



Figure 16 - The TJ Hickey protest march begins between the block and Redfern Station, New South Wales, 2004. Photograph by Louise Whelan (Source: National Library of Australia)

In an attempt to counter the negative view of The Block and Redfern generally, local Aboriginal people were involved in the painting of murals on walls and buildings in the Redfern area. The 'Welcome to the Block' mural, on the Eveleigh Street wall, at the intersection of the Lawson Street Overbridge, was painted in the 1990s (Figure 16). Two other murals are located on the Lawson Street Overbridge including: '40,000 Years is a Long, Long Time', by artist, Carol Ruff, 1983, on the northern side of the bridge and, on opposite wall, 'Say kNOw to Drugs: For the Next Generation', painted by a group of six Tribe members under the supervision of community artists. Other murals within The Block precinct, include the Settlement Building, at 1 Edward Street, "Think Globally, Act Locally" and the Elouera 'Tony Mundine' at the Gym, among others.

Over the past three decades, the AHC has attempted to redevelop The Block through a variety of housing plans. In close consultation with the Aboriginal community, these plans have a common theme of community – each included affordable and safe housing, health, education and cultural facilities, and promoted Aboriginal enterprise and employment. Many of the recommendations and strategies from the various AHC plans in the 1980s, the 1990s, the 2001 AHC Social Plan and the 2004 Concept Plans (prepared by Merrima Aboriginal Design Unit) were not implemented mainly due to lack of funding and resources, and government neglect and inaction. As all levels of government continued to ignore the escalating social problems, the drug trade intensified and interest in community plans slackened.¹³

¹³ Pitts, A., *Dreaming the Block: Aboriginal Housing Company Pemulwuy Redevelopment Project*, <http://www.theregoestheneighbourhood.org/TGTN-eBook.pdf>

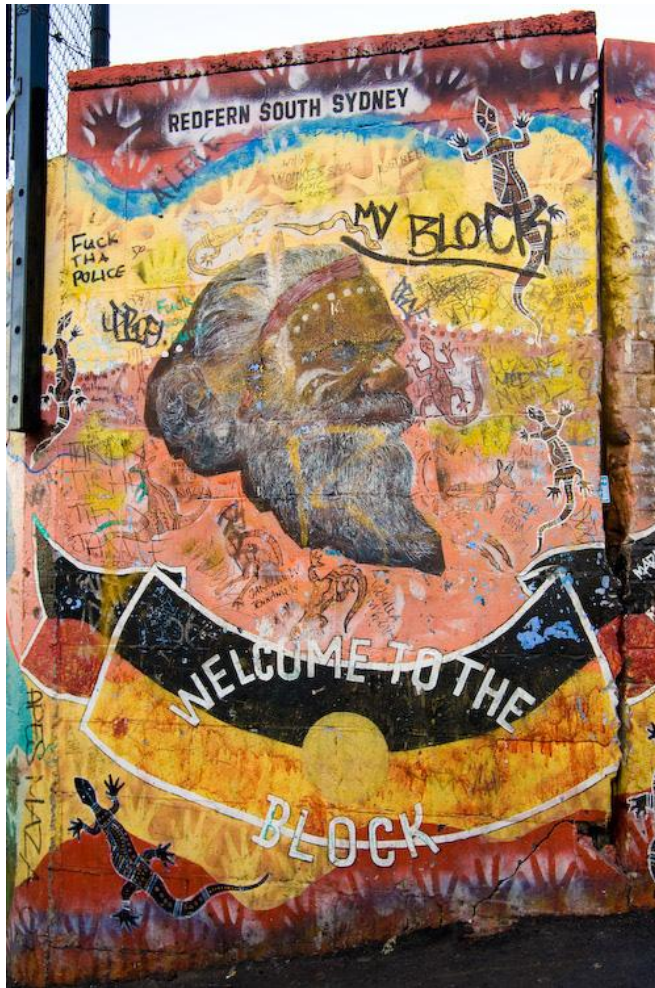


Figure 17 – “Welcome to the Block”, mural, Eveleigh Street, Redfern, November 2008.
Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/71072750@N00/3117289887/>

2.8 Pemulwuy Redevelopment Project

The Pemulwuy Redevelopment Project application seeks to develop the land into “three groups of buildings designed for residential, commercial and cultural and recreational activities”¹⁴. The AHC plans to provide 62 dwellings; other families have been relocated elsewhere in the suburb or in other parts of Sydney by the Housing Department. At the present time 1/3 of land in Redfern and Waterloo is owned by the NSW government, including Redfern railway station, the old Police station, Redfern public school, the former Courthouse, Rachel Foster hospital, and public housing. The AHC’s Pemulwuy Project for The Block is just one of several urban renewal project currently under the supervision of the Redfern Waterloo Authority (RWA). Formed in 2005, the RWA is responsible for the urban renewal of Redfern, Waterloo, Eveleigh and Darlington, in three areas: built environment; employment and sustainability; and human services.

¹⁴ Cracknell and Lonergan, *Environmental Assessment 060101 Pemulwuy Mixed Use Development Redfern Concept Plan*, October 2007.

3.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE - RAIL CORRIDOR RETAINING WALL

3.1 Generally

The study site comprises the western retaining wall of the rail corridor, north of the Lawson Street Overbridge. The Lawson Street Overbridge forms part of the site known as Redfern Railway Station Group (described as Part Lot 4 DP 862514 and constructed in 1891) and is owned and managed by Railcorp. The following text and photographs describe the separate items comprising the study area – the rail corridor western retaining wall, Eveleigh Street Wall and Mural and Lawson Street Overbridge (north wall and mural).

3.2 Rail Corridor Western Retaining Wall

The retaining wall is located on the western side of rail corridor north of the Lawson Street Overbridge. The railway corridor retaining wall delineates the boundary of the cutting in the terrain undertaken in the construction of Sydney's railway system. The brick wall is constructed in English-bond face brickwork. The wall is capped using a stringer course with flashing mounted over. The height of the wall varies, following the slope and relative level at Eveleigh Street. The depth of the wall is unknown.

At the northern extent of the brick retaining wall, is a sandstone wall varying in height between seven and two courses (each sandstone block approximately 400mm in height and finished with rock-faced work / rough sparrow pecked). Both the face brick and sandstone retaining walls are in good condition.

A concrete block wall is constructed at the Eveleigh Street level, set back from the rail corridor retaining wall. The concrete block wall follows the slope of the terrain. A metal palisade fence is constructed on top of the wall. This is described below as the Eveleigh Street Wall and Mural.

3.3 Eveleigh Street Wall and Mural

A concrete block wall is located on the eastern side of Eveleigh Street and is splayed at the corner of Eveleigh and Lawson Streets. The concrete block wall is constructed adjacent the rail corridor brick retaining wall. The concrete block wall steps down the sloping terrain with a metal palisade fence mounted above. Each concrete blocks is 190mm (height) x 390mm (length). The block wall ranges in height, however, comprises approximately 12 rows of blocks (approx 2300mm to 3000mm in height) with a concrete capping block.

The concrete wall is in good to fair condition. The painted mural finish dating to the 1990s is in good to reasonable condition. This wall was constructed by the AHC in the 1980s.

3.4 Lawson Street Overbridge – North Wall and Mural

The brick wall on the northern side of Lawson Street comprises a double skin of brickwork. The brick wall ranges in height, however, is approximately 1750mm with a brick capping. A nine metre southern section of the wall (in close proximity to Eveleigh Street) has a stone plinth (ranging from one to two courses). The sandstone blocks are approximately 300mm x 1930mm. The brick wall to this section is constructed in English bond. Other sections of the wall have been constructed using a variety of adhoc bonds, with little consistency. The eastern section of wall, closest Gibbons Street, is constructed principally of stretcher bond, with two header rows near the base. The wall indicates areas of extension to accommodate the increase in the number of rail tracks heading to and from Central.

The wall ranges in condition from good to fair with evidence of cracking and repairs to cracks. The northern section of the wall is painted in monochrome. The remainder of the wall is a painted mural showing evidence of flaking.

Figure 10 indicates engaged piers and a water main (owned and managed by Sydney Water) carried across the overbridge.



Figure 18 – View north from Platform 3, Redfern Railway Station, to the rail corridor retaining wall. The retaining wall is constructed of facebricks in English bond, possibly around 1885-1891. Engaged piers provide support for the overhead wiring structures introduced when the rail line was electrified from 1926. A stepped blockwork fence / wall with metal palisade fence above and stepped back from the railway corridor retaining wall. Recent overhead wiring structures have been installed on top of the retaining wall (Source: NBRS+PARTNERS, July 2011)



Figure 19 – View west from Gibbons Street across the tracks to the rail corridor retaining. The retaining wall gradates down from north to south, Services are mounted at the base of the retaining wall (Source: NBRS+PARTNERS, July 2011)



Figure 20 – View west from Gibbons Street across the tracks showing the junction of the brick retaining wall and sandstone retaining wall to the north (at right) (Source: NBRS+PARTNERS, July 2011)



Figure 21 – View north to the brick retaining wall along Platform 1 at Redfern Railway Station. This retaining wall appears to be the same construction as the railway corridor on the retaining wall to the north (Source: NBRSPARTNERS, July 2011)

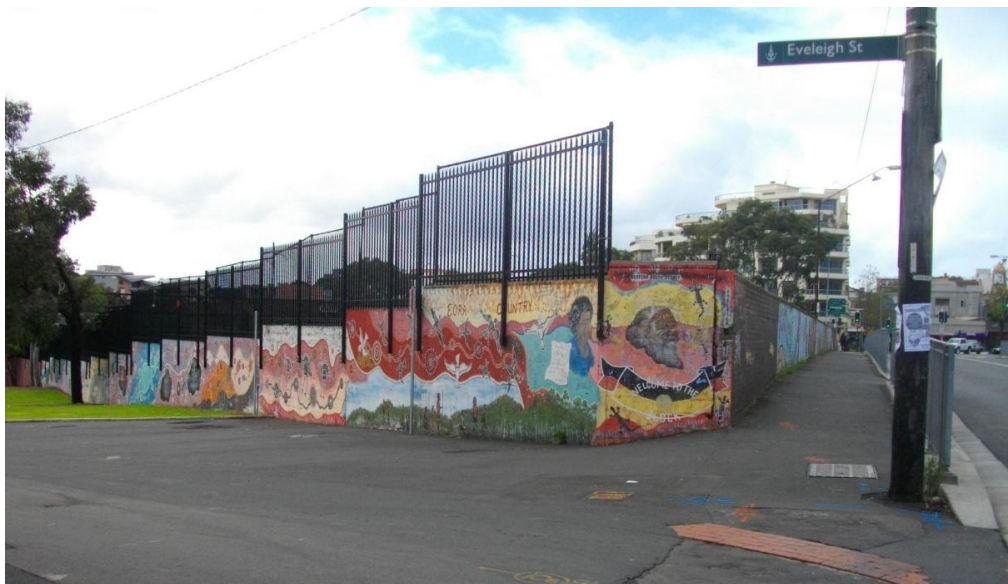


Figure 22 – View from the corner of Eveleigh and Lawson Streets looking north northeast of the boundary walls showing the mural painted stepped concrete block wall to the left and the railway bridge wall to the right (Source: NBRSPARTNERS, June 2011)



Figure 23 – View from the southern corner of Eveleigh and Lawson Streets looking northeast to the railway bridge wall. The northern section of the wall is painted dark brown, the remainder of the wall is painted with murals (Source: NBRSPARTNERS, June 2011)



Figure 24 – View east from Eveleigh Street, showing the blockwork wall with metal palisade fence over, located above the retaining wall. The blockwork wall is painted with murals by the Aboriginal community and date to the 1990s. Overhead wire infrastructure is visible beyond the fence (Source: NBRSPARTNERS, July 2011)



Figure 25 – View from the corner of Eveleigh and Lawson Streets looking southeast to the Queen Anne style, Redfern Station, listed as a State significant heritage item as part of the Redfern Railway Station Group that dates to 1891 (Source: NBRSPARTNERS, June 2011)



Figure 26 – View of the corner, showing the junction of the English bond brick wall to Lawson Street (right) and the mural painted concrete block wall to Eveleigh Street (left) (Source: NBRSPARTNERS, June 2011)



Figure 27 – Detail of the corner junction, showing the fractured “9-inch” English bond brick wall at the corner to Lawson Street part of the original wall constructed in 1891 (left). Lawson Street railway wall showing the repaired structural cracking near the junction of the original wall and the later addition wall, added as part of the widening of the railway corridor (left). (Source: NBRSPARTNERS, June 2011)

4.0 ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Basis of Cultural Heritage Assessment

This assessment of heritage is based on the methodology and guidelines set down by the NSW Heritage Office and considers the standard values or criteria which arise from the history, construction and use of the building and its site as well as any levels of esteem by recognised groups for the site.

Evaluation Criteria

Heritage significance, cultural significance and cultural value are all terms used to describe an item's value or importance to our own society. This value may be contained in the fabric of an item, its setting and its relationship to other items, the response that the item stimulates to those who value it now and in the historical record that allow us to understand it in its own context. An assessment of what is significant is not static. Significance may increase as more is learnt about the past and as items become rare, endangered or are found to document or illustrate aspects that achieve a new recognition of importance.

Determining cultural value is the basis of all planning for places of historic value. Determination of significance permits informed decisions or future planning that ensures that the expressions of significance are retained, enhanced or at least minimally impacted upon. A clear understanding of the nature and degree of significance will determine the parameters for flexibility of future planning and development.

The historical analysis provides the context for assessing significance, which is made by applying standard evaluation criteria to the development and associations of an item. The NSW Heritage Manual has produced standard evaluation criteria that are compatible with the criteria used by the Australian Heritage Commission in assessing items for the Register of the National Estate, and with those included in the *Burra Charter*.

4.2 Assessment of Cultural Significance - Lawson Street Overbridge Wall

4.2.1 Criterion (a) Historical Evolution

An item is important in the course, or pattern, of the local area's cultural or natural history.

- The railway corridor retaining wall signifies the western boundary of the rail corridor and the historic development of the Redfern Railway Station Group. The railway corridor has strong associations with the development of rail transport in Sydney and throughout NSW.
- The railway corridor retaining wall has associations with the construction of the first railway line within Sydney and NSW. The area, owned by William Hutchinson and known as "Hutchinson's Paddock", was subdivided for the construction of Sydney's first railway line, which extended from Sydney to Parramatta Junction, and opened in 1855. Eveleigh Station was opened in 1878, the Wells Street Overbridge (Redfern Station Booking Hall, offices and public amenities) was constructed in 1891, and renamed Redfern Station, in 1906.

- The stone face retaining wall at the northern-most end of the railway cut adjoining The Block, appears to have been constructed prior to 1888. It seems possible, the facebrick retaining wall was constructed in 1891, at the same time as Redfern Station (also known as the Wells Street Overbridge). It seems likely, former night soil laneways were removed to construct the retaining walls.
- Existing fabric of the retaining wall identifies some alterations and additions associated with rail upgrades, including changes from steam to electrical rail transport and to accommodate additional rail lines that serve the expanding Sydney train network. However, the face brick retaining wall is substantially intact.
- The concrete block wall to Eveleigh Street was constructed in the 1980s after terrace houses were demolished to make way for public open space. It provides a boundary marker for the Aboriginal area in Redfern, known as The Block. Aboriginal artists and the community painted murals on the wall in the 1980s establishing an Aboriginal community identity to The Block and have become recognisable features of the place. The concrete blockwork fence is a boundary marker and has little historic significance. The murals have an historic identity specific to the phase of development of The Block, a place identified with the Aboriginal community's ownership of the place.

The railway corridor brick retaining wall fulfils this significance criterion.

4.2.2 Criterion (b) Historical Associations

An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the cultural or natural history of the local area.

- While the railway corridor retaining wall has associations with the construction of the railway line in Sydney, there is no person specifically associated with the design of the retaining wall and rail infrastructure.

The railway corridor retaining wall does not fulfil this criterion.

4.2.3 Criterion (c) Aesthetic Values

An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in the local area.

- The railway corridor retaining wall, constructed in English bond brickwork is a standard detail of brick wall construction undertaken as part of railway stations designed at the turn of the century by the New South Wales Railways.
- The railway corridor retaining wall is not a major work by an important individual designer, however, is consistent with work undertaken by NSW Railways in the period from the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries.
- The murals painted on the Lawson Street Overbridge brickwall and the Eveleigh Street blockwall were painted in the 1980s-1990s by the Aboriginal community. The paintings form part of a collective artwork project undertaken by the Aboriginal community to provide landmark

signs heralding entry to The Block and is recognisable by the greater community. The artwork was not undertaken by a significant artist, although artists who worked on the project may have continued with art production following the creation of the murals. The artwork is peeling away in many sections of the walls and has been more than temporarily degraded.

Neither the Railway Corridor Retaining Wall nor the Lawson Street Overbridge Wall fulfil this criterion.

4.2.4 Criterion (d) Social Value

An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in the area for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

- The murals painted on the Eveleigh Street concrete block wall and the Lawson Street Overbridge north wall were painted by the Aboriginal community as a marker to signify the entrance to The Block, an area of considerable significance to the Aboriginal people and local community. The AHC has stated the murals would be retained.

The railway corridor retaining wall, Eveleigh Street blockwork wall and mural and Lawson Street Overbridge wall and mural do not fulfil the criterion for social significance.

4.2.5 Criterion (e) Technical / Research Value

An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the area's cultural or natural history.

- The railway corridor brick and sandstone retaining wall is a standard detail of brick wall construction undertaken as part of railway infrastructure designed at the turn of the century.

The railway corridor retaining wall, Eveleigh Street blockwork wall and Lawson Street Overbridge Wall do not fulfil this criterion.

4.2.6 Criterion (f) Rarity

An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the area's cultural or natural history

The railway corridor retaining wall, Eveleigh Street blockwork wall and Lawson Street Overbridge Wall are not rare and do not fulfil this criterion.

4.2.7 Criterion (g) Representativeness

An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of the area's

- - cultural or natural places; or
- - cultural or natural environments.
 - The intact railway corridor retaining wall forms part of an extensive network of railway infrastructure constructed as part of the establishment of the railway corridor in Sydney and throughout NSW in the late-nineteenth century.
 - The Lawson Street Overbridge North Wall has lost the range of characteristics associated with a Federation period wall associated with railway construction.

The railway corridor retaining wall fulfils this criterion.

The Lawson Street Overbridge North Wall does not fulfil this criterion.

4.3 Statement of Cultural Significance – Rail Corridor Retaining Wall, Redfern

The rail corridor retaining wall, located east of Eveleigh Street, Redfern, has historic significance associated with the development of railway transport and infrastructure established in Sydney and NSW in the second half of the nineteenth century. The well-built railway corridor retaining wall forms the western boundary of the rail corridor between Redfern and Central Stations and is representative of retaining walls constructed to ensure the development of essential rail transportation systems.

4.4 Statement of Cultural Significance - Lawson Street Overbridge Wall

The Lawson Street Overbridge Wall, which forms part of the heritage listing known as the Redfern Railway Station Group, has been degraded and has little heritage significance.

4.5 Statement of Cultural Significance - *Darlington Heritage Conservation Area*

The Block is located within Conservation Area 17 (CA17) as identified in the South Sydney Local Environmental Plan 1998 (South Sydney LEP 1998). The following is a statement of significance from the Heritage Branch Inventory Sheet:

Darlington Heritage Conservation Area is historically significant as a representative area of mid nineteenth century residential subdivision and mid to late nineteenth century working class housing. It illustrates the principal characteristics of a working class district of the period 1860-1890. The area demonstrates the impact of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops on the development of the surrounding area. The establishment of the Railway Workshops introduced a unique and powerful influence which stimulated development, particularly housing to meet the requirements of employees of the Workshops. The Conservation Area illustrates the impact of the railway line, Cleveland Street and the topography of the area on the street pattern, which is dominated by narrow twisting streets with changing views ending in T-intersections and long bent through streets. The area's basically residential character is intact and consists of rows of terraces hugging the curving streets. There is a complementary mix of light industrial buildings, largely sympathetic in scale and alignment to the terraces. The residential buildings are low scale and austere in their presentation, occupying narrow deep allotments. The form, layout and location of the buildings demonstrate the urban forms of the pre-motor car, pre-electricity era for working class people in Sydney and express the social conditions and environment of that time. The area is significant as a relic of mid to late nineteenth century urban development and illustrates the principal characteristics of a working class district in this period. The Darlington Conservation Area lies within the lands of the Gadigal (Cadigal) people, part of the Eora Nation.

The area within the Darlington Conservation Area referred to as The Block is significant as one of the bases for Koori people in Sydney; it was one of the first pieces of land in urban Australia owned by Aboriginal people when it was purchased for Aboriginal housing in 1973. The Block has provided Aboriginal Australians moving to Sydney the opportunity to remain living in a community environment with extended family, living together, providing a support network. The sense of community is partially maintained by the time residents spend in the public spaces of the verandahs and Eveleigh Street. The layout of the houses and the street facilitates this community atmosphere. The media attention and visibility of The Block has helped in the national acknowledgement that it is a significant place. The Block is important to all Australians as a symbol of the ability of Aboriginal Australians to maintain their community identity in an urban situation. The struggle to gain ownership and control of The Block by the Aboriginal community was part of the movement by Aboriginal people during the 1970s towards self-determination. The Block is also significant for its association with many famous Aboriginal people who have been residents or associated with The Block including the late Robert Bellea, Charles Perkins and Tony Mundine Snr.

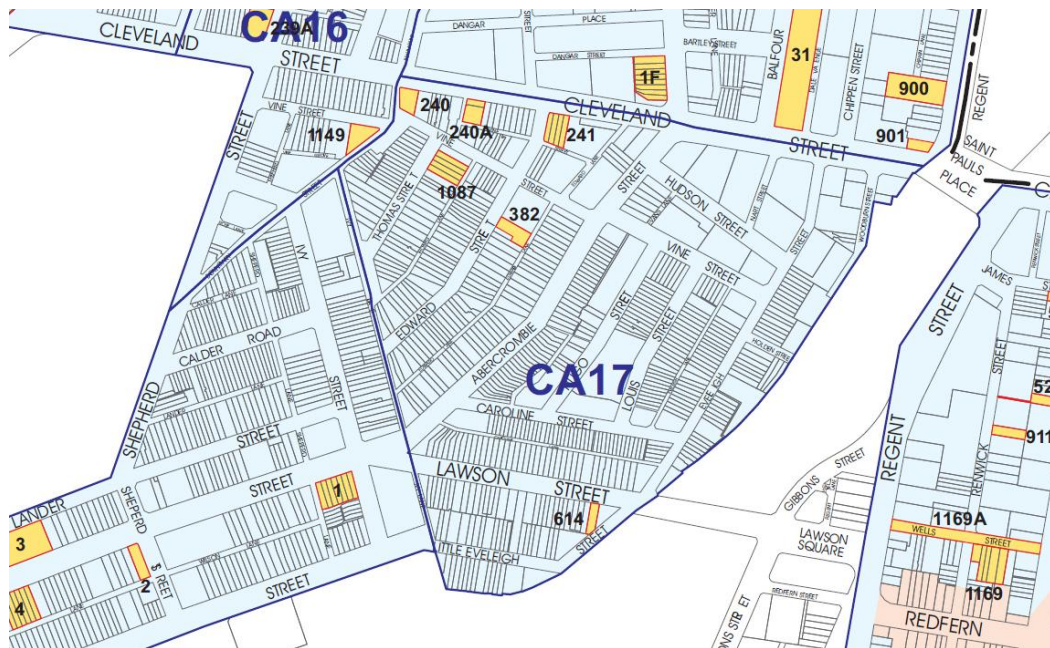


Figure 28 – Darlington Conservation Area (CA17) (Source: South Sydney LEP 1998 – Heritage Map)

4.6 The Redfern Waterloo Authority

The Redfern Waterloo Heritage Taskforce was established in 2009 to recognise the broad extent of local heritage in Redfern-Waterloo that has significant value for both the local community and the wider public. Its purpose is to identify opportunities for the active conservation, interpretation and, where appropriate, the adaptive reuse of the cultural, natural and archaeological heritage of the Redfern Waterloo area.

The Taskforce seeks to increase community awareness, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the existing heritage and stimulate greater community initiative and participation in efforts to conserve it.

While The Block forms part of the Darlington Heritage Conservation Area (CA17), the Redfern-Waterloo Authority administers the area, including heritage controls. The rail corridor retaining wall forms the eastern boundary of The Block. No heritage items are listed within the area known as The Block.

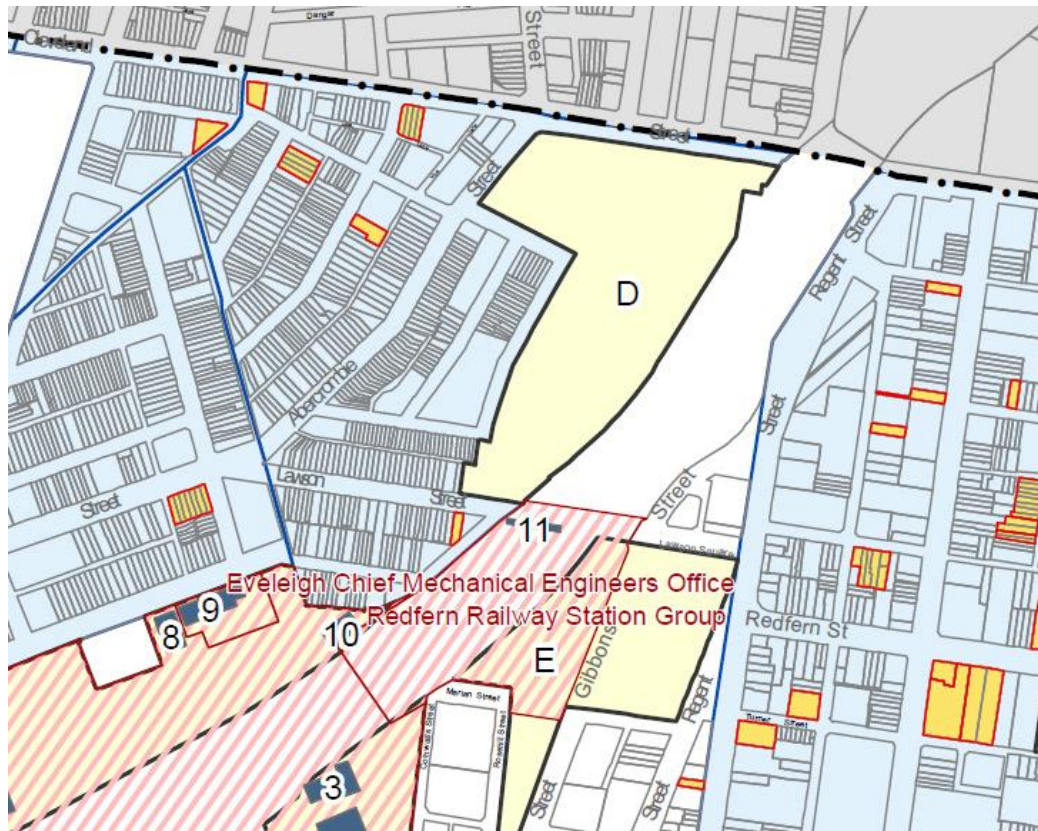


Figure 29 – Redfern Waterloo Authority Heritage Map, a map of local heritage items prepared in collaboration with the City of Sydney. The map shows The Block identified as “D” with the railway corridor retaining wall located on the eastern boundary, as a “Strategic Site”

(Source: http://www.redfernwaterloo.com.au/community_consultation/heritage.htm)

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The Rail Corridor “retaining wall” on Lawson Street is owned and managed by RailCorp. Recent negotiations, between Railcorp and AHC, have resulted in a proposal for a “land bridge” to connect Redfern Station and Pemulwuy site.

5.2 Recommendations

1. The rail corridor brick and sandstone retaining walls have high heritage significance and should be retained and conserved.
2. The Eveleigh Street block wall, located adjacent the rail corridor brick and sandstone retaining walls, has little heritage significance. In any future works, there is the potential to remove the block wall.
3. The Lawson Street Overbridge North Wall and Mural, has moderate to little heritage significance. There is the potential to remove sections of the Lawson Street Overbridge North Wall and Mural.
4. An archival recording should be undertaken to record all murals prior to any works being undertaken, including removal of part or whole of the block wall located on the brick retaining wall.
5. Should any works be undertaken in close proximity to the retaining wall, all efforts must be made to protect and conserve the integrity of the wall.

6.0 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix A – Land Titles Information

6.2 Appendix B – State and or Local Heritage Inventory Listing Sheets