

Ashfield Heritage Study Review of Areas Zoned 2(a)

Current Use Explorers Park, 11-23 Liverpool Road, Ashfield	Reference N° 2 12 01
Heritage Listing Recommended	
Themes : Local Subdivision and consolidation	Themes : State Creative endeavour Leisure
<p>Historical Notes</p> <p>This site, like so many in Ashfield, has an interesting past. Its white history began in 1795, when the area was granted jointly to Thomas Rowdon, John Jones, Francis McKewen and John Butcher, three military privates and a civilian settler. By 1820 it had been incorporated in Henry Kable's farm. The part of Kable's land west of Liverpool Road was acquired by James Underwood, subdivided for residential development, and offered for sale in 1879. This site included Lot 1 of Section 8.(1) On the opposite side of Parramatta Road was the Plough Inn.(2)By the turn of the 19th century, re-subdivision had created the Ottoline Estate, which included nine allotments facing Liverpool Road between Parramatta Road and Tideswell Street.(3) By the 1970s these sites held seven houses and, at the Parramatta Road corner, a service station. That corner building (then No 9 Liverpool Road) began in 1925 as the business of Frank Dale, motor engineer, and later became the Western Service Station. The house next door at No 11 was 'Chelsea', first occupied in 1914. No 13 (later 13-15) appeared in about 1920; No 15 was first listed in 1925, No 17 (19) in 1928, No 19 in 1922. No 21 was 'Fosterley', about 1914, while No 23 was 'Faithlie', built about the same time.(4)</p> <p>After clearing these sites, the park was designed in 1987 by Harry Howard & Partners, Landscape architects, following a competition for the use of the site. The works were constructed and supervised by Ashfield Council. The steel cut-out screen and path plaque graphics, with historical themes, were designed by Roderick Simpson.(5)</p>	
<p>Physical Description</p> <p>The park is landscaped and centres on a wide longitudinal walkway parallel with Liverpool Road, which is shaded by a creeper-covered openwork vault motif of metal trellises. This forms a vista towards the concave end of a prominent curved metal screen wall which addresses the intersection of the two roads. It bears a perforated design incorporating the name of the park and a figurative exploration motif. A set of flagstaffs adds emphasis to the corner. Vertical interpretive plaques line part of the walkway, which has two semicircular branches containing bench seats. Set into the exposed aggregate paving are low relief plaques also containing informative images of explorers. The park is level with and conceived as a continuation of the footpath of Liverpool Road. As the land slopes towards Parramatta Road at the eastern end, there is a series of retaining walls forming terracing along that boundary.</p>	
<p>Information Sources</p> <p>(1) Johnson & Sainty, <i>Land Grants 1788-1809</i>, pp 56, 249; <i>Ashfield Heritage Study 1993</i>, vol 1, pp 32, 36; vol 2, item 215; Richardson & Wrench subdivision map, 1879, in Ashfield Council Archives.</p> <p>(2) This is commemorated in a painting by John Guy, unveiled at the opening of Explorers' Park, now hanging in the Level 3 Foyer of the Ashfield Council Building.</p> <p>(3) H E C Robinson map of Ashfield, north-east ward, undated but from 1912.</p> <p>(4) <i>Sands Directories</i>; Valuer-General's records, East Ward, 1940, No 1143, in Ashfield Council Archives.</p> <p>(5) From information in the interpretive signage at the park, and records in Ashfield Council Archives. The engineers were Miller, Milston & Ferris and the Council partner was Ventura Projects.</p>	