

## Area 10 Easton Park Conservation Area

### Landform

This conservation area occupies a small knoll of land above Whites Creek, and the small valley to its north, now largely occupied by Easton Park (reclaimed from Rozelle Bay).

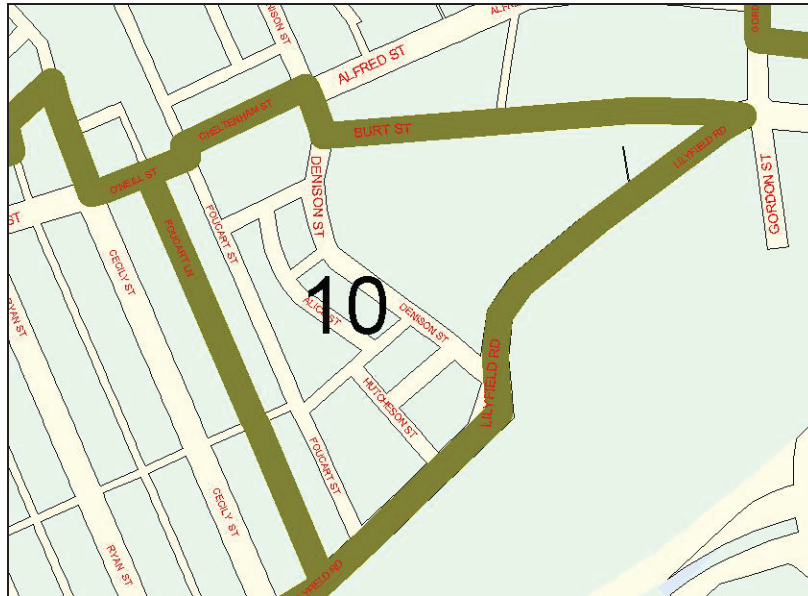


Figure 10.1 Easton Park Conservation Area Map.

### History

This area lies within Gilchrist's 550-acre Balmain Estate which covered the whole of the Balmain peninsula. Its eastern boundary is marked by Foucart Lane. Surveyor Charles Langley subdivided the estate for sale into 46/47 sections in 1852. This area comprises Sections 21 and 22 of that subdivision. The sections were purchased by a number of small-scale speculators.

The growth of industry along Whites Creek and in Rozelle Bay attracted many small investors and developers who saw the opportunity to provide housing for workers and tradesmen close by. Albert, Mary and Easton Streets were formed in 1875-1880 when Brockley and Hutcheson subdivided that land for small scale cottages and terraces. Payne and Flood were responsible for other subdivision in the area. Five acres of low-lying, probably flood-labile land was dedicated for a public reserve in 1890, and reclamation works raised the level of the park to its present configuration.

Despite the proximity of a large employment base, the buildings in the area today suggest that it was built up slowly from the 1880s to probably the 1920s, with small detached brick and timber cottages and small groups of single and two-storey terraces.

There has been considerable demolition and rebuilding in recent years with small-scale townhouses replacing those of an earlier era.

## Sources

Solling, M and Reynolds, P 1997, 'Leichhardt: on the margins of the city', *Leichhardt Historical Journal*, Vol. 22, Allen and Unwin.

Further information provided by Max Solling.

## Significant Characteristics

- Dominated by large ficus trees around the park and views across Whites Creek to port and industrial activities.
- Contrasting landform of elevated knoll above Lilyfield Road, and low-lying land to the west and around the park.
- No street tree planting except around the park.
- Large anchor buildings on corner of Denison and Burt Streets.
- Narrow streets, narrow footpaths and no grass verges.
- Buildings sited close to street. In some places early buildings stand right onto the street alignment.
- Limited mix of housing types – cottages, double and single-fronted; semis and two-storey terraces.
- Materials also mixed – stone, timber, face brick, plastered brick.
- Stone retaining walls and fences part of the streetscape.
- Occasional iron palisade fence; paling fences.
- Sandstone gutters.

## Statement of Significance or Why the Area is Important

- One of a number of conservation areas which 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 illustrates development of workers' and tradesmen's housing from the 1880s-1930s in response to nearby industry. It is significant for its surviving development from the pre-World War II period (ie pre-1939).
- In its now rare weatherboard buildings it can continue to demonstrate the nature of an important/major construction material in the fabric of early Sydney suburbs, and the proximity of the timber yards in Whites Bay.
- Through the mixture of shops, and nearby industrial buildings it demonstrates the nature of a Victorian suburb, and the close physical relationship between industry and housing in nineteenth century cities before the advent of the urban reform movement and the separation of land uses.
- Of aesthetic value for the valley siting and mature plantings of Easton Park, and the relationship of adjoining and enclosing anchor buildings with verandahs.

- It demonstrates the nature of some private subdivisions before the introduction of the Width of Streets and Lanes Act of 1881 required roads to be at least one chain wide.

## 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 remaining timber buildings
- All other pre-1939 buildings
- The anchor buildings and the post-supported verandahs.
- All plaster finishes to external walls – reconstruct where necessary.
- All unpainted face brick walls.
- All original external architectural detail, verandahs, decorative tiles, plaster mouldings, chimneys, roof ridges and finials, commercial signs etc.
- All remaining sandstone kerbs and gutters.
- The ficus plantings to Easton Park – reinstate where necessary.

### Avoid

- Amalgamation which might lead to a change in the densely developed streetscape.
- Demolition of any building constructed prior to 1939.
- Any alteration to the form of the building, including additional storeys above the existing form of the building.
- Removal of plaster to external walls, where part of the original construction.
- Painting or plastering of unpainted face brick wall finishes.
- Additional architectural detail for which there is no evidence.
- High brick or stone fences/walls or other fencing which blocks out public views of front gardens.
- Interruption to the almost continuous kerb and gutter line.

### Further Investigation

It is recommended that a detailed survey be undertaken of the heritage value of each building: there appear to be a number of very early buildings, including timber buildings here.