

**Area 8****Austenham Estate Conservation Area****Landform**

This conservation area comprises land that slopes gently south from the Perry Street/Balmain Road ridge.

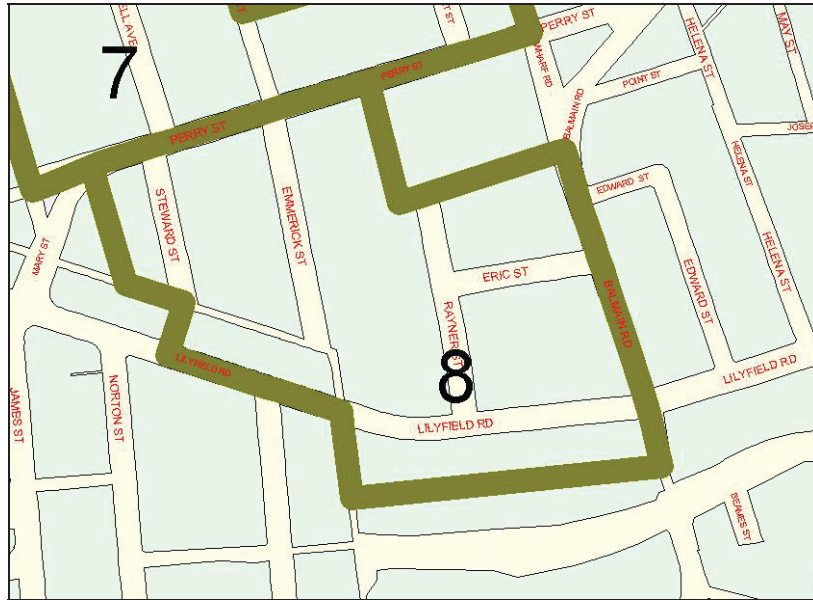


Figure 8.1 Austenham Estate Conservation Area Map.

**History**

The suburb of Lilyfield is made up from a collection of five original grants made between 1819 and 1841. It comprises 330 acres that in the 1840s became the semi-rural resort for Ryan Brennan, Samuel Perry, CJ Rogers and other wealthy people. Their residences, Austenham House (1835), Kalouan (1840/44), Broughton House (1840/44) and Maida House (1840/44), set amid extensive estates, reflected the social status of the occupants. The original estates had been fragmented into 18 separate estates by 1880, and the process of intensive residential development began in 1879. By 1905 the subdivision and sale of the Lilyfield estates were well under way with the exception of the Marlborough Hill Estate (east of Balmain Road) and the Campbell Estate.

Austenham House, designed by John Verge (who designed many Regency villas including Elizabeth Bay House) was the residence of JG Rogers. The house was demolished in 1902 and the estate, from which this conservation area is defined, was carved up into four separate subdivisions in 1901, 1902, 1903, 1905. In 1901 two new streets named after local builders Emmerick and Steward were created, releasing 60 allotments, and in 1902 a further 40 allotments were offered for sale. A new road, Austenham Road (now Lilyfield Road) appeared on the map. Another new road, Rayner Street, was created in 1903, and 30 building allotments became available. The fourth and final subdivision in 1905 created Eric Street and 23 allotments. Each of the streets created by the subdivisions fulfilled the requirements of the 1881 Width of Streets and Lanes Act. The Austenham Estate was largely built up with brick Federation houses by about 1910.

## Sources

Information provided by Max Solling.

## Significant Characteristics

- Five wide streets, one chain each in width.
- Grassed nature strips.
- Street planting/area improvement scheme of the 1930s comprises brush box trees planted within the roadway.
- Single-storey houses.
- Unity of architectural style, scale and materials. (Walk up flats have replaced six early buildings on large allotments of land in the 1970s, and disrupt this unity.)
- Hipped and some gabled roofs leave V-shaped spaces between the roofs of buildings
- Face brick construction to almost all buildings, (although a number of walls, particularly in Steward Street, have been painted in more recent years).
- Some decorative use of render on parts of wall, or around entrance.
- Timber frames to wall openings.
- Roof cladding of unglazed terracotta tiles and slates.
- A range of other decorative elements includes the use of central front gables; glazed tiles; part render of walls, chimneys, roof ridging, decorative plaster mouldings, terracotta ridging and restrained finials.
- Double-fronted houses on wider allotments, often with narrow driveways and garages beside house.
- Single-fronted, often identical, houses on narrow allotments.
- Regular setbacks, small front gardens with soft landscaping.
- Low fences allow public view of front gardens. These include appropriate and accurate reconstructions of early timber palisade fences, low brick fences, and timber and wire mesh fences.
- Sandstone kerbs and gutters with some interruption for garage/carport access.

## Statement of Significance or Why the Area is Important

- One of a number of conservation areas that collectively illustrate the nature of Sydney's early suburbs and Leichhardt's suburban growth, particularly between 1871 and 1891, with pockets of infill up to the end of the 1930s (ie prior to World War II). This area is important for illustrating development following the 1890s Depression and was built over a very short period of time from 1901-1910.

- Demonstrates, by contrast with East Balmain or South Leichhardt, the effect of the Width of Streets and Lanes Act of 1881 on the layout of suburban subdivisions.
- Through its pattern of subdivision allowing for double and single-fronted detached and attached houses and through the scale, shape, siting and materials of its buildings, it provides a good example of a turn-of-the-century tradesmen's suburb.
- It is of streetscape value for the unity of its scale, shape, setbacks and materials as a result of having been built up over a short period of time.
- It clearly illustrates through its construction materials the ready availability of machine-made face bricks during the period of its development.

## Management of Heritage Values

### Generally

This is a conservation area. Little change can be expected other than modest additions and discrete alterations. Buildings which do not contribute to the heritage significance of the area may be replaced with sympathetically designed infill.

### Retain

- All sandstone kerbs and gutters, uninterrupted by any new vehicular driveways.
- All existing buildings.
- All face brick walls. Encourage reinstatement of face brick surfaces where necessary.
- Original or early fences – encourage reconstruction where evidence exists.
- Original architectural features and embellishments.
- Front gardens and street verge as green garden space.

### Avoid

- Amalgamation of any allotment to create larger building sites.
- Alterations to the form of the existing building, especially the roof, including two-storey additions – extensions should be to rear of existing house only.
- Any new two-storey buildings.
- Painting or plastering of any existing unpainted brick surface.
- Road chicanes which alter the straight line of the streets.
- High masonry front fences/walls or new palisade fences on high brick bases.