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'CARITAS'

299 FORBES STREET DARLINGHURST, NSW

INITIAL HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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'Lunatic Reception House, Darlinghurst, Sydney' (Mitchell Library: GPO 1 - 05750)

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on behalf of



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SEPTEMBER 2006

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Site Location

*Archaeological and Heritage Management Solutions Pty Ltd (AHMS)* has been engaged by *St. Vincent's Hospital Sydney Ltd* (the Proponent) to prepare an initial historical archaeological assessment of proposed re-zoning and redevelopment of 299 Forbes Street, Darlinghurst, NSW (Lot 1612 DP 752011, hereafter referred to as the 'site', 'subject site' or 'Caritas').

The site is occupied by 'Caritas' an inpatient unit of St Vincent's Mental Health Service dedicated to the treatment of mental illness. The unit provides supervised care in hospital, a 24 hour Crisis Assessment and Management Service & Rehabilitation Services aimed to stabilise the mental state of patients and provide education and support to patients and their families<sup>1</sup>.

The general location of the site is shown in Figure 1.1. A current site survey plan is also included as Figure 1.2.



Figure 1.1: General Site Location

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sesbs.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/StVincentMHS.asp> 30-08-06

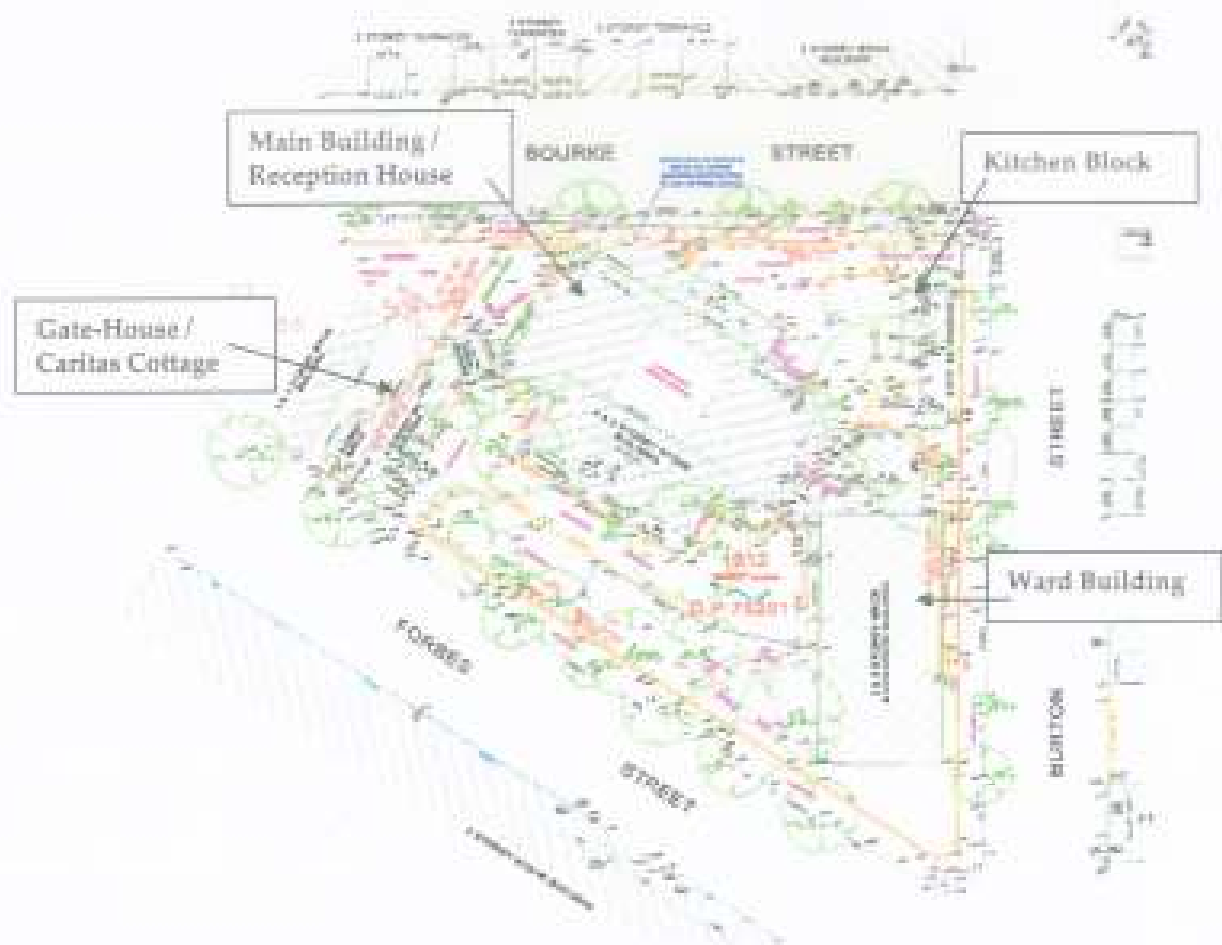


Figure 1.2: Current Site Survey Plan showing extant Buildings (Extract from Plan No. 72150/3 prepared by Rygate & Company Pty Ltd, 12-7-06)

## 1.2 The Development Proposal

St. Vincent's Hospital proposes the rezoning of Caritas from "Special Use" to "Mixed Use" and the redevelopment of the O'Brien wing of the hospital. The site is located between medium density Residential 2b zones to the north and east and special use zones to the south and west accommodating the Courthouse, East Sydney Technical College, the Police Station and St. Vincent's Hospital.

Caritas' services are in high demand and its inpatient facilities are currently overloaded making it difficult for the Centre to provide adequate crises or case management services. To improve the facility the NSW Government and St. Vincent's Hospital have pledged to fund a new Mental Health Emergency Department linked to the general St. Vincent's Emergency Department. This will leave the subject site vacant and available for redevelopment.

A Concept Plan for future redevelopment of the site has recently been prepared by Architectus Sydney. A copy of the plan is included as Figure 1.3. The Concept includes:

- Rezoning the property from 'Special Use (Hospital)' to 'Mixed Use';
- Demolition of the Caritas Rehabilitation Centre fronting Burton Street;
- Construction of new mixed use building fronting Bourke and Burton Street;
- Demolition of the rear additions to Caritas House;
- Change of use of the heritage items (i.e. Caritas House, Caritas Cottage and the Old Kitchen Block) to a use to be determined.

Architectus described the Concept as follows:

*The design and functionality of the development and of the site as a whole are to facilitate a sensitive but innovative mixed-use interface between the neighbouring residential areas, the adjacent special use zones and the retail uses along Oxford Street.*

*The development will provide a convenient and accessible residential/commercial facility which will be designed to compliment and respect the historical character of the area without attempting to replicate the traditional built forms<sup>1</sup>.*



Figure 1.3: Concept Plan for Caritas (prepared by Architectus Sydney)

<sup>1</sup> Architectus Sydney, July 2006

### 1.3 Rationale and Objectives for the Study

The site is currently listed as a significant heritage item under Schedule 2 of the South Sydney Local Environmental Plan (SLEP) 1998, is subsequently listed on the NSW Heritage Inventory and is contained within a Heritage Conservation Area. It contains a number of significant heritage buildings of varying ages, established gardens and heritage-listed perimeter fencing. Given its heritage status, items of heritage value at the site can not be demolished, altered, removed or modified without authority consent. Such consent can only be granted following consideration of potential impacts on the site's heritage values.

The Proponent has prepared a Rezoning Application to be lodged with NSW Department of Planning. The development has been identified as State Significant and has been accepted for consideration under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP & A).

Graham Brooks and Associates (GBA) Pty Ltd has produced a Due Diligence Report.<sup>3</sup> GBA's Due Diligence Report was an initial assessment that aimed to identify items of heritage value at Caritas. The report provided a detailed site history, focusing on the Main Building (Caritas House), the Gate-House (Caritas Cottage), the perimeter fencing, landscaping and significant people associated with development of the site. The report noted the following archaeological considerations: the location of a well on the site, remnants of an old ward on the northeast corner of the site, footings and other relics associated with the original watch-house beneath Caritas Cottage and remains of the Old Kitchen facility in the northern corner of the site. Given the potential for archaeological remains to be present across the site an initial archaeological assessment of the site was required by Council to support the Re-zoning Application.

A Clause 6 Application Report prepared by Architectus Sydney describes why Part 3A of the EPA applies to the current Proposal. As the site is listed as a heritage item by Sydney City Council and is contained within a Heritage Conservation Area no heritage items can be demolished, altered, removed or modified without authority consent. The Clause 6 Application has been approved by the Minister of Planning. Thus, if archaeological remains ('relics') are indicated at the site recording and salvage of the remains could be conducted without the requirement for an Excavation Permit under S.140 of the *NSW Heritage Act (1977)*.

This report is designed to satisfy the preliminary requirements of the Minister of Planning to assess potential impacts of the Concept Plan on heritage values identified at the site. Its objectives are to:

- identify the extent, integrity and significance of historic archaeological relics (if any) at the subject site;

<sup>3</sup> Graham Brooks & Associates, August 2006

- prepare an archaeological predictive model and assess the current concept to identify any archaeological constraints on proposed development of the site. This will assist future development planning; and
- provide management recommendations for any historic relics indicated at the site.

## **1.4 Report Outline**

The report is divided into the following sections:

- **Section 2** provides a summary of heritage legislation relevant to the development proposal for the site and results of heritage register searches;
- **Section 3** summarises research and site inspection/recording methods employed during the assessment;
- **Section 4** presents the assessment results. These are divided into the following sub-sections - site history (4.1) and physical evidence (4.2);
- A discussion on the site's archaeological potential is provided in **Section 5**;
- **Section 6** evaluates the heritage significance of any potential relics indicated at the site;
- An archaeological predictive model is provided in **Section 7**; and
- **Section 8** provides management recommendations;

The scope of work for the assessment was limited to examination of the sites historic heritage significance and archaeological potential, although references to Aboriginal history and the potential for Aboriginal objects are made in the report.

## **1.5 Study Team & Acknowledgments**

The site history was compiled by Fiona Leslie. It supplements information about past use of the site described in Graham Brooks & Associates' Due Diligence Report. The site inspection was conducted by Fiona Leslie and Matthew Kelly with remaining sections of the report written by Fiona and reviewed by Matthew. Scaled overlay plans were prepared by Sophie Pullar (AHMS Archaeologist) and Fiona.

The authors acknowledge assistance provided by Greg O'Neil (Aurora Projects Pty Ltd) and Tony Collier (Architectus Sydney Pty Ltd) during preparation of the assessment.

## 2.0 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

In New South Wales, protection for Historic heritage items and places is provided by the *NSW Heritage Act, 1977* and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979*. Significant historic sites and places can be listed on either statutory or non-statutory registers, as discussed in following sections.

### 2.1 The NSW Heritage Act (1977)

The NSW Heritage Act is a statutory tool designed to conserve New South Wales' historic heritage.<sup>4</sup> It is used to regulate development impacts on the state's historic heritage assets. In addition to buildings, landscapes and other items listed on the State Heritage Register, archaeological features and deposits are afforded automatic statutory protection by the relic provisions of the NSW Heritage Act 1977 (as amended in 1999). The Act defines 'relic' as:

*any deposit, object or material evidence relating to the settlement of the area that comprises NSW, not being an aboriginal settlement, and which is fifty or more years old.*

Sections 139 to 145 of the Act prevent the excavation or disturbance of land for the purpose of discovering, exposing or moving a relic, except by a qualified archaeologist to whom an excavation permit has been issued by the Heritage Council of NSW.

### 2.2 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979)

The NSW Heritage Council, on behalf of the Department of Planning, is an approval body in the IDA process, with their involvement triggered by the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979*. The Heritage Council requires preparation of an *Historical Archaeological Assessment* when a development has potential to disturb 'relics'. If the development will disturb historic relics, consent must be granted by the Heritage Council prior to their disturbance / removal.

**Under the provisions of Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* (as amended), Development Applications deemed to be 'Major Projects' do not require Part 6 approvals from the Heritage Council.** Under the Part 3A provisions, the Minister for Planning is the consent authority and has ultimate responsibility for determining matters relating to historic heritage.

<sup>4</sup> NSW Heritage Act, <http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/>, p1



## 2.3 The State Heritage Register

The State Heritage Register is a statutory list of historic places and items of State heritage significance made by the Minister of Planning. The Register lists a diverse range of historic places, including archaeological sites, that are particularly important to the State and which enrich our understanding of the history of NSW. State heritage significance is defined by the NSW Heritage Office as "significance to the State in relation to the historical, scientific cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of the item (Section 4A (1), Heritage Act, 1977)".<sup>5</sup> Places and items listed on the Register are legally protected under the NSW Heritage Act 1977 and require approval from the Heritage Council of NSW prior to undertaking work that results in their alteration or modification.

*The subject site is not currently listed on the State Heritage Register.*

## 2.4 The State Heritage Inventory

The State Heritage Inventory (SHI) is an electronic database of statutory listed heritage items in New South Wales that are protected by heritage schedules of Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) and Regional Environmental Plans (REPs) or by the State Heritage Register. The inventory can include historical archaeological sites, maritime archaeology, industrial sites, urban landscapes including parks and gardens, private and civic buildings, heritage items owned by State government agencies, moveable heritage - such as transport vehicles or heritage collections - and Aboriginal heritage<sup>6</sup>.

*The Caritas Centre Group is listed as built heritage item on the State Heritage Inventory (Item Id: 2420756). The site is described as a two-storey Victorian Regency style building with third storey addition; Two storey arts and Craft style building and perimeter fences.*

## 2.5 Local and Regional Planning Instruments

Other documents that include statutory listings for both Historic and Aboriginal heritage items in NSW include Regional Environmental Plans (REPs), Development Control Plans (DCPs) and Local Environmental Plans (LEPs). These planning instruments are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the NSW *Environmental and Planning Assessment Act, 1979* and are designed to integrate heritage management and conservation into the planning and development control process to ensure that development does not affect the significance of heritage items, sites and/or places, and conservation areas.

*The Caritas Centre Group is also listed as a heritage item (Item No. 461) in Schedule 2 of the South Sydney Local Environmental Plan 1998 and is contained within the East Sydney and Darlinghurst Conservation Area.*

<sup>5</sup> NSW Heritage Office website, [www.heritage.nsw.gov.au](http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au) 12/04/06

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

## 2.6 The Australian Heritage Database

The Australian Heritage Database is a register, maintained by the Australian Government Department of Environment & Heritage (DEH), of sites, places and landscapes with either Aboriginal or historic heritage values.

*The subject site is not currently listed on Australian Heritage Database.*

## 2.7 The National Trust of Australia (New South Wales)

The National Trust of Australia is a non-statutory register of historic heritage sites, buildings, landscapes, places and objects. Listing by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) constitutes an authoritative statement regarding a site's heritage significance, and while it does not impose any legal constraints upon future use or development of a site or place, a National Trust listing is a strong indication of the community's recognition of that site or place's heritage significance and the need for its conservation.

*The subject site is not currently listed on the National Trust of Australia (New South Wales) Register.*

## 3.0 METHODS

### 3.1 Historical Research

The site history presented in Section 4 of this report combines information from the following sources:

- A detailed history of the Caritas site compiled by Graham Brooks & Associates (GBA) as a component of their Due Diligence Report; and
- Additional historic maps and plans recovered for this assessment detailing site specific occupation from 1788 to the present.

GBA's site history was compiled using information from primary sources found at Mitchell Library, Sydney Water, Sydney City Archives and NSW State Records and secondary sources, including *Out of Sight, Out of Mind* by James Kerr<sup>2</sup>.

Information from this history was incorporated into this report, with permission from the author, and supplemented where necessary with historic maps, plans and other documentation detailing site specific occupation from 1788 to the present day. Maps and plans were sourced from Sydney Water, Mitchell Library and Lands & Property Information (LPI).

### 3.2 Site Inspection

Matthew Kelly and Fiona Leslie inspected the grounds of Caritas on 30 August 2006. The purpose of this work was to determine factors that may have contributed to, or modified, pre-existing ground surfaces.

A current site plan was annotated with observations regarding the extent of excavation, and the location of service lines, footings and construction and landscaping episodes that must have resulted in removal of pre-existing soil deposits. This information was then collated with the research results to define a development sequence for the site. Observations regarding the extent of disturbance caused by site formation processes were subsequently used to determine whether or not any archaeological relics were likely to survive on the site.

<sup>2</sup> Graham Brooks & Associates, August 2006.

<sup>3</sup> 1988.

## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 Historical Research

In general terms, historic use of the site can be divided into five phases of occupation and/or possible use:

1. Possible Aboriginal use and occupation (pre 1788 – c1820);
2. Darlinghurst Gaol (1822 - 1865);
3. Darlinghurst Police Station (1841 - 1928);
4. Darlinghurst Reception House for the Insane and associated buildings (1865 - 1961); and
5. Caritas Mental Health Facility of St. Vincent's Hospital (1962 - present).

The following sections summarises Darlinghurst's historical development generally, with a focus on site specific developments and occupation.

#### 4.1.1 Aboriginal Occupation of Sydney Cove

Aboriginal people occupied the Sydney area for tens of thousands of years prior to the period when Britain annexed Australia. Sydney Harbour, the area's streams, and the surrounding lands provided Aboriginal people with rich maritime and terrestrial resources.

The people who occupied greater Sydney are thought to have been the Cadigal band who spoke the coastal Eora language. This group is well attested to in the writings of early colonial diarists such as Tench and Collins, and leaders of this band included the famous Colbee.<sup>9</sup> The Darlinghurst gaol area was referred to a *Woolloomooloo* by local Eora people.

Prior to European settlement the subject site was on the upper slopes of a significant hill overlooking Sydney harbour. In addition to providing good views, an abundant supply of water was available from a creek near the present-day St Vincent's Hospital. It is therefore possible that members of the Cadigal tribe occupied the site at some point, camping at the site of Darlinghurst Gaol.

There is considerable physical evidence of Aboriginal occupation and use of greater Sydney. The large shell middens of Port Jackson that were burnt for lime by early European settlers, and stone tool assemblages unearthed during excavations in Sydney, bear witness to the Aboriginal occupation and use of the Sydney area.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Turbet, 2001: 18-27; Tench, 1975; Collins, 1975; Ross, 1988: 41-53.

<sup>10</sup> Fitzgerald & Keating, 1991: 16; Lampert & Truscott, 1984.

A number of recent urban archaeological excavations along former creek lines have recovered Aboriginal objects, such as stone artefacts and other evidence of pre-European occupation. The two excavations most relevant to this archaeological assessment are Angel Place (1997) and the Quadrant Development site (2001-2002).

Salvage excavation of a localised area of relict topsoil at Angel Place, during redevelopment along the former Tank Stream, produced the following results:

- An assemblage of 54 flaked stone artefacts (including flakes, cores and flake fragments produced during on-site reduction) was recovered. Analysis of the finds indicated that they included a variety of raw materials including silicified tuff, indurated mudstone, siltstone and quartz.
- The spatial distribution of the stone artefacts along the bank of the original Tank Stream indicated continuous Aboriginal occupation at the site.
- Palynological evidence retrieved during the excavation indicated that the area had been rapidly de-vegetated immediately after initial European settlement.<sup>10</sup>

Based on the results at previous archaeological investigations in East Sydney it is possible that Aboriginal objects have survived in areas of remnant topsoil at the subject site, however, *they are likely to be highly disturbed and of limited scientific significance.*

Figure 4.1 shows an Aboriginal campsite in the Darling Harbour area, in c1812.

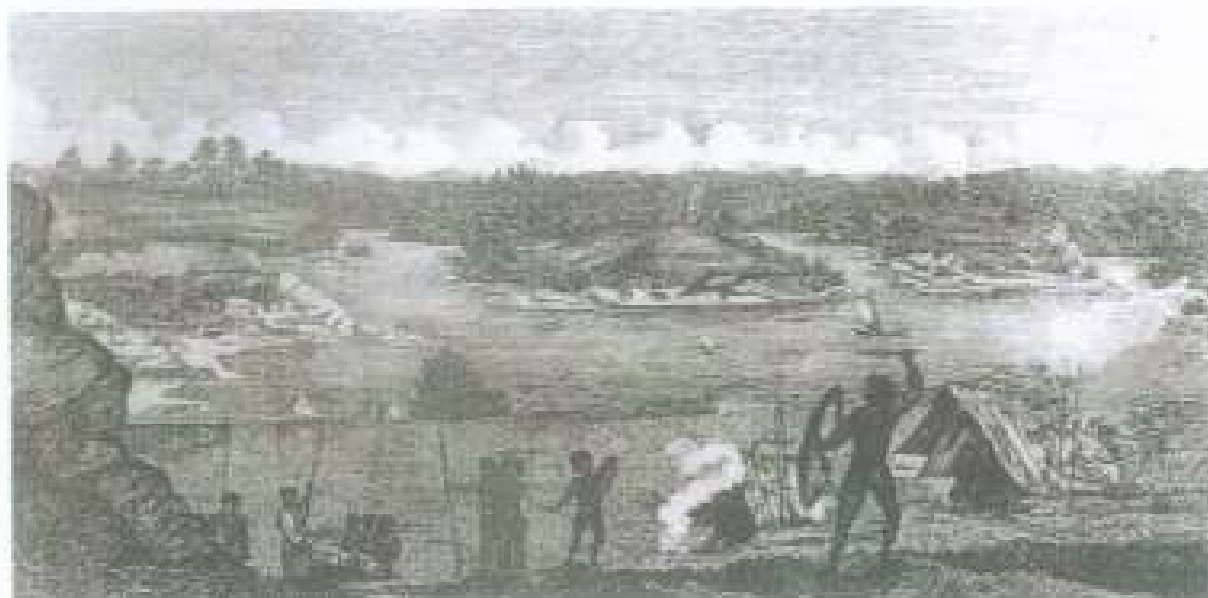


Figure 4.1: 'Aboriginal Camp at Cockle Bay?' Absalom West c1812 (ML SPF - reproduced in Fitzgerald & Golder, 1994: 14).

<sup>10</sup> Durr Steele (Prehistory excavation director), pers. comm: Golder Mackay, 1998.

#### 4.1.2 Early Land Grants (c1800 - 1822)

The area now known as Darlinghurst was first subdivided in the early 1800s. However, as indicated by an early parish map (Figure 4.2), land surrounding the subject site remained undeveloped until construction of Darlinghurst Gaol directly southeast of the site. John Palmer, Joseph Foveaux and Alex Donaldson's 200 acre 'Surry Hill Farm' was situated to the south west, John Palmers 100 acre farm 'Woolloomooloo' to the north east and Thomas West's 20 acre property named 'Barcom Glen' further east overlooking Rushcutters Bay. During the early 1800s the area was at the extremity of the town, with Sydney Common to the south. A city boundary stone was set up at the intersection of Dowling, South Head Road (Oxford Street) and Victoria Street emphasising the peripheral position of the site.



Figure 4.2: Parish Map showing the general location of the site prior to construction of Darlinghurst Gaol c1822. The road directly south of the site was South Head Road, later renamed Oxford Street.

#### 4.1.3 Darlington Gaol (1822 - 1865)

Following an assessment of the conditions at Sydney gaol in 1820 Commissioner John Thomas Bigge recommended that a new gaol be built. A 4 acre site of sand and bush was chosen by Governor Macquarie on Woolloomooloo Hill on the South Head Road (Oxford Street). Funds to construct building for the gaol, however, did not become available for many years.

Construction of the walls of Darlington Gaol was authorised by Governor Brisbane in 1822. Standish Lawrence Harris, the Government Architect at the time, is believed to have supervised the works<sup>12</sup>. Sandstone for the walls was quarried by a convict chain gang from a nearby site at Barcom Glen and a quarry on the corner of William and Forbes Streets. The walls were completed in 1824 and required some 30 000 tons of sandstone. Construction of buildings within the walls, however, was abandoned for another twelve years, due to lack of Government funding. In the meantime, the space was used to house convict work gangs and became known as 'Woolloomooloo Stockade'.

Funds to complete the gaol were finally made available by Governor Richard Bourke in January 1835. Mortimer William Lewis, the colonial architect at the time, prepared designs for the buildings with input from Captain George Barney, Royal Engineer of NSW. Work on the first two wings and governor's quarters commenced in November 1836 with convicts working as labourers. The first prisoners arrived in June 1841. At the time only two wings and the governor's residence was complete. The courthouse adjacent to the Gaol was designed by Mortimer Lewis and completed in 1844. The gaol and courthouse are clearly shown in Surveyor William Henry Well's 1843 plan of Sydney (Figure 4.3).

By 1872, all of the major buildings within the gaol were complete. The original Forbes Street perimeter wall built in 1824 was entirely replaced in the early 1870s. Prior to its demolition, the original sandstone gate was a substantial and impressive structure leading to the governor's quarters. A platform was built over the top of the gate for public hangings<sup>13</sup>. The first execution of a prisoner took place inside the Forbes Street gates on 29 October 1841. Two men were hanged for murder on a scaffold close to the gate. Another seventy-four prisoners were hanged between 1841 and 1855.

Of relevance to the subject site is the public hanging of John Knatchbull, son of Sir Edward Knatchbull. The hanging was a very public affair, drawing a crowd of some 10 000 people, and is recorded to have taken place outside the Forbes Street Gate. The event took place on Tuesday, 13 February 1844 with Knatchbull hanged for murder on a high scaffold in front of the gaol gates. Figure 4.4 below shows a sketch of the event and suggests that the execution may have taken place on the subject site. However, it is highly unlikely that any physical evidence of the execution has survived below current ground surfaces at Caritas.

<sup>12</sup> Beck, 2005: 3

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*



Figure 4.3: 1843 'Map of the City of Sydney' showing the subject site adjacent to Darlinghurst Gaol. The site appears to have been undeveloped at the time. (William Henry Wells, Land Surveyor - reproduced from Ashton and Waterson, 2000: 25).



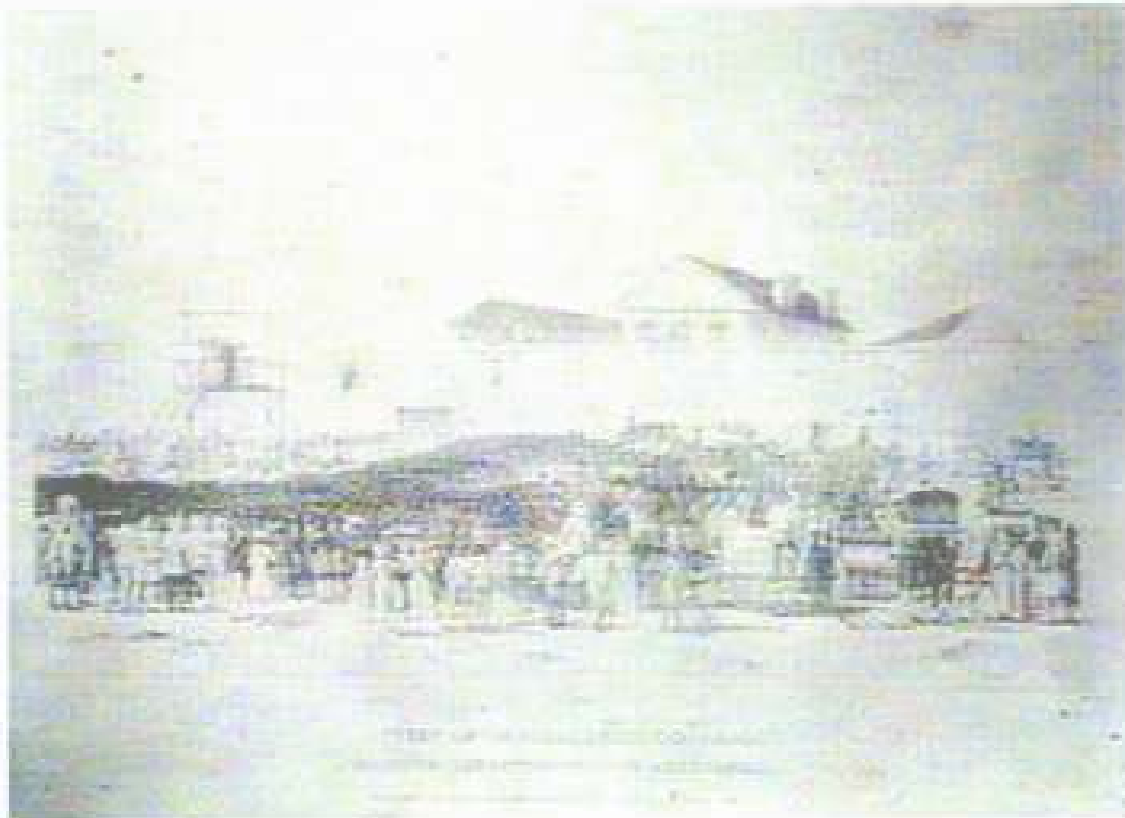


Figure 4.4: 'Woolloomooloo Gaol, Execution of John Knatchbull' nd. The execution took place in front of the Forbes Street Gates - which is likely to have been within the subject site (Mitchell Library GPO 1 - 21799)

The only other reference to possible use of the subject site during establishment of Darlinghurst Gaol is the construction of a residence by its first Governor, Henry Keck<sup>14</sup>. Keck was one of the Gaols most notorious Prison Governors using both male and female prisoners to run errands for his own enterprises. Keck was first appointed Prison Governor of the Old Sydney Gaol in October 1837 and moved into his new residence at Darlinghurst in July 1841. The Prison Governor's residence was constructed by this date, raising doubts over the construction of a separate residence in front of the Forbes Street Gate, although it is recorded that Keck's mistress, Miss Sarah Whitehouse, was set up in a house in nearby Surry Hills. There are no land title records indicating subdivision or the issue of any land grants. However, as discussed further below, the 1865 Trigonometric Survey of Sydney does suggest that a small cottage was situated on the subject site before Darlinghurst Reception House was added to the site. On that basis, the possibility of a house constructed on the subject site by Prison Governor Keck between 1837 and 1865 should not be dismissed.

<sup>14</sup> Hickey in GBA, 2006: 14

#### 4.1.4 Darlinghurst Police Station (1841 - 1928)

The first reference to specific occupation of the subject site was by Governor Brisbane in 1841. The land was supposedly set aside at the time for Police purposes<sup>11</sup>. No buildings, however, are indicated on the subject site in Woolcott and Clarke's detailed map of Sydney City drawn in 1854 (Figure 4.5). The Gaol and Court House, however, are clearly shown.



Figure 4.5: 1854 'Map of the City of Sydney' showing Darlinghurst Gaol and adjacent Court House. No buildings are indicated at the subject site (Woolcott and Clarke - reproduced from Ashton and Waterson, 2000: 27)

The first documented evidence of buildings at the site is from the 1865 Trigonometric Survey of Sydney (Figure 4.6). The plan shows four [4] buildings within the subject site, with an earlier cottage and outbuilding indicated below the larger Reception House. As discussed in the previous subsection, the cottage and outbuilding may have been constructed by Governor Keck between 1837 and 1865. The building towards the corner of Forbes and Bourke Street is most likely the Police Station / Residence. The building directly behind the larger cottage may have been a temporary lock-up.

<sup>11</sup> GBA, 2006: 14



Figure 4.6: 1865 'Trigonometric Survey of Sydney' showing four [4] buildings on the subject site (Sheet K2-1 NRS 9929, Department of Lands)

Our first view of the Police Station & Residence is from a photograph taken in c1875 (Figure 4.7). The photograph shows two adjoining cottages on the corner of Forbes and Bourke Streets. The layout of the buildings suggests that the cottage to the left was the Police Station and to the right, a residence for the Police Sergeant.

A Metropolitan Detail Series Plan, drawn by the Water Board, in 1884 shows the Police complex in more detail (Figure 4.8). By this date at least three outbuildings had been added to the rear of both cottages. The outbuildings may have included a watch-house, stables, detached kitchen or laundry. Their exact function and purpose is unclear.



Figure 4.7: c1875 view of Forbes Street from Taylor Square showing a complex of Police buildings adjacent to the subject site. (Reproduced from Bock 2005:23)

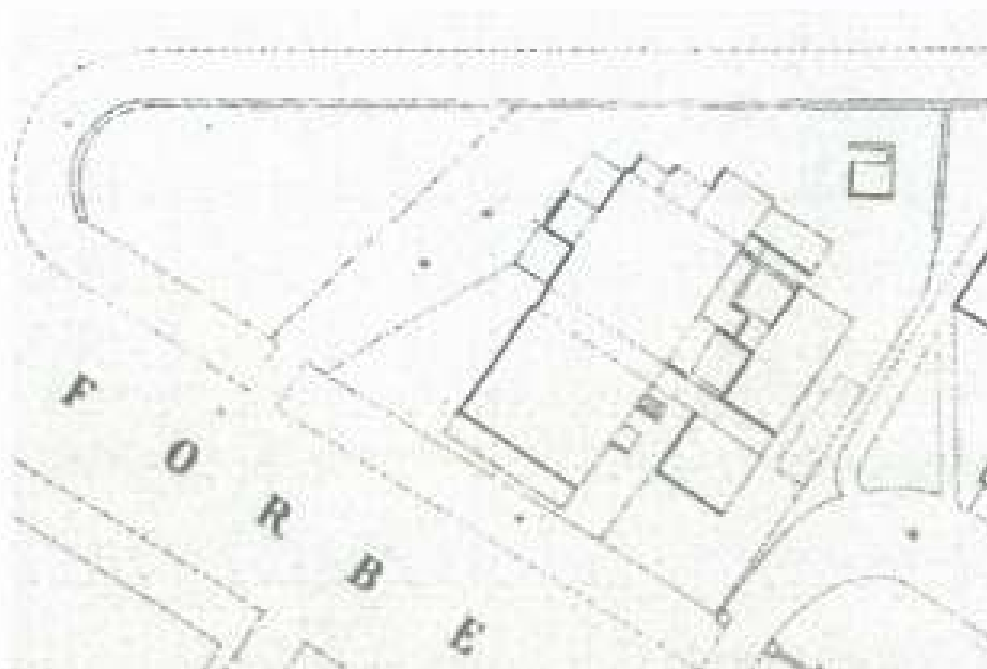


Figure 4.8: Extract from the 1884 Metropolitan Detail Series Plan showing the addition of a number of outbuildings to the rear of the Police complex. (Mitchell Library MZ Ser 4 811.17/1 Sheet L1)

By 1901 the entire police station complex had been reconfigured. A large building was added to the corner of Bourke and Forbes Street, the two cottages demolished and a Stables and a Proposed Lunacy Court replacing former outbuildings. Historic records indicate that the building on the corner of the allotment was constructed in 1899 by Government Architect W.L. Vernon at a cost of 3000 pounds. The 1901 Block Plan clearly shows the new layout of the Police buildings (Figure 4.9).

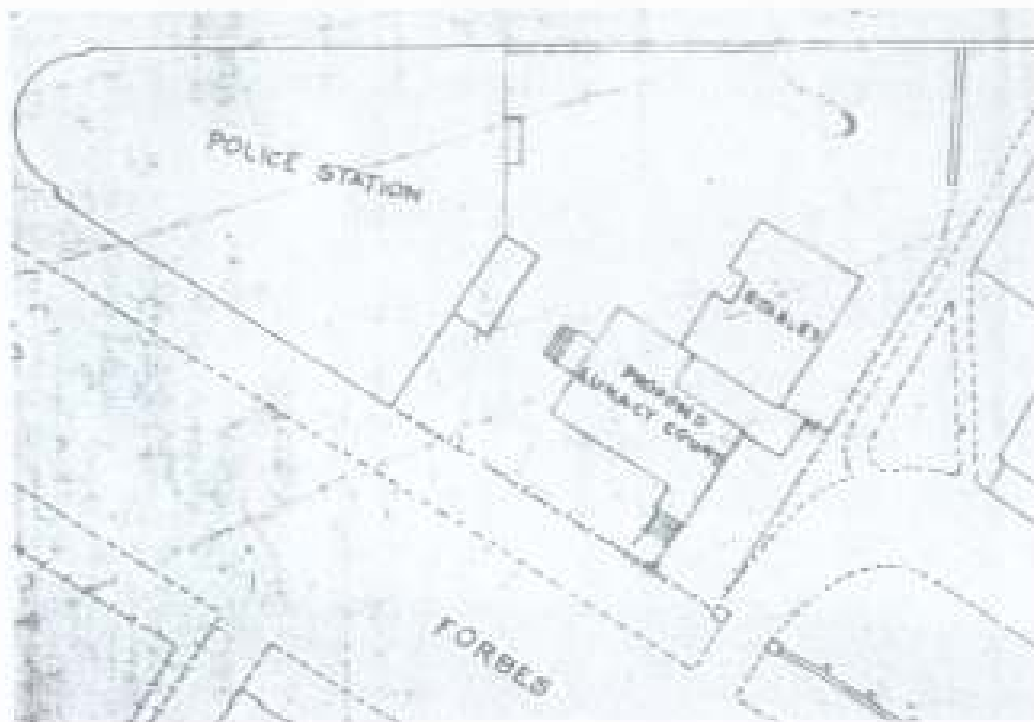


Figure 4.9: Extract from the 1901 Block Plan of the Darlinghurst Police Station showing the reconfiguration of the site, with the addition of a new Police Station on the corner of Bourke and Forbes Streets, a Stables and a Proposed Lunacy Court. (Reproduced from GBA, 2006)

A 1928 survey of the site indicates that by this date the Lunacy Court and Stables had been demolished and replaced by a thin rectangular building later incorporated into the main Police Station building. Two additional cells were built in 1930 and in 1935 an upper floor was added to the former single storey side wings. The site was remodelled again in 1955-56. By 1967, the extant Caritas Gate-House (cottage) had been added to the site, possibly incorporating elements from former buildings<sup>16</sup>. The cottage served as the residence for the Superintendent of the Reception Centre from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

<sup>16</sup> GBA, 2006: 19

#### **4.1.3 Darlinghurst Reception House for the Insane (1865 - 1961)**

Plans for the Darlinghurst Reception House for Lunatics (presumably drawn by Government Architect James Barnet) were approved by the Colonial Secretary, Henry Parkes in June 1866. The need for such a facility was first recognised by Parkes following a Commission of Enquiry in 1855 on the condition of Lunatic Asylums in NSW and subsequent criticism in a letter by Dr Robert Wilson, the Catholic Bishop of Hobart. Parkes gave a number of specific directions for the works, which were to begin immediately and be completed as soon as possible.

*The building is to be erected on the piece of land adjoining Bourke Street on the site marked 'Police Sergeant' or the accompany piece of ground, space being left for a flower garden in front. It is desirable that the Receiving House in all its outside arrangements should have a neat and cheerful appearance, and this must be kept in view in its erection<sup>17</sup>.*

Construction of the Reception House was completed by 1868 with the first patients admitted to the facility on 24 July of that same year.

The purpose of the Reception House was to temporarily detain persons believed to be insane in order to determine the nature of their illness. The aim was to avoid the wrongful admission of persons to hospitals for the insane or keeping those who were a danger to themselves or others in the community. The Lunacy Act of 1898 specified that patients could not be detained in a reception house for more than 14 days without written certification and reasons from a medical officer. In 1880, however, the Reception Centre opened a ward for male patients who may require a more extended stay for those considered curable and not certified. This ward functioned until 1922, when its role was taken over by other facilities.

As indicated in the 1865 Trigonometric Survey the original configuration of the Reception House may have differed from the layout indicated in later plans and photographs (See Figure 4.6). The building was depicted on the plan as being rectangular in shape. Unfortunately, the original plans appear to have been mislaid from the Colonial Secretary's correspondence file, however, an early photograph depict the original layout of the building (Figure 4.10 )<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> Parkes in GBA, 2006: 7

<sup>18</sup> GBA, 2006: 14



Figure 4.10: 'Lunatic Reception House, Darlinghurst, Sydney' showing its original dimensions. (Mitchell Library: GPO 1 - 05750)



Figure 4.11: 'Darlinghurst Gaol (1870)' from the east. (Mitchell Library: GPO 1 - 05750)

By 1883, two wings had been added either side of the house with an additional building added to the north towards Bourke Street (Figure 4.12). Because of the site's natural topography, steps were required to access the new building, which was situated on lower ground. A small building is also indicated toward the north east property boundary, as is a significant retaining wall along Bourke Street and at the front of the property.



Figure 4.12: Extract from the 1884 Metropolitan Detail Series Plan showing the configuration of the Reception House and associated buildings. (Mitchell Library MZ Ser 4 811.17/1 Sheet L1)

This layout remains virtually unchanged in the 1901 plan. By 1923 significant changes to the site are believed to have occurred, with a third floor added to the Reception House and other works completed. A Voluntary Mental Facility, possibly sited at the northeast corner of the property, operated from 1908 to 1922. Records from the City of Sydney Archives indicate that in September 1927 an application for additions at the corner of Burton and Forbes streets was made to the Inspector of Mental Hospitals<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*



The 1935 Detail Plan and 1957 Sewer Plan clearly show the addition of three buildings in the north east corner of the site. These building include the extant brick building on the corner of Burton and Bourke Streets, a former workshop building adjacent to Bourke Street and a former large 'Female Ward' added to the Forbes and Burton Street corner of the site oriented east-west (Figures 4.13). The 1935 plan shows general landscaping works, including the addition of a retaining wall and paved areas. The small building adjacent to the Reception House shown in earlier plans appears to have been removed at some point between 1901 and 1935.



Figure 4.13: Extract from the 1957 Sewer Reference Sheet showing the site configuration. (Sheet 3817, Sydney Water)