

Heritage Conservation Area



KEY PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1859 to 1930s

HCA TYPE 2: Single storey residential (ii) Uniform single period subdivision around a retained earlier house
Statement of Significance

The Rathgael Estate Heritage Conservation Area is of *local* heritage significance.

The area is of *historical* significance as the 1910 “Rathgael Estate” subdivision around Rathgael house (1870) and a stone cottage (circa 1859-1869) which remain in the centre of the subdivision (heritage listed, located on a battleaxe allotment at 18A Bay Street).

The area has *historical* association with prominent figures associated with the history of Rathgael house including James Sandy, one of the first aldermen to be elected to Ashfield Borough Council, responsible for the construction of Rathgael house in 1870.

The area is of *aesthetic* significance for its 1910 subdivision pattern (with some 1920s and later re-subdivision) around the Victorian period Rathgael house and its remaining grounds. The area is of aesthetic significance for its consistent streetscapes of detached and semi-detached Federation Queen Anne style face brick single storey houses, single storey detached Federation Queen Anne style weatherboard houses; and single storey detached brick Inter-war California Bungalow style houses.

The Rathgael Estate Heritage Conservation Area is rare as a 1910 subdivision of Victorian period house estate where the Victorian period house – Rathgael, built 1870 - remains in the centre of the subdivision, and is additionally rare for the circa 1859-1869 stone cottage which remains as part of the Rathgael house site.

Key Character Elements

Subdivision and public domain elements:

- 1910 subdivision pattern around heritage item “Rathgael” (1870) and stone cottage (circa 1859-1869) in the centre
- Relatively narrow carriageways in Bay Street, Church Street and Croydon Road reflecting Victorian period road formation
- Small setbacks of housing from streets allowing for small front gardens
- Lack of nature strips in Bay Street, Church Street and Croydon Road reflecting Victorian road formation

Elements that contribute to the consistency of the streetscape (visible from the public domain)

- “Rathgael” house and stone cottage, heritage item at 18A Bay Street
- Detached and semi-detached face brick single storey housing Federation Queen Anne style and Inter-war California bungalow styles
- Detached single storey weatherboard Federation Queen Anne style houses
- Detached brick single storey Inter-war California Bungalow style houses
- Brick 3-storey 1920s Residential flat buildings at Nos. 18 and 18B Bay Street, resulting from a 1920s re-subdivision of the Rathgael house grounds.
- Original details such as:
 - Front verandahs with original detailing
 - Original main roof forms with original cladding of slate or unglazed terracotta tiles and original chimneys (Federation period brick houses), or corrugated iron (Federation period weatherboard houses), or terracotta tiles (Inter-war California Bungalow style houses)
 - Gable ends facing the street with original timber shingled, roughcast stucco or imitation half-timbered finishes (Federation, Inter-war periods)
 - Face brickwork (Federation, Inter-war periods)
 - Original timber-framed windows and timber panelled doors consistent with the periods and styles of houses
- Original front fences - timber picket, low brick, brick & timber picket for Federation and Inter-war period houses
- Narrow driveways with garages to the rear or carports to the side of houses



NON-CONTRIBUTORY ELEMENTS

- 1970s and more recent houses (for example 1970s housing at Nos. 79, 79A, 81A and 81 Church Street)
- Changes to materials: Cement rendering of face brickwork to Federation or Inter-war period houses; modern roof cladding (eg concrete tiles) and loss of chimneys
- Front verandah enclosures.
- Changes to materials and details – for example aluminium framed windows
- Carports or garaging in front gardens
- Modern front fences of unsympathetic design and materials, particularly high solid masonry front fences.

Historical Development

This Heritage Conservation Area is named for the property 'Rathgaele'. This land was part of a 100-acre grant made to Captain John Townson in 1793. By 1818 it had been absorbed into the large holding of the Ashfield pioneer Joseph Underwood called Ashfield Park Estate.¹ The Ashfield Park property was established by Underwood on the part of his estate between what is now Bay Street and Parramatta Road and between Byron and Scott Streets. The Ashfield Park house itself, however, was not built until the 1870s, by Samuel Smyth, who purchased the land from the Underwood estate. Its large curtilage was subdivided in 1904. Ashfield Park house was demolished by about 1910 and its site further subdivided.

In the meantime, the part of Underwood's estate between the present Bay Street and Church Street was purchased by H C Brooks, of Hunter's Hill, in 1859. He sold his holding to Mrs Catherine Bowen in 1867 and Mrs Bowen transferred it in trust to her daughter Elizabeth Sandy, whose husband James was one of the first aldermen to be elected to Ashfield Borough Council. By 1870 James Sandy had built 'Rathgaele', an eleven-roomed 2-storey house with a shingle roof, facing east towards Croydon Road. A single storey stone cottage in the Old Colonial Georgian style, located immediately to the south of 'Rathgaele' house was there already, having been built between 1859 and 1870 on part of the Ashfield Park Estate, perhaps as an outbuilding of Ashfield Park House.²

Both the Rathgaele house and the stone cottage remain in the centre of the present Rathgaele Heritage Conservation Area on a battleaxe allotment at 18A Bay Street as a local heritage item.

James Sandy died at "Rathgaele, Croydon Road Ashfield" aged 58, on May 20 1883.³ By February 1885 the trustees of his estate were engaged in selling the "elegant household furniture and effects" of Rathgaele.⁴ After this sale of the Rathgaele contents in 1883, it appears the house was rented for a time.⁵

In September 1887 the Rathgaele house and its land was advertised for sale as a "Capital residence" which would "prove profitable to speculators, Building Societies and others for subdivision.." (see 1887 sale advertisement below). It appears that subdividers were not interested, and it was purchased as a home and occupied in the period

In February 1910, the Rathgaele Estate was advertised for sale as a subdivision of 54 lots around "Rathgaele" house, which was also offered for sale with about an acre of grounds (see advertisement below).

The Rathgaele Estate subdivision is shown and identified as Deposited Plan No 5974, on the H E C Robinson map of Ashfield North Ward, which was first compiled in about 1912.⁶ There were 40 allotments shown on this plan—three and a half of them, Lots 8, 9 10 and half of 7, containing 'Rathgaele' and its appendages. The allotments are mostly deep, those addressing Bay and Church Streets generally having frontages of 40 feet, while those facing Croydon Road are parallelogram-shaped, three of them oddly shaped to reconcile the different angles of the layout.

¹ Ashfield Heritage Study 1992, vol 1, pp 32, 36; vol 2, Reference No 239.

² Ashfield Heritage Study 1992, vol 2, Reference No 032; Ena Harper & Nora Peek, A Triangle of Land (ADHS, 1988) p 107

³ Advertisement, The Sydney Morning Herald, 3 February 1885

⁴ Death announced in Family notices, The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 May 1883, page 1

⁵ Advertisement for letting of Rathgaele was published in the Sydney Morning Herald, 21 February 1885, p.23

⁶ Copies of the H E C Robinson map are held in Ashfield Council Archives and in the collection of the Ashfield & District Historical Society.



Allotment 19 was later divided into two (now Nos 184-186 Croydon Road) and Lots 21 and 22 were re-subdivided as three lots (now Nos 176-180 Croydon Road). Later, Lots 25 and 26 were each likewise divided into two (now Nos 164-170 Croydon Road). The 'Rathgael' site was further subdivided in the 1920s as "The Bay Estate" creating further allotments including 18A Bay Street containing Rathgael house, 18 and 18B Bay Street developed with a 3-storey brick residential flat buildings, and Nos. 24, 26 and 28 Bay Street. In the 1970s the two irregular allotments 28 and 29 were further subdivided as four allotments - Nos 79, 79A, 81 and 81A Church Street and redeveloped with 1970s housing.⁷ The 'A' numbers are battle-axe lots.

**CHARMING SITUATION AT CROYDON,
Elevated, and with frontages to three good roads.**

BY ORDER OF THE TRUSTEES.

CAPITAL RESIDENCE, RATHGAEL, and wide grounds, about 12½ acres, with large valuable frontages to CROYDON-ROAD, CHURCH-STREET, and BAY-STREET, rendering the property most attractive as a gentleman's Suburban Homestead, or it would prove profitable to SPECULATORS, BUILDING SOCIETIES, and others for subdivision, as the property enjoys a prominent site on the hill, whence is commanded extensive and picturesque views, withal convenient (about 10 minutes from station), and possessing a healthy atmosphere. It adjoins Ashfield Park Estate.

THE RESIDENCE is of stone and brick, part two-story, and part Cottage at rear, with verandahs, hall, 8 rooms, kitchen, &c., besides numerous useful and good outbuildings. It is well known as formerly occupied by the late James Sandy, Esq., and the land was an early picked block many years ago.

RICHARDSON and WRENCH will sell, by order of the Trustees, by public auction, at the ROOMS, Pitt-street, on FRIDAY, 23rd SEPTEMBER, at 11 o'clock, The above residence and expansive valuable grounds, Croydon. Cards to view on application. (1428)

Above: Advertisement for the sale of "Rathgael" published in the Sydney Morning Herald, 19 Sept 1887 p11

⁷ Ashfield Council Planning Scheme map compiled in October 1974.



AUCTIONS.

SIX MINUTES FROM CROYDON STATION.

ON PARRAMATTA-ROAD SIDE.

There's real pleasure in handling such a genuine proposition as Rathgael Estate, Croydon. Our greatest concern is that you may purchase somewhere else without seeing it. We, therefore, invite, and particularly ask, if you're looking for "something out of the box" in the way of a building section, to inspect and carefully look this Estate over. See if you can discover a single bad allotment. Find a solitary fault or reason for not becoming the owner of one if you can.

AUCTION, FEB. 19,
ON GROUND,

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ON GROUND,

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ON GROUND,

AUCTION, FEB. 19,
ON GROUND,

FIFTY-FOUR BIG LEVEL SECTIONS.

EACH A BEAUTIFUL BUILDING SITE.

RATHGAEL ESTATE is high—very high—overlooking the whole of the surrounding districts and Parramatta River; it is withal as level as a table; and there's just sufficient fall to guarantee absolute drainage. The lots front Croydon-road, Church and Bay streets; and every one is a big lump of garden soil averaging 40 x 180. Sewerage is there, also gas and city water; while the homes in the neighborhood are some of the best.

AUCTION, FEB. 19,
ON GROUND,

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ON GROUND,

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ON GROUND,

AUCTION, FEB. 19,
ON GROUND,

TERMS: FROM £2 DOWN, £1 MONTH.

INTEREST 5 PER CENT. ON QUARTERLY BALANCES.

RATHGAEL LOTS have another advantage. In addition to being so close to the station, but 6 miles from Sydney, and at which no fewer than 113 trains stop daily, it is an easy 3 minutes' walk from the Estate to the tramline; while from there to Abbotsford Swimming Baths costs but a penny fare. The lots are going to be sacrificed. The owner wants to sell, and it certainly won't be on account of high reserves if he doesn't. We don't say there is "no reserve," but so low has it been fixed that this Auction might well be described as an unreserved one.

AUCTION, FEB. 19,
ON GROUND,

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ON GROUND,

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AUCTION, FEB. 19,
ON GROUND,

IN ADDITION TO THESE BEAUTIFUL LOTS, THE LARGE BRICK AND STONE RESIDENCE, "RATHGAEL" (WELL KNOWN AS THE HOME OF THE LATE HON. BUDGE), WITH ABOUT AN ACRE OF GROUNDS, WILL ALSO BE OFFERED ON EASY TERMS. THERE ARE ABOUT 10 ROOMS, ALL IN PERFECT CONDITION, AND THE PLACE IS WELL AND SUBSTANTIALLY BUILT. IT IS SUITABLE, INDEED, FOR A GENT'S HOME, NURSING HOME, BOYS' OR GIRLS' SEMINARY, OR SIMILAR PURPOSE.

Call, Write, or 'Phone for a free plan of RATHGAEL ESTATE.

C. J. TURNER,

AUCTIONEER, SWORN VALUATOR, AND REAL ESTATE SPECIALIST.

Valentine-street, Haymarket, opp. Central Station.

'Phone, 3333.

£6 is being offered in prizes for the nearest estimate to the average price obtained per foot at the auction. Send in for full particulars.

(DIRECTOR OF REALTY DEPARTMENT, FREDK. A. EGGLETON).

Above: Sale advertisement for the Rathgael Estate, The Sydney Morning Herald, 12 February 1910, page16



BUILDING RANKING DEFINITIONS

Building ranking No.	Building Ranking Definition
*	Heritage items: Buildings individually listed as heritage items in the LEP
1	Contributory 1: Buildings that clearly reflect the Key period of Significance for the HCA and are key elements of the character of the HCA
2	Contributory 2: Buildings that have been altered but are still identifiable as dating from the Key period of Significance for the HCA. They retain their overall form from the original date of construction and, even though altered, are contributory to the HCA character
3	Neutral: Buildings that are either heavily altered to an extent where the construction period is uncertain, or are from a construction period which falls outside the Key Period of Significance for the HCA, but which reflect the predominant scale and form of other buildings within the HCA, and therefore do not detract from the character of the HCA
4	Detracting: Buildings from a construction period which falls outside the Key Period of Significance for the HCA that have scale or form that is not consistent with the key characteristics of the area



Rathgael Estate

Street	Side	No	Rating	Name	Style/Observations
Bay Street	E	2	1		Queen Anne
Bay Street	E	4	3		Simplified Classical Revival
Bay Street	E	6	1		Queen Anne/Arts-&-Crafts
Bay Street	E	8	2		
Bay Street	E	10	1		California Bungalow
Bay Street	E	12	3		Sydney Bungalow
Bay Street	E	14	3		
Bay Street	E	16	1		Queen Anne/Arts-&-Crafts
Bay Street	E	18	4	Loreley Court	Arts-&-Crafts (?)
Bay Street	E	20	1		Arts-&-Crafts
Bay Street	E	22	1		Queen Anne/Arts-&-Crafts
Bay Street	E	24	1	Roseville	Arts-&-Crafts/Queen Anne
Bay Street	E	26	1		Queen Anne/Arts-&-Crafts
Bay Street	E	28	1	Ivanhoe	Queen Anne
Bay Street	E	30	1		Federation Bungalow
Bay Street	E	32	1		Queen Anne (?)
Bay Street	E	34	2		
Church Street	N	103	1		Queen Anne
Church Street	N	101	1		Queen Anne
Church Street	N	99	3		
Church Street	N	97	3		Queen Anne (?)
Church Street	N	95	*	Wairoa	Queen Anne/Arts-&-Crafts
Church Street	N	93	*	Linghorne	Queen Anne
Church Street	N	91	1		Queen Anne
Church Street	N	89	3		
Church Street	N	87	1		Queen Anne
Church Street	N	85	1		California Bungalow
Church Street	N	83	1		Queen Anne
Church Street	N	81	3		
Church Street	N	79A-81A	3		Mediterranean



Street	Side	No	Rating	Name	Style/Observations
Croydon Road	S	162	1		Queen Anne
Croydon Road	S	164-166A	1		Queen Anne
Croydon Road	S	168-170	1		Queen Anne
Croydon Road	S	172	1		Queen Anne/Arts-&-Crafts
Croydon Road	S	174	1		Queen Anne
Croydon Road	S	176	1		California Bungalow
Croydon Road	S	178	1		California Bungalow
Croydon Road	S	180	1		California Bungalow
Croydon Road	S	182	1		Arts-&-Crafts/California Bungalow
Croydon Road	S	184-186	1		Arts-&-Crafts/California Bungalow



