

30.1 LOCATION

The Civic Precinct Estate Heritage Conservation Area is located to the east of the intersection of Marrickville Road and Livingstone Roads, Marrickville.



Figure 30.2 The Area in 1943 and 2009 (source: NSW Lands Department SIX Viewer)

30.2 DESCRIPTION

The Civic Precinct Heritage Conservation Area encompasses the group of civic and community buildings and spaces addressing Marrickville and Livingstone Roads which has provided a focal point for the Marrickville area since first subdivided for suburban development in late 19th Century. The area includes other buildings which are not of a civic nature but form part of the group; including several Inter-War buildings (residential and commercial) and the retail shops at the eastern end of the group.

The area includes a breadth of facilities and services that is rare in a suburban setting and which provides evidence of the importance of the introduction of the regular tram service along Marrickville Road in 1881. It includes two churches (St Bridgid's Catholic Church, Shrubland Hall, Shrine and centre for the Passionist Community on the site of the former 'Shrubland' villa and nursery estate at the corner of Marrickville and Livingstone Roads; and the St Clements Anglican Church and Rectory at the corner of Marrickville and Petersham Roads); the former Marrickville Hospital Complex on the northern side of Marrickville Road between Livingstone Road and Lilydale Street; the former Town Hall and library ; one of the most imposing Fire Stations in Sydney, and the western end of the main shopping centre. The churches, hospital buildings, Town Hall, Fire Station and a 19th Century red letterbox are all heritage items in the existing Local Environmental Plan for their individual heritage significance. This individual significance is complemented by their collective value as an important civic group.

The scale of the precinct is an impressive contrast to that of the surrounding residential and commercial areas. Most buildings in the precinct are monumental in scale when compared to their suburban surroundings and are enhanced by mature plantings which frame the views of the buildings and axial views along Marrickville Road. The western end of the precinct is bracketed by the St Bridgid's Church group and the former Marrickville Hospital site, the buildings of each being set well back from the street and creating an open character to the edge of the commercial/civic area. The tower and Church of St Brigid's is an important landmark when travelling south along Livingstone Road as it terminates the streetscape view after Enfield Street, and particularly when the monolithic slab of the hospital building is passed.

St Brigid's Church is an imposing Federation-Romanesque style church and tower set in landscaped grounds with prominent Shrine on the eastern side of the Church, although the quality of the setting does suffer somewhat from the use of part of the space for carparking. The Monastery building at the rear is built around the former Victorian Villa "Shrublands".

The Fire Station and Town Hall/library buildings are both imposing structures and are set closer to Marrickville Road. Each is aligned with Petersham Road which has created a roughly triangular area of open space between the Fire Station and Petersham Road and mirrors the smaller space in front of St Clement's in the same manner that the Hospital and St Brigid's spaces work together to create a sense of place. The Fire Station was designed by Spain & Cosh in Federation Free Classical style and was the largest in NSW when constructed in 1914. It was also one of the last designed for horse-drawn appliances. It also includes a 'hospitality flat' for the families of firemen visiting from the country for medical treatment (source: NSW Heritage Act S170 register description) and remains a working station and an important contributor to the significance of the Area.

The buildings the Town Hall and Fire Station address include a recently constructed residential flat building, and a group of Federation/Inter-War buildings, one of which is of good quality and contributes well to the Area (the professional consulting rooms at 342 Marrickville Road). The other two buildings, on the corners of Fletcher Street are heavily layered and aesthetically detractive to the quality of the area.

The St Clement's Church group is a prominent and highly contributory element in the local streetscape and to the Area. The Church was also designed by architects Spain & Cosh and was built in two stages between 1899 and 1909. It is smaller in scale than St Brigid's, although still

imposing in its scale and form with a prominent bell tower/steeple which brackets the St Brigid's tower. It is aligned to Marrickville Road, and the setback from Petersham Road is also triangular in shape and reinforced by the consistent prominent gable roof form of the adjacent Hall. The Rectory building, also part of the Church group, is distanced from the main Civic precinct streetscape.

The retail shops at the eastern end of the area form part of the main Marrickville shopping precinct as well as forming part of the Civic Area through their proximity and ways in which they address the Civic group. The buildings within this part of the Area are mixed in their individual contributory value, and include some very good examples of 19th and early 20th Century retail development as well as some highly intrusive examples.

The main approach to the area from the north is from Livingstone Road and is dominated by the former Marrickville Hospital site. The Hospital has closed and the buildings are substantially vacant, although some are occupied by health and community groups such as the Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Womens Legal Centre. The site is owned by Marrickville Council who is investigating options for future development as a Civic and Community Centre (and potentially other uses). Any proposed development should place a high priority on the protection of the sense of scale and setting of the site as part of this civic group, and the need for new buildings and uses to respect the civic and community focus of the area.

The following figures illustrate the main elements and characteristics of the Civic Precinct Heritage Conservation Area.



Figure 30.3 and 30.4. The churches of St Clement's and St Brigid's are located at the eastern and western ends of the Civic precinct. Their spires are highly visible landmarks within the local area.



Figure 30.4 The spire of St Clement's dominates the Marrickville Road streetscape.



Figure 30.5 The spire of St Brigid's dominates views along Livingstone Road.



Figure 30.6 and 30.7. The Marrickville Fire Station was the largest in New South Wales when built and included hospitality accommodation for the families of country fireman needing to attend city hospitals. Its significance is enhanced by its continuing use as a working fire station. It forms an important and imposing part of the Civic precinct, with both the building and its use being highly contributory..



Figure 30.8. The side elevation of the Marrickville Town Hall and library building (shown on the cover of this section) presents a finely finished and decorated facade to the oblique view from Marrickville Road.



Figure 30.9. The Civic precinct includes the former Marrickville Hospital site which has been purchased by Council and is awaiting a final decision about redevelopment. This large block is likely to be demolished as part of any redevelopment project. It does not contribute significantly to the heritage value of the Civic precinct.



Figure 30.10 the former Marrickville Hospital site has been largely cleared with the exception of the significant buildings. Its current spatial contribution to the streetscape quality of the Civic precinct is mediocre.



Figure 30.11. The main entrance to the hospital addressed Lilydale Street, now a minor residential road.



Figure 30.12 and 30.13. Hospital buildings



Figure 30.14. The grassed area is part of the formal Hospital site and contains mature trees which enhance the streetscape quality of this part of the precinct.



Figure 30.15. The planting in the Hospital's grounds are mirrored by the well maintained and substantial planting to St Brigid's Church grounds.



Figure 30.16 to 30.18. The Civic precinct includes a collection of eclectic 20th Century buildings, which, with the exception of the finely detailed interwar medical Centre shown on the right side of Figure 30.17, make only a minor contribution to the significance of the Civic precinct.



Figure 30.18 Recent infill development adjoining the St Brigid's Church group.



Figure 30.19. A very rare traditional postbox that is still functional provides a further reminder of the civic function of the precinct.



Figure 30.20. The St Clement's Church Hall is simple in its design and detailing.



Figure 30.21. The Rectory was remodelled to resemble a Victorian Georgian building. It is distanced from the main Civic precinct but its function is highly contributory to the group.



Figure 30. 22. and 30.33. St Brigid's Church is Romanesque in style and substantially larger and more imposing than St Clement's, including a monastery, shrine and school within the complex.



Figure 30.34 to 30.38. The Civic precinct includes the western end of the shopping area on the northern side of Marrickville Road. These buildings formed part of the streetscape group and their consistent parapet line allows the church spires to remain dominant elements in the local streetscape.



Figure 30.36. This building has been gutted, with only the facade remaining.

Figure 30.37. Most of the buildings within the streetscape group have little intrinsic historic or aesthetic significance. Their contribution to the area is through their scale and form and the continuing retail/commercial land use.



Figure 30.38. This small group has retained some elements of its original streetscape quality, being similar to another group found in the Dulwich Hill Commercial Precinct Heritage Conservation Area.

30.3 SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUES

The Marrickville Road Civic Precinct is a high quality and substantially intact example of the local civic precinct.

The Marrickville Road Civic Precinct Heritage Conservation Area is of historical significance as the traditional centre of the Marrickville local government area. It is defined by its strongly expressed and imposing civic and community buildings; including the former Town Hall, one of the most substantial Fire Stations in the state, two major churches, a local hospital and many ancillary buildings. It also extends into the adjacent Marrickville road shopping centre streetscape as the two functions developed concurrently, facilitated by the opening of the 1889 tramway from Dulwich Hill to Marrickville which ran along Marrickville Road.

The Marrickville Road Civic Precinct is also of aesthetic significance as a largely intact civic precinct with important buildings from the period 1895 – 1940. The two Church groups provide excellent examples of the Inter-War Romanesque and Victorian/Federation Gothic styles; the Fire Station and main ward block of Marrickville Hospital of Federation Free Classical, the Town Hall the Inter-War Free Classical styles and the modest medical centre at 342 Marrickville Road the Inter-War Georgian Revival style. The setting of each is generous which allows most of the main buildings to be viewed ‘in the round’, reflecting their important role in the historic development of the local area.

The Marrickville Road Civic Precinct is of social significance for its rich range of community services and functions, including spiritual and social (St Brigid’s Catholic and St Clement’s Anglican Church groups); medical/social (the former Marrickville Hospital as well as the medical consulting rooms within the Area); community governance and facilities (the former Town Hall and current library), and community safety (the Fire Station).

The retail section of the Civic precinct contributes to the setting and integrity of the civic streetscape through its continuing use as a retail/commercial area and through its consistent parapet heights which contribute to the precinct’s aesthetic values by directing the eye to the churches and focal points at the western end. The retail precinct also contains some good examples of late 19th/early 20th Century retail shops with residential accommodation above which are contributory to the aesthetic values of the area. Other individual shops contribute minimal aesthetic value to the area and are significant primarily for their ongoing retail/commercial role.

KEY PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1895 – 1940

The Civic Precinct Heritage Conservation Area demonstrates heritage values that satisfy the NSW Heritage Council's Criteria for listing as a locally significant heritage conservation area. These values can be seen in the area in many ways, including:

Heritage Council Guideline for Inclusion satisfied	Crit.	Heritage value	How the value can be seen in the area today
The Area demonstrates overlays of the continual pattern of human use and occupation	A	The cultural landscape of the Area demonstrates the pattern of development in the Council area from early land grants to densely settled urban landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The primary value of this conservation area is derived from the evidence it provides of the development of Marrickville as the focus for civic activity in the early years of the 20th Century through the scale, purpose and design of the buildings and spaces within it.
The area is associated with a significant activity or historical phase (subdivision and development)	A	It occupies land within the Sydenham Farms, which was part of the Petersham Estate; one of the most important early Estates in vicinity of Sydney.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The earlier layers of development in the area can be seen through the alignments of Livingstone and Marrickville Roads which marked the boundary of the earliest division of the Petersham Estate into the Petersham and Sydenham Farms; and the next layer of subdivision of the nurseries/villa estates of Lilydale and Shrublands which were bounded by the alignments of Lilydale, Stanley and Francis Streets. The former Hospital and St Brigid's complex are rare remaining evidence of the scale of these earlier semi-rural layers of development.
The area demonstrates the principal characteristics of a class of Marrickville's cultural places (community)	G	It demonstrates the principal characteristics of the development of the Marrickville Council area from an early Estate to urban cultural landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The focus of the area is its community role. It includes a rich range of community services and functions, including spiritual and social (St Brigid's Catholic and St Clement's Anglican Church groups); medical/social (the former Marrickville Hospital as well as the medical consulting rooms within the Area); community governance and facilities (the former Town Hall and current library) and community safety (the Fire Station).
The area demonstrates the principal characteristics of a class of Marrickville's cultural places (retail)	G	It demonstrates the principal characteristics of the development of the Marrickville Council area from an early Estate to urban cultural landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Area includes the western end of the shopping centre, demonstrating the close connection between civic and retail functions and the importance of the arrival of reliable public transport (trams) to the development of both.

Heritage Council Guideline for Inclusion satisfied	Crit.	Heritage value	How the value can be seen in the area today
<p>The area demonstrates the principal characteristics of a class of Marrickville's cultural places (public domain)</p> <p>The area has attributes typical of the particular philosophy and design of Marrickville Council (and its predecessors)</p>	G	<p>It demonstrates the principal characteristics of the development of the Marrickville Council area from an early Estate to a suburban cultural landscape and contains high quality streetscapes and public domain elements representative of civic management and improvement programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The relationship between the built elements and land uses within the area is both imposing and subtle. – The western end of the group demonstrates spatial relationships rare in the densely settled Marrickville area, with both the St Brigid's Church group and the former Hospital complex set back from Marrickville Road and allowing for the façade of the Church in particular to be appreciated as a dignified whole. The mature plantings near Marrickville Road, in particular the Canary Island Palms both create a landscaped setting for the hospital group and Church as well as providing a termination for the viewscape when looking west towards Livingstone Road. – East-west relationships are expressed by the Church groups at each end, and emphasised by their towers which punctuate the skyline. – The streetscape of the area also includes the imposing Federation period group formed by the Fire Station, former Town hall and St Clement's Church, each of which is aligned to create a triangular forecourt area to Marrickville Road; and the western end of the shopping precinct which forms part of the group through its orientation to the Church and evidence of civic-commercial relationships to the growth and status of the central Marrickville area once the tram was introduced in the late 19th Century. – Sandstone kerbing and guttering – Street tree planting in most of the Area is negligible and representative of the late 20th Century Environmental movement (primarily native species: bottlebrush, melaleuca etc.). More recent plantings in the retail part of the Area are more substantial and enhance the quality of this streetscape, including by minimising the visual impact of some of the less sympathetic structures in the

Heritage Council Guideline for Inclusion satisfied	Crit.	Heritage value	How the value can be seen in the area today
			shopping area.
Is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in the Marrickville area.	C	It contains many buildings and elements of individual and group aesthetic value, including several excellent examples of their type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The civic and public buildings within the area are designed to reinforce their role as the focal point for the community and demonstrate architectural design and detailing of a high quality and representative of their type. – Most of the major buildings in the group read as being substantially intact, with alterations and additions settled well into the streetscape. – The two Church groups provide excellent examples of the Inter-War Romanesque and Victorian/Federation Gothic styles; – the Fire Station and main ward block of Marrickville Hospital are good examples of the Federation Free Classical style; – the Town Hall is a good example of the Inter-War Free Classical style; and – the modest medical centre at 342 Marrickville Road is a fine example of the Inter-War Georgian Revival style. – The spaces around each of these are generous and allow the buildings to be appreciated from many perspectives as one moved through the space. – The other buildings in the group, including the retail shops vary in their ability to demonstrate a high individual aesthetic value due to the insensitivity of subsequent layering; although almost all contribute to the streetscape quality of the Area through their scale and overall form.
The area contains groups and streetscapes which collectively illustrate representative types of Marrickville's cultural landscape.	G		
The area contains evidence of a significant variation to a class of items (fire station)	G		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Fire Station building remains one of the largest and finest of its class in NSW.

30.4 DEFINING THE EXTENT OF THE HERITAGE CONSERVATION AREA

The boundaries of the heritage conservation area reflect the identified heritage values of the area and the ability of the fabric of the buildings and streetscape to demonstrate these values. They recognise the impact that the changing role and character of the land uses and buildings have had on the layer of fabric from the significant era of development (1895-1940).

The western end of the precinct is defined by the boundary of Livingstone Road since it forms the historic boundary between the Petersham and Sydenham Farms; and although the Masonic Temple is consistent with the civic precinct in both scale and land use it is physically part of the adjacent residential area.

The northern and southern edges are defined by the change of land use and the focus of the area on the Marrickville Road streetscape.

The eastern edge includes the shopping precinct to Despointes Street. The retail streetscapes include some good groups and individual examples shops and commercial buildings as well as many very layered properties and/or contemporary infill development. Their scale, massing and function is however contributory to the integrity of the area as a whole and in particular the setting of the St Clements Church group.

30.5 ELEMENTS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AREA

The table above outlined the ways in which the heritage significance of the Civic Precinct Heritage Conservation Area are expressed through the contemporary cultural landscape.

The relevant Heritage Typological Control to conserve the evidence of the area's heritage significance is the Shopping Streetscapes DCP for the retail buildings and the Public Domain Controls for the public buildings and spaces (see the DCP for details). Major sites such as the former Marrickville Hospital will require a site-specific DCP to conserve and enhance the heritage significance of the individual buildings, their settings as well as that of the precinct prior to any redevelopment proposal being finalised.

The Civic Precinct Heritage Conservation Area also contains many details, or fine-grained elements that are found throughout the area on buildings of different styles and types that contribute to the integrity and heritage significance of the area. The elements are not found on all buildings; but if they are present they need to be retained in any new development. Further details about how to protect these details and incorporate them in new development can be found in the detailed DCP sheets. They include:

SUBDIVISION AND PUBLIC DOMAIN ELEMENTS

- Boundaries of the former villa estates occupied by Lilydale and Shrublands Nurseries
- Civic and spatial relationships between:
 - St Brigid's Church and former Marrickville Hospital complex (both set back from Marrickville Road with vegetated settings addressing each other)
 - St Brigid's Church and St Clement's Church (both imposing local church buildings with towers that bracket the east and west extents of the area)
- Alignment of civic buildings (Town Hall, Fire Station and St Clement's) to provide semi-formal forecourt setting to allow scale of buildings and their relationship to each other to be appreciated
- Sandstone block kerbing
- Street tree planting and public domain improvements to retail area

ELEMENTS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONSISTENCY OF THE STREETScape (VISIBLE FROM THE PUBLIC DOMAIN)

- High incidence of substantial private and public buildings that demonstrate individual heritage value and which contribute to the integrity of this area as a focal point for the development of the Marrickville area's expansion as a suburban area.
- Setbacks from the street alignment are generous for the LGA and consistent within building groups and visual catchments
- Building typologies reinforce the civic functions of the area.
 - High quality examples of a range of architectural styles from the period of construction
 - Groups of buildings demonstrate strong streetscape qualities including cohesiveness of form, scale, rhythm and materials.
 - High quality detailing to front elevation of intact and substantially intact houses and terraces
 - Major buildings designed to be read in the round
- Intact or substantially intact built elements
 - Consistency of form and detailing to intact and substantially intact original buildings and streetscapes
 - Any additions visible from the public domain that are of a minor scale, respect original built form and are unobtrusive in the context of the streetscape
- Building heights appropriate to typology and period of construction
- Building heights emphasise the hierarchy of civic purpose in the group
- Detailing and finishes appropriate to typology and period of construction
 - Window openings appropriate for architectural type
 - Timber framed windows
 - High-quality brickwork and attention to detail in finishes
 - Original brickwork to Federation period buildings remains unpainted

ELEMENTS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE INTEGRITY OF THE OVERALL PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA (NOT NECESSARILY VISIBLE FROM THE STREET)

- Footprints of additions to the rear respect the traditional pattern of development (including service wing/pavilion/recessive scale)
- Vehicle access from side streets (where available)

30.6 ELEMENTS THAT DETRACT FROM THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AREA

The Civic Precinct Estate Heritage Conservation Area has undergone many layers of change and alteration over the years since it was first developed. Some of these contribute to the cumulative heritage significance of the area but others do not because they are of an irreversible nature or result in a visual fabric that destroys, overwrites or otherwise confuses the identified values of the area. These include:

- Replacement of original shops in commercial precinct by poorly scaled and detailed alterations and infill development
- Visually intrusive alterations to significant fabric and detailing
- Car parking in landscaped forecourt to St Brigid's Church group.