

**SOUVENIR GUIDE FOR OPEN DAY.
SATURDAY, 4 JUNE 2005.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS
134-140 MARSDEN STREET &
45-47 MACQUARIE STREET,
PARRAMATTA.**

The purpose of the archaeological investigation is to recover all significant information from the various sites prior to redevelopment.

The excavation began on 9 May 2005 and will run for 10 weeks. On this open day you will be shown the sites on Macquarie Street and a selection of the latest finds.

Site History.

The town of Parramatta was founded by Governor Phillip in 1790. Initially the town allotments were occupied by convicts, who were housed in what are known as “convict huts” - small wattle and daub buildings accommodating from 10 to 14 convicts. Gradually the huts were taken over by free persons. By 1823 the whole town was leased out and the remaining convicts were housed at the Convict Barracks (the site is on Macquarie Street, opposite Governor Phillip High School).

These excavations include the sites of four convict huts, built in the 1790s or 1800s. Two are located on the Macquarie Street frontage, the other two are on the Hunter Street frontage. The one on the corner of Macquarie and Marsden Street became a hotel by 1801 (“The Wheatsheaf” and later “The Shepherd and Flock Inn”) and was leased to John Graham in 1806. The hotel survived until the 1870s.

The sites of the convict huts were redeveloped for housing in the 19th and 20th centuries. The site was most recently used as a car park.

Significance.

The Penal Colony of New South Wales was founded in 1788 and continued to take the overflow from British gaols until the end of transportation in 1841. The buildings and structures associated with transportation form an important group of heritage items, deemed to be of state, if not national significance. The remains of “Convict Huts” are at the opposite end of the social scale of Old Government House

in Parramatta Park, but nonetheless share a common heritage.

“The Wheatsheaf” or “The Shepherd and Flock Inn”, Allotments 17 & 18.

The story of the hotel on the corner of Macquarie & Marsden Streets tells an extraordinary tale of reversal in fortunes.

John Graham was transported to NSW in 1797 with a 7 year sentence. He was a very fortunate convict, who had a faithful wife. She came out with her convicted husband, bringing their children on the same ship. When in NSW, John was assigned as a government servant to his wife and it was Elizabeth Graham who may have operated the hotel on this site from 1801 onwards.

John Graham soon became wealthy. He took out a lease on the hotel in 1806, at this time named “The Wheatsheaf”. With the failure of their marriage, the hotel was sold in 1808. John Graham died in 1809.

*“... a capital and substantial Dwelling House, very desirably situate at the entrance to Parramatta, near the Church, occupying an excellent Allotment on Lease to John Graham, 12 years unexpired – The house contains 6 rooms, with good stabling, well, and out-buildings, having been established in the public line for 7 years past: and known by the Sign of the Wheat Sheaf. For particulars, apply on the premises. Six months or a longer credit will be given on approved security.”
Sydney Gazette, 25 December 1808.*

By 1823, William Sully occupied Allotment 17. He had been transported to NSW in 1790 as a convict. He was again convicted of crimes in the colony, yet by 1814 was a constable – obviously the proverb “set a thief to catch a thief” was followed by the authorities in Parramatta.

Sully sold his building on Allotment 17 to Thomas Reynolds in 1823. Reynolds already possessed the building on Allotment 18.

Thomas Reynolds was transported to NSW in 1816 with a life sentence. He was soon pardoned, married in 1820 and had 2 children by 1824. From 1825 until 1846 he

held the licence to “The Shepherd” or “The Shepherd and Flock Inn”. He died in 1849, but the hotel continued to at least 1870.

While the hotel buildings do not appear to be well preserved, the cellar has survived on Allotment 17. Was this the cellar of “The Wheatsheaf” (1801-1809) or did it belong to the later “Shepherd and Flock Inn” (1825-1846)? This question will be solved by excavation.

Allotment 16.

A small timber cottage or “Convict Hut” was erected on the Macquarie Street frontage by 1804. Although initially occupied by convicts, it was taken over by free persons.

John Walker was a “currency lad”, a “colonial boy”, born in the colony in 1799. He leased this town allotment on 30 June 1823. He was a skilled wheelwright and with a trade he had a secure future. He married Eliza Humm at St. John’s, Parramatta in 1821 and the couple had several children. As well as a wheelwright, John also was a farmer and involved in business in Parramatta.

He could afford to build himself a fine house on Macquarie Street. He converted the lease of his allotment to a grant in 1841, thus securing the improvements he had made to the land. It is likely that he had built the brick house by this time.

John Walker died in 1846, leaving the house to his children. The property was sold in 1864.

The majority of the footings that you can see today date to the 1840s or earlier – we know that because of the sandstock brick type. But the house survived until at least the 1950s.

Yet the archaeological excavation has revealed at least two phases to this brick building as well as the remains of an even earlier structure directly beneath the footings. It is likely that the first structure was a convict hut, even though it has a brick floor.

Subdivision of Allotment 16.

The allotment was subdivided in 1878 and the western part sold for £260, indicating that it already had a house on it. We have

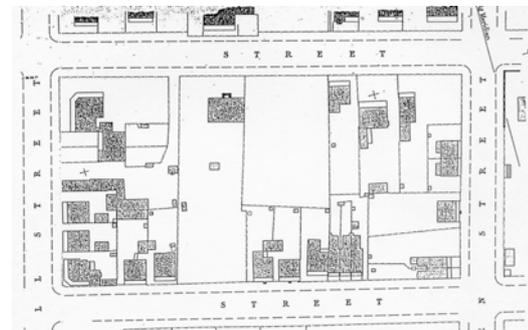
found the brick footings and sandstone fireplaces belonging to this weatherboard cottage. The concrete footings belong to a “Federation” style house built by 1911.



1823 Plan of Parramatta



1844 Map of Parramatta



1894 Map of Parramatta

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Leaflet based on historical research by Terry Kass, 9749-4128. Plans from Lands Dept, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW and State Records Office.