CONSERVATION GUIDELINES
YOUNG STREET TERRACES, SYDNEY
36 - 42 YOUNG STREET, SYDNEY.

W. THORP  B. MCDONALD
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PREAMBLE

This discussion is not a complete conservation plan. That work will be required at a later stage of the competition to provide specific policies for individual elements within the terraces. This work is intended to provide general policies which may guide competitors in use options for the terraces as part of the greater site development. It provides the parameters in which the terraces may be altered and adapted for uses compatible with and complementary to this development.
2.0 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE FOR SITE DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The Evidence for the Site

There is, at this time, limited documentary evidence for the construction and development of the terraces. Additions and adaptations are known of only by inference. The major source of reference is contained within the conservation plan for the First Government House site. Subsequent research has added a little to the existing data base. It will be necessary for additional and more detailed research to be undertaken as part of the conservation plan prepared for the terraces.

2.2 The Early History of the Site and Its Relationship to the First Government House Precinct: 1788 - 1874

The terrace houses occupy land first utilised by out-buildings associated with First Government House. These were removed in 1845-6. In subsequent years, until the construction of the terraces, Elizabeth Street was extended along the boundary of the site, (later named Young Street), and proposals were made to use the site for a town hall. None came to fruition.

The block was subdivided in 1862 and the lots encompassed by the terraces were sold in 1863. They were subsequently twice resold, finally to a builder, Joseph Walker, in 1874. Walker was responsible for building the terraces. It is clear that nothing occupied the site in the period between the Government House occupation and the construction of the terrace houses.

2.3 The Terraces as Government Offices: 1874 - 1937

(Phase I-II Drawings)

Some excavation may have occurred on the site prior to Walker assuming ownership, however, the major period of construction is associated with his purchase. The money raised for the venture was intended for dwelling houses, however, it is clear that the plans were quickly adapted to suit government offices. The building appears to have been completed between the end of 1874 and mid 1875. The new Department of Mines was the first to lease the premises. They occupied Nos 36-40 for three years. No. 42 was occupied by the office of the Chief Inspector of Stocks and Brands.

The Department of Mines opened a Mining and Geological Museum in two of the ground floor rooms
of No. 38 in 1876. This remained in the terrace until 1881 when it was removed to a new location. The Mines Department moved approximately two years later.

A ground plan of the building in 1880 shows the terraces with attached WC blocks and yards. A separate museum building is noted as well, which suggests that the collection may have been moved from the terraces by this time. This arrangement was current in 1884. By 1888 it is possible that some extensions had been made to the northernmost WC, although the evidence is far from certain.

By the end of the century the buildings were said to be severely overcrowded. This situation was only partially alleviated by the construction of the new building for Public Works on the corner of Philip and Bridge Streets.

The buildings continued to be occupied by a variety of government offices during the first decades of the twentieth century. In 1910 they were used as offices by the Friendly Society, Trade Unions and Old Age Pensions. By 1936, when they were vacated, they formed the office of the Government Statistician.

2.4 The Terraces as Nurses' Accommodation: 1937 - 1982

(Phase III Drawing)

In 1937 work was carried out to renovate the buildings to prepare them as emergency occupation for Sydney Hospital nurses. The hospital was, at that time, suffering from severe overcrowding. It is unclear exactly what work was carried out for this new function. The building was painted and hot water services were provided. It has been suggested that bathroom and kitchen facilities were added at this time although there is no documentary evidence available to support this contention.

It has been presumed that the two extensions at the back of the terraces date from this period of work. An imprecisely dated plan of the 1930s, from the MWSDB, shows all the current additions to be in situ. In July 1948 unspecified work, for bathrooms and kitchens, was carried out and in 1949 the yard outside the kitchen was said to be in a poor state.

In 1967 the area at the back of the houses was made into a car park. From the 1960s onwards little was spent on the houses to maintain them. The hospital gave up the buildings in 1982.
2.5 The Terraces as Storage Space: 1982 - 1988

During the period that the site has been subject to archaeological investigation the terraces have been used for storage of equipment, records and artefacts. The artefacts and records are still housed there. A number of rooms were also used for office space during the excavation and post excavation phases of work. Other than establishing the power supply and installing a security system no further work has been carried out on the building during this time.
3.0 **THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

A comprehensive and detailed analysis of the individual components of the buildings has not yet been undertaken. This will be a task of the conservation plan. However, it is possible to make preliminary observations regarding the physical evidence contained within the buildings and various extensions.

The limited documentary evidence available for this site increases the importance of the evidence which may be contained within the buildings. This may prove to be the only way of determining the full history of development of the terraces and the various extensions and additions.

3.1 **The Terraces**

The terraces reveal evidence of the original intention, immediate and subsequent changes made to suit new requirements. At least three phases of work are evident and possibly more. These phases relate to the original plan and its immediate alterations to suit the new function; later alterations and additions to the government offices (from the later nineteenth century or early years of the twentieth century) and, finally, the renovations carried out for the hospital use.

The building consists of four units, each of three storeys and a basement, interconnected on all floors. These interconnections are now perceived as long enclosed corridors. This is a result of later partitioning which created the enclosed spaces, however, the original plan depended more on the flow between rooms (Phase I Drawing). It is clear from the plan that each unit was designed, originally, to be separate from the others although this appears to have never been effected. The mirror image staircases and individual entrance doors are the best indicators of this intention. (The southernmost staircase has been removed).

The basements may be entered from outside the building, down flights of stairs on the eastern side of the terraces or from inside on the ground floor. There are also openings in the basements to the space under the verandahs on the western side of the building. It is unclear whether this area may have formed a delivery area, from the street, for articles such as coal.

The main entrances are from Young Street. These are
now boarded up. There are back doors to the buildings on the eastern elevations.

The original plan of the building appears to have allowed two rooms per floor, some divided by folding doors (Phase I Drawing).

The basements are constructed of sandstone with concrete floors. The rest of the building is constructed of rendered brick with timber floors. The roof is clad in iron. The verandah and balcony guards are made from cast iron. The doors, windows and party walls have moulded stucco detailing.

The major internal walls of the building are of thick, rendered masonry. There are a variety of partitions which divide the internal spaces, mainly fibro or fine profiled, beaded tongue and groove boards. A dado line is visible on the walls in the stair wells. The different materials and workmanship evidenced in the various partitions indicate the various phases of work.

There are a number of original doors still in situ. Some have been re-used in different parts of the building. Other doors, particularly those through partitions, relate to later phases of work. There is at least one blocked door in the basement and two infill door openings, one on the ground floor and a second on the top floor.

Most of the windows are original and retain their joinery and furniture. At least one window has been introduced (in a ground floor room) and two bricked up (over the southern staircase and in the former back wall of the building at the southern end). One original staircase window, with coloured glass panes, remains although partially obscured by an introduced floor level.

There are three major types of ceiling evident in the building: plain plastered, ripple iron and plaster divided into panels with decorative battens. The few ceiling roses remaining in the terraces relate to the plaster and batten type ceilings. The ground and first floor ceilings are generally more ornate with deep cornice mouldings.

A variety of skirting-boards are evident within the building ranging from high, detailed profiles to flat beading at the base of partitions.

Most fireplaces are still exposed and at least three different designs, some ornate, are to be found. A few have been boarded or bricked up and rendered
over. Only one marble surround is found in the terraces the others are of carved timber with cast iron grates.

The building has been painted throughout and this is now badly peeling. There is no visible evidence of earlier decorative schemes. There is also no visible evidence of earlier services and fixtures such as gas lighting.

3.2 The "Linkage" Elements - Former WCs (East Elevation of Terraces)

These elements were part of the original construction but have been added to and extended during later phases of work. They were two, single storey WCs symmetrically placed at the back of the terraces. These appear to be the WCs seen on the 1880 and 1884 ground plans of the buildings. They are made of rendered brick and probably had a gable or skillion roof. They are keyed into the main building and now act to link the terraces with the two later building extensions. Both have been converted for new functions.

The northernmost link has an entry porch and toilet at ground level on the northern side. An awning extends over the southern ground floor level. There is a two storey infill extension above this link providing access from the terraces to the brick services block.

The middle section of this infill is rendered but appears to be composed of the same style of brickwork as the service block. Window details within it and the service block are also similar. This infill section is not keyed to the main building and a substantial gap has opened between the two. The service block appears to have settled at a different rate to the terrace, causing the infill to sag.

The second floor infill is in a style and materials which correspond with the second major extension to the terrace i.e. of fibro and battens. The ceiling in the middle level of the infill has been exposed as lathe and plaster.

The southern WC has been widened, north and south, by small brick additions. This entire structure has been subsumed by the fibro addition which extends above it. At ground level, attached to the eastern facade of the WC, a separate shower and WC have been constructed from weatherboards.
3.3 The Northern Brick Service Block

This addition relates to a later phase of work on the terrace. It is constructed in common dry-pressed bricks. It is three storeys in height, the ground floor most recently used as a kitchen, the upper two housing showers and toilets.

The kitchen is reached via the ground floor linkage under the awning. Entry to the shower and toilets in the two storeys above is via the infill linkage.

The kitchen contains fittings and fixtures from the earlier twentieth century. The showers and toilets were constructed with painted timber partitions and simple panel doors. The plumbing is chromium plated. At least one door leading to the link sections has cedar jambs, reveals and architraves. All are simple panel types.

3.4 The Southern Fibro "Dormitory" Extension

This building also represents a later phase of work on the terraces. It is located behind the southern section of the terrace at first and second floor levels only. It completely subsumes the ground floor link. It is two storeys in height; the ground floor is open with only a weatherboard shower and privy attached to the back of the former WC.

The extension opens directly into the back of the terrace, part of the original back wall having been removed to accommodate it. The various rooms are formed of plain painted fibro partitions. Only one phase of work is evidenced in this building.

3.5 The Boiler Room

This is attached to the north-eastern side of the brick service block. It is a single storey shed on a brick platform. The walls and roof are formed from iron sheets. It houses a hot water service.

3.6 Out-house

A single storey dry-pressed brick room with corrugated iron skillion roof. It is located on the northern side of the brick service block. The brickwork of this structure is not bonded into the building. There is a window in the north wall.
4.0 INTERPRETATION

The documentary and physical evidence available at this time provide some guidance in determining the development of the building since its first construction.

4.1 Phase I: Original Plan

The evidence clearly points to these buildings having been designed as four separate residences. Each had an entry from Young Street, a rear door, WC and basement. On the ground floor a main room opened from an entrance hall. A second room had access to a back passage which gave onto the stairs. The first floor had two rooms opening from the landing. The front room had access to the balcony through French doors. The top floor repeated this pattern. It is unclear from the available evidence how much it was originally intended to interconnect, if at all, rooms on each level.

(Phase I Drawing)

4.2 Phase II: Changes Made for Offices

The initial adaptations made for the offices left the residential terraces largely intact. Minor concessions were made in terms of opening rooms into each other and creating openings between the individual terraces.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century it appears probable that a number of partitions had been added to the terraces to create separate small offices. Entrance foyers were created in at least three of the terraces.

The major addition made during the period of office accommodation was the brick service block on the north-eastern side of the terraces. This, and the first floor infill link above the earlier WC, appear to have been built during the early years of the twentieth century, possibly prior to WWI. The additional facilities were probably a response to the greater concern for and understanding of sanitation at this time as well as the greater number of people working in the building. The ground floor, now a kitchen, probably served as showers and toilets in the original design. It is possible that the weatherboard shower and privy attached to the eastern side of the original southern WC was built during this phase.
4.3 Phase III: Changes Made for Nurses' Accommodation

Most of the internal partitions now seen in the terraces date to this phase of development. These have acted to greatly reduce the size of the rooms as well as to create a perception of long transverse corridors which were not part of the original design.

The most significant creation of this phase of work was the construction of the second major extension on the eastern side of the terrace. This fibro and batten building appears to have acted as a dormitory wing. Its construction caused the demolition of part of the south-eastern back wall of the terrace and, presumably, the removal of this staircase and the subsequent bricking in of windows.

The second storey infill link between the terrace and the northern service block also dates to this period. It is likely that the shed housing the hot water service was also built to accommodate this occupation.

(Phase III Drawing)
5.0 **SIGNIFICANCE**

The Young Street terraces must be assessed on two levels of significance. The first is their importance as part of the greater First Government House site development. The second is their own intrinsic historical worth as individual elements.

5.1 **As Part of the First Government House Site Development**

The Young Street terraces are significant because they demonstrate the later, post government house, phase of site development. They are the only buildings out of many which utilised the vacant site to remain in situ.

They symbolise the changing attitudes to and perceptions of the place. By the time of their construction the site had been forgotten and devalued as an historic site. Roads, services and buildings encroached on the evidence of the earlier buildings. Part of the terrace also covers a small portion of the First Government House site material.

5.2 **As An Individual Historical Item**

The Young Street terraces are significant because of their relationship to the surrounding streetscape in design, scale, form and materials.

They are significant because of their historical associations in the surrounding streetscape. They were part of the early development of this area as a leading government administrative centre. They have associations with a number of figures important in the colonial bureaucracy.

They are significant because they are a rare survival within the CBD of essentially residential buildings. The original adaptations made for office accommodation were minor and the scale and intention of the residences is still obvious. However, and in addition, these adaptations do offer a clear perception of nineteenth century administrative practice and provide insights into the burgeoning colonial public service.

5.3 **Degrees of Significance**

It is considered that those elements which relate to the original construction and subsequent changes made for office accommodation are of high
significance. They illustrate most clearly the changing attitudes to and perceptions of the site, as well as representing the most historically important period of use both in terms of its relationship to the surrounding streetscape as well as the individual historical development of the buildings.

Those elements which post-date the period of office accommodation are considered to be of low significance. These relate to the period of accommodation for nurses which was an incidental function of the buildings, rather than planned occupancy.
6.0 CONSERVATION GUIDELINES AND USE OPTIONS

6.1 Conservation Guidelines

Areas to be Conserved

All those elements which are deemed to be of high significance i.e. those associated with the original construction and changes made to suit office accommodation. This includes the basements, all walls, partitions, internal detailing, windows, doors, joinery, fireplaces, external privies, the northern service block and the infill linkages between this and the terrace and first and second storey levels.

(Phase I, II Drawings).

Areas Which May Be Removed

These include all those elements added for the nurses' accommodation; all internal partitions specified as such, the southern dormitory extension and the boiler house. The one exception to this shall be the second floor infill over the northern linkage. This will be required to gain access to the service block at this level as well as form an interpretative element.

(Phase III Drawing)

Restoration

The removal of the southern dormitory block may necessitate the rebuilding of the back wall of the terrace at the junction point. This is an acceptable procedure, however, it is considered inappropriate to reinstate the missing staircase at this point. It is also considered inappropriate to restore internal detailing which has been removed as part of the historical process for example, ceiling roses or ceilings, skirting boards etc.

Additional Work

All elements which are removed should be preceded by a comprehensive recording programme.

Any disturbance of sub-floor areas should be accompanied by archaeological supervision and recording.
Investigation should be made to uncover any evidence of earlier colour and decorative schemes.

Prior to any work being carried out a full conservation plan and additional historical research should be completed.

6.2 **Appropriate Use Options**

The primary objective of the work is to conserve and interpret the foundations of First Government House and its out-buildings. It is anticipated that this will require additional facilities such as a theatrette, bookshop, display areas etc. The Young Street terraces are to be incorporated in this Interpretation Centre.

In view of the historical role that the terrace has played in the development of this site the following is recommended:

6.2.1 That all interpretation relating to the First Government House phase (1788 - 1846) be confined to the area behind the terraces i.e. that this phase is divorced from any displays incorporated in the terrace. If this interpretation requires any museum items or artefacts which need environmentally controlled conditions, these should also be constructed outside the terraces.

6.2.2 Interpretation of the later history of the site, 1846 onwards, should be developed in the terraces. The terraces may also serve as space for book sales, offices, refreshment areas. A small theatrette could be incorporated in the building. The most appropriate space for this is on the second floor in the central rooms. Toilet and wash-room facilities and a kitchen may be developed in the northern service block.

It is possible that visitors to the site could enter from Young Street and, through interpretative displays, go from the present day through the later nineteenth century and then progress to the back of the terraces where further displays explain the earliest history of the site. The various physical remains on the site present the prime exhibits for each phase; the remaining infill link the nurses' occupation, the terraces the later nineteenth century period and the foundations the early site history.

6.2.3 It is also considered appropriate that displays relating to the archaeological work and process be developed in the terrace. These could incorporate,
at various times, "live" demonstrations of various facets of the work, particularly if later archaeological work is carried on at the site.

However, it is not considered appropriate, as has been suggested in the conservation plan, that an urban archaeological unit be established in the terraces. The space is inadequate and it may detract from the primary objective of the work. This unit would be better served by the development of, for example, warehouse space.