



Heritage Conservation Management Plan

'Burns Place', Mann Street, Gosford

October 2025

EHC2023/0205

EDWARDS HERITAGE CONSULTANTS PTY LTD

ABN 38 650 469 211

19A Fitzgerald Street, Windsor | (02) 4589 3049 | PO Box 4189 Pitt Town NSW 2756

enquiry@edwardsheritage.com.au | edwardsheritage.com.au

Document Control					
Project No.	Issue Date	Revision	Issue	Prepared	Reviewed
EHC23/0205	13/01/2024	A	Draft	BR / ME / HC	ME
	16/04/2024	B	Reviewed		
	18/04/2024	C	Client issue		
	21/05/2024	D	Final draft		
	03/03/2025	E	Public exhibition		
	21/10/2025	F	Final issue		

© 2025 | EDWARDS HERITAGE CONSULTANTS PTY LTD

This report remains the property of Edwards Heritage Consultants Pty Ltd.

The Client commissioning Edwards Heritage Consultants Pty Ltd to prepare this report shall have a non-exclusive licence for the use of this report, however the copyright remains the property of Edwards Heritage Consultants Pty Ltd.

No part of it may in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical photocopying, recording or otherwise) be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in part or in full, without the express written consent of Edwards Heritage Consultants Pty Ltd.

DISCLAIMER

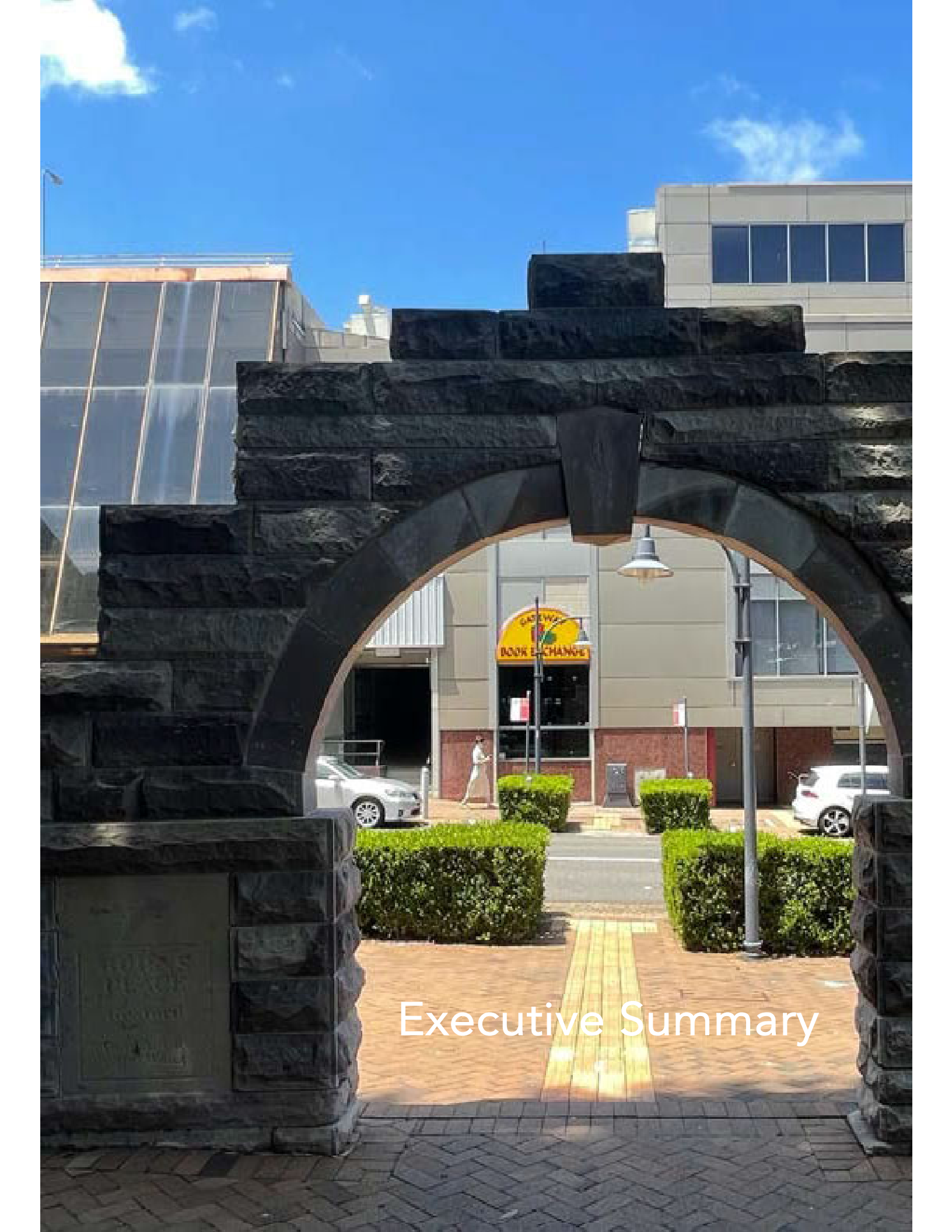
Any representation, statement, opinion or advice expressed or implied in this report is made in good faith but on the basis that Edwards Heritage Consultants Pty Ltd is not liable (whether by reason or negligence, lack of care or otherwise) to any person for any damage or loss whatsoever which has occurred or may occur in relation to that person taking, or not taking (as the case may be) action in any respect of any representation.

While any representation, statement, opinion or advice in this report is provided in good faith, it does not guarantee that a development approval will be issued by the Consent Authority, nor give expressed or implied support to any development proposal, unless solely by professional recommendation and opinion.

REPORT CONTENTS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
2.0 QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE	5
2.1 Introduction	5
2.2 Why is Burns Place of heritage significance?	5
2.3 What are the parameters for change to the site?	5
2.4 How must the built and landscape features be managed generally?	7
3.0 INTRODUCTION.....	12
3.1 Context of the report.....	12
3.2 Identification of the study area.....	12
3.3 Objectives.....	12
3.4 Methodology.....	13
3.4.1 Definition of heritage.....	13
3.4.2 Report Structure and Assessment Procedure	13
3.4.3 Philosophy and Approach.....	14
3.5 Authorship	16
3.6 Limitations	16
3.7 Terminology	16
3.8 Physical Evidence	17
3.9 Summary of Documentary Evidence	17
3.9.1 Resources.....	17
3.9.2 Acknowledgements	17
4.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	19
4.1 Introduction	19
4.2 Early European settlement	19
4.3 First land grant.....	21
4.4 Establishment of Burns Place.....	22
4.5 Lewers Memorial Fountain	32
4.6 Late 20 th century improvements to the site	35
4.7 Heritage listing	42
4.8 Summary timeline of events	45
4.9 Ability to represent historical themes.....	46
5.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE	48
5.1 Introduction	48
5.2 Context and setting.....	48
5.3 The subject site generally.....	49
5.4 Landscaped setting	51
5.5 Description of the built forms on site	53
5.6 Condition and integrity	57
5.7 Streetscape contribution	57
5.8 Moveable heritage	58
5.8.1 Introduction	58
5.8.2 Moveable heritage at Burns Place Park	58
5.9 Archaeology	58
5.9.1 Introduction	58
5.9.2 Summary of archaeological potential	58
5.10.1 Introduction	59
5.10.2 Key views to the site	59
5.10.3 Key views from the site	61
5.10.4 Key views within the site	62
6.0 HERITAGE LISTING STATUS.....	65
6.1 Introduction	65
6.2 Statutory heritage listings.....	65
7.0 ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE	69
7.1 Identifying heritage significance.....	69
7.2 Previous heritage significance assessments – statutory heritage listings	69
7.3 Previous heritage significance assessments – non-statutory heritage listings.....	69
7.4 Comparative analysis.....	70
7.4.1 Introduction	70
7.4.2 Selection criteria	70
7.4.3 Selection of comparative examples.....	70
7.4.4 Comparative Examples.....	70
7.4.5 Summary observations of comparative analysis	75
7.6 Assessment of Cultural Significance using the NSW Heritage Assessment Criteria	76
7.7.1 Criterion (a) – Historical significance	77
7.7.2 Criterion (b) – Historical association significance.....	77
7.7.3 Criterion (c) – Aesthetic significance	78
7.7.4 Criterion (d) – Social significance	79
7.7.5 Criterion (e) – Technical / research significance.....	79
7.7.6 Criterion (f) – Rarity	80
7.7.7 Criterion (g) - Representativeness.....	80

7.8 Summary level of significance	81
7.9 Statement of Significance	81
7.10 Heritage curtilage	82
7.10.1 Introduction	82
7.10.2 Heritage curtilage assessment principles	82
7.10.3 Heritage curtilage assessment	84
7.10.4 Recommended heritage curtilage	84
8.0 GRADING OF SIGNIFICANCE	87
8.1 Introduction	87
8.2 Fabric condition ratings	88
8.3 Grading of significance – site	88
8.4 Tolerance for change	92
9.0 CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES	95
9.1 Introduction	95
9.2 Issues arising from the Statement of Significance	95
9.3 Issues arising from the physical condition of the site	96
9.4 Issues arising from the requirements of ownership and management	97
9.5 Issues arising from heritage curtilage	98
9.7 Heritage management framework	99
9.7.1 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979	100
9.7.2 Heritage Act 1977	101
9.7.3 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999	102
9.7.4 National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974	102
9.8 Environmental Planning Instruments	103
9.8.1 State Environmental Planning Policy – (Exempt & Complying Development Codes) 2008	103
9.8.2 State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021	103
9.9 Development Control Plans and Guidelines	105
9.9.1 Gosford City Centre Development Control Plan 2018	105
9.9.2 Heritage Council of NSW – Design in Context	105
9.9.3 Heritage Council of NSW – New Uses for Heritage Places	105
9.10 Non-statutory heritage considerations	106
9.10.1 ICOMOS (Australia) Burra Charter	106
9.10.2 The National Trust of Australia (NSW)	107
9.10.3 National Construction Code and Building Code of Australia	107
9.10.4 Disability Discrimination Act 1992	108
10.0 CONSERVATION POLICIES AND GUIDELINES	111
10.1 Introduction and role of conservation policies	111
10.2 Best practice approach and conservation methodology	111
10.3 Recognition of cultural significance	112
10.4 Role of the CMP including adoption and review of policies	113
10.5 Conservation advice	114
10.6 Documenting evidence and decisions	115
10.7 Conservation methodology	115
10.7.1 Management generally	116
10.7.2 Retention of original design integrity	117
10.7.3 Conservation, maintenance and repair works	118
10.7.4 Painting and renewal of surface finishes	122
10.7.5 Landscapes	122
10.7.6 Operational requirements, new development and new uses	123
10.7.7 Services, signage, safety and security and public domain works	126
10.7.8 Archaeology	129
10.7.9 Interpretation	130
10.8 Approvals	131
10.8.1 Relationship with Commonwealth, State and Local Authorities	131
10.8.2 Approvals process	131
11.0 IMPLEMENTATION	134
11.1 Introduction	134
11.2 Management issues	134
11.3 Establishment of a Maintenance Plan	134
11.4 Recommended schedule of conservation works	135
11.5 On-going maintenance	136



Executive Summary

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Context of the Report

This Heritage Conservation Management Plan (herein referred to as the 'CMP') for Burns Place at Mann Street, Gosford, has been prepared at the request of Central Coast Council, who are the owners, custodians and managers of Burns Place.

Burns Place is a small elongated public park, situated in the heart of the Gosford town centre. The park serves as a prominent local landmark and gateway to the transport interchange and Gosford Railway Station precinct on the western side and the commercial town centre on the eastern side.

Burns Place is of local heritage significance for its historical, aesthetic, social and representative values. It is historically significant at the local level for its ability to demonstrate the growth and development of the wider Gosford township and is representative of civic actions and advocacy, making it a good example of an evolved landscape, evidencing the various phases of change and changing attitudes to public domain works and civic improvements.

The park is also distinctive within the immediate streetscape and broader townscape, possessing landmark qualities due to its prominent positioning. The site is further enhanced by mature trees and stone edging, remaining aesthetically significant within the wider streetscape of commercial built forms and transport corridors.

Burns Place is of high social significance to the community from its origins, as the park was funded by the local community as a place of public open space. It has continued to retain this social significance, as it is important to the community's sense of place, holding a high degree of esteem.

Burns Place is identified as an item of local heritage significance, which is listed on Schedule 9 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021*, which is the statutory planning instrument that establishes the land use planning regime, including the statutory protection for items of cultural heritage significance within the Gosford town centre.

The purpose of this CMP is to create a plan to manage the site for current and future generations, by providing a framework for decisions regarding the ongoing management, conservation and future use. The CMP is also intended to guide potential development and works both to and within the vicinity of the site and to manage the identified cultural heritage significance of the site.

Subsequently, this CMP explains both the heritage significance of the site and establishes a framework of conservation principles and policies that should be followed in order to retain and/or reveal the identified heritage values and cultural significance.

These objectives are achieved through:

- Investigation and analysis of the documentary and physical evidence known and available.
- Assessing and establishing the cultural heritage significance of Burns Place and developing a Statement of Cultural Significance.
- Determining the opportunities and constraints that influence or direct the management and use of the site.
- Formulating appropriate conservation policies and guidelines for the short and longer-term conservation, use, management and interpretation of Burns Place, to ensure that the heritage values of the place are maintained and, where appropriate, enhanced, taking into consideration the historical and social significance, physical fabric, curtilage and ongoing use of the place.

Decisions regarding ongoing management and future works, including cyclical maintenance, repairs, conservation, preservation, adaptation and repurposing, alterations and additions or new development, should take into consideration the cultural significance of the place or site as a whole rather than individual

elements in isolation, but so too giving consideration to any affected individual elements and their relationship to the site as a whole.

It is important to recognise that the conservation policies developed in this CMP are not intended to prohibit change from occurring. Rather, the application of the conservation policies will ensure that future decisions are made on an informed basis that ensures the cultural significance of the place or site is retained to the greatest extent possible and where possible, enhanced. The conservation policies are focused around the issues that have been identified as being relevant to the site, but are also intended to have flexibility, in order to respond to the changing requirements of the site and those of the owner(s) / occupant(s).

1.2 Structure of the Report

The conservation policies in this CMP are structured in four parts:

1. *Heritage conservation best-practice and theory*

The conservation policies commence with a general outline of heritage conservation best-practice and theory and provide guidance to deal with the key implications for retaining the cultural significance of the site, including:

- Recognising, retaining and where possible, enhancing the identified heritage values of the site.
- The need to approach the conservation and management of the place as a whole.
- Recognising all phases of the site's history.
- Facilitating the continued use of a place and opportunity for adaptation or repurposing.
- Conserving and maintaining significant features and elements of the site and their relationships with one another.
- Undertaking conservation actions in accordance with significance.

2. *Physical conservation issues*

The conservation policies then focus on addressing the physical conservation issues such as identifying, managing and undertaking maintenance and conservation works, with guidance on the engagement of consultants, contractors and tradesmen with appropriate expertise and experience, together with:

- Adopting best-practice guidelines and procedures.
- Providing and implementing effective management.
- Management of operational requirements.

3. *Management of change*

The conservation policies also provide for the identification and management of future change, accepting that change is both often inevitable and necessary to permit the continued occupation and functioning of a heritage site or place, including:

- Managing change, including management of the site as an overall strategy.
- Guidance for change through adaptive reuse and repurposing, alterations and additions or new development.
- Management of potential archaeological.
- Identification and assessment of potential impacts associated with change.

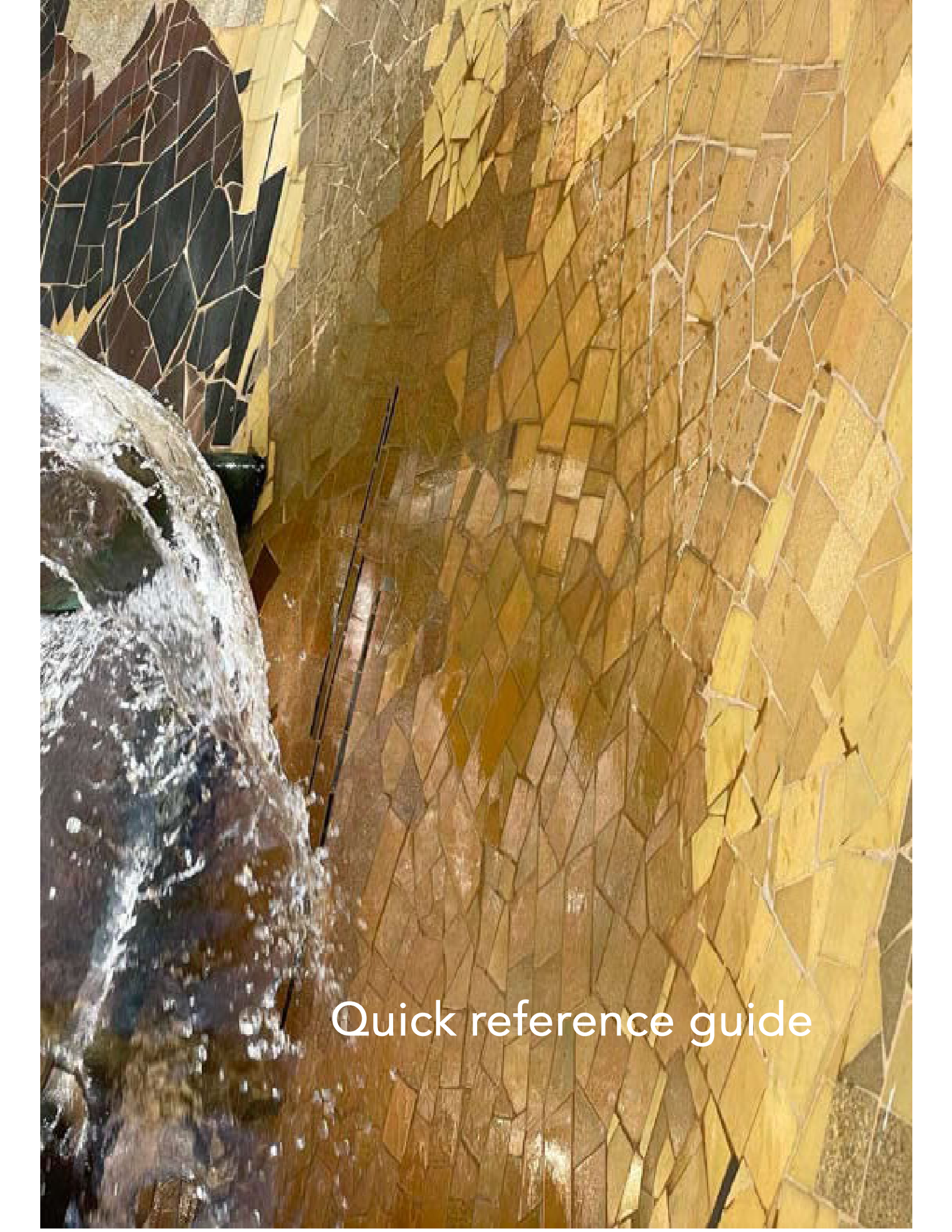
4. *Ongoing maintenance and management*

Finally, the conservation policies provide guidance and specific recommendations on ongoing maintenance of the item or place, including:

- Involving associated people and communities where necessary and appropriate.
- Good record keeping practice, including managing archive collections and records.
- Periodic review and update of the CMP, including the constraints and opportunities and conservation policies.
- Presenting and interpreting the site and its story.
- Undertaking further research as resources permit.

The final section of the CMP considers how the conservation policy framework is implemented and 'put into practice'.

This includes establishing a strategy to guide conservation, cyclical and 'catch-up' maintenance works required, including the development of a schedule of any prioritised works. A methodology is also established for undertaking conservation and maintenance works, including specific technical advice on conservation works.

The image shows a large, curved architectural structure, likely a dome or a vaulted ceiling, covered in a mosaic of irregular, golden-brown tiles. The tiles are arranged in a pattern that follows the curve of the structure. On the left side, there is a waterfall cascading down a rocky, grey surface. The water is white and frothy as it falls. The overall scene is brightly lit, and the colors are warm and vibrant.

Quick reference guide

2.0 QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

2.1 Introduction

This section of the Heritage Conservation Management Plan (herein referred to as 'the CMP') is intended as a 'quick reference guide' to assist Council as the owners, custodians and managers of the site as well as persons undertaking works, on what can or cannot be achieved with Burns Place.

Set out as 'frequently asked questions', this section has been prepared to guide decisions towards acceptable and appropriate outcomes and to assist with the management and care of Burns Place. The advice given in this section is essentially a summary only and should be read in the context of the full CMP, together with the conservation policies in Section 10. The most applicable conservation policy is referenced in the frequently asked questions; however the reader should be aware that more than one conservation policy may apply in each situation and more than one conservation policy may need to be consulted.

2.2 Why is Burns Place of heritage significance?

Burns Place is of local heritage significance for its historical, aesthetic, social and representative values.

Burns Place in Mann Street, Gosford, is considered historically significant at the local level for its ability to demonstrate the growth and development of the wider Gosford township. The park is representative of civic actions and advocacy and is considered a good example of an evolved landscape, evidencing the various phases of change and changing attitudes to public domain works and civic improvements.

The subject site is distinctive within the locality, possessing landmark qualities due to its prominent position. The site is further enhanced by mature trees and stone edging, remaining aesthetically significant within the wider streetscape of commercial built forms and transport corridors.

Burns Place is of high social significance to the community from its origins, as the park was funded by the public. It has continued to retain this social significance, as it is important to the community's sense of place, holding a high degree of esteem.

Overall, Burns Place makes an important contribution to the historical narrative of Gosford, and has historical, aesthetic, social and representative significance at the local level.

2.3 What are the parameters for change to the site?

- **Can the site be subdivided?**

No. Burns Place is presently defined by the existing singular allotment, with clearly defined boundaries, being an important and valued area of public open space within a predominately urban environment.

Subdivision (for divestment of land, road widening or the like) would disrupt the context and setting of the park, and would compromise established relationships between the Gosford Railway Station and Mann Street and the commercial town centre.

- **Can new development be accommodated on the site?**

It is important to recognise that part of the significance of Burns Place is imbued in its evolved landscape, with the various built and landscape elements not being limited to any one period or phase.

The idea of an 'evolved landscape' is one that has changed (or 'evolved') over time and as is the case with Burns Place, there is evidence of different phases, uses, influences, pressures, styles,

technology, management approaches, legislative requirements, social influences, historical events and community demands and expectations.

Burns Place therefore, does not display features or characteristics which are attributed to any one particular period or phase and it is important to allow the landscape to continue to evolve to reflect the changing needs of the community and how they interact with the public open space.

New development within Burns Place must be guided by an understanding of the significance of the place and ensure that no one phase or period of the evolved landscape is preferred over another, unless there is compelling evidence to do so.

There is opportunity to accommodate new development that reinforces the role and function of the park as a place of public open space, or involves the reconstruction of earlier known structures that will enhance the significance, such as the reconstruction of a band rotunda. New development may also include minor structures or works such as the installation of park furniture, small-scaled shade structures, monuments, access improvements or repairs and remedial works to existing built improvements.

Owing to the configuration of the site, and the importance and significance of the park as public open space, there is little opportunity or tolerance for new development that would involve substantial changes to the built or natural landscape, involve substantial building footprints, visually dominating structures or any other development that would diminish or otherwise erode the role and function of Burns Place as public open space.

- **Can temporary structures be installed at the park?**

There is opportunity for the installation of lightweight temporary structures for community events such as stages, platforms, marquees, tents and other such similar works that are associated with small-scaled temporary uses of the park.

- **Does the site have archaeological potential / significance?**

Burns Place has low archaeological potential to yield significant archaeological resources.

The historical analysis in Section 4 of this CMP establishes the historical narrative of the site and demonstrates that there is little evidence of known previous built improvements associated with the post European settlement of the area. While a c1940s Tourist Bureau building was later demolished to accommodate the current toilet block and offices towards the southern end of the park, the extent of ground disturbance associated with the construction of the latter, is likely to have removed or destroyed any surviving evidence.

Burns Place generally, has potential to yield incidental occupation deposits associated with the various users of the park. Occupation deposits (such as coins, buttons and various minor ephemera) can potentially be found through circulation areas within the park. However, occupation deposits are unlikely to yield significant archaeological information about the site.

- **Does the site have any significant relationships with adjacent buildings or spaces?**

Burns Place is situated in the heart of the Gosford town centre and is a visually prominent and local landmark in the town centre.

The park plays an important role in connecting the adjoining transport interchange and Gosford Railway Station on the western side of the site, with the commercial town centre on the eastern side of the site.

Much of the surrounding context of Burns Place has changed progressively over time, with Burns Place continuing to play an important role as a valuable area of public open space and a 'gateway' from the transport interchange and railway station to the town centre.

The green space was to be a place of rest and enjoyment whilst waiting for a train or bus or a place to sit once one had finished shopping.

Additionally, the park has a relationship to the Gateway Centre, being connected by a pedestrian footbridge that extends over Mann Street from the station. Whilst the Gateway Centre and footbridge are not considered significant built forms, the footbridge does contribute to the narrative of the site.

2.4 How must the built and landscape features be managed generally?

- **Are all existing built features of significance?**

No. Burns Place evidences built features, works and improvements that are attributed to various phases and periods of change. Not all built features are of equal importance.

Section 8 of this CMP provides a grading of significance and establishes the significance of the various built features.

Section 10 of this CMP provides a framework of conservation policies which are underpinned by Section 8.7 which establishes the tolerance to change based upon the assessed level of significance.

- **Do all existing built features need to be retained?**

No. Not all existing built features are of equal significance and as such, have different tolerances to change and adaptation as explained in Section 8.7 of this CMP.

Not all built structures or features need to be retained. Generally, any fabric that has been assessed as having exceptional, high or moderate significance, must be retained and protected.

At a high level, the following built features must be retained and protected:

- i) The c1963 Lewers Memorial Fountain.
- ii) The c1930s sandstone entry arch and pillars.
- iii) The c1930s sandstone block walls along the front boundary to Mann Street.
- iv) The cast concrete light poles.

- **Can the c1985 pedestrian footbridge be removed?**

Yes. The c1985 pedestrian footbridge which spans across the airspace of Burns Place and provides pedestrian connectivity from the transport interchange on the western side of the site to the commercial precinct on the eastern side of the site, is of low significance and low retention value.

Removal of the pedestrian footbridge would have a positive impact on the cultural significance, views, visual setting and aesthetic values of Burns Place. However, removal of the pedestrian footbridge would result in the loss of a functioning pedestrian connection point and would increase pedestrian activity and foot traffic through Burns Place, which has the potential to increase pressure on further upgrades and changes to Burns Place to address accessibility and safety issues. In particular, the stair access between the transport interchange and Mann Street would present an equitable accessibility issue and intensification of the frequency of pedestrians crossing Mann Street presents a potential safety and traffic management issue.

These matters must be carefully considered and sensitively balanced prior to the removal of the footbridge.

- **Can maintenance, remedial, restorative and conservation works be undertaken?**

Yes. Good conservation practice encourages the undertaking of cyclical and preventative maintenance to protect, manage and safeguard places of cultural significance.

In some instances, reactive maintenance or conservation works may be required, such as responding to vandalism or damage, or the natural deterioration of fabric.

Section 10 of this CMP establishes a conservation management framework to protect and manage Burns Place. Section 10.7.3 specifically establishes conservation policies to guide maintenance, repairs and conservation works.

- **How does heritage listing of the park affect day-to-day maintenance and operations?**

As identified above, good conservation practice encourages the undertaking of cyclical and preventative maintenance to protect, manage and safeguard places of cultural significance and the heritage listing of Burns Place does not in and of itself prevent or preclude day-to-day maintenance and operations from occurring.

Clause 5.36 *Heritage conservation of State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021* establishes the statutory framework for the protection and management of items of cultural heritage significance within the Gosford town centre precinct.

In particular, clause 5.36(2) prescribes that consent is required for any works or activities that demolish, move or alter the exterior of any elements within Burns Place.

However, clause 5.36(3) prescribes that certain minor works or activities may be exempt from the requirement for consent, where those works involve the maintenance of the heritage item or are minor in nature. Any person seeking to undertake minor works or activities must first notify Central Coast Council as the consent authority and receive written endorsement from Council that the works would not adversely affect the significance of the heritage item, prior to the undertaking of the works or activities.

Typically, the following types of cyclical maintenance works **do not require consent or a minor works exemption** pursuant to clause 5.36 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021*:

- i) Cyclical mowing of lawns, including cutting of grass edges.
- ii) Watering, weeding or light fertilizing of lawns or garden spaces.
- iii) Removal of leaf litter or rubbish (including the regular collection and emptying of waste receptacles.
- iv) Cleaning of gutters or general cleaning of the exterior of the public toilets building.
- v) Internal cleaning of the public toilets building for hygiene and public health.
- vi) Replacement of light globes / LEDs in existing lighting fixtures.
- vii) General light pruning of vegetation to maintain health and vigour, remove dead fronds or limbs.
- viii) Removal of unauthorised works and vandalism (i.e. spraypaint, stickers, unauthorised billboard or advertising posters or signs) where removal is not likely to damage significant fabric.
- ix) Maintenance to the pump equipment of the memorial fountain including water treatment to maintain water clarity, proper function of the fountain operation and prevent microbial growth.

- x) Light surface cleaning of the memorial fountain mosaic tiled artwork and associated plaques.
- xi) Light surface cleaning or localised regrading of individual brick paver units in footpaths (including edging) to prevent slips, trip hazards or other injury.

Typically, the following types of works or activities **would likely trigger the requirement for a 'Minor Works Heritage Exemption'** pursuant to clause 5.36(3) of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021*:

- i) Removal of dead trees or vegetation, or removal of any vegetation that Council is satisfied is a risk to human life or property.
- ii) Removal of unauthorised works or remedial works to rectify vandalism, where such works are not superficial and likely to have some minor material impact to significant fabric (i.e. potential abrasion, mechanical scraping or the like).
- iii) Changing landscaping elements and themes (i.e. renewing garden beds for seasonal plantings).
- iv) Localised minor repairs to non-significant fabric (ie. Like-for-like replacement of damaged pavers or path edging).
- v) Renewal of wayfinding signage.
- vi) Removal of minor elements that are identified as having low significance or are intrusive.
- vii) Certain emergency works to stabilise, repair or conserve.
- viii) Installation of CCTV cameras.
- ix) Minor internal refit works to the public toilets such as replacement of toilet pans, re-tiling, repainting or replacement of rainwater goods.
- x) Conservation works to the sandstone arch and corresponding wall, including repointing, or localised and like-for-like replacement of individual stone units.

- **Can exposed masonry or stone be painted or rendered?**

No. The exposed masonry and stone units that comprise the archway, stone wall and steps, must not be painted or rendered.

This is to ensure the continuation of the existing appearance of the masonry and stone units but also to prevent the introduction of incompatible works that will cause accelerated deterioration of significant fabric.

- **Can trees and other vegetation be removed?**

Yes. Clause 5.36(2) of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021* prescribes that consent is required for any works or activities that demolish, move or alter the exterior of any elements within Burns Place. This requirement extends to the removal of trees and vegetation.

Clause 5.36(3) prescribes that certain minor works or activities may be exempt from the requirement for consent, where those works involve the maintenance of the heritage item or are minor in nature. The provisions of clause 5.36(3) can be relied upon for the removal of dead trees or vegetation, or removal of any vegetation that Council is satisfied is a risk to human life or property.

- **Can landscaping works be undertaken, including changes to landscaping or introduction of new plantings?**

Yes. Burns Place is described as an 'evolved landscape' and contains numerous built and landscape elements that are attributed to different phases and periods.

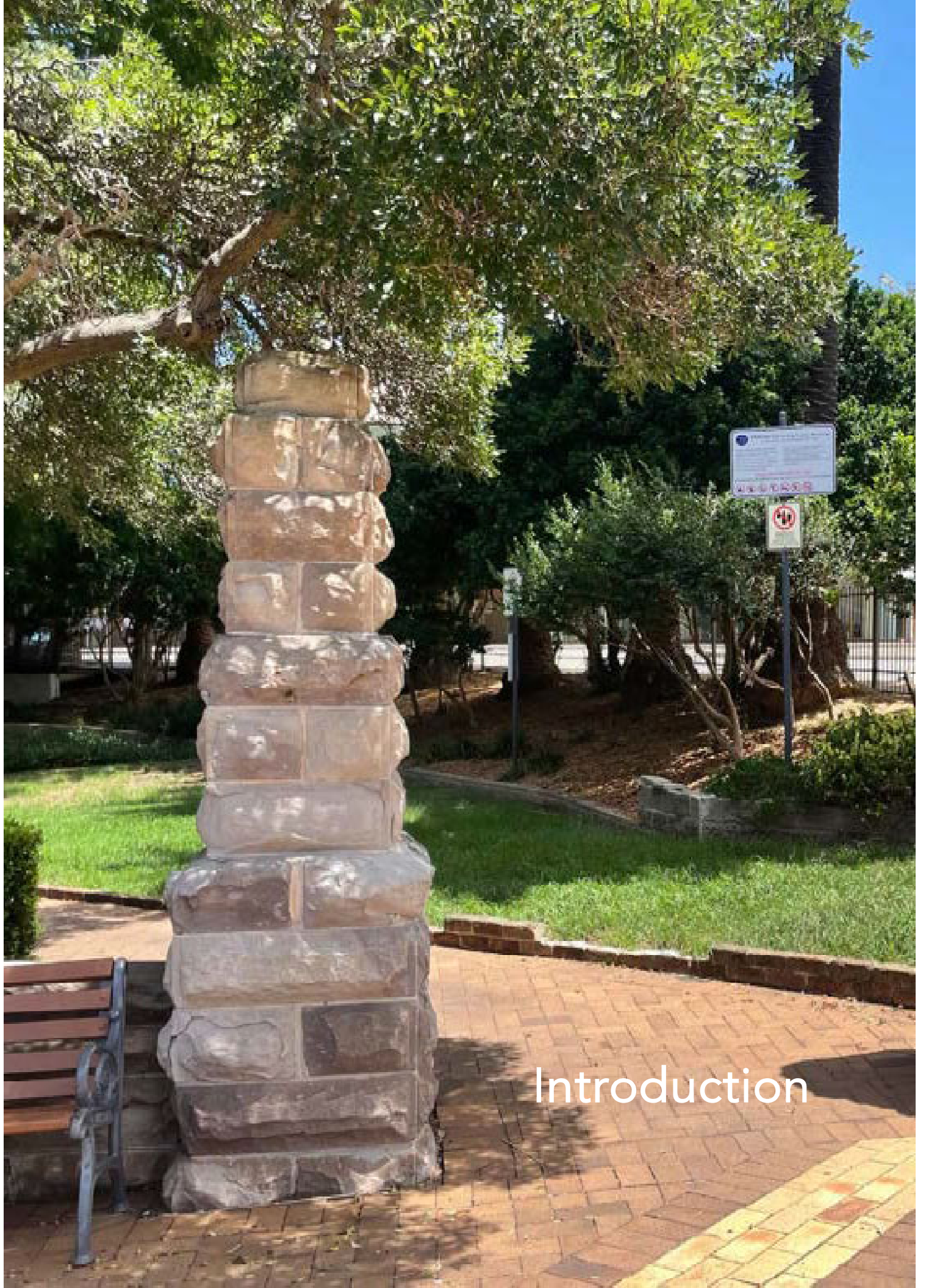
The idea of an 'evolved landscape' is imbued in the cultural significance of Burns Place and it is important that the landscape is allowed to continue to evolve in a careful, considered and sensitive manner that respects the identified values and significance of the place.

Historically, the landscaped setting of Burns Place has included a variety of landscaping works and features, including formal garden beds planted out with coloured annuals along the Mann Street frontage, together with the planting of various shrubbery and specimen trees framing the backdrop or boundary with the adjoining Gosford Railway Station.

Maintaining the idea of an 'evolved landscape' means that the landscape is continually changing. Some established plantings are however identified as having high significance and the appropriate conservation approach is to retain and protect such landscape features and plantings. Whereas landscaping of lower significance can continue to change and can include activities such as the renewal of garden beds with annuals or seasonal plantings, or the renewal / rejuvenation of grassed surfaces.

Where significant vegetation needs to be removed because of declining health and vigour, or for safety reasons (i.e. risk of limb drop, mechanical impact to significant built features or passive casual surveillance), specialist Arboricultural advice must be sought to determine whether tree management works can be undertaken in the first instance to address the issues. Preference is given to undertaking light tree management works (i.e. pruning) rather than wholesale removal.

If wholesale removal of significant vegetation is required and unavoidable, replacement planting should occur. In this manner, consideration should be given to succession planting, to stagger the impacts of wholesale removal of trees and vegetation en-masse.



Introduction

3.0 INTRODUCTION

3.1 Context of the report

This Heritage Conservation Management Plan (herein referred to as 'the CMP') for Burns Place at Mann Street, Gosford, has been prepared at the request of Central Coast Council, owners, custodians and managers of the site.

The purpose of this CMP is to create a plan to enhance the site for future generations, by providing a framework for decisions regarding the ongoing management, conservation and future use. The CMP is also intended to guide potential development of the site and to manage the identified cultural heritage significance of the site.

Burns Place is situated within the Central Coast local government area and the principal environmental planning instrument for the site is the *Central Coast Local Environmental Plan 2022* and *State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021*. The Plan is herein referred to as the '*Central Coast LEP 2022*' and the '*SEPP (Precincts – Regional) 2021*' respectively.

Burns Place is identified as an item of local heritage significance, listed on Schedule 9 of the *SEPP (Precincts – Regional) 2021*.

3.2 Identification of the study area

Burns Place is situated within the locality of Gosford, which is 77 kilometres northeast of Sydney city. It is situated within the heart of the Gosford town centre, specifically sited between Burns Crescent to the west and Mann Street to the east.

A detailed analysis of the site, including its context and setting, is provided in Section 4 of this CMP.

3.3 Objectives

Current 'best practice' in heritage conservation requires that a CMP be prepared prior to the making of land use and management decisions about heritage items or places. The CMP essentially then 'sets the tone' for all short and long-term management decisions.

Sensitivity to heritage values requires an understanding of the attributes (whether tangible or intangible) that make an item or place significant. An assessment of heritage significance clarifies heritage values and forms the basis of decisions about the future of that item or place. Once heritage values are appropriately understood, future directions can then be determined to ensure the continuing viability as a heritage asset.

Subsequently, this CMP is intended to be a practical document that explains both the heritage significance of the site and establishes a framework of conservation principles and policies that should be followed in order to retain and/or reveal the identified heritage values and cultural significance.

These objectives are achieved through:

- Investigation and analysis of the documentary and physical evidence known and available.
- Assessing and establishing the cultural heritage significance of the place and developing a Statement of Cultural Significance.
- Determining the opportunities and constraints that influence or direct the management and use of the place.
- Formulating appropriate conservation policies and guidelines for the short and longer-term conservation, use, management and interpretation of the place, to ensure that the heritage values are maintained and, where appropriate, enhanced, taking into consideration the historical and social significance, physical fabric, curtilage and ongoing use of the place.

3.4 Methodology

3.4.1 Definition of heritage

Heritage has been defined as ‘the things we want to keep’.¹

Heritage places can include landscapes, sites, buildings, structures and items that have particular values that distinguish them from other places and/or their surroundings.

There are a wide variety of reasons why places are listed on heritage registers and identified as heritage items. These could include:

- Association with a significant phase of history.
- Association with people or events of notable historical significance and importance.
- Forming part of an important historical pattern.
- Being aesthetically pleasing and contributing to the sensory appeal of a site or place.
- Having been constructed with an unusual degree of technical skill or use of materials.
- Being of social value and importance to an identifiable group of people, or significantly contributing to the sense of place for a community.
- Having a degree of rarity and/or being to the point of endangerment through a loss of similar examples, setting or integrity.
- Being a representative example of a particular style or class.

In short, heritage places may vary greatly in character, but have in common, the ability to show how Australians have responded physically, emotionally, socially and architecturally to the environment and how places have been variously occupied, used, ignored, refined, degraded or associated with Australian society over time².

Heritage places can be summarised as being places in which relationships between various elements have created a ‘sense of place’ that is considered worthy of preserving for the use and enjoyment of the current and future generations.

The identification of an item or place as having heritage significance does not mean that all the fabric and elements that comprise the place are of equal heritage value. The fact that some elements of a place have little or no heritage value however, does not generally diminish the value of the place as a whole.

It is important to note that the declaration of a place as a ‘heritage item’ does not preclude change and adaptation. It does however, entail the creation of guidelines to ensure that the place is managed in such manner that has regard to the identified heritage values and that new or modified elements are sensitively designed and located in a manner that is sympathetic to, and ultimately enhances, the character and heritage significance, having a positive impact.

Change and adaptation to a heritage item should be based on an understanding and appreciation of the qualities, attributes and characteristics that make an item or place special. Managing change in a way that respects these qualities and characteristics, protects, and can even enhance, a sense of place.

3.4.2 Report Structure and Assessment Procedure

This CMP has been prepared following the general methodology set out in J.S Kerr’s *The Conservation Plan* (7th edition, 2013) and the guidelines outlined in *Assessing Heritage Significance* (2001) as contained in the NSW Heritage Manual, produced by the Heritage Council of NSW.

¹ Davidson, G. 1991. ‘The meanings of heritage’ in A Heritage Handbook.

² NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP). ‘Conservation Areas: Guidelines for Managing Change in Heritage Conservation Areas’.

3.4.3 Philosophy and Approach

The overarching philosophy and approach to this CMP is guided by the conservation principles and guidelines of the Australia ICOMOS *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance* (Burra Charter 2013).

The *Burra Charter* provides definitions for terms used in heritage conservation and proposes conservation processes and principles for the conservation of an item. The *NSW Heritage Manual* explains and promotes the standardisation of heritage investigation, assessment and management practices in NSW.

The CMP adopts the following approach:

1. *Investigation of significance*

The initial sections of the CMP involve researching, gathering, examining and analysing documentary evidence to establish the historical context of the property. This analysis culminates in the establishment of an historical summary, as an aid to developing an understanding of the history of the place.

2. *Physical analysis*

This section of the CMP examines and analyses the physical attributes of the property, its setting and context, including a description of the built and landscape features and physical condition of the fabric.

3. *Assessment of significance*

Once a thorough examination of the attributes, characteristics and condition of the property has been undertaken, this section of the report evaluates the historical, documentary and physical evidence.

A comparative analysis is undertaken with other like built forms to establish rarity and representative values, together with an assessment of the cultural significance of the property using the assessment criteria established by the Heritage Council of NSW (as contained within the *NSW Heritage Manual*) and development of a Statement of Cultural Significance, which is a concise authoritative statement on what is important and culturally significant about the place or item.

The significance of a place can be investigated using a variety of methods. The assessment of significance contained within this CMP considers the place as part of the cultural landscape of the Burns Place within the Gosford local government area, and on a wider level, of New South Wales.

The various features and elements are then individually and collectively graded to identify their differing levels of contribution to the significance, together with the assessment and establishment of a heritage curtilage, which is the space surrounding the item or place required to ensure its setting can be appropriately managed and preserved.

Examining the historical evolution of a place within its various contexts, highlights the interrelated evolution of people and their environment. Cultural significance ultimately lies within the synthesis that:

'cultural landscapes are an important part of our heritage. They can present a cumulative record of human activity and land use in the landscape, and as such, can offer insights into the values, ideals and philosophies of the communities forming them, and of their relationship to a place.'

The study of cultural landscapes can suggest the feelings of the community toward its environment, and indicate the social networks developed by the community. Cultural landscapes have a strong role to play in providing the distinguishing character of a locale, a character that might have varying degrees of aesthetic quality, but, regardless, is considered to be important in establishing the communities 'sense of place'³.

Approaching a place as a cultural landscape recognises that it is not static, but is engaged in a process of constant evolution and change. Cultural landscapes have layers of history and meaning and significance may be found in tangible and intangible elements, in physical fabric, as well as memories, traditions, customs and events. In particular:

'the reasons why places look and feel the way they do, why they become what they are, are many and complex. There is no one-to-one correspondence between any one variable and its physical expression.

Yet by looking at some of the attitudes and forces, insights are gained which help clarify the processes, explain the scene, suggest areas of concern, reasons for problems – and even suggest how changes can best be effected'⁴.

The above approach to assessing heritage significance helps to identify the intricate relationship that exists between the character of a place and its heritage value and cultural significance.

4. *Manage the significance*

Once the cultural significance has been established, it is important to consider and address the various ways in which that significance needs to be managed in order to protect and maintain.

This section of the CMP establishes and evaluates the constraints and opportunities that arise out of management, custodianship, heritage significance, physical condition, statutory obligations and stakeholder / owner requirements, together with any other relevant management constraints or opportunities.

A conservation policy framework is then established, based on the historical significance, physical condition, heritage significance and constraints and opportunities, which sets in place a series of policies that inform, direct and guide the ongoing management and maintenance of the heritage item.

5. *Implementation strategy*

The final section of the report considers how the conservation policy framework is implemented and 'put into practice'.

This includes establishing a strategy to guide conservation, cyclical and 'catch-up' maintenance works required, including the development of a schedule of any prioritised works. A methodology is also established for undertaking conservation and maintenance works, including specific technical advice on conservation works.

³ Pearson, M & Sullivan, S. 1995. 'Looking After Heritage Places'. Melbourne University Press.

⁴ Rapoport, A. 1972. 'The Emergence of the Present Environment' in 'Australia as a Human Setting'.

3.5 Authorship

This CMP has been prepared by the following EHC project team:

- Bethany Robinson BA, M.Mus&Herit, Senior Heritage Consultant

Bethany is a vibrant and well experienced Heritage Consultant who is passionate about the historic built environment. Her established skills set is underpinned by her grounded background and experience in cultural heritage management and conservation practice with various museums collections.

- Michael Edwards B.Env.Plan M.Herit.Cons JP, Director & Principal Heritage Consultant / Advisor.

Michael has close to two decades of extensive experience in both the heritage conservation and town planning disciplines and has held previous positions in Local and State Government.

Michael is a trusted Heritage Expert in the NSW Land and Environment Court and is Heritage Advisor to multiple metropolitan and regional Councils, including Cessnock City Council, Georges River Council, Wingecarribee Shire Council, Temora Shire Council, Mid-Western Regional Council, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Cowra Shire Council and MidCoast Council.

- Holly Challenger B.A, M.Herit.Cons, Senior Heritage Consultant.

Holly is an experienced Senior Heritage Consultant whose combined skills and experience in history, heritage management and conservation practice, reinforces her well-rounded, balanced approach to effective research and conservation theory and practice.

The report has been reviewed and endorsed by Michael Edwards.

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs in this report are by Edwards Heritage Consultants. Previous historical research or heritage assessments, referred to or quoted within this CMP, are referenced throughout.

3.6 Limitations

This CMP:

- Is limited to the investigation of the non-Aboriginal cultural heritage of the site. Therefore, it does not include any identification or assessment of Aboriginal significance of the place.
- Is limited to a due-diligence archaeological assessment only and does not present a detailed archaeological assessment of the site.
- Does not provide a structural assessment or advice. Subsequently, this report, including any conservation policies or implementation recommendations, should be complemented by advice from a suitably qualified Structural Engineer with demonstrated experience in dealing with items of cultural heritage significance.
- Does not provide an arboreal assessment of the existing vegetation on the site.
- Provides as comprehensive as possible, a historical analysis of the site, given the availability of documentary sources at the time of assessment. It is possible that further information may come to light that may have the ability to reinforce, enhance or otherwise refute the historical analysis contained within this CMP. Indeed, the CMP provides a policy that encourages further research and a scheduled review of the CMP.

3.7 Terminology

The terminology used throughout this CMP is consistent with the *NSW Heritage Manual* and the Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter* (2013).

The term 'Heritage Conservation Management Plan' is interchangeable with 'Conservation Management Plan' and the two terms are taken to be a reference to the same. Central Coast Council has adopted the term 'Heritage Conservation Management Plan' to aid in distinguishing the focus of the document as relating to heritage conservation and not be taken to mean environmental conservation (though cultural landscapes are considered within the CMP).

A glossary of common terms used is listed in Appendix A.

3.8 Physical Evidence

Site visits were conducted between 19 January 2023 and 2 February 2024 for the purpose of investigating, documenting, recording and assessing the extant physical fabric of the place.

3.9 Summary of Documentary Evidence

3.9.1 Resources

The following resources were accessed during the preparation of this CMP, together with the literature cited in the references:

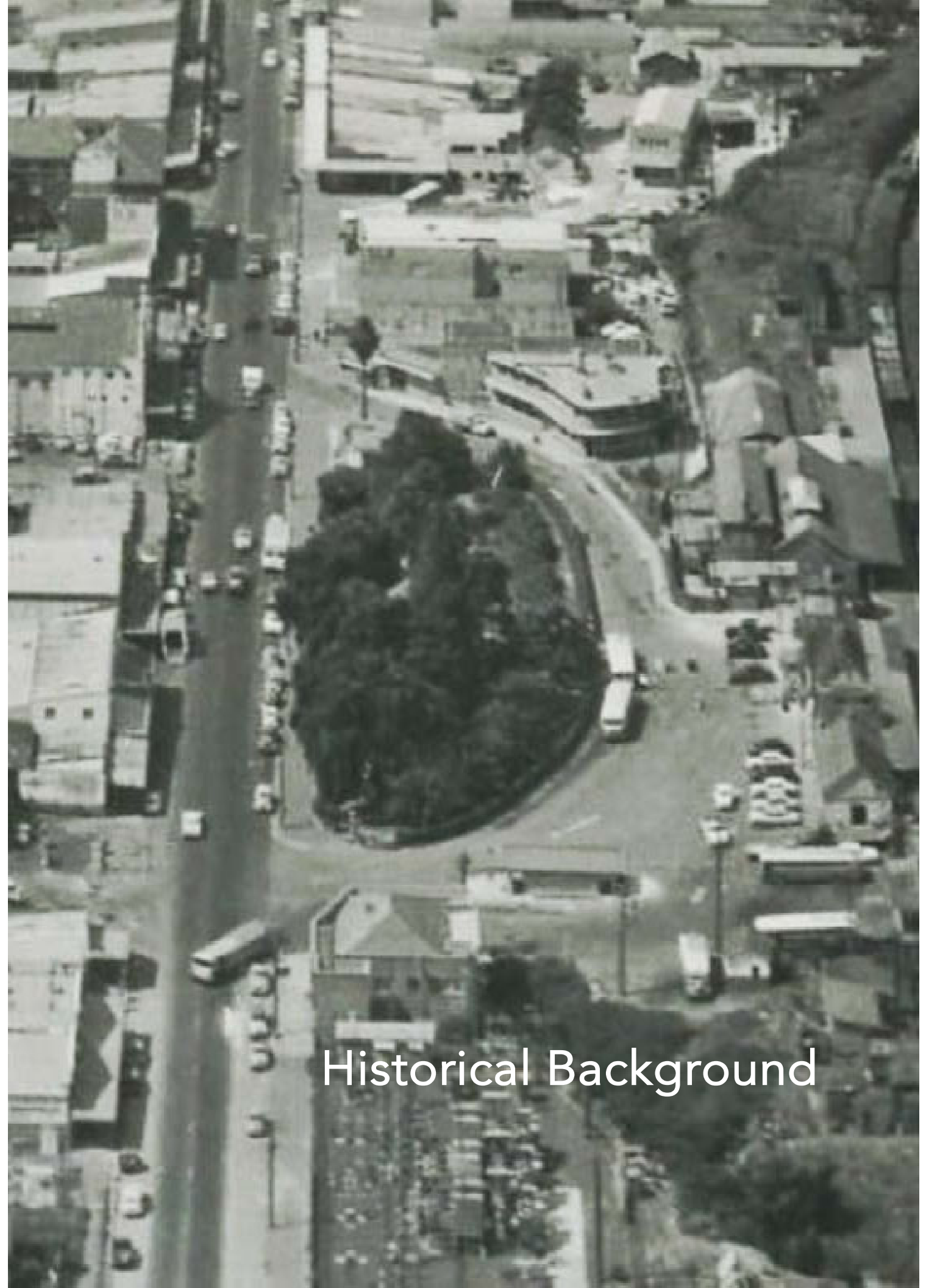
- Central Coast Council records.
- Gosford Library Local Studies collection.
- State Library of New South Wales.
- TROVE – an initiative of the National Library of Australia.

3.9.2 Acknowledgements

The assistance of the following was greatly appreciated in the preparation of this CMP:

- Rebecca Cardy – Heritage Officer, Central Coast Council.
- Luke McWhirter – Project Manager, Central Coast Council.
- Geoff Potter – Local Studies Librarian, Central Coast Council.

This section of the page has been intentionally left blank.



Historical Background

4.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Introduction

This section of the CMP attempts to place Burns Place into the context of the broader history of the region as well as outlining the sequence of development, occupation and use of the site.

Analysing and understanding the historical context of the site is an important consideration in the assessment of cultural significance (see Section 7.0), informing the assessment of historical significance and historical associations of significance.

The history of the site is presented in a narrative form and is mainly derived from the published sources as well as incorporating documentary sources referenced throughout.

The historical analysis also builds on existing extensive publication and research and assumes a prior knowledge of the Aboriginal history of the area.

4.2 Early European settlement

Gosford was explored by Governor Phillip between 1788 and 1789, entering Broken Bay in a whaleboat in 1788 five weeks after the settlement at Sydney Cove. The area was not easily reached owing to the topography and densely vegetated area, subsequently settlement did not start before 1823.⁵ Governor Phillip observed 'that the land is much higher than at Port Jackson, more rocky and equally covered with timber; large trees which grow on the summits of mountains.'

The first land on the Central Coast was given to William Nash, a former marine of the First Fleet, in 1811. Despite the grant, Nash purportedly never settled in the area. The close proximity to the penal colony at Newcastle and rugged terrain discouraged rapid settlement of the area. The main draw card to the area was the potential for tree logging, with cedar, forest oak, blue gum and other hardwoods readily available.⁶

Gradually, settlers took up land along the shore, establishing small farms growing maize, onions, potatoes and hay. Gathering cockle shells for lime burning was also popular along with dairying. Those of wealthy status purchased timbered areas along Erina and Narara Creeks.

In 1829 a survey was taken of the area which listed about 100 persons to be living along Brisbane Waters. It was believed half of which were convicts assisting timber getters. A courthouse was built on the Gosford site as early as 1827, and by the early 1830s there were approximately 315 people listed as living in the area.⁷

In the 1830s a private township was established by Samuel Peek, at what is now East Gosford. This township was slow to develop. A government township was eventually surveyed and laid out in 1839 between Narara and Erina Creeks. It was officially named the 'Township at Point Frederick' on the survey submission, however Governor Gipps crossed this out and wrote 'Gosford' in honour of Archibald Acheson, 2nd Earl of Gosford, who had served with Gipps in Canada.⁸

In 1848, 53 persons were listed as residing in the area. By this time a small church had already been erected nearby and another was constructed in 1857-1858.⁹ The first school was opened in 1865 to respond to slow growing population of the Gosford locality.

⁵ Unknown, Nov 2008. 'Gosford – Culture and History'. Accessed at <https://www.smh.com.au/traveller/inspiration/gosford-culture-and-history-20081119-6ayl.html>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Gosford Historical Research Association, 1981. 'City of Gosford History of Local Government'.

⁹ Ibid.

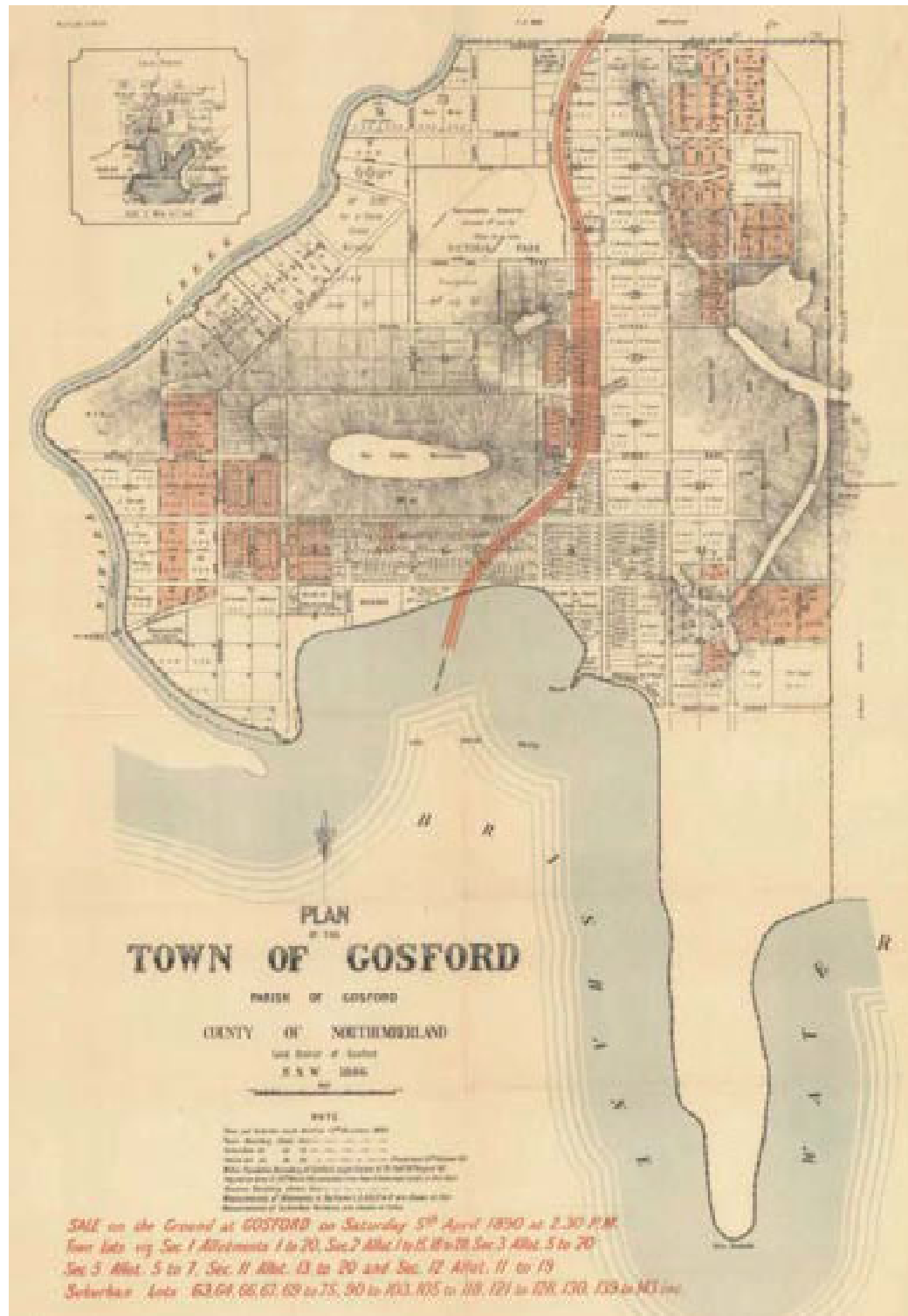


Figure 1: Plan of the Town of Gosford, 1890.

[Source: State Library of NSW, 2024 FL2054177]

A boom in the late 1880s hit the area, specifically with the competition of the Sydney to Newcastle railway in 1889. The increased ease of access via the railway also increased tourism in the area and the Central Coast quickly became a prime tourist destination for Sydneysiders.¹⁰ Holiday homes began to emerge in the area as people came to fish, sightsee and hunt. The expansion of the train also assisted in expanding the industries in the area, giving better access to both Sydney and Newcastle.

In 1886 the Gosford township merged by the Samuel Peeks private township forming the Municipality of Gosford.¹¹

4.3 First land grant

In 1854 and 1855, Henry Worley, a sergeant in the area purchased at auction Lots 2 to 10 in Section 11 of the Gosford township subdivision.¹²

Henry Worley was a farm labourer who was assigned to Richard Fitzgerald of Windsor upon his arrival to the colony. In 1833 he married Martha Elizabeth North and they stayed together until his death.¹³ He obtained a ticket of leave in 1838 after which time he was a constable in Maitland, Morpeth and Newport. By 1844 he had obtained his conditional pardon and by 1859 he had succeeded to the position of Chief Constable at Gosford.

Mr Worley had started his career in the district at Mangrove Creek, where he remained for several years, even establishing a farm on the creek. In 1859 he was appointed Inspector of Distilleries which gave him authority over the distribution and production of illegal spirits.¹⁴ By 1862 he had made Sergeant in the area and after he retired he was pensioned off and acted as Bailiff of the Court of Requests. During his later years, he lived in a small cottage on the land that now forms part of the Gosford Railway Station.¹⁵



Figure 2: Extract of map of the Parish of Gosford. Land purchased by Henry Worley, 1854-55 indicated in red. [Source: NSW Land Registry Services, 2024]

In 1866 Henry Worley died, leaving his remaining property to his wife, Martha. Martha died in 1884 leaving the property to Elizabeth Mary Thompson, wife of Charles Thompson.¹⁶ The following year the land was resumed by the Commissioner of Railways for the purposes of the constructing a new railway line from Sydney to Waratah.¹⁷ The line between Sydney and the Hawkesbury River was opened in 1887 and the line between Newcastle and the northern bank of the Hawkesbury River was opened in 1888. The line was fully completed between Sydney and Newcastle in 1889.¹⁸

¹⁰ Unknown, Nov 2008. 'Gosford – Culture and History'. Accessed at <https://www.smh.com.au/traveller/inspiration/gosford-culture-and-history-20081119-6ayl.html>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² NSW Land Registry Services, 2024. CT Book 553 Fol 305.

¹³ Gosford District Local History Study Group, 1990. 'Historical Records of the Central Coast of New South Wales Bench Books and Court Cases: 1826-74.'

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ NSW Land Registry Services, 2024. CT Book 553 Fol 305.

¹⁷ SHR - Gosford Railway Clock, Steam Locomotive Facilities & Signal Box. Heritage ID No. 4800002.

¹⁸ Ibid.



Figure 3: Photograph of Gosford Station c.1908.
[Source: NLA, 2024.]

The Gosford Railway Station was opened in January 1888. The original line was constructed as a 'single' line, but Gosford was provided with three roads, a Down platform road, an Up platform road and a 'middle road' which could be used in either direction. Within a couple of years, a turntable, locomotive watering facilities, a refreshment room, footbridge, a number of goods sidings and signal box were added to Gosford.¹⁹

By 1910, duplication of the main lines through Gosford vastly expanded the capabilities of the site. The railway layout and general surroundings were expanded accordingly. Locomotive servicing sidings were relocated, station facilities and ancillary structures were rebuilt and additional sidings and refuge loops were added.

4.4 Establishment of Burns Place

The early 20th century saw the continued growth of the Gosford township. The railway precinct extended from Railway Street to Mann Street, with Mann Street lined with street trees along its entirety.

In 1930, growing interest in the railway precinct emerged with local residents and members of the local council advocating for a new park within the vicinity of the railway. More specifically, there was increased pressure to improve the functionality and use of the land adjoining the train line to create an open and inviting space for travellers, shoppers, residents and people waiting on buses or taxis.

The description of the land at this time was the 'fenced in plot running parallel to the railway.'²⁰ The land was considered ideal spot as it would not require "such an enormous expenditure to convert it from what I would call an 'eye-sore' – into an ornamental piece of land with its already shady trees and natural formation, where an inexpensive waiting room could be erected, and seats placed in various parts."²¹ It was further recommended that the roads and approaches to the station be altered and improved.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, May 1930. 'Correspondent's Opinions', p6.

²¹ Ibid.

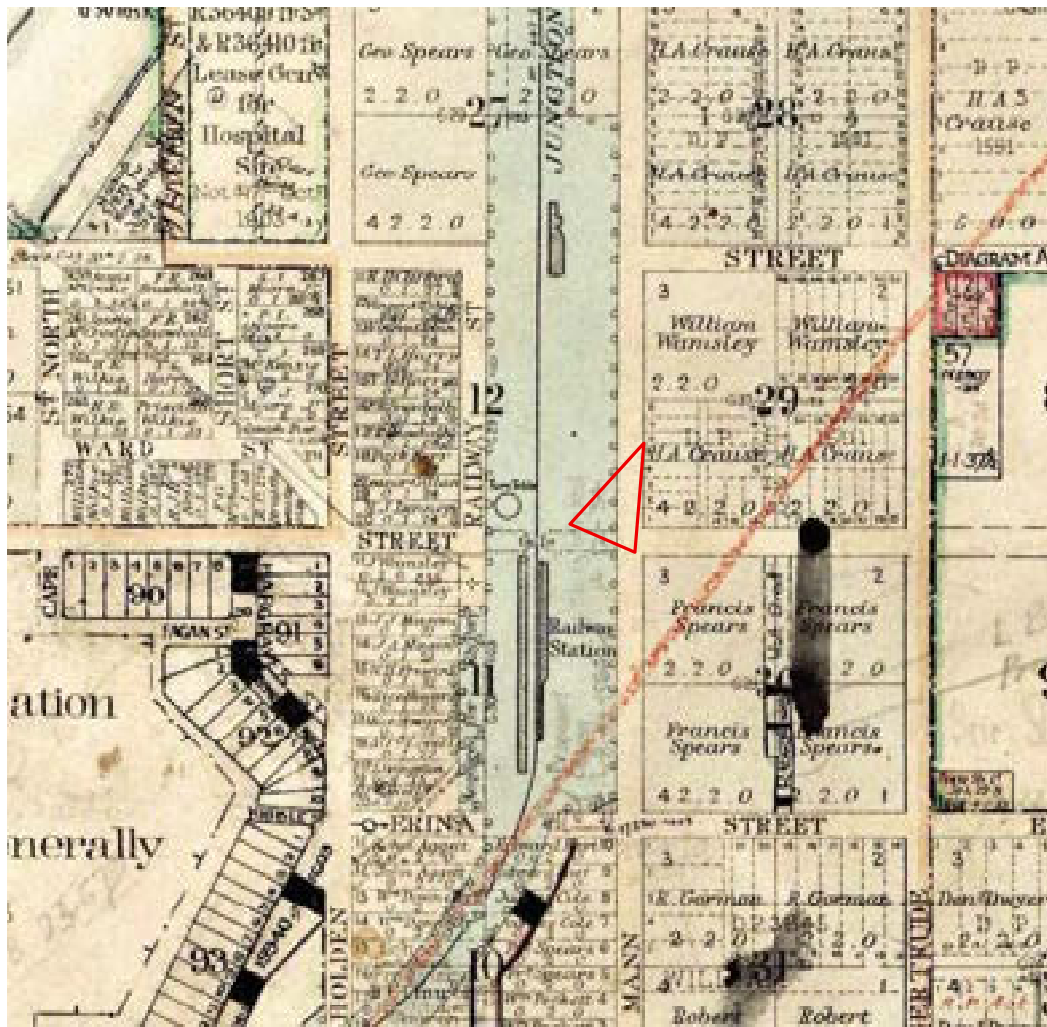


Figure 4: Map of Gosford Railway Station Precinct, c.1922. The red triangle approximates the location of capture and direction of view of Figure 5 below.

[Source: NSW Land Registry Services, 2024]



Figure 5: Mann Street, near the station facing south, c.1900s.

[Source: NLA, 2024]



Figure 6: Postcard view of Mann Street, Gosford, c1906-1910.

In 1932 James Canning, proprietor of Canning and Co, donated £50 to the Council dedicated to the improvement and beautification of 'Railway Square' in Gosford. He had promised an additional £150 on the basis that the work would assist the unemployed.²⁴

The pleas from the community were heard, for Erina Shire Council at its meeting of 19 February 1934²⁵, resolved on the motion of Councillor Chapman to rename 'Railway Square' as 'Burns Place', named after William 'Billy' Burns²⁶ who was an Alderman in the first Municipal Council of 1887 and the first bandmaster who played a pivotal role in establishing the Gosford Band²⁷. The renaming of Railway Square also coincided with the calling for tenders at the following Council meeting for the construction of a new band rotunda that was quickly erected, for the band rotunda opened at the new 'Burns' Place' in April of the same year, with the stone foundations for the rotunda in Burns Place being completed by local stonemason Randall 'Ranji' William Dumbrell.

The opening was met with much enthusiasm by the community, the scenes were described as follows:

"Although the seating accommodation of Burns Place is somewhat scanty as yet and despite the fact that the grass was still wet from earlier showers, there was scarcely a yard of available standing room on the reserve, while the station approach reduced itself to the narrowest of human lanes and the steady procession of Easter cars had literally to crawl at a snail's pace through the dense throng which packed the roadway and stretched back to crowd the footpath..."²⁸

²⁴ The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, August 1932. 'Beautifying Railway Square'. p.4.

²⁵ Council minutes from the former Erina Shire Council, 19 February 1934.

²⁶ The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, Sept 1934. 'Beautifying Gosford'. p.8

²⁷ George Fletcher (G.F.), 'The Late William Burns: An appreciation', Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, Thursday 20 July 1933, p.8.

²⁸ The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, Apr 1934. 'Gosford Opens Band Rotunda'. p.2.



Figure 7: View of Burns Place, c1930s.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]

The band rotunda would serve a multipurpose use, principally as dry and shaded place for musicians to practice and hold live concerts, and as a popular addition to the public reserve as a resting spot and shelter for community and visitor use.

The success and interest in the band rotunda adjoining the railway station increased the drive of the citizens of Gosford and plans were put forward to improve the reserve. In 1935 it was announced at the Gosford Chamber of Commerce that a new beautification scheme would go ahead for the reserve. The following was recorded:

A scheme had been drawn up for the transformation of the reserve. Instead of approaching the Council for the necessary funds, he [Councillor Grahame] had decided to make a private appeal to the public spirit of Gosford business men. The response had been most gratifying! Handsome stone archways would be placed at each end of Burns Place, impressive gates and steps would lead down from the roadway outside the station, a central arch would be constructed, a wall would be placed in position on the upper end, and a most attractive chain fence along the lower portion. There would be a spray fountain on one side of the central passage way, and a drinking fountain on the other. (Loud applause).

Without going into details, said Cr. Grahame, he might state that Sterland Bros, had provided £25 for the gates and steps, Canning & Co. had given £40 to erect a spray fountain, Mr. F. Wheeler had subscribed £25 to defray the cost of a central archway as a memorial to his brother, the late Mr. R. C. Wheeler, who had been one of the first Aldermen of Gosford municipality, Cr. A. L. Taylor and himself had each contributed £15 to erect the corner arches, and several business men had each paid £5 for individual panels in the chain fence.²⁹

²⁹

The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, Oct 1935. 'Beautifying Gosford'. p8.



Figure 8: Extract of the Plan of the Town of Gosford, 1935, showing the early outline and emergence of Burns Place.
[Source: Historical Records Lands Viewer, 2024]

In 1937 the land that would comprise the reserve was formally realigned to coincide with the new passageway that would extend from Faunce Street and the foot bridge, past the station buildings, rounding back to Mann Street.

By 1937 the works at the site had commenced. The towns engineer, Mr T M Wilson, reviewed the plans for the site which included the construction of a stone wall along the building line fronting Mann Street, central archway, smaller archways at NE and SE corners and crazy path leading west from the main archway to steps leading to the roadway near the entrance to the railway station. All the stonework was to be in Gosford Freestone. The estimated costs of the works were £300.³⁰

Along the approach road to and from railway station a fence to consist of 51x 5 inch hardwood posts, 3ft high, spaced 9ft centre to centre, and bored to take a five-sixteenth inch short link galvanised chain. Also, along the approach roads, were to be stone kerbing and semi-circular garden plots 12ft in diameter with edging of 9in x 6in hammer-dressed stone.³¹

Mr Wilson also proposed a series of changes to the design included setting main arch 'back one panel' at a 45-degree angle to break the continuity of the front boundary wall.³² He also recommended that the archways at the northeastern and south eastern corners be enlarged or omitted although and columns used as an alternative. The latter was purportedly more effective and would not overshadow or detract from the main arch. There were also recommendations made around additional plantings, paths and garden beds. It was noted that these revisions could be at additional cost and consideration would need to be given prior to signing off on the changes. The article noted that Gosford Council had agreed to the changes.³³

³⁰ The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, Jul 1937. 'Burns Place Beautification' p6.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

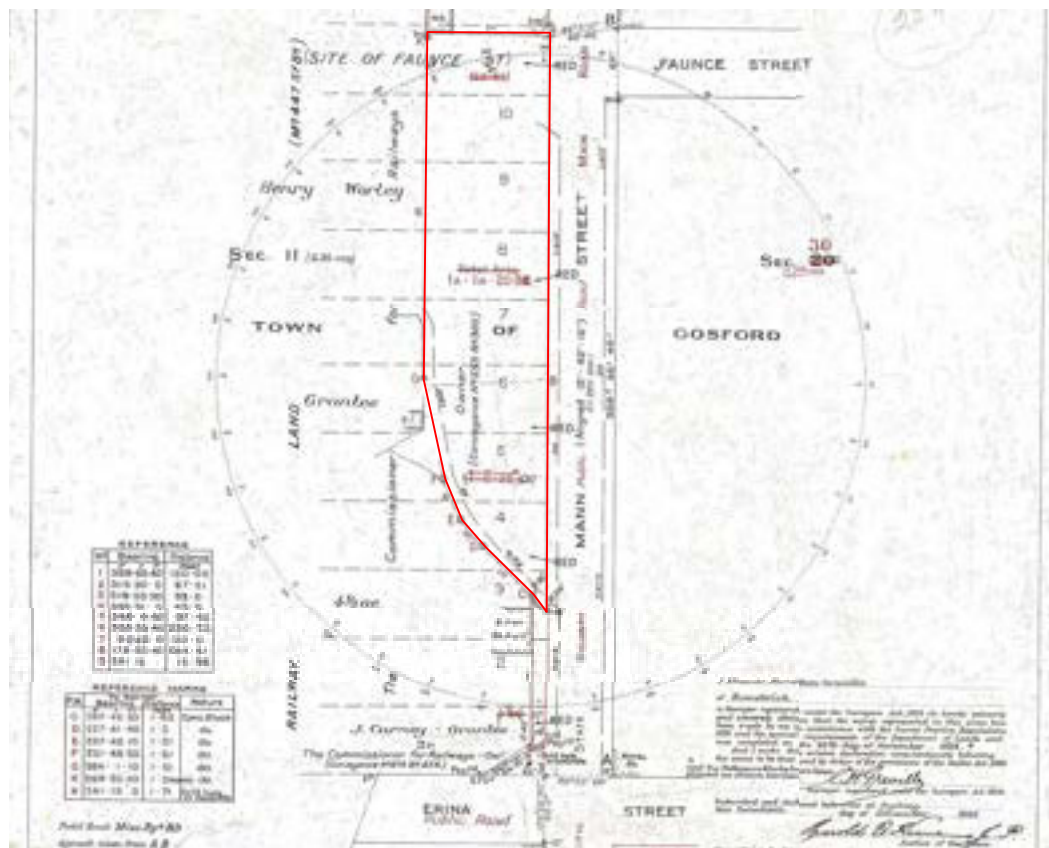


Figure 9: Crown Plan of the land that would form Burns Place.
[Source: NSW Land Registry Services CP20197.1603]



Figure 10: c1930s-1940s postcard showing view of Burns Place and the band rotunda.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]



Figure 11: c1930s-1940s postcard showing view of Burns Place and the band rotunda.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]



Figure 12: c1930s postcard showing view of Mann Street, facing towards the 1937 sandstone arch.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]

In November of the same year, it was announced that the funds had been granted and supported by both local citizens and the Council, however work had not commenced owing to the difficulty in obtaining the necessary stone.³⁸

By the following year works had slowly begun to commence, with the general pruning of the existing trees, cutting of grass and the park generally cleaned up.³⁹ In August the same year it was reported that the Gosford Municipal Council was still having difficulties securing the appropriate stone for the improvements to Burns Place.⁴⁰ By October it had been announced that the Council had decided to carry out an extensive planting scheme at Burns Place inclusive of trees, shrubs and flowers.⁴¹

The project continued into 1939, with works being close to completion in April.⁴² It is believed that the stonework was done by Mr Hayward as one of his last contracts, or local stonemason Randall 'Ranji' William Dumbrell. As a young man, Mr Hayward explored the district looking for suitable stone for quarrying, whereas Dumbrell established a monumental mason yard in Gosford. Stonemason Bill Thorn was the leading stonemason who worked on the stone fencing around Burns Place, which was undertaken in the late 1930s.⁴³ The works were completed by May 1939 and were described as follows:

*"A neglected park, known as Burns Place, facing the main street, between same and railway station, had long been neglected and was a blemish to the town. An appeal for a public fund was made to make this one more of the beauty spots of Gosford. Subscriptions to the extent of £187 were readily in hand. The park was enclosed in hewn stone from the famous sandstone quarries near the town. An archway entrance was erected leading from Main Street into the enclosure, and a pillared gateway leading therefrom to the railway station, with each at northern and southern entrances. Park seats were provided and the enclosed land set out in ornamental trees, palms and terraced flower beds of great attraction. The shopping appointments, hotels, banks, and general conveniences meet every requirement of modern times."*⁴⁴

In September 1939 it was announced that the Council had decided to proceed with the construction of a tourist bureau at Burns Place.⁴⁵ The structure was to cost approximately £300 and the works were to be carried by a day labourer and an architect was engaged to prepare plans.⁴⁶

Despite the distractions of the commencement of the Second World War in Europe, construction of the tourist bureau building was completed by May 1940 and was leased to various occupants.⁴⁷ The small brick structure had a rectangular footprint and was situated in the southern corner of the park.

Aerial photography of the site from the 1950s shows the densely vegetated landscape of the park. The northernmost entrance can be seen in the photograph as well as tourist bureau structure in the southern corner. No pathways or way finding tracks can be discerned from the aerial.

In 1952, Burns Crescent was named in honour of William 'Billy' Burns. Prior to this, the area was known as 'Free Speech Corner'.

³⁸ The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, Nov1937. 'Gosford Mayoral Minute' p5.

³⁹ The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, Jun 1938. 'Burns Place Improvements'. p5.

⁴⁰ The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, Aug 1938. 'Burns Place'. p8.

⁴¹ The Sydney Morning Herald, Oct 1938. 'Beautifying Gosford'. p7.

⁴² The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, Apr 1939. 'Council Jottings' p8.

⁴³ SH, 2024. 'Burns Place Park' Heritage ID 1620241.

⁴⁴ The Northern Champion, May 1939. 'Gosford's Rapid Recovery' p2.

⁴⁵ The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, Sept 1939. 'Tourist Bureau to be Constructed' p7.

⁴⁶ The Maitland Daily Mercury, Jul 1939. 'State Imports'. p2.

⁴⁷ The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, May 1940. 'Tourist Bureau' p1.

SHIRE OF GOSFORD.—NAMING OF ROAD.—Notice is hereby given that the Council proposes to apply for the approval of the Minister for Local Government to the naming of road commencing at the southern end of Burns-place, Mann-street, Gosford, thence in a circular north-westerly line for about 300 feet. Proposed name—Burns-crescent. Objections to the proposed name may be lodged with the Council by any elector of the area within one month after publication of this notice. Such objections will not be in order unless they give reasons. Authorised by resolution of the Council on the 15th day of September, 1952. N. G. HOWES, Shire Clerk, Council Chambers, Gosford, 15th January, 1953. **222—18s.**

Figure 13: Government gazette notice of the change of name to Burns Crescent.

[Source: Government Gazette of the State of New South Wales, Friday 23 January 1953, p.243.]



Figure 14: c1940s view of Mann Street facing south. The c1940 tourist bureau building can be seen to the right of frame at the southern end of Burns Place.

[Source: Central Coast Library Service]



Figure 15: Photograph of the 1964 ANZAC Day March, Burns Place is in the centre of the image, with the tourist bureau situated on the corner, just behind the banner]
[Source: Gosford Library Local Studies Collection, 2024]



Figure 16: Aerial photograph of Burns Place, 1953.
[Source: Photograph by Franklyn Wainman of Avion Views, Cooranbong NSW.]



Figure 17: Aerial view of the Gosford town centre in 1955, showing Burns Place and the adjoining railway station.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]

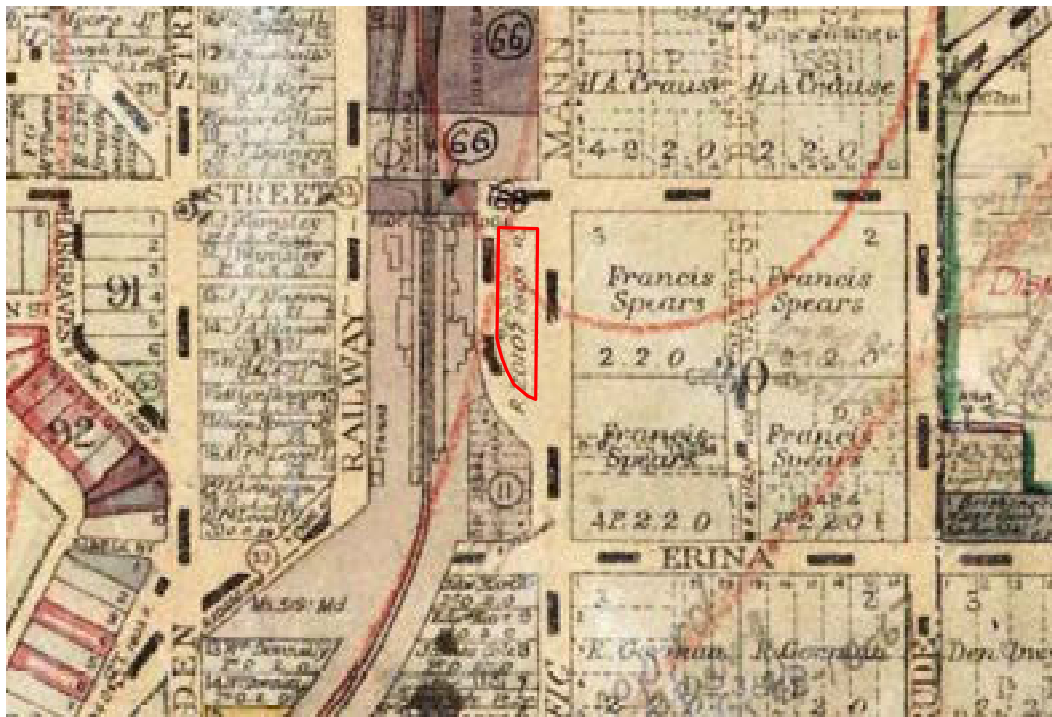


Figure 18: Extract of the Plan of the Town of Gosford, 1958, showing the formalisation of Burns Place.
[Source: Historical Records Lands Viewer, 2024]

4.5 Lewers Memorial Fountain

In the 1960s the Gosford Rotary Club received an anonymous donation of £7,000 for the erection of a war memorial. This led to the Gosford Rotary Club commissioning the War Memorial Fountain to be placed at Burns Place. Renowned sculptor Gerald Lewers was invited to create the fountain, along with his wife Margo Lewers.



Figure 19: Sculptor Gerard Lewers at work on the water spout for the war memorial fountain.
[Source: Submission by Merril Jackson to public exhibition of the draft Burns Place CMP]



Figure 20: Example of the Lewer's mosaic tile work.
[Source: Submission by Merril Jackson to public exhibition of the draft Burns Place CMP]



Figure 21: Margot Lewer at work.
[Source: Submission by Merril Jackson to public exhibition of the draft Burns Place CMP]



Figure 23: Example of Gerard Lewer's sculpture work.
[Source: Penrith Regional Gallery, 2025]



Figure 22: View of the memorial fountain prior to the installation of a steel screen base to prevent public drowning.
[Source: Submission by Merril Jackson to public exhibition of the draft Burns Place CMP]

Gerald Lewers was a sculptor and construction engineer, he had spent his earlier years in a construction and quarry business which was mainly engaged in building roads and installing sewerage works. In the 1920s Gerald met Margo at an evening art class run by Antonio Dattilo-Rubbo.⁴⁹ Margo and Gerald married in 1934 and together they went abroad to study at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London. Upon returning to Sydney, Margo opened a gallery and an interior design shop. Gerald returned to Farley and Lewers and assisted in the construction of the Pirie-ort Augusta railway line in South Australia. By 1942 he had overtaken management of the quarry in Castlereagh, New South Wales.⁵⁰

In 1950 Gerald retired to become a full-time sculptor, and he and Margo moved to a farmhouse on the Nepean River. Between 1953 and his death, Lewers received over fifteen major commissions for sculptors. Some of which works included 'Relaxation', a reclining 'sandstone figure of heroic size' (University House, Canberra) and the sandstone relief on the York Street front of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (Sydney, 1954).⁵¹ He and Margo were also jointly commissioned to create a garden of pebbles, cacti and sandstone shapes for the M.L.C. Building, North Sydney (1957). In his later years he began working more extensively with metal, especially for public fountains 'whose shape mirrored and reflected the moving waters' (I.C.I. House, Melbourne; Macquarie Place, Sydney).⁵²

Lewers had commenced work on the public fountain for Gosford Rotary in 1960s, with Margo being invited to design the pool and wall mosaic. This would be the last commission before Gerald would be tragically thrown from a horse in Queensland, fracturing his skull and dying of a brain haemorrhage in 1962.⁵³

The public fountain was incomplete at this time, Gerald had completed a drawing and a small model of the fountain but no work had commenced on final product.⁵⁴ Margo was tasked with bringing to fruition the final design. The fountain's hydraulics were purportedly problematic, with the water needing to hit the top of the brass bowl and follow its curve to the bottom. Gerald had made contact with the Hydraulics Department of Adelaide University in South Australia, and Margo and their daughter Darani had to often fly to Adelaide to consult with the engineers there, as well as the water research lab at Sydney University.⁵⁵ The piece was finished and unveiled to the public in 1963 by Mrs C. C. Margin.

⁴⁹ Crayford, M. 2006. Australian Dictionary of Biography – Gerald Francis Lewers (1905-1962).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Coogee Media, 2024. <http://www.coogeemedia.com.au/lewers.htm> by Margo Lewers speaks of her late husband, Gerald Lewers in the Hazel de Berg collection [sound recording], DeB 142 National Library of Australia, 1965.

⁵⁵ Ibid.



Figure 24: Photograph of the fountain shortly after its unveiling, c.1963.

[Source: Coogee Media, 2024. Accessed at <http://www.coogeemedia.com.au/lewers.htm>]

The public fountain featured a wall of grey Gosford sandstone with staggered steps to provide a pattern of water cascades. The large copper spout was designed by Gerald and the tessellated tile backdrop framing the vertical wall had been designed by Margo and arranged in a map of Brisbane Waters. Curiously, despite it being referred to as the War Memorial Fountain, there are no memorial tablets or other commemorative plaques to ascribe this association.

Margo Lewers died of cancer in February 1978 at her Emu Plains home.⁵⁹ A large collection of her and her husband's work, as well as the family home, was bequeathed to Penrith Council by their children in 1980. The site of their home is now known as the Penrith Regional Gallery.

4.6 Late 20th century improvements to the site

By the 1970s and 1980s the landscape of Burns Place had been altered, with a number of established plantings either removed or substantially pruned to increase visibility to and from the site. Despite this, many of the established plantings remain, but were concentrated to the northwestern and southern corner of the site.

⁵⁹ Crayford, M. 2006. Australian Dictionary of Biography – Gerald Francis Lewers (1905-1962).



Figure 25: Aerial photograph of the site, c.1984.
[Source: Land registry Services, 2024]

In the 1980s the tourist bureau building was demolished and a new facility was constructed in the southern corner of the site. This included attached bathrooms to north of the structure. To accommodate the new building a number of trees were removed. A new footbridge was also constructed in the late 1980s (post 1984) connecting Burns Place to the Gateway Centre which was constructed and opened in 1985. This provided pedestrian access to the centre, from the railway station without needing to cross Mann Street.



Figure 26: View of the former rotunda structure facing north towards the stairs to Gosford Railway Station (left of frame), c1960.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]



Figure 27: View of facing south towards the former rotunda structure, c1960.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]



Figure 28: View of Burns Place / Burns Park c1970, as viewed from the shops on the eastern side of Mann Street, facing southwest.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]



Figure 29: View from Burns Park facing northeast towards Mann Street, c1974.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]

The former bandstand / rotunda which was situated just to the southern side of the main sandstone arch, was demolished during the early 1980s, which appears likely to have coincided with various other civic improvements to 'tidy up' and 'modernise' the park. Photographic evidence suggests that much of the extant understorey vegetation such as the cycad ferns are attributed to this time. The ground extending from the bitumen pathway behind the main sandstone arch and extending around the base of the mature trees towards the northern end of the park, was paved with large (likely concrete) pavers.



Figure 30: View of Burns Park, c1980s.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]



Figure 31: View of Burns Park from the Railway Station precinct facing east, c1980s.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]



Figure 32: View facing north, showing the location of the former rotunda.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]



Figure 33: View facing northeast, showing the paving around the base of the trees.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]



Figure 34: Aerial photograph of the site, c.1984.
[Source: Land registry Services, 2024]



Figure 35: View the underside of the newly built pedestrian footbridge c1985-1986.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]



Figure 36: View of the underside of the pedestrian footbridge, c1985-1986, facing south.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]

The tourist bureau building erected in 1940 was also demolished during the 1980s and a new building was constructed in the southern corner of the site in much the same location. This included attached public toilets to northern side of the building. To accommodate the new building, a number of trees were removed.

During the 1970s and 1980s, many of the earlier buildings attributed to the early 20th century on the eastern side of Mann Street were being demolished and redeveloped to accommodate new larger scaled commercial premises. The buildings directly opposite the site in Mann Street were demolished in the early 1980s to permit the construction of the new 'Gateway Centre', which is a multi-storey commercial building of reinforced concrete construction with a glass curtain wall.

Completed and opened in 1985, the Gateway Centre featured a steel framed and glass walled footbridge, which spanned across Mann Street and Burns Park, providing an aerial pedestrian connection between the transport interchange and, conveniently, or rather, deliberately, directing pedestrian traffic straight to the new commercial and retail centre. It is also possible that the concrete paving beneath the footbridge was installed as part of the construction of the bridge given the lessening of solar access to allow the grass to thrive.

4.7 Heritage listing

Towards the later half of the 20th century, there was increasing interest and awareness in the conservation and protection of significant buildings and places. This led to the introduction of the *Heritage Act* in 1977 and the establishment of very early heritage studies across NSW.

In the early 1980s local heritage studies began to be undertaken across the state. Whilst there is no documentary evidence to suggest the park was identified as a local heritage item in the 1980s, the site was eventually identified as a place of potential heritage significance in 2000 after a heritage review of the former Gosford City Council was carried out. The site was formally listed in 2004 on Schedule 5 of the *Gosford Local Environmental Plan 2005*.

The site has remained a locally listed item with periodical reviews of its listing status. In 2014 a new significance assessment was undertaken which identified the site as follows:

'Burns Place Park is the prime city centre formal park acting as a gateway between the commercial streetscape and the railway station. It is aesthetically significant as a public open space, and socially significant for its components donated/built by the community, such as the War Memorial Fountain. Full height mature trees (Taxodium distichum (Bald Cypress), especially in groups, are a valuable asset to the city.'

4.8 Upgrades to Gosford Station and interchange and a masterplan for Burns Park

By the early 1990s, plans were underway for the renewal and redevelopment of the Gosford Railway Station and transport interchange precinct. It would appear from historical photography that this work occurred post 1990 but prior to 1994, for in 1990, the former two-storey Railway Station Masters dwelling appears visible in the backdrop to Burns Park.

Come 1994, the transport interchange upgrade works had been completed, which comprised a new bus interchange between Burns Park and the railway station, with numerous bus stands and plaza areas.

In or about 1997, Gosford City Council commissioned landscape architectural firm Andrews Neil to prepare a landscape masterplan for Burns Park.

The *Landscape Design Concept – Burns Park Gosford* would propose a series of new landscaping and civic improvement works to the park, many of which would involve the removal or modification of the surviving earlier elements.



Figure 37: View of the sandstone arch facing west towards the former station masters dwelling.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]

The plan proposed to retain much of the existing mature treed canopy, but if implemented, would have involved works that:

- Removed the tessellated tiles to the 1963 War Memorial Fountain and replacement with a rendered concrete finish.
- Removed the sandstone arch 'to improve views into the park, reuse stone for new wall construction'.
- Installed new park furniture to match the remainder in Mann Street.
- Removed the existing stone pier at the western top side of the stairs.
- Constructed a ramp at the western boundary of the site that wraps around to meet on the northern side of the information centre building.

The concept plan was met with resistance by the local community, with the main cause for opposition being that many of historic features would be removed⁶⁰. It is unclear how much, if any, of the concept plan was implemented, however a comparison with the present-day character suggests very little.

Since this time, there have been various other minor works undertaken in Burns Park, including replacement of the bitumen pathways with brick pavers and matching edging, installation of new furniture including bins and lighting and various landscape works.

However, Burns Park appears to have remained little altered for much of the past 30 years.

⁶⁰ Email communication to the Author from Geoffrey Potter, Local Studies Librarian at Central Coast Council.



Figure 38: Aerial view of Burns Park and the upgraded railway station and transport interchange, 1994.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]

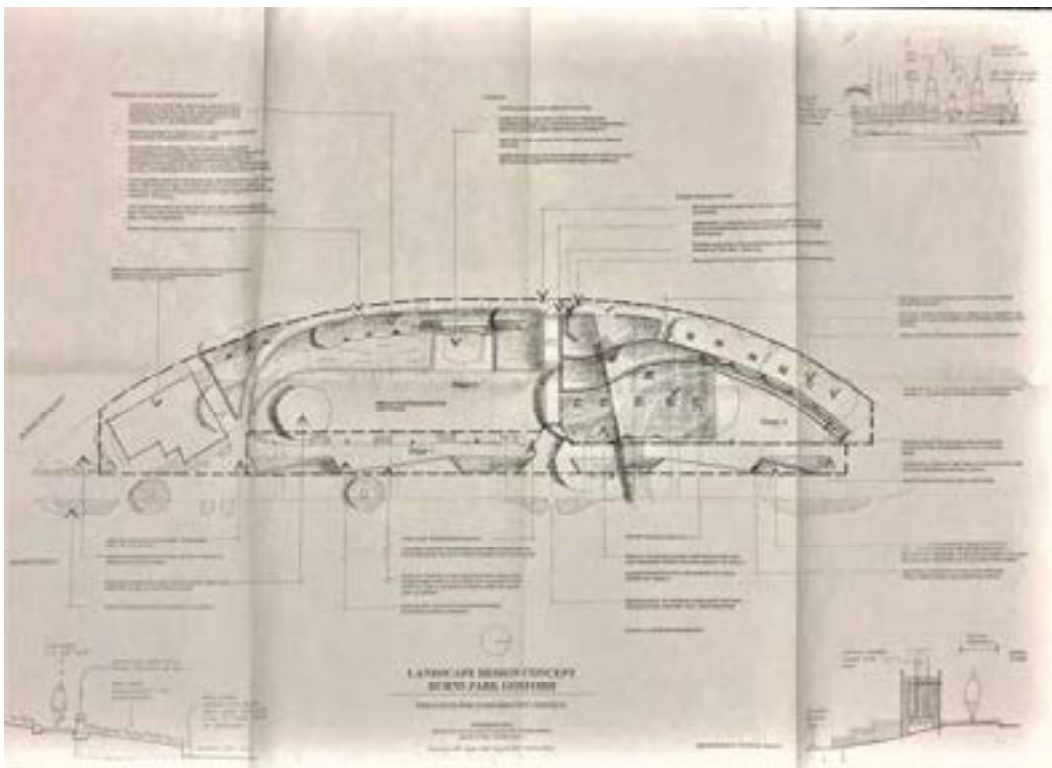


Figure 39: c1997 concept landscape masterplan for Burns Park.
[Source: Central Coast Library Service]

4.9 Summary timeline of events

The following timeline summarises the historical overview of Burns Place, Gosford.

TABLE 1 – Summary timeline of historical events		
Phase	Date / Period	Event
Discovery	1788-89	First European discovery and subsequent settlement of the area. The area was not easily accessible therefore no settlement occurred during this time.
Land grant	1811	The first land grant on the Central Coast was granted to William Nash, a former marine of the First Fleet. No efforts were made to develop the land.
Establishment of Gosford	1830s	Samuel Peek establishes a township in what is now East Gosford.
	1839	A government township is surveyed and laid out between Narara and Erina Creeks, it was initially named Point Frederick, however, was quickly renamed 'Gosford' after Archibald Acheson, 2 nd Earl of Gosford.
	1886	The private and government township merge to form the Municipality of Gosford.
First land grant for the site that would become Burns Park	1854-1855	Henry Worley, a local sergeant purchase at auctions Lots 2-10 in Section 11 of the Government township.
Resumption of land by Commissioner of Railways	1885	After the death of Worley and his wife, the land is resumed by the Commissioner of Railways for the construction of the Gosford Railway Station as part of the Homebush to Waratah (Newcastle) railway line.
Gosford Railway Station opened	1888	The Gosford Railway Station was formally opened in 1888 and the completion of the line occurred the following year.
Establishment of Burns Park	1930	The public begin to agitate for the land adjacent to the railway to be utilised as a public park as part of the beautification of the townscape. At this time, the land was described as no more than 'an enclosed plot of unsightly land'.
	1934	Railway Square is renamed 'Burns Place' and a band rotunda is erected on the site.
	1935	Gosford Council announced that a new park would be established on the land. At the announcement it was acknowledged that majority of funds had been provided by the local community.
Land formally resumed	1937	The land that would comprise the park is formally resumed and set aside as a public reserve.
Works commence to establish the park	1937	The town engineer makes recommendations for changes.
	1937	Difficulty obtaining the required stone sets the project back substantially.
	1939	The 'beautification works' and establishment of the park is completed by May of this year.
Construction of a tourist bureau	1940	Construction of a 'tourist bureau' building is completed by May this year. The structure is then leased to various occupants.
Commission of water fountain to the Lewers	c1960s	Gosford Rotary commissions the Lewers to produce a memorial fountain for Burns Park. The project was incomplete when Gerald Lewers tragically died in 1962, with his wife Margo seeing the completion of the fountain.
	1963	The War Memorial Fountain is completed and unveiled to the public.
Contemporary upgrades	c1980s	The 1940 tourist bureau building is demolished and a new Tourist Information and public toilets building is erected in its place.
		The former bandstand rotunda is demolished.
		Paving and other civic improvements together with new landscape plantings are introduced.
	c1985	The Gateway Centre is constructed on the eastern side of Mann Street and a new footbridge is built to provide an aerial connection between the Gosford Railway Station precinct and the commercial and retail centre.
	c1990-1994	The Gosford Railway Station precinct is upgraded, with new station facilities and a transport interchange with numerous bus stands.
Concept masterplan	c1997	A concept landscape masterplan is prepared for Burns Park, which involves the removal of many of the remaining historic elements in an attempt to improve sight lines and 'modernise' the park.
Recent improvements	Post 1997	Various cosmetic works are undertaken to improve the park, including replacement of the bitumen pathways with brick pavers, new furniture and signage.
Conservation works	2023 – present	Council identifies structural defects in the sandstone block wall and arch, likely the consequence of invasive root growth from trees. Preliminary heritage advice and structural advice is obtained and the Conservation Management Plan is commissioned.

4.10 Ability to represent historical themes

A place of cultural significance needs to be considered in the context of the history and historical geography of the area surrounding it. When identifying the heritage items of a given area, a purely visual approach is inadequate. It is important to understand the underlying historical influences, which have shaped and continue to shape the area.⁶¹

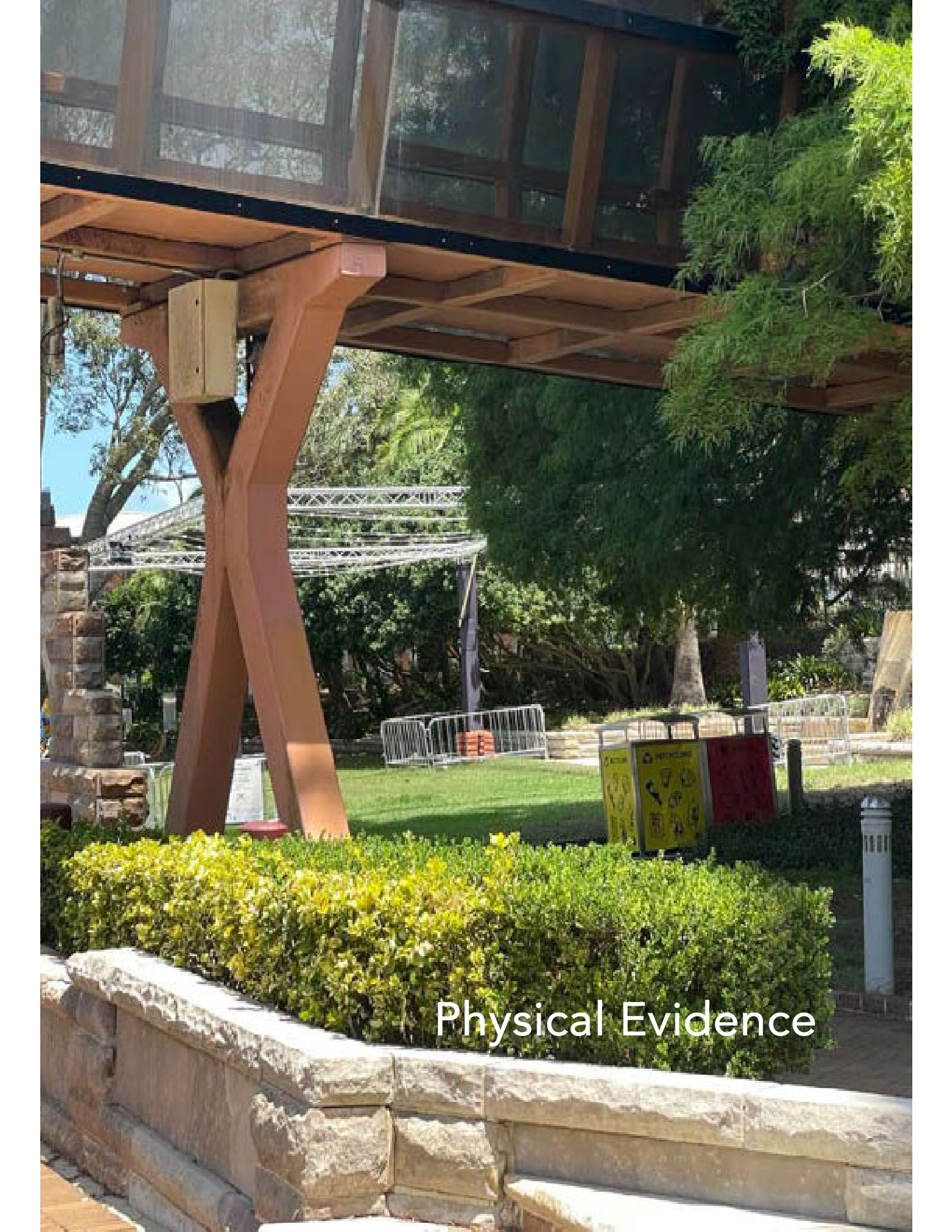
Historical themes provide a context within which the heritage significance of an item can be understood, assessed and compared. Themes help to explain why an item exists, how it was changed and how it relates to other items linked by the theme.⁶²

The *NSW Heritage Manual* provides a standardised set of themes from which the applicable themes are reproduced below:

Theme	Explanatory Note	Comment
Environment – cultural landscape	Activities associated with the interactions between humans, human societies and the shaping of their physical surroundings.	Burns Place is directly associated the Inter-War period of growth and development in Gosford. The park is the direct result of local citizens advocating and raising funds for the park alongside the local Council.
Towns, suburbs and villages	Activities associated with creating, planning and managing urban functions, landscapes and lifestyles in towns, suburbs and villages.	Burns Place contributes to the urban fabric of the Gosford town centre and is an important focal point within the town centre for public gathering. The shared relationship to the railway station contributes to the historical narrative of Gosford.
Creative endeavour	Activities associated with the production and performance of literary, artistic, architectural and other imaginative, interpretive or inventive works; and/or associated with the production and expression of cultural phenomena; and/or environments that have inspired such creative activities.	The Lewers Memorial Fountain was one of the last commissions Gerald Lewers worked on prior to his untimely death. The fountain was completed by his wife Margo. This significant piece of art forms a crucial element of the fabric of the park.
Leisure	Activities associated with recreation and relaxation.	The park is a pleasant space that connects the township of Gosford with the railway station. The park provides a physical and visual buffer and demonstrates the remnant plantings of the original landscape setting of the area.

⁶¹ NSW Heritage Office. 'History and Heritage – The use of Historical Context and Themes in Heritage Assessment.'

⁶² Ibid.



Physical Evidence

5.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

This section describes Burns Place and its surrounding context.

Prior to applying a set of criteria established by the NSW Heritage Council for the assessment of cultural significance, it is important to establish and understand the integrity and condition of the fabric, to identify view corridors to and from the site, its contribution to the streetscape, and the heritage curtilage and setting.

5.2 Context and setting

The subject site is situated within the Central Coast Council local government area and in the locality of Gosford, which is 77 kilometres northeast of Sydney city. The subject site is situated in the heart of the Gosford town centre, forming part of the road reserve and is not identified by any particular Lot or DP reference.

The site is effectively bound to the west by Burns Crescent, which arcs around the site and joins into Mann Street, which defines the eastern side of the site. The site is commonly known as 'Burns Park', Mann Street, Gosford.



Figure 40: Aerial view of the locality.
[Source: NSW Land and Property Information, 2024]



Figure 41: Aerial view of the site.

[Source: NSW Land and Property Information, 2024]

5.3 The subject site generally

Burns Park is located in the heart of the Gosford town centre and sits on the western side of Mann Street, within an established urban streetscape.

The site is irregular in shape and as it is part of the broader road reserve, it does not occupy its own separate allotment boundaries. For the purposes of this CMP, Figure 41 above identifies a red outline which illustrates the 'boundary' of what is considered to define Burns Park. It comprises an approximate area of 5,564.37sqm.

The site is adjoined to the west by the Gosford Railway Station precinct, which include the railway station itself and a transport interchange with numerous bus and taxi stands. To the north, south and east of the site are various commercial buildings which form part of the commercial and retail core of the town centre.

Burns Park comprises a mostly level topography, which sits slightly higher than the road carriageway level of Mann Street, before rising steeply to the rear, with Burns Crescent occupying an elevated position in the landscape. The crescent profile of Burns Crescent commences at the south commensurate with Mann Street, before rising to its highest elevation towards the location of the stair access to Burns Park, before gradually reducing in elevation to rejoin Mann Street at the north.



Figure 42: View of Burns Place from Mann Street facing southwest.



Figure 43: View of Burns Place from Mann Street facing west.



Figure 44: View of the Burns Place facing south.



Figure 45: View of Burns Place from Faunce Street facing south.



Figure 46: View of Burns Place from Gosford Railway.

5.4 Landscaped setting

Burns Park comprises mostly open grassed areas, interspersed by established trees, formal paths and terraced gardens that frame the rear backdrop of the park. The park is situated adjacent to the Gosford Railway Station and has a direct relationship, comprising a central pathway and stairs that extends from the boundary of the station to the Gateway Centre on the eastern side of Mann Street.

The existing established landscaped plantings surrounding Burns Park provide for a treed canopy and landscaped backdrop that largely frames the parks boundaries. Along the western boundary are a neat row of Canary Island date palms which create a visual barrier between Burns Crescent and the park. Towards the centre of the park are established Bald Cypressess, that frame the c1985 pedestrian footbridge. Towards the southern corner of the park is a single large Forest Red Gum (*eucalyptus*).

Terraced garden beds line the western rear boundary, delineated by low height sandstone walls. The garden beds are not densely planted but mostly comprise mulch as a covering. Towards the centre of the site is a stone paved area and the ornate c1963 Memorial Fountain designed by Gerald and Margo Lewers. The sculpted copper scoop sits adjoining a stone wall, with tessellated tiles said to represent a map of Brisbane Waters. The pool beneath the scoop has been ornamented with coloured tiles which reflect in the water onto surrounding hard surfaces.

The landscaped setting of Burns Park is reasonably formal, yet minimal, structured off the two axial, pathways comprising brick paving that transect the park, extending east to west and north to south. The Mann Street boundary is enclosed by a low height stone wall, which meets at a central stone archway and primary entrance to the park. The arch is offset at 45 degrees from the stone wall, providing a natural gateway entry and focal point within Mann Street.

Opposite the Mann Street entrance is the entrance from the station side of Burns Crescent. This entry is delineated by sandstone stone pillars with a wrought iron arch affixed to either pillar. The arch leads to a set of cementitious stairs that transition into the paved path.

The northern entry of the site is flanked by two stone pillars, whilst the southern entry to the park has an 'open' language, transitioning from the public footpath to the paved walkway in the park. Also in the southern corner of the site is the public bathrooms and the Gosford / Erina and Coastal Chamber of Commerce and Industry building.

Hedges have been planted along the western stone wall providing a soft landscape transition between the built environment and the open grassed landscape of the park.



Figure 47: View of central and main entrance to Burns Place from Mann Street.



Figure 48: View of the northern entrance to the park facing southeast.

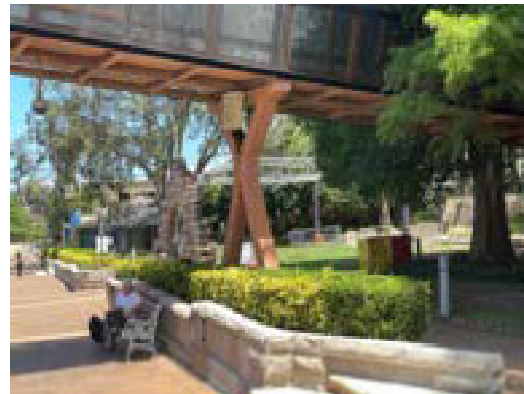


Figure 49: View of Burns Place facing southeast.



Figure 50: View of Burns Place facing south.



Figure 51: View of the central pathway facing west.



Figure 52: View of the garden beds along the western boundary facing north.



Figure 53: View of the Memorial fountain on the western boundary.



Figure 54: View of Burns Place facing north.



Figure 55: View of Burns Place facing south towards the bathrooms.



Figure 56: View of the entry from the station.

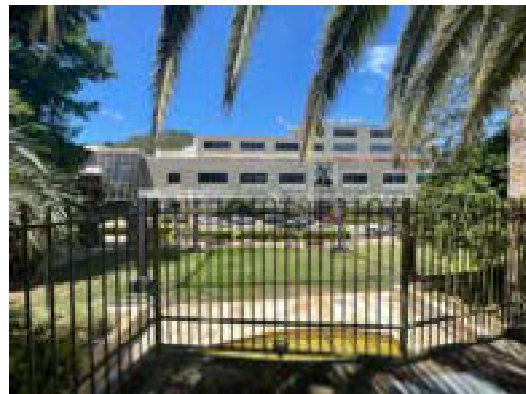


Figure 57: View of the park facing east.

5.5 Description of the built forms on site

Gosford / Erina and Coastal Chamber of Commerce and Industry building

The single storey structure is concentrated to the south of the site and has rectangular footprint. The building is orientated to have its primary frontage to Mann Street and presents as a stepped structure with multiple gabled roofs over the sectional portions of the building. The roof is clad in concrete tiles and the eaves have been enclosed.

Whilst of masonry construction, the eastern walls largely comprise of floor to ceiling windows, with painted portions of face brick interspersed. The western elevations are face brick with no windows or notable architectural features.

The definitive framework for identifying architectural styles within Australia is that developed by Apperly, Irving and Reynolds in '*Identifying Australian Architecture: Style and Terms from 1788 to the Present*'. The authors provide a perceptive account of what constitutes and defines a style. Mostly concerned with 'high' or 'contrived' architectural styles, rather than the 'popular' styles or the vernacular, it is accepted that the boundaries between identified styles are not always clear-cut.

Subsequently, the terminology for a style and the framework to be applied in defining the style, comprises two parts, firstly identifying the period in which the building belongs and secondly describing the major characteristics.

In this manner, the building displays characteristics that are loosely attributed to the late 20th period and of the Sydney Regional architectural style.

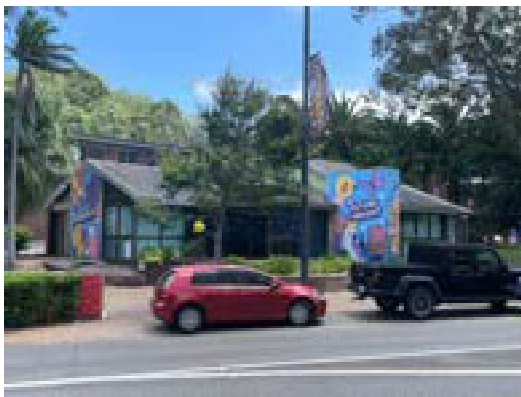


Figure 58: View of the building from Mann Street.



Figure 59: View of the northern wall facing south.

Pedestrian Footbridge

The pedestrian footbridge extends from Burns Crescent to the Gateway Centre located on the eastern side of Mann Street. The footbridge is a steel structure encased in tinted glass. It measures approximately 35 metres and is suspended the full length with no piers or pillars upholding the structure.

The bridge was constructed in c.1985 after the construction of the Gateway Centre.

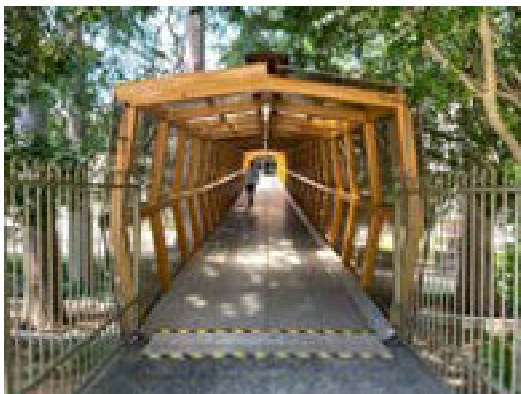


Figure 60: View of the footbridge from Burns Crescent facing east.

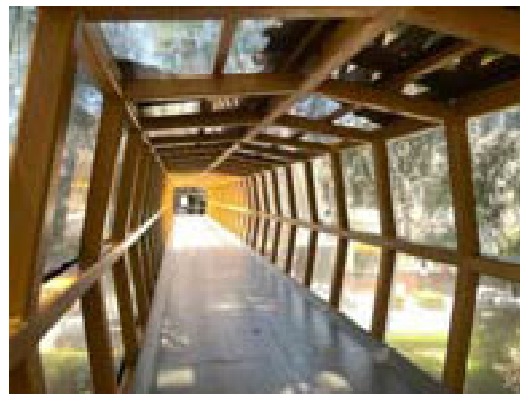


Figure 61: View of the footbridge from Burns Crescent facing southeast.



Figure 62: View of footbridge from the Gateway Centre facing west.



Figure 63: View of the footbridge from the park facing northeast.

Sandstone arch and corresponding walls and steps

The most striking feature of the site is the sandstone gateway arch and corresponding walls. The sandstone arch is constructed of local Gosford grey sandstone and consists of stepped stone courses (the spandrel), over a semi-circular stone arch with a central keystone.

The arch and stepped wall are supported on two base / wing walls that sit either side of the arched opening. The stepped spandrel wall consists of eleven courses of 300mm thick, rough-faced stone, while the arch consists of a single course of 255mm thick smooth-faced stone blocks.

The arch has a radius of 1400mm (to the intrados) and the arch springs one course above the base walls, of which are 2,300mm wide and 1,630mm high (above the surrounding pavers) and consists of seven courses of two skins of 220mm thick, rough-faced stone blocks with alternating through-stones.

On either side of the base / wing walls are smooth-faced stone plaques bearing the inscription of the former Gosford City Council logo together with the text BURNS PLACE Gosford "Garden City by the Waters".

The garden wall along Mann Street typically consists of several (4-6) courses of sandstone blocks surrounding a central indented course topped with a stone capping course. The indented stone course has been laid with bedding vertical.

Towards the rear of the site is a set of sandstone block stairs, with stone treads and corresponding side walls which feature capping on the top course. The stone blocks to the side walls are rough-faced, similar to the stone archway, which is situated on the same axis to provide a visual framing of each other.



Figure 64: View of the eastern (front) elevation of the sandstone arch.



Figure 65: View of the rear elevation of the stone arch facing east.



Figure 66: View of the stone panels with their inscriptions.



Figure 67: View of the stone panels in the base walls of the arch.

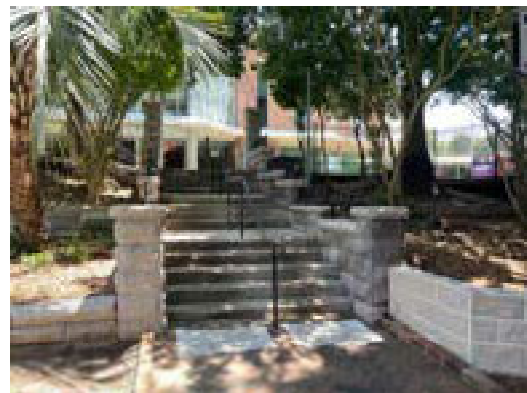


Figure 68: View of rear stairs facing west.

5.6 Condition and integrity

The integrity of a site, in terms of its heritage significance, can exist on a number of levels. For instance, a site may be an intact example of a particular architectural style or period and thus have a high degree of significance for its ability to illustrate that style or period.

Equally, heritage significance may arise from a lack of architectural integrity where the significance lies in an ability to illustrate an important evolution to the building or change in use.

While a detailed structural assessment is beyond the scope of this report, a non-invasive visual inspection of Burns Park has been undertaken, which identifies a number of structural and non-structural cosmetic changes that have been undertaken.

It is important to recognise that Burns Place is considered to comprise an 'evolved landscape'. That is to say, the setting and fabric of the park has evolved and changed over time, with the extant fabric and elements of the park being attributed to differing periods and phases of change, with no one particular layer or phase more intact than another. Each layer and phase of change has been subject to further change. The most formative period of growth and development of Burns Park is however, considered to have occurred in the late 1930s to early 1940s when the park was first established. There are more extant features and fabric surviving from the earliest phase of development and growth than subsequent periods.

Consequently, in terms of integrity, the fact that the park has seen various layers of change does not necessarily diminish its overall design integrity. Certain previous actions regarding change have however, obscured or diminished the integrity of individual layers, but not necessarily the park as a whole.

The c1937 sandstone block arch, garden wall and stairs are substantially intact and retain a high degree of integrity in and of themselves, though evidence previous localised repairs including repointing of mortar joints, wholesale replacement of stone units and minor epoxy repairs. Presently, all of the stone structures on the site exhibit varying forms of deterioration and damage to individual stone units, ranging from superficial to substantial failure and damage. It is noted that the present condition of the garden wall in particular, which is being mechanically impacted by invasive root growth of the adjacent trees, has been the catalyst for the commissioning of this CMP, to guide maintenance and conservation of Burns Park and to establish management principles and policies to manage and protect the identified significance and values of the place.

Overall, the changes demonstrate the evolution of the site during its time of use, whilst also reflecting changes in the Gosford township. The changes have altered elements of Burns Park, however the changes are generally considered to have a low impact on the overall character of the site and what it represents.

Burns Park inclusive of the landscape setting and built elements appear well maintained. The site overall appears in reasonable repair and condition.

5.7 Streetscape contribution

Located directly adjacent to the main street (Mann Street) and the Gosford Station, Burns Place occupies a prominent position in the streetscape and broader town centre. The subject site sits within an established park setting, whereby occupying a pleasant location within the locality.

Burns Place was established to provide a pleasant buffer between the station precinct and the Gosford township and provides a soft landscape zone in the bustling township whereby it contributes significantly to the established character and identity of the street. Whilst the surrounding streetscape is a hybrid of commercial complexes, buildings associated with the railway and residential dwellings, the significance that is imbued in the site provides a contribution to the evolutionary narrative of the street.

5.8 Moveable heritage

5.8.1 Introduction

'Movable heritage' is a term used to define any natural or manufactured object of heritage significance, ranging from everyday objects to antiques and may be a single item, a group of items or a whole collection.

However, it does not include archaeological relics found underwater or underground.

Movable heritage may be an integral part of the significance of heritage places. It can also belong to cultural groups, communities or regions of New South Wales.

Because movable heritage is portable, items, objects or collections are easily sold, relocated, displaced or disposed of during changes of ownership, fashion and use. For this reason, movable heritage is vulnerable to loss, damage, theft and dispersal, often before its heritage significance is appreciated.

Documenting movable heritage helps us to understand an item's importance, including its relationship to people and places. Documentation creates a record of the item's location, its arrangement and details of manufacture, ownership and use. When items are moved from their context, documentation helps us to recover their history, trace their use and reinstate them when circumstances change.

A movable heritage item, object or collection, can usually survive for long periods in the place where it belongs, as long as there is basic security, protection from pests and shelter from the elements.

Some items, objects, and collections, which are important to Australia, are given statutory protection by the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986*. This means that a permit may be required for the permanent or temporary export of movable items important to Australia. The Act does not affect the right to own or sell items in Australia.

5.8.2 Moveable heritage at Burns Place

There are no known moveable heritage items associated with Burns Place, comprising largely of established landscaped features that are unlikely to be removed from the site.

5.9 Archaeology

5.9.1 Introduction

A detailed archaeological assessment of Aboriginal and European occupation is beyond the scope of this CMP.

A due-diligence assessment should take reasonable and practical steps to ascertain whether there is likelihood that archaeological sites are present that will require specific management and protection.

If it is assessed that archaeological sites exist or have a likelihood of existing within the site, and have the potential to be impacted by any future development or changes to the item or place, further archaeological investigations may be required along with excavation permits under the *Heritage Act 1977*.

5.9.2 Summary of archaeological potential

Due to the previous disturbance of the natural landform through excavation and landfill and the development of the site, Burns Place is identified as an area of low archaeological sensitivity, having low potential to yield significant archaeological evidence.

5.10 Views and vistas

5.10.1 Introduction

The Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter* (2013) emphasises the importance of setting in the significance of heritage places.

For Burns Place, the setting includes not only the immediate fabric of the park and open landscaped setting, but also the wider cultural landscape context, including views and vistas to, from and within the place. It is important that the physical and visual setting of the site is maintained, preserved and where possible, enhanced, to ensure the interpretation and appreciation of the context and setting.

5.10.2 Key views to the site

Burns Place has a strong visual and physical relationship to both Mann Street, Burns Crescent and Gosford Station featuring prominently within the streetscape, with important (primary) views obtained towards Burns Place from both approaches along Mann Street and Burns Crescent and immediately at the front of the site, which takes in the full viewing scope of Burns Place.

Secondary views are obtained from various vantage points further along Mann Street towards Faunce Street to the north, as well as Erina Street to the south. Additional views are also obtained from the Gateway Centre, which also shares a physical relationship to the site via the footbridge.

Key views to the site are represented in the following images:



Figure 69: View of the site from Mann Street facing south.



Figure 70: View of the site from the corner of Mann Street and Faunce Street facing southwest.



Figure 71: View of site from station depot facing southeast.



Figure 72: View of the site from the station facing east.



Figure 73: View of the site from Burns Crescent facing southeast.



Figure 74: View south from Burns Crescent and Mann Street.



Figure 75: View of the site from Mann Street facing west.

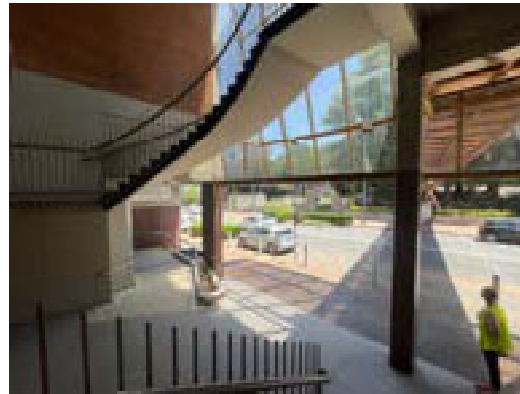


Figure 76: View of the site from the Gateway Centre.

Views to the site are represented in the following diagram and images:

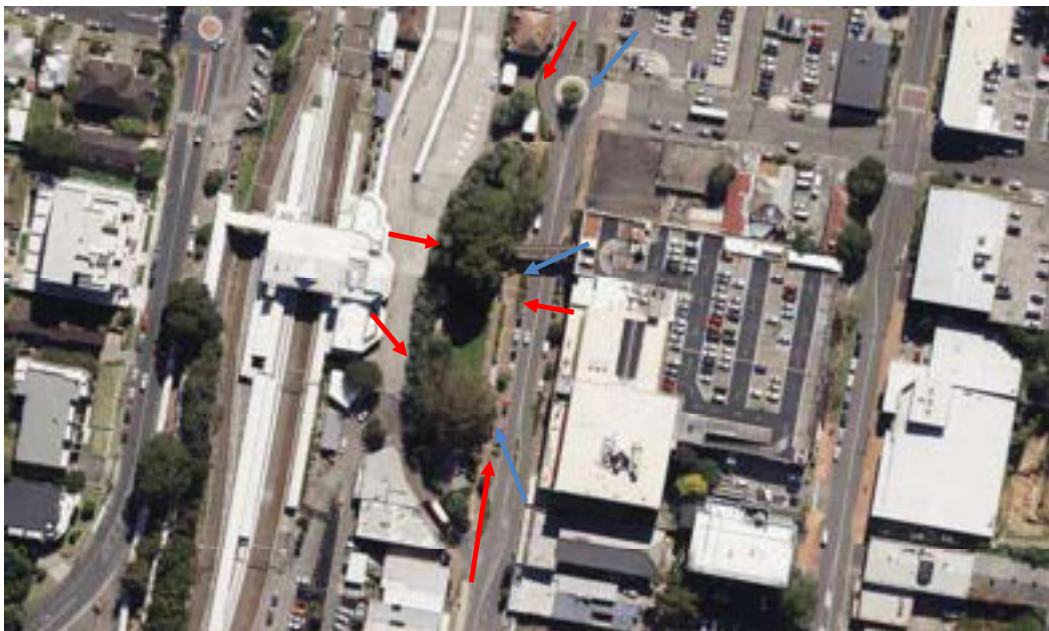


Figure 77: Diagram showing the significant views towards the site. Primary views are shown by blue arrow and secondary views are shown by red arrow.

[Source: NSW Land and Property Information, 2024, with EHC overlay]

5.10.3 Key views from the site

Burns Place is situated within an established urban streetscape setting, surrounded by commercial and civic built forms that comprise the central precinct of the Gosford town centre.

The primary views to and from the site are to and from Mann Street and Burns Crescent / Gosford Station. Whilst these are not significant road corridors within themselves, the pleasant green landscaped setting along the roads contribute to the wider landscaped setting of the site and sensory appeal of the precinct.

Key views from the site are represented in the following images:



Figure 78: View of Mann Street from the centre of Burns Place.



Figure 79: View of Burns Crescent / Gosford Station.

Views from the site are represented in the following diagram and images:



Figure 80: Diagram showing the significant views from the site.
[Source: NSW Land and Property Information, 2024, with EHC overlay]

5.10.4 Key views within the site

Burns Place comprises a number of individual built and landscape elements that collectively make up the site. Each of the built and landscape features have a strong visual and physical relationship owing to the physical proximity, the symmetry and axial pathway alignments that unify the space.

Key views within the site are represented in the following diagram and images:



Figure 81: View of Mann Street from the centre of Burns Place, encompassing the primary arch.



Figure 82: View of transecting pathway, running parallel to Mann Street.



Figure 83: View of central pathway facing towards Burns Crescent.

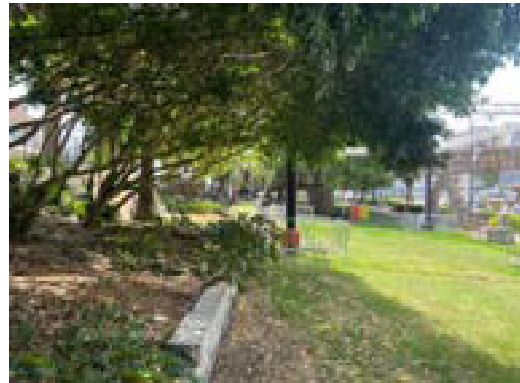


Figure 84: View of park facing north.



Figure 85: View of Memorial Fountain facing west.

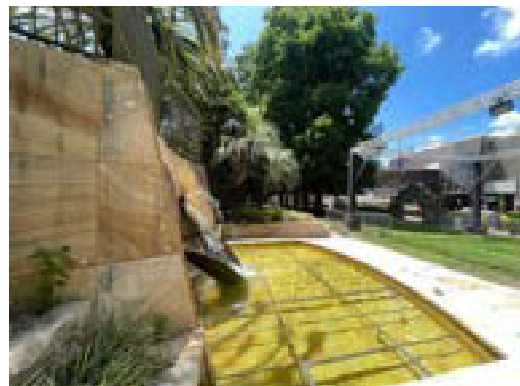


Figure 86: View of the Memorial Fountain facing north.

Views from the site are represented in the following diagram and images:



Figure 87: Diagram showing the significant views within the site
[Source: NSW Land and Property Information, 2024, with EHC overlay]

This section of the page has been intentionally left blank.