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# DRAFT

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Parramatta Town Hall facade  
Photo by Grant Leslie Photography

## City of Parramatta Integrated Heritage Strategy

Our shared histories,  
stories and places



**CITY OF  
PARRAMATTA**



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# Recognition of and commitment to the Dharug peoples

**Wadyiman Barramada gulbanga  
naadyi Barramadagal Dharug  
Ngurrayin, badu, burra barramadagal  
dharug yurayin.**

City of Parramatta recognises the Dharug People as First Australians, peoples of the oldest continuous living culture in the world.

For more than 60,000 years, Parramatta has been home to the Baramadagal and other Dharug peoples, the Traditional Owners of the land we call the City of Parramatta today. The Baramadagal and other Dharug Peoples have cared for and nurtured the habitat, land, and waters for thousands of generations, and maintain an ongoing connection to Parramatta and its surrounding areas.

As a community, we can learn from the resilience and community spirit of First Nations People to best ensure a sustainable city for all. Parramatta has always been an important meeting place for the First Nations People, particularly the Parramatta River, which has provided life and vitality since the beginning of time (The Dreaming).

The name Parramatta is derived from the word Baramada/Burramatta or 'place where the eels lie down' (breeding location for eels within the

Parramatta River). City of Parramatta recognises the significance of this area for all First Nations People as a site of early contact between the First Australians and European colonists, and Parramatta remains an important meeting place for the First Nations community.

First Nations People continue to play a vital role in the ecological, economic, social and cultural life of Parramatta, while maintaining a distinct culture built on the principles of Caring for Country, the primacy of family, and the dignity and governance of Elders.

At City of Parramatta, we aspire to a future where the cultures, histories and rights of all First Nations People are understood, recognised, and respected by all Australians. City of Parramatta is committed to playing an active role in making this future a reality. City of Parramatta is proud to acknowledge the ongoing stewardship of Country by Dharug and other First Nations People and to celebrate their enduring wisdom, strength, and resilience.

**Always Was, Always Will Be, Aboriginal Land.**



# Strategy at a glance

## PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The *City of Parramatta Integrated Heritage Strategy: Our Shared histories, stories and places* is a 10-year strategy for managing the City of Parramatta's heritage. It covers all heritage matters for which the Council has responsibility.

## OUR VISION

We will champion the recognition, protection, management, and celebration of the City of Parramatta's heritage, notably its First Nations, colonial, migrant and other heritage, that will enrich our environment and community, for the benefit of current and future generations.

## OUR KEY GOALS

1

To recognise, protect and conserve the City of Parramatta's valued heritage places, buildings, archaeology, settings and natural landscapes, together with its stories and collections.

2

To provide innovative, best practice and well resourced management of the City of Parramatta's heritage.

3

To place people at the heart of heritage management, engaging with the community and heritage stakeholders.

4

To recognise heritage, local character, and identity, to guide respectful planning and design outcomes in a changing urban context.

5

To recognise First Nations heritage by developing a 'Country' centred approach and work with Dharug and other First Nations people to tell their stories and manage their culturally significant places.

6

To tell the stories that reflect the City of Parramatta's varied and evolving history and promote events and activities that recognise and celebrate our heritages, cultures and waves of migration.

7

To raise awareness of our heritage and to advocate for investment and promotion of Parramatta as a local, national and international heritage tourism destination.

8

To adapt heritage places for climate resilience and economic success, and to provide for sustainable, activated, and accessible heritage buildings that can meet the contemporary needs of occupants.

## OUR GUIDING THEMES



### Knowing and understanding

Improve our understanding of the full breadth of the City of Parramatta's heritage by identifying features and elements, such as places, buildings, archaeology, landscapes, documents, artefacts and stories, that are important to us and ensuring that information is well documented and generally publicly accessible.



### Protecting and conserving

Ensure the City of Parramatta's heritage, including places, buildings, archaeology, landscapes, artefacts and collections, are appropriately protected and valued through a robust policy and management framework.



### Resourcing, advocating and supporting

Resource, advocate for, and support heritage through Council's various roles and responsibilities.



### Communicating and promoting

Raise awareness and appreciation of heritage and celebrate heritage as a community promoting its value for all.



### Preparing, adapting and activating

Consider how heritage places and their settings can best adapt to the pressures of climate change, new development and changing occupant needs, and provide opportunities for activation.



City of Parramatta-Foundation Day 2023 hosted at the Parramatta Female Factory.  
Photo by Anna Kucera.

**PART 1**

# Introducing City of Parramatta Integrated Heritage Strategy

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# Introduction

**The City of Parramatta's heritage is of exceptional value and tells the distinctive stories of First Nations, colonial and migrant history, whose influence on the way we live, the environment around us, our culture, traditions and our history has informed our unique heritage.**

Reflecting its world, national and local heritage significance, the City of Parramatta has a diverse range of heritage listed items, conservation areas, and significant archaeology, as well as extensive cultural collections and archives.

First Nations heritage is nationally significant, with archaeology, places and objects (including 196 recorded Aboriginal sites) that First Nations people have a connection to, both physically and spiritually.

Additionally, over 700 heritage items of local heritage significance largely reflect the evolution of City of Parramatta's post European history.

As well there are numerous items of State heritage significance including St John's Anglican Cathedral, St Patrick's Catholic Cathedral, Elizabeth Farm House, Experiment Farm Cottage, Hambledon Cottage and Roxy Cinema. Old Government House and Domain are of World and National heritage significance whilst Parramatta Female Factory and Institutions Precinct is of National heritage significance (and possible World heritage significance).

Good management is key to conserving and promoting heritage and ensuring sustainable development, liveability and social inclusion for future generations.

City of Parramatta is currently undergoing significant physical and social transformation. Preserving, sharing and activating our rich natural, First Nations, colonial, migrant and other heritage values will play a key role in supporting vibrant communities. Council's Integrated Heritage Strategy provides a comprehensive approach to manage, promote and conserve heritage within the City of Parramatta.



'Water Lines', Cultural stories and themes of the land and river. Interpretation at Charles Street Square. Photo by Brett Boardman.

# Why heritage matters

**Heritage matters because it is our inheritance. We protect heritage because it connects us to the past, gives us a sense of place in the present and preserves what we value for future generations to enjoy. Heritage is dynamic, it does not stand still; each generation adds to tomorrow's heritage. It is at the heart of our community's identity; belongs to all of us; and we are all responsible for caring for it.**

Heritage includes natural places and cultural landscapes, movable items and collections, buildings, monuments and archaeological sites, and intangible heritage including oral traditions, performing arts and rituals. Connection to country and cultural heritage is at the centre of First Nations heritage.

Heritage often evokes an emotional response inspiring an appreciation of natural beauty, traditional craftsmanship or a memory of times gone by. Yet the most important aspect of heritage is that it contributes to our shared story.

## **THE HERITAGE OF THE CITY OF PARRAMATTA IS RICH AND UNIQUE TO OUR AREA.**

It tells the stories of the First Nations people who have lived here for thousands of years, as well as those who have migrated here in colonial settlement and since, each bringing their own unique stories and reflections in times gone by. The City of Parramatta is fortunate to have a community who value its heritage and who advocate and work to preserve and protect it.

Since legislation was introduced in the 1970s to protect heritage in NSW as part of our environmental planning system, much has been achieved. Heritage conservation in the early years was mainly focused on the protection and restoration of grand historic buildings and colonial estates. Today our understanding of heritage has changed immeasurably. Heritage is a focal point of identity and contributes to local character and is a reminder of our complex history. It contributes

to maintaining attractive urban environments and has been shown to have positive effects on local economies.

## **HERITAGE CAN BE AT THE HEART OF SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

Natural and cultural heritage are key platforms for creating sustainable cities. The need to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage has been recognised by the United Nations in its global Sustainable Development Goals. Heritage and local character set the context for how future development should respond, ensuring that our histories remain present, while continuing to evolve.

The City of Parramatta Council, through its planning decisions, activities, promotions and events, plays a pivotal role in developing a vibrant local heritage economy, as well as in shaping what local people see, keep and value and what future generations inherit. This responsibility brings with it a significant duty of care which the Council has recognised in the development and implementation of this Integrated Heritage Strategy.

A strong strategy for our heritage will ensure future development is sustainable and does not diminish the City of Parramatta's special historical places and stories of lived experiences. The City of Parramatta can draw unique inspiration from its past.



# Purpose of the strategy

**The City of Parramatta Integrated Heritage Strategy is a 10-year strategy for managing the City of Parramatta's heritage.**

The Strategy covers all heritage matters for which the Council has responsibility, from tangible features, such as historical buildings and precincts, landscapes, waterways archaeological sites, natural elements, objects, collections and records, to intangible elements, such as cultural practices, stories, traditions, folklore and other knowledge that is inherited over generations.

The Strategy recognises that managing and protecting heritage in the local area is a shared responsibility between local, state and federal government, government agencies, developers, private owners and managers, and communities.

Developing a strategic and sustainable approach to heritage management in the City of Parramatta requires more than the foundational heritage actions of identification, research and protection. While these foundations remain critical to good heritage management, for the City of Parramatta they should be seen as stepping stones to more innovative heritage practice.

The natural, cultural and intangible heritage of this LGA is nationally significant and heritage management by Council needs to recognise the exceptional importance of the City of Parramatta's heritage to its identity, community, environment and character.

Council has a key influencing role in designing the future of the City of Parramatta's heritage through its planning, programming, collaborations and resourcing. By promoting and adopting the highest standards of heritage practice and drawing from examples from other cities nationally and internationally, the City of Parramatta will be able to create a rich and vibrant inheritance.

To guide Council's long term heritage objectives, the Strategy framework sets out a vision statement, key goals, and actions that have been organised around the following five guiding themes:



## Knowing and understanding

Improve our understanding of the full breadth of the City of Parramatta's heritage by identifying features and elements, such as places, buildings, archaeology, landscapes, documents, artefacts and stories, that are important to us and ensuring that information is well documented and generally publicly accessible.



## Protecting and conserving

Ensure the City of Parramatta's heritage, including places, buildings, archaeology, landscapes, artefacts and collections, are appropriately protected and valued through a robust policy and management framework.



## Resourcing, advocating and supporting

Resource, advocate for, and support heritage through Council's various roles and responsibilities.



## Communicating and promoting

Raise awareness and appreciation of heritage and celebrate heritage as a community promoting its value for all.



## Preparing, adapting and activating

Consider how heritage places and their settings can best adapt to the pressures of climate change, new development and changing occupant needs, and provide opportunities for activation.



## PART 2

# How the strategy was informed

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# Background

The Strategy is underpinned by previous work and analysis undertaken by heritage consultants GML Heritage in 2019.

Using this earlier work as a foundation, Council staff commenced a review and update having regard to the matters outlined below.



Heritage display in the Charles Byrnes Room in Parramatta Town Hall.  
Photo by Grant Leslie Photography.

# Strategic context

## COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Council's Community Strategic Plan 2025-2050 (CSP) identifies our long-term vision, goals and aspirations for the future, and strategic actions for achieving these goals. The CSP sits above and helps inform all other Council plans and strategies. One of the strategic actions of the CSP is to: *Recognise, protect, and share Parramatta's rich and evolving heritage and histories.*

Our community wants the City of Parramatta's rich heritage to be the cornerstone of future development and to ensure the City of Parramatta's heritage and natural assets are preserved for future generations.

## PARRAMATTA 2050

Parramatta 2050 is Council's long term vision document, an overarching strategy to help the City of Parramatta become a global city and provides for heritage assets to be leveraged to help achieve this objective. The Strategy highlights the need to protect and share the rich and varied heritage and history of Parramatta, including a significant story of contact and impact between First Nations and non-Indigenous people. Important also is sharing the stories of waves of migration that have embedded diverse cultural practices in the fabric of Global Parramatta.

Global Parramatta is home to places of exceptional natural and built heritage significance, which acknowledge shared and challenging histories and is positioned to become a must-visit destination for cultural and heritage experiences.

## FIRST NATIONS STRATEGY

Parramatta's First Nations Strategy centres Dharug and First Nations people at the heart of what is done at the City of Parramatta being specifically based on the five pillars of social justice, cultural leadership, social cohesion, celebration and accountability. The First Nations Strategy includes a number of actions relevant to heritage including:

- > to recognise and promote cultural ongoing planning for and delivery of programs that support the elevation of Dharug and First Nations culture, history and Knowledge;
- > to elevate Dharug Language through dual naming and signage projects;
- > to celebrate local Dharug and broader First Nations community through a curated program that showcases the compelling Indigenous stories of Parramatta; and
- > Provide for various annual grant funding categories to support First Nations objectives.

## CULTURAL STRATEGY (CREATIVE PARRAMATTA)

City of Parramatta's Cultural Strategy (Creative Parramatta) is Council's 10-year cultural strategy, providing a cohesive vision for arts, cultural and creative practice and participation in our City. Creative Parramatta positions Parramatta's unique community, heritage and authenticity as its point of difference and increasing awareness of the City as a desirable cultural destination across and beyond Western Sydney.

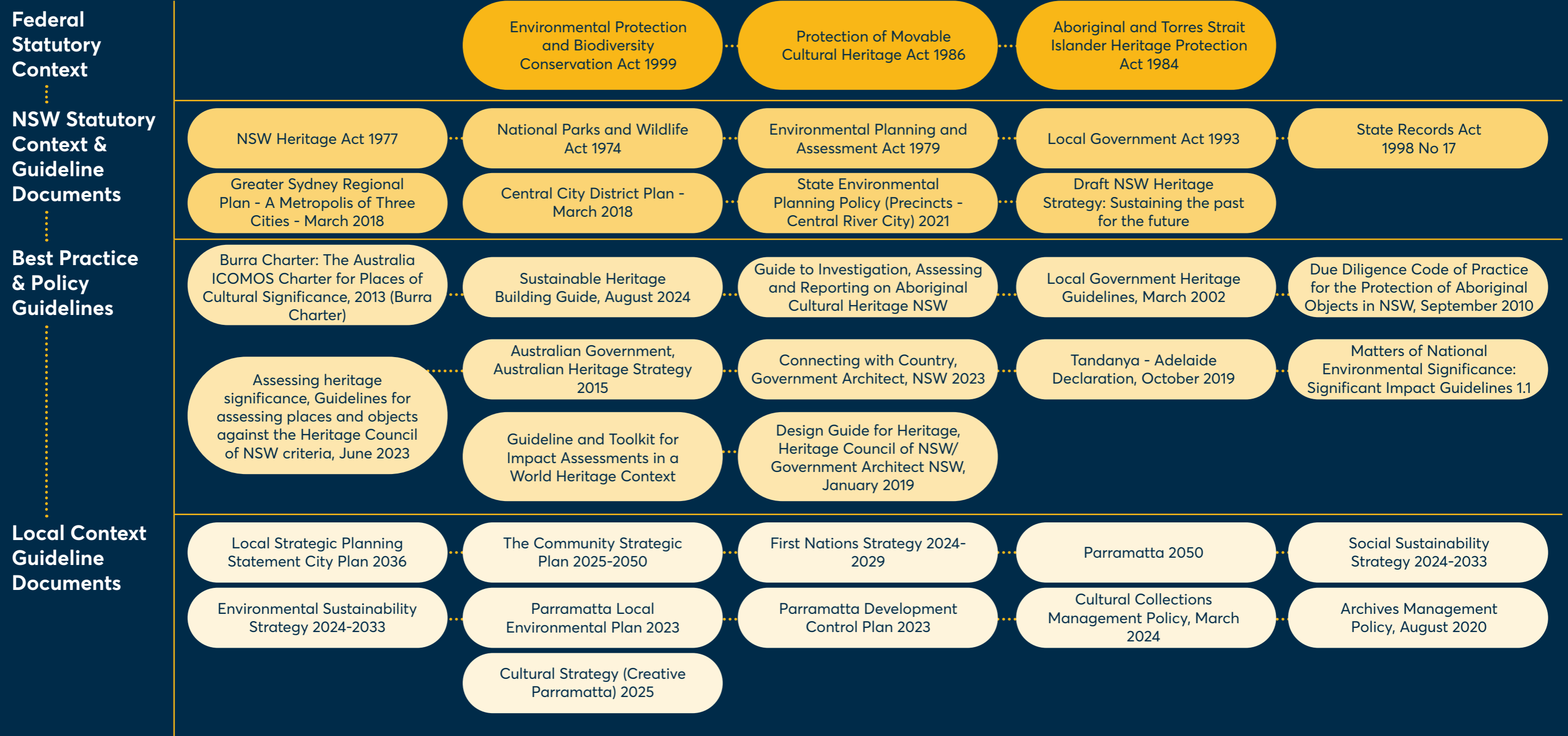
The Strategy seeks to build on the work of Parramatta 2050 to boost Parramatta as a cultural and creative epicentre including actions relating to heritage, such as:

- > Promoting Parramatta as city of choice to host major cultural events such as UNESCO World Heritage program;
- > Promote Parramatta's heritage, complex histories, and diverse communities through planning and precinct development;
- > Develop a best practice heritage interpretation and communications strategy;
- > Advocate for investment from State and Federal government to increase investment into cultural venues (including reopening of the Roxy Theatre as a live music venue); and in heritage preservation, storytelling and digitisation.
- > Coordinate arts and cultural programming to promote local histories and sites.



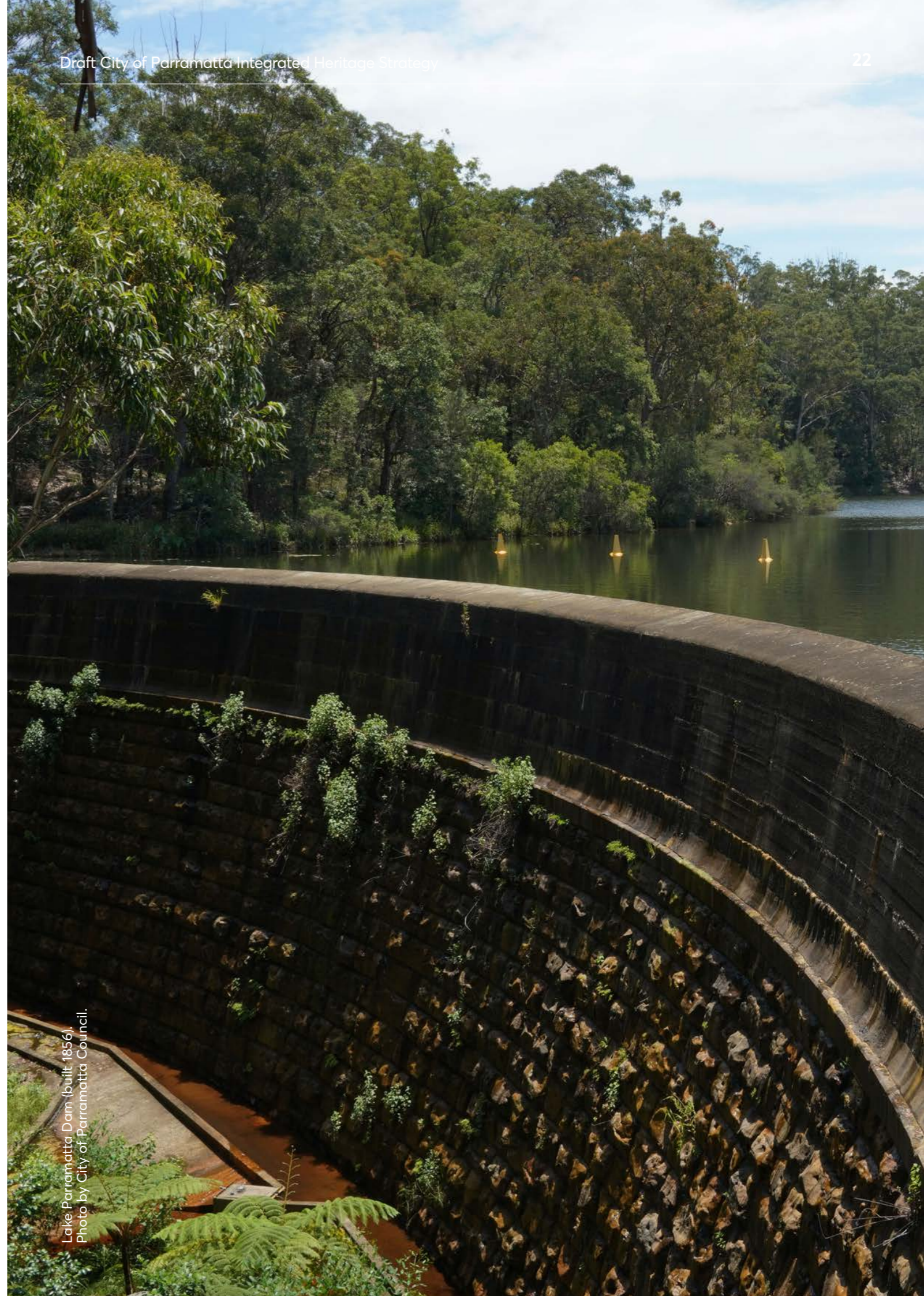
HOW THE STRATEGY WAS INFORMED

# Statutory and Planning Context



# Emerging trends and issues

Over recent years a number of emerging trends relating to heritage across the globe have been observed through heritage forums, conferences and other literature as outlined below. These provided areas for consideration in the development of the Strategy.



Lake Parramatta Dam (built 1856). Photo by City of Parramatta Council.

## HOW THE STRATEGY WAS INFORMED

# Challenges



## KNOWING & UNDERSTANDING

The thematic history for City of Parramatta is approximately 30 years old and needs to be reviewed and updated to make it more relevant and current and to address any knowledge gaps in the City of Parramatta's heritage.

Need to review list of heritage items, heritage conservation areas, list of recorded Aboriginal sites and heritage inventories to ensure they are up-to-date and in line with contemporary practice and include opportunities to consider additional places of heritage significance, including our natural heritage.

A better understanding of First Nations cultural heritage is needed because it differs from traditional heritage management ideas.



## PROTECTING & CONSERVING

City of Parramatta is experiencing a high level of development pressure, particularly in the Parramatta CBD and in urban areas close to train stations, and this may result in conflicts between heritage and new development.

Development, including infrastructure works, must be carefully managed to avoid compromising the integrity of heritage places.



## RESOURCING, ADVOCATING & SUPPORTING

Council needs to best utilise existing resources to prioritise its heritage management responsibilities.

Owners of heritage properties, including Council itself as the owner of many heritage properties, often encounter significant challenges and higher costs when it comes to maintaining these sites. Difficulties can arise from limited access to heritage information, a shortage of skilled tradespeople, and a more complex approval processes for carrying out necessary works.



## COMMUNICATING & PROMOTING

It can be challenging to engage with our population around heritage in a way that is meaningful and inclusive of all groups.

City of Parramatta has many iconic heritage places that could be better publicised to allow better access and greater visitation. Easier access to heritage information should be made available to the community through promotion.



## PREPARING, ADAPTING, & ACTIVATING

Updating heritage buildings to meet modern standards, like environmental sustainability and universal access, is challenging.

As more sites are redeveloped, the potential for unearthing artefacts increases. Consideration needs to be given to how artefacts can be recorded and managed.

Activating heritage buildings needs to be appropriately managed so that any changes, including additions, signage, fire safety upgrades, and access improvements, do not compromise the integrity of the building.

It is unknown how certain heritage buildings, assets or landscapes will withstand the pressures of climate change.

## HOW THE STRATEGY WAS INFORMED

# Opportunities



## KNOWING & UNDERSTANDING

Investigate a broader range of heritage items and places of relevance to different people, including First Nations, cultural groups and varied age groups through the Thematic History Study and Heritage Items Review.



## PROTECTING & CONSERVING

Maintain the distinctiveness of the City of Parramatta's cultural heritage while balancing intensification of use and ensuring integration of modern development with heritage places.

Develop practical models for identifying and protecting living heritage\* which supports and encourages neighbourhood heritage initiatives.

Take a place based historic landscape planning approach\* with people at the centre of the planning process, and heritage recognised as a key ingredient for creating great places.



## RESOURCING, ADVOCATING & SUPPORTING

Strengthen partnerships and relationships with other heritage groups/custodians to identify, manage and protect heritage to make most efficient use of available resources.

Increase education, assistance and advice for heritage property owners.

Simplify processes that enable heritage property owners to undertake minor works without any Council approval to ensure the ongoing integrity of heritage properties is maintained.

Develop strategies and improve internal knowledge and training for Council staff to better manage its own heritage assets.

Continue to seek grant funding from Government to assist in the restoration and celebration of heritage.



## COMMUNICATING & PROMOTING

Share and make relevant the stories of the City of Parramatta's layered histories, including First Nations, colonial and migrant histories, to increasingly diverse communities. Consider heritage listing places of significance to broader cultural groups.

Seek contributions from youth and all cultural groups in the future of heritage management and conservation.

Understand, appreciate and promote the economic, environmental and social benefits of heritage and leverage the strength of heritage tourism to help Global Parramatta become a must visit destination for cultural and heritage experiences.

Improve access to heritage information on Council's website for use by heritage owners and the general community. Partner with others to create a space to share and display cultural collections.

Be a leader in heritage management promoting innovative practices and pursuing advocacy to address issues and promote history and heritage.



## PREPARING, ADAPTING, & ACTIVATING

Investigate changes that can be made to enable heritage buildings to be modified or adapted to better suit contemporary requirements, to improve accessibility, environmental sustainability (e.g. solar panels) and to allow buildings and places to adapt to climate change pressures.

Encourage the activation and adaptation of heritage buildings for creative and cultural uses.

Consider best practice approach to archaeological site management and recording of artefacts.

\*refer Glossary

# Community and stakeholder engagement

In developing the Strategy, consultation was undertaken with the community, key heritage stakeholders and Council staff. An outline of key messaging is provided below.

## PARRAMATTA 2050 CONSULTATION

In undertaking community engagement for the development of Council's Parramatta 2050 vision document, the following relevant themes were identified by the community:

- > Support for Council strengthening partnerships with First Nations People.
- > Need to protect current heritage and expand opportunities to learn, display and communicate stories of past practices and events that have taken place in Parramatta.
- > Need to preserve and beautify heritage areas for the community.
- > Need to highlight the importance of colonial heritage.
- > Desire to see heritage sites leveraged for economic and tourism benefits for local, national and international audiences.

## COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN CONSULTATION

In developing Council's Community Strategic Plan (2025-2050), the community provided the following feedback in relation to heritage:

- > History and heritage was rated as 'important' or 'very important' to many participants.
- > Concern about loss of historical character due to high-rise developments and urban growth.
- > Calls to preserve historical buildings, maintain their integrity, and limit over-development that erodes heritage value.
- > Suggestions to promote heritage tourism and protect Parramatta's unique historical identity.
- > Recognition of First Nations culture including support for continued investment in First Nations cultural events and festivals.
- > Strengthening connection to First Nations languages and cultures as part of the city's long-term vision.

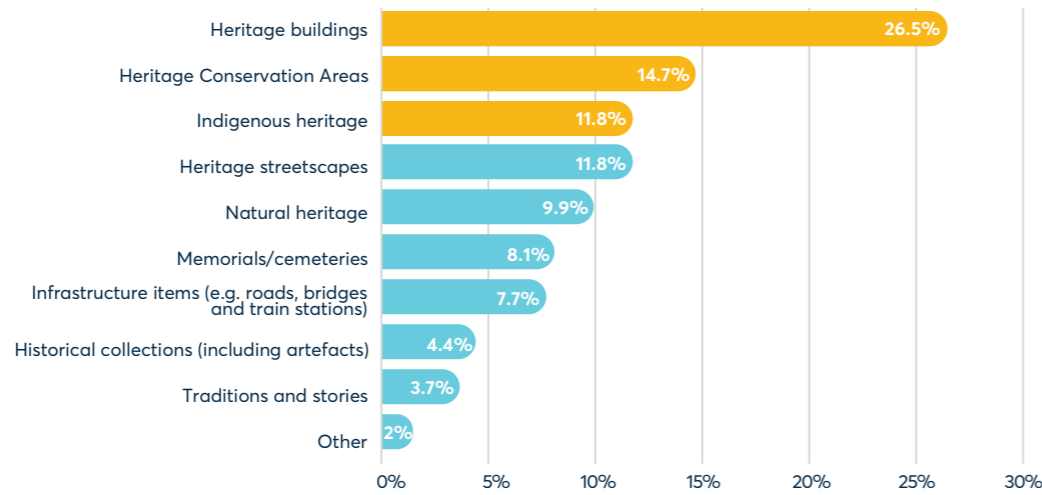
## PARRAMATTA COMPREHENSIVE HERITAGE REVIEW - PHASE ONE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION – DECEMBER 2024 TO MARCH 2025

As part of the Comprehensive Heritage Review - Phase One Community Consultation, Council wrote to heritage property owners and heritage stakeholders seeking views on a range of heritage matters. Council received approximately 300 survey responses and submissions. Feedback from the consultation was mixed with most people supporting heritage and requesting that Council provide further protection and promotion of heritage. **A summary of the key feedback provided is outlined below.**

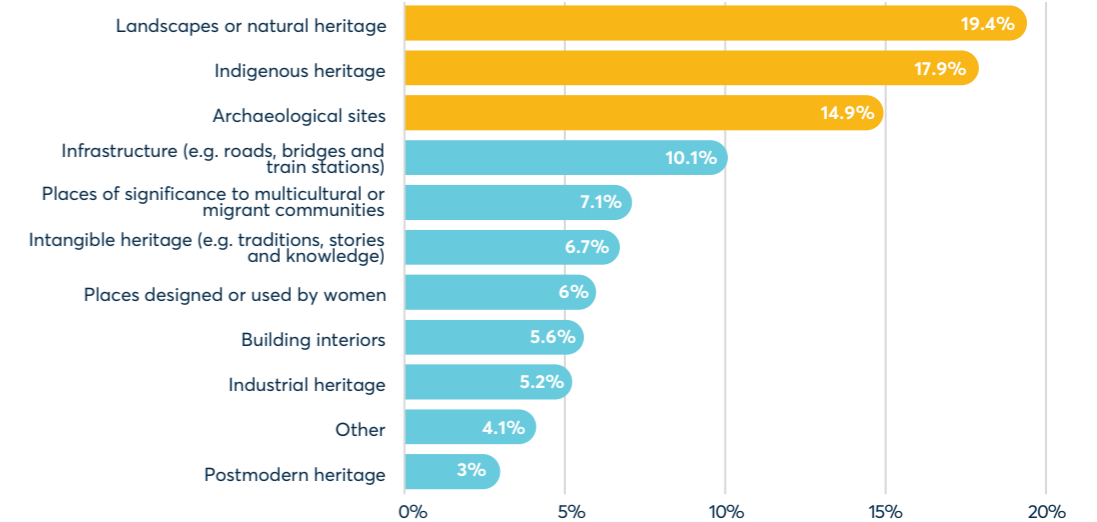
- > **A strong desire to preserve the City of Parramatta's historical buildings and sites.** Many comments emphasise the importance of stopping the destruction of heritage sites and maintaining the character and history of the area.
- > **Significant concern about overdevelopment and its impact on heritage sites.** Respondents advocate for more thoughtful and controlled development that respects heritage areas.
- > **The need for better community consultation and involvement in decisions related to heritage and development.** There is a sense that the community's voice is not being adequately heard or considered.
- > **Suggestions that heritage sites can be leveraged for economic, tourism and cultural benefits.** Ideas include reopening Parramatta Gaol for ghost tours, converting heritage cottages into wine bars, and activating heritage walking and cycling trails.
- > **Emphasis on the preservation of heritage trees and green spaces.** Respondents highlight the importance of maintaining significant older trees and ensuring that new developments do not negatively impact the natural environment.
- > **Calls to ease development controls around heritage listed properties; and to provide more incentives for preservation of heritage buildings and places.** Some respondents expressed frustration with the additional approval processes required to undertake maintenance and improvements to heritage properties. It was also suggested that Council could provide greater assistance to heritage owners for example through heritage grants.
- > **Appreciation for Parramatta's historical significance as one of Australia's earliest colonial settlements.** Many comments reflect a strong sentiment that this history should be preserved and celebrated for future generations.
- > **Potential in promoting heritage sites for tourism and educational purposes.** Suggestions include better advertising and support for heritage museums and attractions, as well as the creation of a Tourist Information Centre.
- > A number of heritage property owners specifically sought **removal of heritage listing** of their properties for reasons including that heritage notations restrict development potential, and that heritage properties do not accommodate modern needs and have high maintenance costs. The historic and heritage value of many heritage conservation areas was also questioned by a number of owners.

# What the community told us

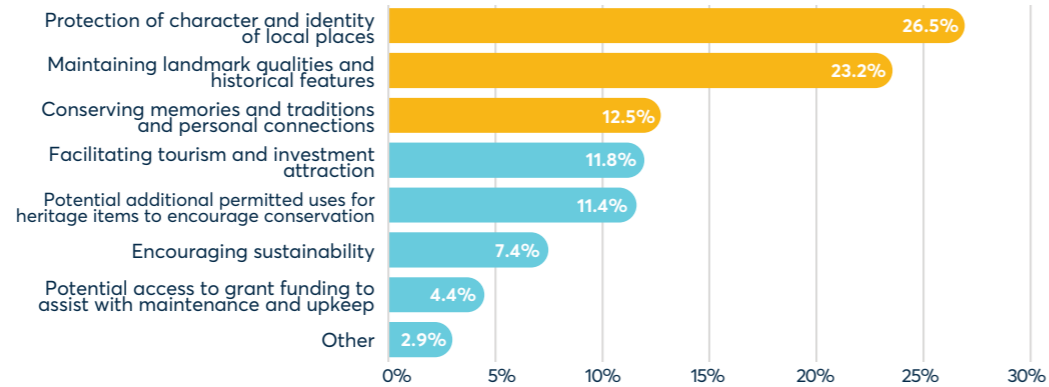
## Categories of importance



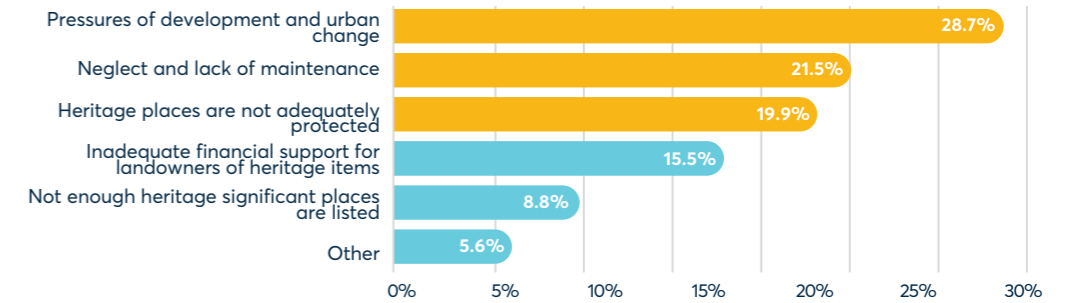
## What 3 types of heritage do you think should be prioritised/further celebrated?



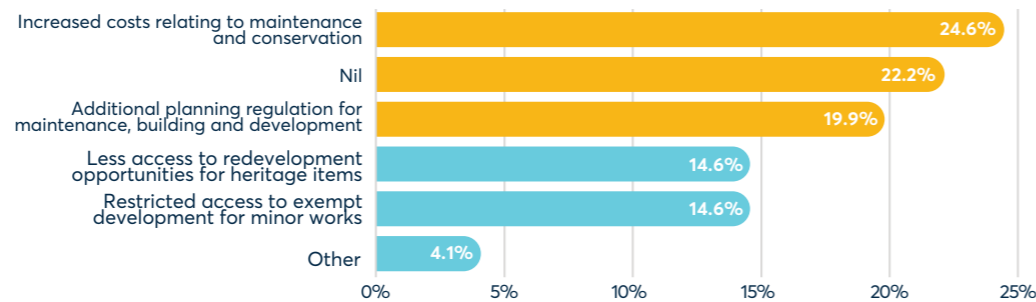
## Most important benefits of heritage listing



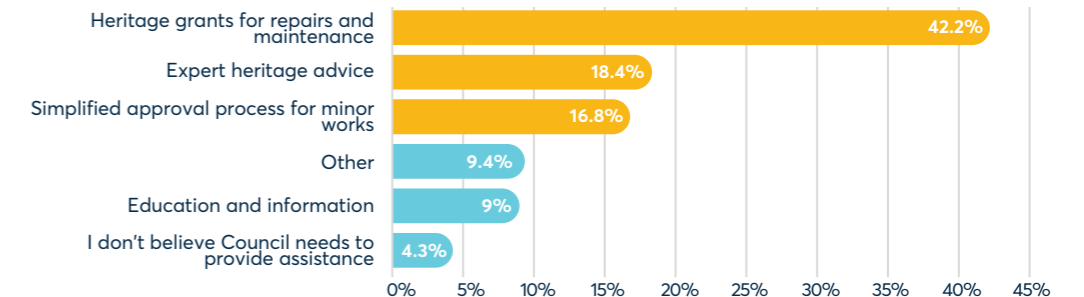
## What do you think are the main challenges to heritage protection and conservation?



## Which of the following do you consider to be disadvantages of heritage listing?



## Preferred method of assistance Council could provide to heritage property owners?





Lake Parramatta.  
Photo by City of Parramatta Council

**PART 3**

# City of Parramatta's heritage

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# Our heritage: a snapshot

## World Heritage List (Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property)

**2** Old Government House and Domain  
Parramatta Park, NSW

## National Heritage List

**2** Old Government House and Domain  
Parramatta Female Factory and  
Institutions Precinct

## NSW Heritage Act 1977

**51** places on the State Heritage Register

## Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023

**739** heritage items  
**15** heritage conservation areas  
**20** archaeological sites

## State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts - Central River City) 2021

**4** heritage items  
**2** heritage conservation areas

## Council assets

**100** Council-owned or managed heritage items (approx) - buildings, structures, parks and reserves

## Locality

**35** suburbs  
**84km<sup>2</sup>** of Western Sydney  
**7** municipalities sharing a border

## Population Growth

**50%** forecasted population growth by 2046

## Residents

 **275,000**  
with 56% speaking  
a language other  
than English at home

## Economy - between 2001 and 2023

**\$11 bil** growth in Gross Regional Product  
**43,000** new local jobs

## District Plan

Identified as the  
**Central River City**

which will grow significantly over the next twenty years with Greater Parramatta as its metropolitan centre

## Aboriginal Sites

**143** listed on Council's Geographic Information System  
**196** listed in Aboriginal Heritage Information System (AHIMS)

## Historic Archaeological Management Units

**355** within the Parramatta City Centre alone

## Research and Collection

**11,000+** records (Council Heritage Archives)  
**3,000+** records (Community Heritage Archives)  
**100,000+** objects (Cultural Collection)  
*Dharug Keeping Place*

## Parramatta Local Studies and Family History Library

**5,000+** books  
**100+** maps  
microfilms of newspapers

**Thousands of artefacts from archaeological excavations unearthed each year.**



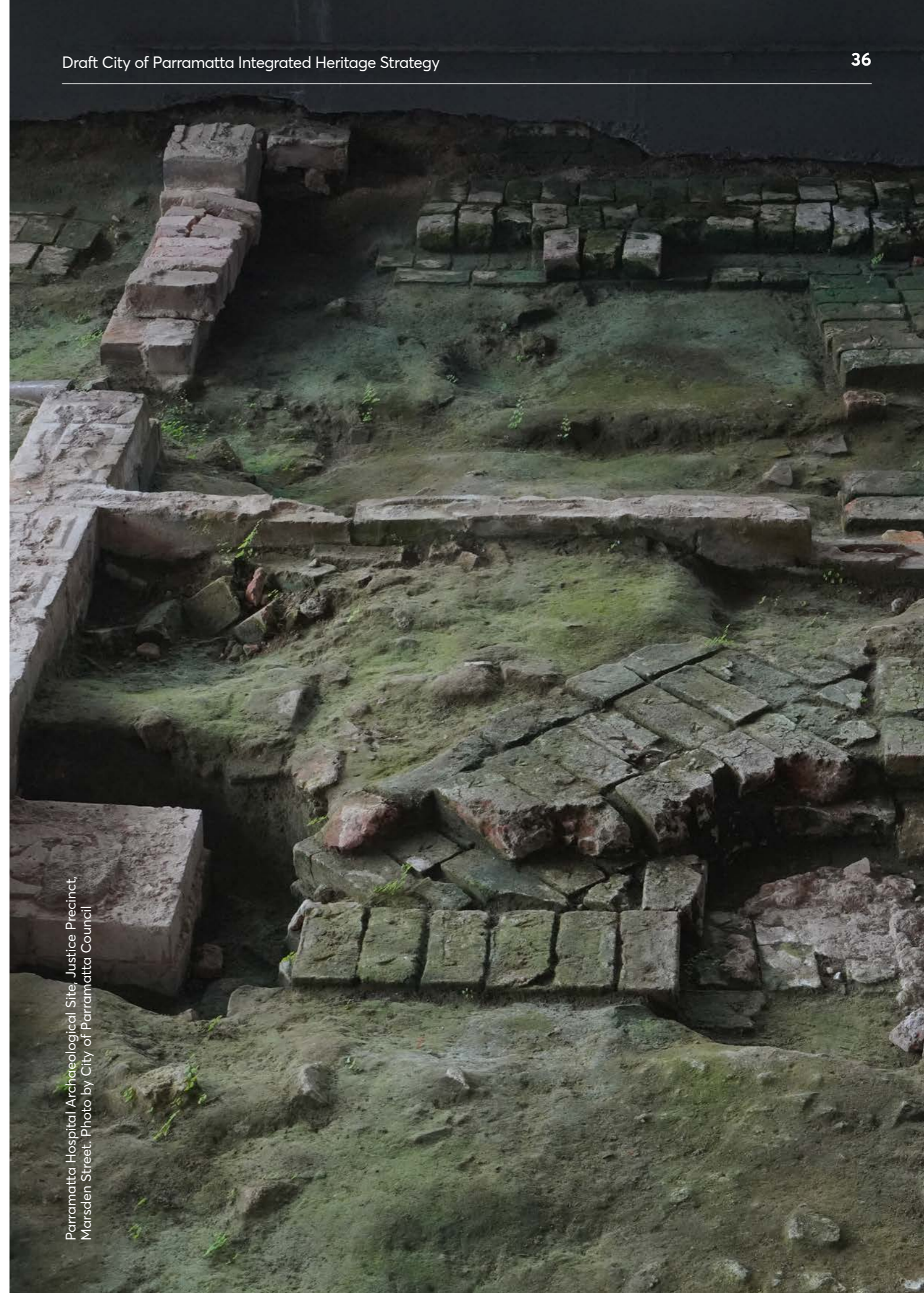
Dharug Circle, Parramatta Square.  
Image by Nuttshell Design.

# Our heritage management responsibilities

Planning and development regulation in NSW is a shared responsibility between national, state and local governments. Natural, First Nations and historic cultural heritage are protected under separate statutes in NSW. This means that decisions affecting heritage items are not always the responsibility of local government and approval pathways for new developments are not always clear to local communities.

Federal, state and community-based organisations such as the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water, the NSW State Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW Heritage Council, Museums of History NSW, National Trust (NSW), local First Nations groups and Land Councils, historical societies, and private owners and managers of heritage places may have responsibilities for some aspects of managing the City of Parramatta's heritage.

**COUNCIL HAS MANY IMPORTANT ROLES REGARDING THE CITY OF PARRAMATTA'S HERITAGE, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:**



Parramatta Hospital Archaeological Site, Justice Precinct, Marsden Street. Photo by City of Parramatta Council

# Our key achievements



## KNOWING & UNDERSTANDING

Various heritage studies including:

- Parramatta Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study Review 2014
- South Parramatta Conservation Area Review 2014
- Epping Town Centre (East) Heritage Review 2017
- Various heritage studies between 2015 and 2019 as part of the Parramatta CBD planning framework that focused on the CBD and surrounds
- Heritage Review Granville (land north of railway line) 2023

Updates to NSW heritage inventories for City of Parramatta heritage items.

Publication of *Waves of People – exploring the movements and patterns of migration that have shaped Parramatta through time*, City of Parramatta, 2018.



## PROTECTING & CONSERVING

Amendments to Parramatta Local Environmental Plans and Development Control Plans to modify and strengthen heritage provisions.

Established the Dharug Keeping Place in PHIVE, Parramatta.

Updated documentation and information associated with Council's archives and collections.

Completed a Heritage Council Archives digitisation program and digitised Council archives.

Updated Council's *Archives Management Policy 2020* and its *Cultural Collections Management Policy 2024*.

Adopted *City of Parramatta First Nations Strategy 2024 – 2029*.

Restoration of heritage items including Parramatta Town Hall, Prince Alfred Square Bandstand, Parramatta War Memorial, Centennial Memorial Clock Tower and HMAS Parramatta Memorial.



## RESOURCING, ADVOCATING & SUPPORTING

Appointment of full-time Heritage Advisor.

Approval and support of Council's grants:

- Local Heritage Fund for maintenance and conservation of local heritage items
- Vibrant Parramatta program for heritage façade restorations.
- History, Culture and Stories Fund to enhance knowledge of Parramatta's history and culture.

Obtained grants from NSW State Government to support Council's heritage programs.

Facilitate, support and manage Council's Heritage Advisory Panel.

Council staff training for First Nations 'Designing with Country'.

Established Heritage Minor Works process for minor works to heritage properties.



## COMMUNICATING & PROMOTING

Preparation of *City of Parramatta Heritage Communications Strategy 2023*.

Organising of heritage events including NAIDOC Week, Heritage Week and Foundation Day.

Heritage interpretation for PHIVE Parramatta, Parramatta Square and the Parramatta Aquatics Centre, Charles Street Square and other private property.

Preparation of *Parramatta Public Domain Guidelines*.

Adopted *City of Parramatta Cultural Strategy (Creative Parramatta)*.

Improved online access to Cultural Collections and Heritage Archives.

Showcased Cultural Collections and Heritage Archives through exhibits and displays at PHIVE.



## PREPARING, ADAPTING & ACTIVATING

Continued to advocate for and assess proposals for the adaptive reuse of the Roxy Theatre.

Advocated for improved heritage outcomes for private development projects, and government infrastructure projects.



ACC245/007/004. Old Government House, 1971 (built in 1820).  
Photo by John Hinchliffe. Courtesy of City of Parramatta Community Archive

## PART 4

# The strategy

Our vision	41
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THE STRATEGY

# Our vision

We will champion the recognition, protection, management, and celebration of the City of Parramatta's heritage, notably its First Nations, colonial, migrant and other heritage, that will enrich our environment and community, for the benefit of current and future generations.

The Great Hall at Parramatta Town Hall following extensive restoration.  
Photo by Grant Leslie Photography.



# Key goals

To achieve our vision the Strategy establishes eight priority goals:

1

To recognise, protect and conserve the City of Parramatta's valued heritage places, buildings, archaeology, settings and natural landscapes, together with its stories and collections.

2

To provide innovative, best practice and well resourced management of the City of Parramatta's heritage.

3

To place people at the heart of heritage management, engaging with the community and heritage stakeholders.

4

To recognise heritage, local character, and identity, to guide respectful planning and design outcomes in a changing urban context.

5

To recognise First Nations heritage by developing a 'Country' centred approach and work with Dharug and other First Nations people to tell their stories and manage their culturally significant places.

6

To tell the stories that reflect the City of Parramatta's varied and evolving history and promote events and activities that recognise and celebrate our heritages, cultures and waves of migration.

7

To raise awareness of our heritage and to advocate for investment and promotion of Parramatta as a local, national and international heritage tourism destination.

8

To adapt heritage places for climate resilience and economic success, and to provide for sustainable, activated, and accessible heritage buildings that can meet the contemporary needs of occupants.



Hambleton Cottage (built in 1825).  
Photo by City of Parramatta Council.

# Knowing and understanding

Improve our understanding of the full breadth of the City of Parramatta’s heritage by identifying features and elements, such as places, buildings, archaeology, landscapes, documents, artefacts and stories, that are important to us and ensuring that information is well documented and generally publicly accessible.

Key goals	Priority	Estimated Budget	Resource Implications
1 5	High To be undertaken within 1-3 years	WB Within existing budget	N Neutral within existing staff capacity
6	Medium To be undertaken within 3-5 years	\$ Additional budget up to \$50,000	S Additional staff required
	Low To be undertaken within 6-10 years	\$\$ Additional budget \$50,000 to \$150,000	C Consultant required
	Ongoing To be undertaken periodically or on an 'as needs' basis	\$\$\$ Additional budget \$150,000 to \$500,000	
		\$\$\$\$ Additional budget over \$500,000	

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGETING & RESOURCING
K1. Undertake heritage studies and reviews through the City of Parramatta Comprehensive Heritage Review Program, and amend planning controls following recommendations of the relevant studies.	High - Medium	City Planning & Design	\$\$\$\$ C
K2. Work with First Nations people to determine the best way to identify and record First Nations sites and prepare for the introduction of any revised Aboriginal Heritage legislation.	Medium	City Planning & Design	\$ C

## CORE BUSINESS

Things that we currently do, and that we will continue to do:

- Review heritage planning controls, listed heritage items and inventories to ensure heritage is adequately protected.
- Update the NSW State Heritage Inventory database for sites in the City of Parramatta LGA.
- Update Council records on known Aboriginal sites using data from the NSW Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS).



'Badu Barara: Water Song', Interpretation of Parramatta. Source: GML Heritage.

# Protecting and conserving

Ensure the City of Parramatta’s heritage, including places, buildings, archaeology, landscapes, artefacts and collections, are appropriately protected and valued through a robust policy and management framework.

Key goals	Priority	Estimated Budget	Resource Implications
1 4	High To be undertaken within 1-3 years	WB Within existing budget	N Neutral within existing staff capacity
5	Medium To be undertaken within 3-5 years	\$ Additional budget up to \$50,000	S Additional staff required
	Low To be undertaken within 6-10 years	\$\$ Additional budget \$50,000 to \$150,000	C Consultant required
	Ongoing To be undertaken periodically or on an 'as needs' basis	\$\$\$ Additional budget \$150,000 to \$500,000	
		\$\$\$\$ Additional budget over \$500,000	

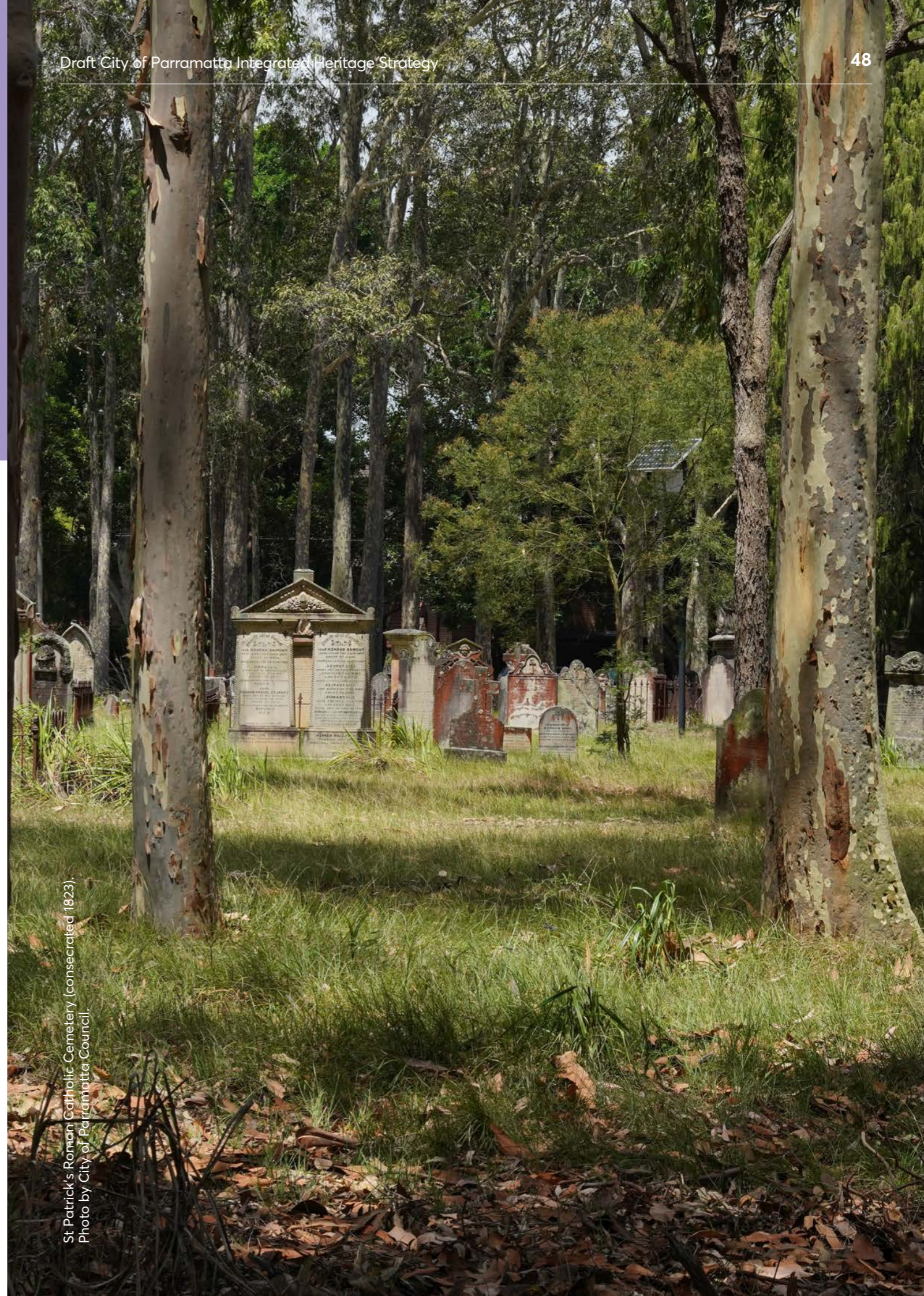
ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGETING & RESOURCING
P1. Investigate opportunities to audit significant Council owned/ managed built heritage assets to identify physical condition, and develop a conservation maintenance program that may include preparation of asset management plans; conservation strategies and guidelines; and conservation management plans.	High - Medium	City Assets & Operations  Corporate & Property Services	\$\$\$
			C
P2. Investigate and ensure appropriate storage facilities are available for all heritage archives and cultural collections.	High - Medium	Community & Culture	\$\$\$ N
P3. Enhance Council's digital collection database management systems and associated support platforms that allow public access.	High - Medium	Community & Culture	\$/per annum
			C
P4. Finalise the review and management of archaeological artefacts and assemblages in the care of Council.	High	Community & Culture	\$\$
			S
P5. Taking into consideration the findings of the Thematic History Study, a scoping report detailing the need for and cost of a natural landscapes and significant trees review be prepared and reported to Council.	Medium	City Planning & Design	WB
			N

## CORE BUSINESS

Things that we currently do, and that we will continue to do:

- Consider the conservation of heritage and local character through precinct planning and infrastructure projects supported by a Historic Urban Landscape approach\* and spatial heritage master planning.
- Document and manage Council's collections and archives in accordance with Council's Collections Policy and relevant legislation; and continue to resource best practice collection management.
- Provide expert heritage advice for development proposals relating to heritage properties including heritage minor works, local heritage fund applications, development applications, planning proposals, precinct planning, infrastructure and public domain projects, urban design projects, and other strategic planning studies.
- Document and record archaeological assemblages and artefacts in accordance with Council's Archaeological Management Framework for major excavation projects on Council land.
- Recognise and protect archaeological remains and promote conservation of in situ remains, including site interpretation, to create unique visitor experiences.
- Ensure heritage is a key consideration for the Design Excellence Advisory Panel when considering new buildings and interpretation, including work within heritage curtilages or close to important heritage places.

\*Refer glossary.



St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cemetery (consecrated 1823).  
Photo by City of Parramatta Council.

# Resourcing, advocating and supporting

Resource, advocate for, and support heritage through Council's various roles and responsibilities.

Key goals	Priority	Estimated Budget	Resource Implications
1 3 5	<b>High</b> To be undertaken within 1-3 years <b>Medium</b> To be undertaken within 3-5 years <b>Low</b> To be undertaken within 6-10 years <b>Ongoing</b> To be undertaken periodically or on an 'as needs' basis	<b>WB</b> Within existing budget <b>\$</b> Additional budget up to \$50,000 <b>\$\$</b> Additional budget \$50,000 to \$150,000 <b>\$\$\$</b> Additional budget \$150,000 to \$500,000 <b>\$\$\$\$</b> Additional budget over \$500,000	<b>N</b> Neutral within existing staff capacity <b>S</b> Additional staff required <b>C</b> Consultant required

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGETING & RESOURCING
<b>R1.</b> Undertake benchmarking with other NSW Councils to determine how Council's heritage resources can best achieve our heritage responsibilities and priorities outlined within this Strategy; the Community Strategic Plan (2025 – 2050); and the Delivery Plan and Operation Plan.	High	City Planning & Design	WB
			N
<b>R2.</b> Advocate to government agencies to: seek minimum standards of maintenance and repair for heritage items; ensure adequate protection and recognition of heritage items in planning for state significant infrastructure and development; and seek to ensure that Heritage NSW has adequate oversight of State significant heritage assets.	Ongoing	City Planning & Design	WB
			N
<b>R3.</b> Provide heritage and cultural training to Council staff, Councillors and Council's Heritage Advisory Panel on best practice heritage management at the start of each new Council term.	Medium	City Planning & Design Community & Culture	\$
			C
<b>R4.</b> Investigate and implement best practice measures to make it easier for heritage property owners to undertake minor works, repairs, and maintenance to their properties.	High	City Planning & Design	WB
			N
<b>R5.</b> Review Council's Local Heritage Fund program every four years, including budget and guidelines.	Medium	City Planning & Design	WB
			N
<b>R6.</b> Council engage with Placemaking NSW and NSW Environment and Heritage and relevant owners of key heritage sites including Old Government House, Fleet Street Precinct, Elizabeth Farm, Experiment Farm, Lancer Barracks, Brislington, Hambledon Cottage, Whitlam Institute and Newington Armory to explore unified ownership and place management under a single government entity, to enhance visitor experience and promotion to increase visitation.	High	Community & Culture City Planning & Design	WB
			N

## CORE BUSINESS

Things that we currently do, and that we will continue to do:

- Write to heritage property owners providing useful and relevant heritage information, including on Council's Local Heritage Fund.
- Continue to provide grants from Council's Local Heritage Fund for the maintenance and conservation of heritage properties.
- Continue the Vibrant Parramatta grants to assist with façade restorations of heritage properties.
- Continue to seek grant funding from Heritage NSW and the Commonwealth Government to assist with Council's heritage programs, and the restoration and celebration of heritage.



Sorrell Street Conservation Area.  
Photo by City of Parramatta Council.

# Communicating and promoting

Raise awareness and appreciation of heritage and celebrate heritage as a community promoting its value for all.

Key goals	Priority	Estimated Budget	Resource Implications
5 6	<b>High</b> To be undertaken within 1-3 years	<b>WB</b> Within existing budget	<b>N</b> Neutral within existing staff capacity
7	<b>Medium</b> To be undertaken within 3-5 years	<b>\$</b> Additional budget up to \$50,000	<b>S</b> Additional staff required
	<b>Low</b> To be undertaken within 6-10 years	<b>\$\$</b> Additional budget \$50,000 to \$150,000	<b>C</b> Consultant required
	<b>Ongoing</b> To be undertaken periodically or on an 'as needs' basis	<b>\$\$\$</b> Additional budget \$150,000 to \$500,000	
		<b>\$\$\$\$</b> Additional budget over \$500,000	

Heritage Collections Services display at Parramatta Aquatic Centre. Photo by City of Parramatta Council



ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGETING & RESOURCING
<b>C1.</b> Work with State agencies, universities, and other relevant stakeholders, to investigate the establishment of a dedicated space within the City of Parramatta LGA, for the interpretation and display of culturally significant historical collections and artefacts relevant to the City of Parramatta LGA, in either public or private ownership.	High	Community & Culture	WB
			N
<b>C2.</b> Update the City of Parramatta Destination Management Plan and explore and identify strategic opportunities to position the City of Parramatta as a premier destination for cultural and heritage tourism.	High	Community & Culture	\$\$
			C
<b>C3.</b> Run one Heritage Week event during each Council term, including a Heritage and Design Awards program with recipient categories for different development uses and community groups.	Medium	City Planning & Design	\$
			N
<b>C4.</b> Update the draft City of Parramatta Heritage Interpretation Guidelines for Developers to reflect best international practice.	High	Community & Culture	WB
			N
<b>C5.</b> Council investigate wayfinding signage to heritage attractions as part of Council's Wayfinding Strategy.	High	City Engagement & Experience	WB
			N

## CORE BUSINESS

Things that we currently do, and that we will continue to do:

- Engage with heritage stakeholders, including First Nations People and heritage property owners, on projects and strategies involving heritage issues or places of significance.
- Support Council's Heritage Advisory Panel.
- Audit and update Council's website relating to heritage.
- Continue to provide the History, Culture and Stories Fund grants to support projects that enhance and expand understanding of the City of Parramatta's rich history and cultural heritage.
- Support or promote heritage events and cultural programs including NAIDOC Week, Sorry Day, Heritage Week and Foundation Day.
- Consider nominations for State, National and World Heritage Listing.
- Continue to represent City of Parramatta on the Parramatta Heritage Partners Working Group\* and seek ways to support and promote visitor programs for multiple heritage places; including support of local groups and volunteers in the conservation and promotion of local heritage and in maintaining historical collections.
- Continue to show leadership in, and advocate for, best practice heritage interpretation.
- Incorporate the City of Parramatta's stories in a meaningful and engaging way as part of Council's existing communications.
- Engage with stakeholders to showcase migrant stories of the City of Parramatta, through research, curation and promotion for example, through displays at PHIVE and other community hubs and online.
- Collaborate with universities and other learning organisations to create interest in the City of Parramatta's stories, both historic and contemporary.
- Continue to support Dharug and other traditional owners in projects to lead and guide the expression and interpretation of their culture and Country.
- Continue to use digital technology where appropriate to interpret heritage.

\*Refer glossary.

# Preparing, adapting and activating

Consider how heritage places and their settings can best adapt to the pressures of climate change, new development and changing occupant needs, and provide opportunities for activation.

Key goals	Priority	Estimated Budget	Resource Implications
4 8	<b>High</b> To be undertaken within 1-3 years <b>Medium</b> To be undertaken within 3-5 years <b>Low</b> To be undertaken within 6-10 years <b>Ongoing</b> To be undertaken periodically or on an 'as needs' basis	<b>WB</b> Within existing budget <b>\$</b> Additional budget up to \$50,000 <b>\$\$</b> Additional budget \$50,000 to \$150,000 <b>\$\$\$</b> Additional budget \$150,000 to \$500,000 <b>\$\$\$\$</b> Additional budget over \$500,000	<b>N</b> Neutral within existing staff capacity <b>S</b> Additional staff required <b>C</b> Consultant required

ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGETING & RESOURCING
<b>PA1.</b> Undertake a study to investigate best practices to improve the energy and water efficiency of heritage buildings, recommend changes to planning controls, and develop guidance for property owners.	Low	City Planning & Design	\$\$ C
<b>PA2.</b> Consider climate change impacts on heritage assets in asset management plans and conservation management plans.	Low	City Planning & Design	\$\$\$ C

## CORE BUSINESS

Things that we currently do, and that we will continue to do:

- Continue to maintain or improve public access to Council's heritage assets.
- Advocate for, and promote innovative ways for adaptive reuse of heritage buildings to ensure their conservation and relevance, including opportunities for universal public access.
- Maintain planning controls that allow heritage buildings to be reasonably adapted to meet occupant needs without compromising heritage values.
- Maintain and enforce planning provisions to allow urban growth while protecting heritage.



Heritage Archivist rehousing plans. Photo by City of Parramatta Council.



City of Parramatta Foundation Day 2023 hosted at the Parramatta Female Factory. Photo by Cassandra Hannagan.

**PART 5**

# Measuring our progress

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Implementation, review and monitoring

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# Implementation, review and monitoring

Implementation of the actions will be monitored on an annual basis with progress reports back to Council if requested. In this way the outcomes can be measured and where appropriate the actions can be revised.

This Heritage Strategy should be fully reviewed every ten years to further determine how heritage should be managed and how it can continue to make a valuable contribution to the attraction of City of Parramatta.



# Glossary

**Burra Charter** - officially titled 'The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance', 2013 (Burra Charter) provides a best practice standard for managing cultural heritage places in Australia.

**Country** – includes Earth, Waters and Sky. It encompasses tangible and intangible aspects, knowledge and cultural practices, belonging and identity, wellbeing and relationships. People are part of Country. Caring for Country is an approach that embraces the First Nations philosophy that if we care for Country, Country will care for us.

**Designing with Country** – is an approach to design and planning that recognise the unique systems of knowledge and ways of being of First Nations people. It will help ensure that the value of both contemporary First Nations culture and First Nations heritage are recognised and respected by practitioners in the design and planning of our built environment.

**Heritage** – what people value and want to pass on to the future. It includes First Nations cultural heritage and historic heritage, and tangible and intangible heritage. Some but not all of that heritage is formally protected.

**Heritage activities** – used here to mean the many ways people actively engage with heritage, including their heritage or that of others, including researching family history or restoring vintage vehicles or buildings.

**Heritage assets** – the things people value and want to pass on to the future including physical things such as buildings, places, landscapes or objects and intangible heritage such as traditions, stories and memories.

**Heritage Conservation Areas (HCAs)** – are areas of land, precincts, neighbourhoods or groups of properties and streets, which collectively have been recognised as having specific and significant historical value recognised by the community which should be protected. HCAs are listed and mapped in *Parramatta LEP 2023* and therefore have statutory protection.

**Heritage experiences** – the different ways that people encounter the past in their lives and as residents, workers and visitors, including public programs and events, exhibitions, walks, signage and digital media.

**Heritage inventory forms** – are the record of information that supports and justifies the listing of a heritage item or a heritage conservation area. Heritage inventory forms describe the item and identifies heritage significance. This includes the item name, address, physical description, statement of significance, historical notes and an assessment in line with the NSW Heritage significance criteria together with current (and past) photographs. These inventory forms provide important information that can be later referenced by land owners, Council and other government agencies.

**Heritage items** - consist of buildings, places, objects and landscapes, including houses, public and commercial buildings, parks and monuments that the City of Parramatta community has inherited from the past and wishes to protect for future generations. Heritage items are listed and mapped in Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage of *Parramatta LEP 2023* and therefore have statutory protection.

**Historic Urban Landscape Approach** – was endorsed in November 2011 by the 36th session of UNESCO's General Conference and moves beyond the preservation of the physical environment and focuses on the entire human environment with all of its tangible and intangible qualities. It seeks to increase the sustainability of planning and design interventions by taking into account the existing built environment, intangible heritage, cultural diversity, socio-economic and environmental factors along with local community values.

**Intangible heritage** – things people value that don't have a physical form, such as knowledge, skills and languages. They are not usually protected in planning but can be protected through intellectual property rights.

**Interpretation** – the different ways of telling stories that enable people to encounter and understand the past, whether online or in-person, including exhibitions, productions, events, public programs, artworks, talks, plaques and signage.

**Living heritage** – is comprised of numerous elements of culture, many of which are intangible. These intangible cultural heritage elements include traditions of living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants. Intangible cultural heritage is an essential ingredient for healthy communities and families and for sustainable livelihoods.

**Parramatta Development Control Plan 2023** – supports the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023 by providing detailed controls for development across the City of Parramatta, including planning and design guidelines to protect heritage.

**Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023** – delivers the objectives of the planning system in NSW for the City of Parramatta, including provisions to protect heritage.

**Parramatta Heritage Partners Working Group (PHPWG)** - consists of representatives from organisations, businesses, and societies actively engaged in heritage-related work within the City of Parramatta Local Government Area (LGA). Stakeholders include managers of historic properties, Parramatta City Council, heritage industry organisations, and businesses involved in heritage tourism and event delivery. The group aims to promote heritage advocacy, tourism, and events across the City of Parramatta LGA.

**Sustainable development** – development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by member nations in 2015.

**Tangible heritage** – heritage that has a physical form such as buildings, places, landscapes, collections and infrastructure. It distinguishes physical heritage assets from intangible heritage assets.

**Truth telling** – is an opportunity for First Nations peoples to record evidence about past actions and share their culture, heritage and history with the broader community and is seen as being crucial to the ongoing process of healing and reconciliation in Australia.



# PARRAMATTA

With places of Historical Interest defined and described on the reverse side.



**CITY OF PARRAMATTA**

[cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au](http://cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au)

Rosehill