

Ashfield Heritage Study Inventory Sheets 2010

Name of Item	‘Yasmar’, originally a residential estate	Reference N°	10/31																								
Other Names		Land Title																									
Address	185 Parramatta Road																										
Locality	Haberfield	Postcode	2045																								
Item Type	Buildings and grounds	Owner/s																									
Group Name																											
Statement of Significance	<p>The house ‘Yasmar’ is the most historic and one of the oldest buildings in Ashfield. It is the only relatively intact villa in its landmark garden setting on the oldest roadway in Australia. The house, stables and garden survive in layout as originally intended. The garden is a rare example of the Gardenesque style, allowing an understanding of the style that was appropriate to persons of wealth and taste including its original owners, the historic Ramsay family, who were pillars of Presbyterianism. The house is a rare example of the work of the early architect John Bibb. It has associations with Simeon Lord; the Ramsay and Learmonth families; G J Grace, a later owner; and the Presbyterian Church. The property was commandeered for officers’ quarters during World War II.(1)</p>		<p>Condition as observed from street —</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Intact</p> <p>Minor alteration —</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sympathetic</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unsympathetic</p> <p>Major alteration —</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sympathetic</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unsympathetic</p> <p>Modifications —</p> <p>The original house is largely intact but its context has been considerably altered over many years</p>																								
Summary of Significance	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;"></th> <th style="width: 20%;">Rare</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Associative</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Representative</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Historic</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aesthetic</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scientific</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Rare	Associative	Representative	Historic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aesthetic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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Surveyed by

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Survey Date

05/03/2010

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<p>Current Use</p> <p>Government uses including Yasmar training facility. The house itself is unoccupied at the time of writing.</p>	<p>Reference N°</p> <p>10/31</p>
<p>Heritage Listing State Heritage Register. Register of the National Estate. Ashfield Local Environmental Plan 1985. Schedule 7</p>	
<p>Themes : Local</p> <p>Subdivision and consolidation</p>	<p>Themes : State</p> <p>Towns, suburbs and villages.</p>
<p>Historical Notes</p> <p>'Dobroyde', the early name of this area, was acquired by Simeon Lord. Lord's daughter Sarah Ann married the Scottish surgeon David Ramsay. Their first-born Mary Louisa married Alexander Learmonth in 1850. In 1856 Learmonth commissioned the architect John Bibb to design their new house on the property which was named 'Yasmar', their surname spelt backwards. The house is now a rare example of Bibb's considerable corpus of early Victorian residential work. The extended Ramsay family were pillars of Presbyterianism. The first home Sunday School, established at Dobroyde homestead, was moved to 'Yasmar' under the supervision of the Learmonth family.</p> <p>In 1904 Joseph Grace, co-founder of the Grace Brothers department store, leased 'Yasmar', and after his marriage to Sarah ('Gypsy') Smith bought the property. They were both avid gardeners. Grace died in 1931 and Gypsy remained there until the estate was commandeered for military officers' quarters during World War II. In 1946 it became a State Government centre for juvenile justice and, in 1981, a Juvenile Detention Centre. Many additional structures from these periods still exist. The Haberfield Public School occupies a site that was formerly part of the 'Yasmar' estate.</p> <p>The garden expresses the Ramsay family's passion for botany. It was integral to the totality of the place, in design, species selection and propagation. The diversity of plant material is attributed to Edward Ramsay, Mary Louisa's brother, who was a notable horticulturist. Many species there are now deemed rare.</p> <p>The property is Classified by the National Trust of Australia (NSW).</p>	
<p>Physical Description</p> <p>The house 'Yasmar' is a single-storeyed symmetrical building of sandstone, with a hipped roof of slate trimmed with terra cotta. The residence is set well back from Parramatta Road behind a dense and expansive historic garden, which is overlooked by a verandah extending around both ends of the house. The verandah is floored with sandstone flags, has a separate roof at a lower pitch, and is supported on cast iron plate columns made by the Sydney firm of Bubb & Co. There are French doors with shutters on the main and rear elevations, the latter also verandahed. The architectural style of the house is Victorian Regency.(2) The main house is flanked by two service wings which form a courtyard at the rear; they are slate-roofed and verandahed and the east wing has a cellar. These wings have been altered somewhat. A stable block also survives.</p> <p>Some original Georgian elements of the house remain. The elegant curves of the entry foyer, the six panel cedar doors, and the finely crafted joinery of its architraves and skirting boards are intact. Grace also introduced many Federation era elements to its interior, including stained and leaded glass in the front and rear entry double cedar doors, fine mantles and pressed metal in the rear rooms, and the Danks Baronial Study, which featured in the 1920s Grace Brothers catalogue.</p> <p>The large, dense garden, established by the Learmonth's characterises the 'gardenesque' tradition and includes many unusual or rare specimens. A winding entrance drive from Parramatta Road leads from an impressive iron and sandstone entrance gateway to the teardrop-shaped carriage loop which, in Gardenesque style, reveals the house front.</p>	
<p>Information Sources</p> <p>(1) This property has been well recorded in many published and unpublished works. Most of the above information comes from comprehensive documentation in the files of the NSW Heritage Branch and from the entry on 'Yasmar' by Sue Jackson-Stepowski in the <i>Dictionary of Sydney</i> (Sydney City Council, 2008)..</p> <p>(2) Refer to Apperly et al, <i>Identifying Australian Architecture</i>.</p>	