Norma Parker Centre has ceased being a detention centre.

Endnotes

[1] Beryl M. Bubacz, *The Female and Male Orphan Schools In New South Wales 1801 – 1850*, thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy August 2007 Department of Education and Social Work University of Sydney

[2] Heritage Group, State Projects, Department of Public Works. Norma Parker Centre, Kamballa, Parramatta. Formerly The Roman Catholic Orphans School and The Girls Industrial School, Parramatta. Conservation Plan, 1999, p.21

[3] The Parramatta Industrial School Official Handbook, Parramatta Industrial School New South Wales, Sydney, 1910, <http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/doview/nla.aus-f5307-p.pdf>

Mental Health Precinct: Timeline of European Settlement 1788–2013

Neera Sahni and Emma Stockburn

- 1788 – Area explored by Governor Phillip and named Rose Hill
- 1792 – Charles Smith granted a 30 acres lying on the North side of the Creek above Parramatta
- 1796 – First Gaol built on ‘Gaol Green’, now Prince Alfred Square
- 1800–1802 – George Caley, botanical collector establishes a botanical garden near the oval.
- 1800–1804 – Government Mill near the site of the Roman Catholic Orphan School completed.
- 1806 – Marsden acquires Smiths grant; Governor Bligh granted adjacent 105 acres
- 1806 – Marsden builds a watermill near junction Parramatta River and Darling Mills Creek
- 1813 – Samuel Marsden acquired 36 acres of land and named it as “Mill Dam Farm”
- 1816– Francis Greenway report on first female factory in Prince Alfred Square
- 1816 – Four acres of Bligh’s grant allocated for Female Factory site
- 1817 – January: Macquarie places the construction of a new Female Factory building on the list of essential public buildings
- 1817 – March: Greenway given orders to do ground plans and elevations for the original female factory building
- 1817 – December: Major Druitt called for tenders based on Greenway’s plans and specifications
- 1818 –contract to build the Female Factory given to William Watkins and Isaac Payten. Later that year the Female Factory Foundation stone is laid by governor Lachlan Macquarie
- 1820 – Government Mill near the site of the Roman Catholic Orphan School demolished.
- 1820’s to 1830: A house constructed the land for Mary Betts nee Marsden
- 1821 – Second Female Factory designed by Francis Greenway was completed and occupied
- 1821 – Thwaites and reed turret clock installed in the new Female Factory building
- 1823 – Governor Brisbane adds a two storEy building in a separate yard to the north-west area of the Female Factory
- 1824 – Sleeping quarters for Female Factory 3rd class women built
- 1827 – Female Factory women riot breaks out
- 1828 – a pump and internal water system is installed at the Female Factory removing the need for women to go outside to get water. The height of the perimeter wall is also increased
- 1838 – Female Factory ‘3rd class gaol’ built with the help of the Royal Engineers under Colonel Barney
- 1838 – Samuel Marsden dies. His daughter Mary and her husband John Betts occupy this property
- 1839 – First purpose built Lunatic Asylum in NSW was opened. This was also known as Tarban Creek Lunatic Asylum (1838 – 1868)
- 1839 – Sisters of Charity arrive at Female Factory
- 1840 – Transportation to NSW stops
- 1840 – Work starts on Roman Catholic Orphan School
- 1841 – Assignment of convict women ceased to the female factory ceased
- 1844 – Roman Catholic Orphan School occupied
- 1846 – There is now only 250 women in the factory and the government begins to move asylum inmates into the precinct
- 1847 – An accident at the Female Factory caused by faulty workmanship seriously injures two women in the building
- 1848 – Female Factory proclaimed a Lunatic Asylum. The administrative positions of the ‘female factory’ including those of matron had been abolished
- 1850 – The Female Factory Precinct officially becomes the Parramatta Lunatic Asylum
- 1852 – The first Surgeon Superintendent, Patrick Hill appointed to the Asylum. But is replaced in March the same year by Dr Richard Greenup
- 1855– The asylum acquired twenty-three acres from the Government Domain
- 1856 – November: 16 ft high wall separating the refractory women from the gardens falls down
- 1857 – Steam boilers were supplied to the Asylum to eliminate the need for a large number of open fire places. Work

was also done on a number of walls and replaced with 'slabbed fence' and repairs were done on a number of roofs

1858 – The Asylum is given a total of 29 acres to the south side of the river and the land that would become Wistaria Gardens

1859 – Sisters of the Good Samaritan take over Management Roman Catholic Orphan School

1860 – Male shelter sheds' are built and are used as a main dining areas and shelter. The larger of the two is known as the 'Cricket Shelter Shed' and is altered in 1933

1861 – Block of cells built for the criminally insane at the Asylum

1863 – A Female shelter shed is built used a mess hall

1866 – Purchase of forty-three acre 'Vineyard Farm' from George and Ellen Blaxland

1869 and 1871 – Temporary timber buildings constructed at the Asylum for the male inmates

1870-1880s – Separate male and female timber wards were constructed at the start of a building program to make buildings more appropriate for an asylum. These were changed to bricks in the 1930's

1870-1880s – Female Asylum Stores building is built, designed by the Colonial Architects Office

1872 – Mrs Betts' house was occupied by the Medical Superintendent of the asylum

1876 – Starting in 1876 the older buildings in the Female Factory were replaced with brick and stone buildings. The first being Wards 2 and 3 Male Asylum These had dining, dormitories and single rooms

1878 – A name change to Parramatta Hospital for the Insane

1880's – Various ha-has are built to allow barriers but also continuous views of Parramatta River

1880's – A cottage is built for the Assistant Medical Officers and is later used as Matron accommodation. It is named Pine Cottage

1882 – Approval given to destroy 1838-1839 'Female Factory' cells constructed by Governor Gipps

1881-83 – A kitchen block and sheds are built in the Female section of the Asylum. These buildings are altered in 1928 and 1943

1883 – William Cotter Williamson appointed

1885 – New 'Institute of Psychiatry Building' completed. it uses sandstone blocks from 1838-1839 cells and incorporates original 1821 'female factory' turret clock

1885 – Dining Block behind the Psychiatry Building was completed

1885-1886 – Main 'female factory' building demolished

1886 – Orphan School vacated

1886-87 – A recreation hall and chapel is built to benefit the patients. The building was not entirely completed until 1892

1887 – Roman Catholic Orphan School site occupied as Girls Industrial School (1887 – 1912) by Department of Public Instructions. It accommodated 160 to 200 girls at a time

1887 – The Official Visitors address a special letter to the Colonial Secretary dated the 10th July 1887 related to the grievous conditions at the Parramatta Asylum

1889-90 – Ward 4 is built by Manning and Barnet

1899 – A small gardener's cottage is built with additions in 1910

1890 to early 1900's – There was a variety of building works completed on the site, including 'Frangipani' gardener's cottage, nurses quarters, additions to the Wards and repairs to the Medical Officers quarters

1890's – A Male Hospital and Day room is built

1890 – Ward 8 is built for 'wet and dirty' incontinent patients

1892 – New kitchens are built

1893 – The Asylum at Parramatta begins to train mental nurses

1895 and 1897 – Additional patient wards (Ward 2) constructed. This building was added to and changed again 1905, 1938 and 1945

1900 – Dr William Cotter became Medical Superintendent

1901 – Nurses quarters building called Jacaranda House is constructed as well as additions to Ward 4

1906 – New medical quarters (Glengariff) completed. This house was called Wistaria House in 1964

1908 – A new Female Ward is completed, a long building with extended wings and verandah. Added to in 1933, 1962 and into the 2000's

1909 – Male Ward no 7 is completed. Additions added in 1933 and 1964

- 1909 – A new Admissions block is completed with wards attached to it
- 1909 – A fountain is built near the main gates and moved in 1909
- 1910 – A new visitor and office block completed on the site of the old Female Factory entrance gates. This included a library and offices for various medical and administrative staff
- 1910 – A new Admission Block was also completed this year, with three dormitories' and three day rooms as well as a staff dining room and kitchen. This was done by the Government Architects Office under the direction of W.L. Vernon
- 1910 – Wattle cottage built as what might have been waitress accommodation
- 1911 – The patients start a program of rehabilitation through gardening. At this time there was also a kangaroo park for the patient's amusement. During WW1 these gardens provided the patients with vegetable
- 1912 – Parramatta Girls Industrial School was renamed Parramatta Girls Training Home (1912 – 1946) under State Children's Relief Board. Parramatta Training Home was a house for girls charged with various crimes, who were on remand and not settled into foster homes. Parramatta Girls Training Home was accommodating girls as young as two years old until 1928.
- 1916 – The Hospital became known as The Mental Hospital, Parramatta
- 1920's – Workshops are constructed for the electricians, carpenters, and plumbers who worked onsite
- 1920s – A number of patients were taken on outings and participated in cricket matches
- 1928 – A second Nurses Home is built on site
- 1929 – 'Wistaria Gardens' were opened to the public and crafts made by the patients were sold at a fete
- 1929-1932 – A low rustic style stone fence is built by patients along the Fleet St side entrance
- 1930's – Both the Male and Female Weather Board Divisions were gradually replaced by brick buildings
- 1931 – Land was taken from the Asylum
- 1935 – Tuberculosis ward constructed
- 1939 – A new Dining Room was built for the Female Hospital
- 1946 – Parramatta Girls Training School (1946 – 1974). In 1946 Parramatta Training Girls Home was renamed Parramatta Training Girls School. This school was closed in 1974 and replaced with Kamballa
- 1947-50 – Gungarra/Kalindyi buildings are constructed
- 1948 – Mrs Betts House/former Medical Superintendents House is demolished and Rebuilt as Building 68 – Gungarra. Same disposition and orientation of the earlier structure
- 1948 – New male sick infirmary ward (Ward 6) built
- 1950's – A Sport Pavilion is built in the precinct
- 1954 – Total renovation of bathroom and toilet facilities and food storage is completed
- 1956 – A canteen later known as Harriett Ward is built. It was built with bricks from the Sydney Exhibition Building (1882), donated by the Royal Australian Historical Society
- 1956 – New cottage built for the Medical Officer
- 1960 – The Ward built for the criminally insane is closed and the patients moved to Morisset Hospital. This Ward building starts to be demolished
- 1961 – Hay Girls Institution established as Girls Industrial School / Parramatta Girls Home annex
- 1962 – The Mental Hospital is named the Parramatta Psychiatric Centre
- 1963 – 'Criminal Lunatic Ward' is completely demolished
- 1963 – Glengariff/the Former Medical Superintendents house becomes a patient hostel and activity centre
- 1966 – Alterations made to Former Medical Superintendents House/Wistaria House to house drug and alcohol dependant patients
- 1966 – A new medical centre is built to service the whole precinct
- 1966 – A swimming pool which started construction in 1964 is opened
- 1967 – Saw the closure of all farm activity on the central campus with the closure of a piggery
- 1971 – Weather board Wards are demolished
- 1974 – Parramatta Girls Training School was officially closed
- 1975 – Parramatta Girls Home renamed Kamballa (1975 – 1983). Kamballa was established in 1975 by Department of Youth and Community Services. It was a training school for girls having emotional or behavioural problems between the ages of 15 to 18. Taldree Children's Shelter was also housed in the same building from 1974 to 1980

1980 – Norma Parker Detention Centre established in former Parramatta Girls Home building

1983 – Kamballa was closed in March 1983. Its functions and residents were transferred to Minda Remand Centre

1983 – The complex was named the Cumberland Hospital

1989 – Cumberland Hospital is part of a \$21.1 million redevelopment programme

1993 – A new Chapel is built in Wistaria Gardens

1995-1996 – Refurbishment and conversion of a number of buildings to house Information Services and Institute of Psychiatry

2003 – Parramatta Girls reunion