

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

103-105 QUARRY STREET,

ULTIMO



March 1999

For Rodepic Pty Ltd

Wendy Thorp
Cultural Resources Management

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SECTION 1.0

PRECIS OF THE REPORT

The subject of this investigation is the archaeological resource which may be contained within the land at 103-105 Quarry Street, Ultimo. The report has been prepared to meet the conditions of Sydney City Council with respect to the redevelopment of this site. Its principal objectives are to determine if there are historical archaeological issues to be addressed in the course of future development and, if so, the most appropriate means of managing them.

Situated on the edge of a ridge which probably supported scrub and taller stands of timber, the study area was first alienated for European purposes in 1806 as one of several grants which made up Surgeon John Harris' Ultimo Estate. His home was at Ultimo House, now within the site of Sydney Technical College. There is no evidence to show that the study area was ever used or developed, apart from being cleared, throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The estate was subdivided in 1859 but the study area was not developed until 1882. The two terraces and their out-buildings which now occupy the study area were the first and only buildings and works to occupy this land.

It may be concluded with respect to a potential archaeological resource that;

- there is no evidence to show that the site was developed in any way, other than cleared, until the 1880s;
- prior to development the site, which was on the slope of a ridge, may have been filled and levelled to some degree to accommodate the new development. No physical testing of the site has been made to confirm this;
- the first and only known European occupation of the site was the construction of the two terraces and their out-buildings, all still standing, as part of a larger speculative development in 1881-1882;
- the site is unlikely to contain substantial or significant archaeological evidence of occupation or development except for the above ground structures. Municipal collections had already commenced by this period and it is more than likely that most wastes were removed from the site. The type of construction of the buildings precluded the accumulation of a sub-floor artefact deposit.

The potential archaeological resource of this site is assessed to have minimal significance.

It is proposed to demolish the existing buildings and construct a three storey building in their place. This will require excavation of the study area. The assessment has

shown that there is unlikely to be any substantial archaeological resource within the site other than fill. There is no requirement for investigation or recording of this material.

It is recommended that:

- **no further archaeological work be undertaken for this site. The proponents of the development will not be required to make application for an Excavation Permit. from the Heritage Council of NSW.**

SECTION 2.0

THE INVESTIGATION

2.1 The Study Area and Subject

The subject of this investigation are the two properties at 103 and 105 Quarry Street Ultimo. These two sites are occupied by terraces now used in part for commercial purposes. The buildings occupy the southern side of Quarry Street and the eastern side wall of the terrace at 105 returns along Kirk Street. The site, referred to in this report as "the study area", is within the Parish of St Andrew in the City of Sydney.

The investigation broadly encompasses the European "heritage" values of this site with respect to a possible archaeological resource. Heritage values are understood to mean the appreciation of and value placed upon the resource by contemporary society in terms of the criteria expressed in the Burra Charter and formalised by the Heritage Office of NSW. Archaeological evidence, or relics, is defined by the Heritage Act of NSW to be physical evidence (structures, features, soils, deposits and portable artefacts) that provide evidence of the development of NSW, of non-Aboriginal origin and fifty or more years in age.

This report does not address the issue of Aboriginal relics.

2.2 Status of the Site

The site has not been the subject of any earlier archaeological assessment or investigation. Neither allotment has been recognised in the Pyrmont Ultimo Archaeological Master Plan to be of potential significance.

The buildings have been the subject of a heritage impact assessment (Rod Howard Conservation Pty Ltd, *103-105 Quarry Street Ultimo Heritage Assessment and Statement of Heritage Impact*, 1998).

2.3 Methodology

This report has been prepared in accordance with the principles established by the Heritage Office of New South Wales presented in *"Archaeological Assessment Guidelines"* (Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, 1996).

2.4 Objectives and Tasks

The principal objectives of the work have been to identify whether there is an archaeological issue to be addressed prior to or during the course of redevelopment. This report identifies what may be retained in the ground as an archaeological resource, the significance of that material and the most appropriate means of

managing it in the event of it being disturbed during the course of future development. To this end the following tasks have been undertaken:

- primary and secondary historical research sufficient to determine the physical development of this site;
- a review of the available physical evidence;
- a determination of the probable archaeological resource;
- an evaluation of cultural significance with reference to standard criteria;
- recommendations for management strategies;
- complete documentation of the programme to standards acceptable to Council and the Heritage Office of NSW.

2.5 Authorship, Client and Acknowledgements

This report has been written and researched by Wendy Thorp to meet the requirements of Sydney City Council. It has been prepared on behalf of Rodepic Pty Ltd. The work draws on both primary and secondary sources. A complete bibliography is attached to this report (Section 7.2).

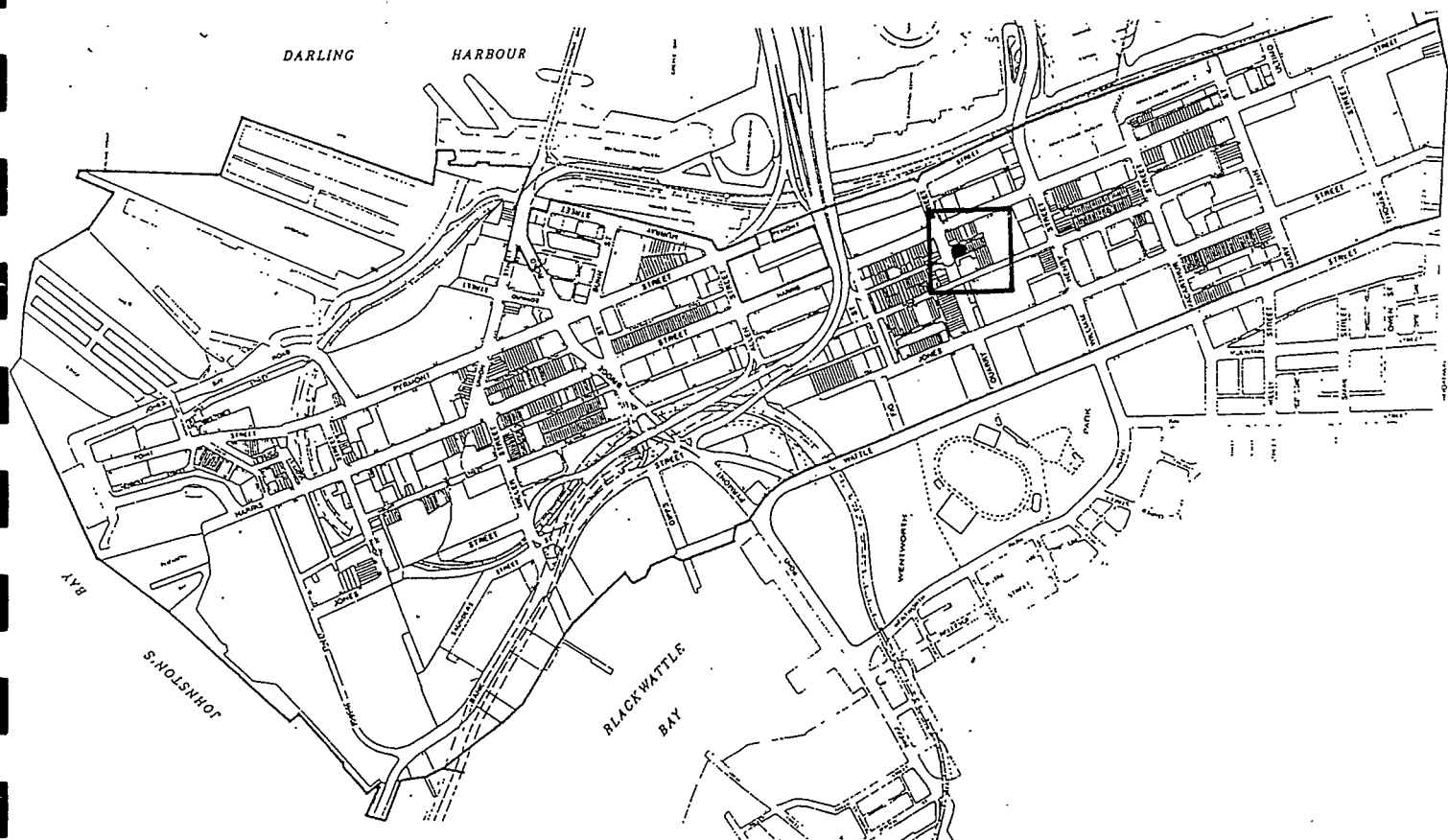


Figure: The Study Area

SECTION 3.0

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This section presents evidence derived from archival sources which is used to describe the evolution and occupation of the study area. This description provides the basis for assessing what may be retained in the ground as archaeological evidence of that development as well as providing a context for determining the significance of that resource.

The archival information is presented in three sections which are:

- The Pre-European Environment
- Alienation: The Harris Family Estate
- Subdivision - Commercial Development

3.1 The Pre-European Environment

Cockle Bay, in the years before it acquired that name, was much deeper in extent than it would come to be in the years of European settlement. The head waters of this bay lapped at what would be later the site of Hay Street. Where the bay met the land it was marshy, swampy ground with numerous rivulets feeding into it; at low tide it was covered with sand and mud. The swamps were fringed with mangroves (*Avicennia* and or *Aegiceras* sp), ti-tree (*Mealucca* sp.), swampy oak (*casuarina glauca*) and swamp mahogany (*Eucalyptus robusta*) (1).

Beyond the marshy flats were gently sloping footslopes, prone to seasonal waterlogging, which were covered with sandy clay loam. With an underlying geology of Hawkesbury sandstone they supported scrub that gave way to heavily forested hills. The tree cover here included Sydney peppermint (*Eucalyptus piperita*), red bloodwood (*Eucalyptus gummifera*), blackbutt (*Eucalyptus pilularis*) and smooth barked Angophora Costata (2). The trees and scrub rose up the ridge that would be later developed for the suburbs of Pymont and Ultimo. Contemporary images show the upper slopes to have been densely covered in vegetation.

The position of the study area on the rising part of the slope suggests that originally this land was covered with scrub and some taller timber. It may have suffered some erosion. It seems likely that this pre-European environment survived for some considerable time at least into the middle part of the nineteenth century. It is also likely for this reason that less evidence of the process of clearance would be found in the sub-soil; the original harsh methods of deforestation and burning had been modified to some degree by the later part of the nineteenth century.

3.2 Alienation: The Harris Family Estate

The study area occupies a small portion of one of several land grants and purchases made to and by Surgeon John Harris that, collectively, came to be known as the Ultimo Estate. Harris acquired over two hundred acres in this area between 1803 and 1818. The study area is located in a grant of 135 acres made to Harris from Governor King on 1 January 1806 (1).

The Ultimo Estate had its focus at Ultimo House a two storey Georgian mansion the site of which is now within the grounds of Sydney Technical College. There is no evidence to suggest that Harris made any particular use of the land within the study area other than , perhaps, clearing it. The earliest survey of the estate, from 1837, shows the area to the north of Ultimo House to be completely devoid of any development.

Harris died in 1838 leaving his estate intact. Due to uncertainties with respect to the position of the legatees no subdivisions were made of this great tract until 1859. Ultimo remained essentially a rural landscape with some quarrying at the northern end for the first half of the nineteenth century. The only thoroughfare was Harris Street. There is no evidence to suggest that any of the land on or around the study area was developed except by clearance until the second half of the nineteenth century.

3.3 Subdivision - Commercial Development

Although the subdivision of the Ultimo Estate was made in 1856, with the study area being numbered Block 31, sale of the land or leases was not initiated until 1859. After that year a massive building programme was undertaken which led to Ultimo rapidly taking over Pyrmont as one of the most densely populated inner city areas. It was largely occupied by working class people very often employed in the district in the various trades and industries which had their premises there.

The study area is shown to be vacant on the 1865 town survey (1). In 1864 when Dr Dunmore Lang was looking at the proposed site of the church now in Quarry Street close to the study area he described the place as a barren hill between a quarry and the railway line (2). It was perhaps this unprepossessing environment that delayed any development of the site until the early 1880s. At that time the southern side of Quarry Street, which until that then had not even appeared in City Directory listings, was encompassed in a speculative estate development, apart from the Church and Manse which were built on land set aside by the provisions of Harris' will.

The first owner of the two allotments was A. Johnson. An undated subdivision plan shows that he also owned the land on the other side of Kirk Street to the intersection of Quarry and Harris Streets (3). He appears to have purchased the land in 1881 and, by 1882, he had constructed on the study area two terraces both used for commercial purposes. They were both described in Council Rates, their first appearance in 1882, as brick-built, with iron roofs, of two storeys and five rooms each. These are the buildings that now occupy the site (4). This form of speculative subdivision was a feature of the Sydney real estate market from the 1870s to the early 1890s, often referred to as the boom years, when a buoyant economy encouraged the development of vast tracts of previously unavailable or unattractive land for those seeking to live and work close to the centre of the city.

The earliest and only plan of the new terraces was completed a few years after the buildings were constructed, in 1888. This survey shows the two terraces with their out-buildings; the yard space was almost completely built over at that time (5).

The first tenant of 103 was John McClour and of 105 was J.J. King. These were superseded by a greengrocer, Thomas Buckle, and a butcher, Thomas Brett (6). Since the 1880s until the present day the terraces have been continuously occupied by a variety of tenants particularly those of James Moodie, greengrocer, who occupied 103 Quarry Street between 1911 and 1930 and John Edward Herron, a butcher at 105 Quarry Street for the same period. Council records indicate that there have been few formal applications for change to either building. Inspection of the site shows that, particularly in the twentieth century, the buildings have been subject to considerable alteration.

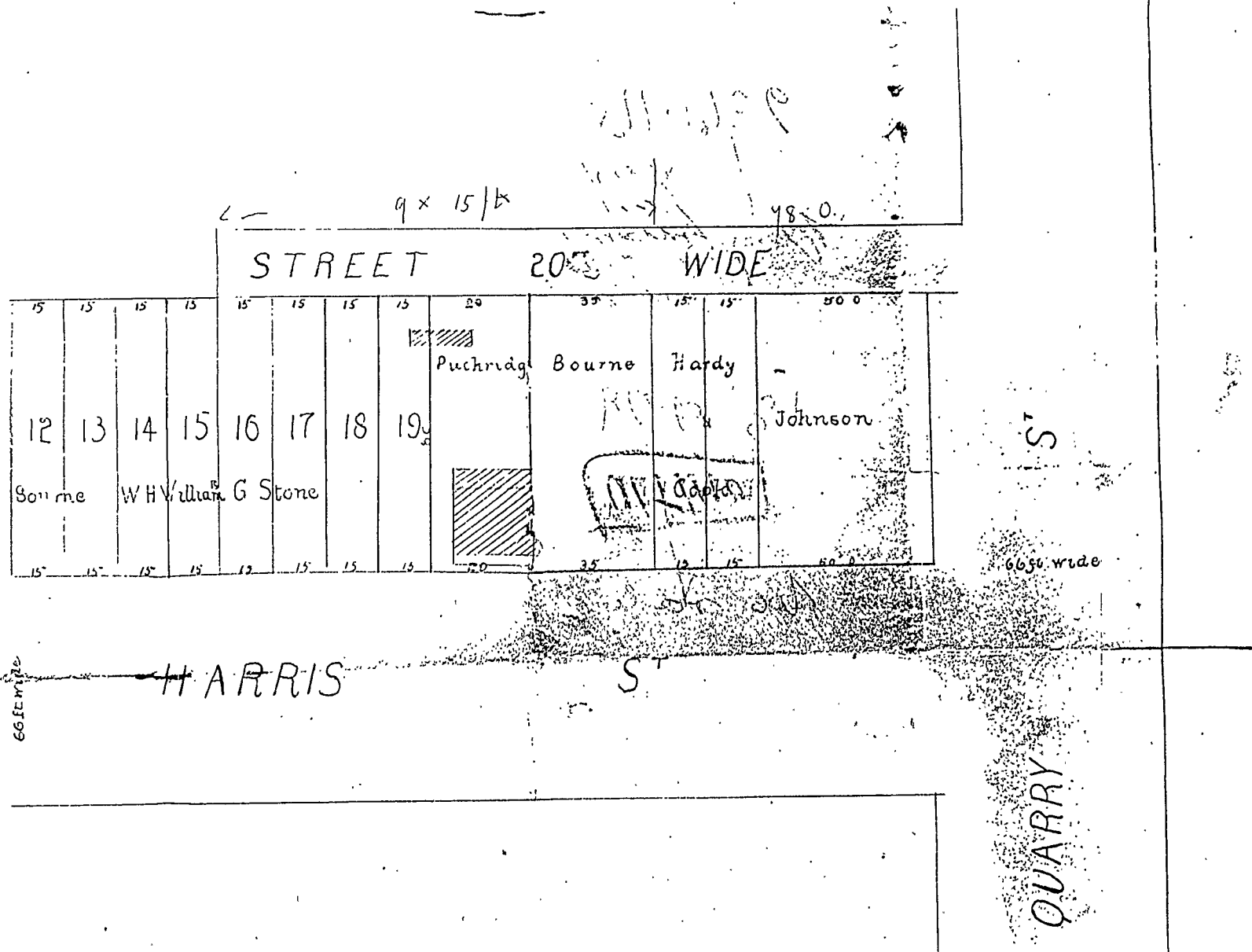
Pl. of Birch on
Alamo

Charles Moore

Pt. Block 31

Ultimo Est

7¹/₂. St Andrew

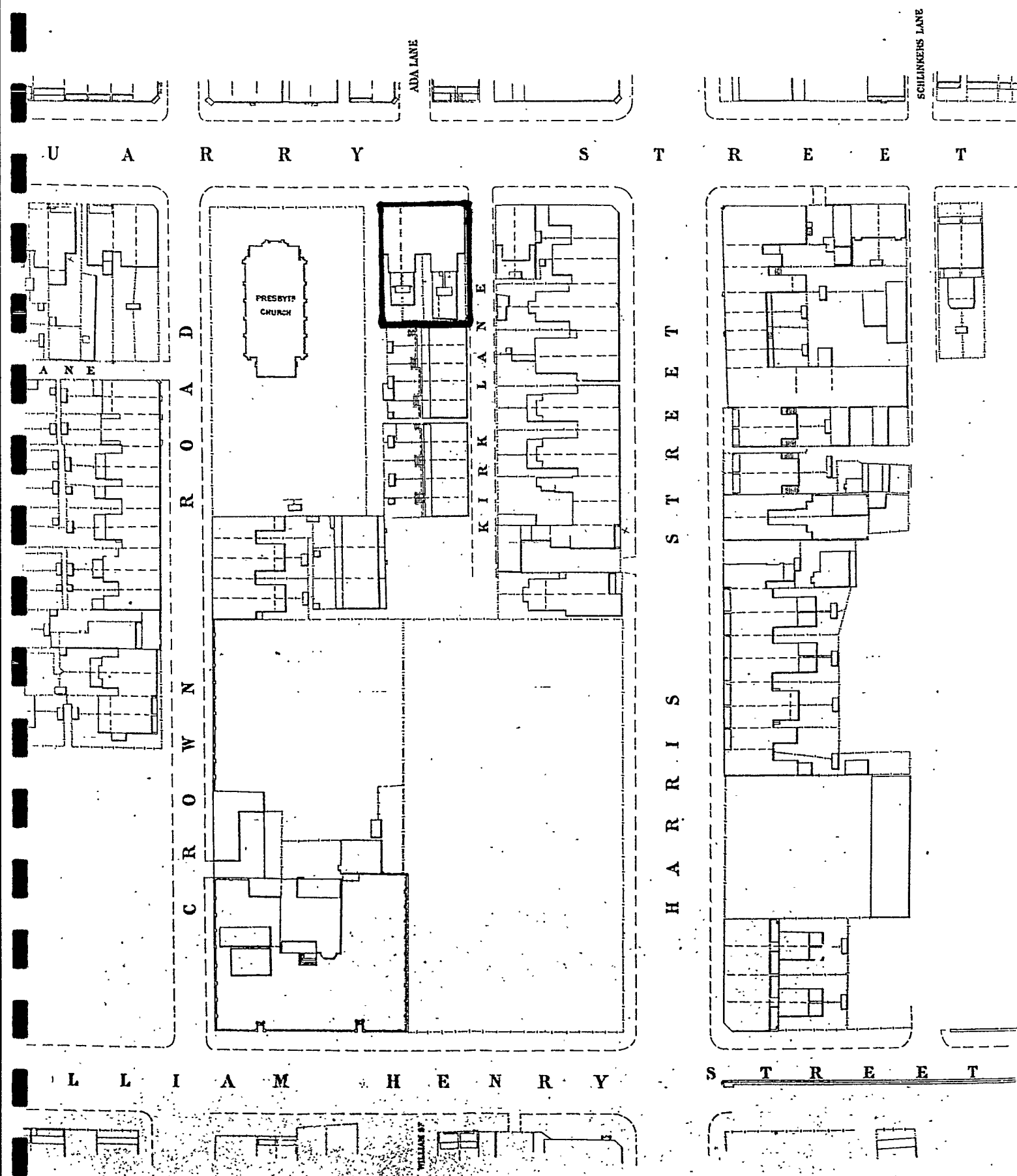


Undated subdivision plan showing the extent of Johnson's land to Harris Street (Source ML SP811.1736/16)

CITY OF SYDNEY

SHEET R3

The study area in 1888 (Source: ML M Ser4 811.17/1)



SECTION 4.0

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

4.1 Topography

The study area is located on part of the slope leading down to the waters of Cockle Bay. It is likely that some fill has been introduced to the site to level it prior to the construction of the two terraces.

4.2 Structures and Services

The terraces and out-buildings which presently occupy the site are those buildings erected in 1881-2. These were the first and only European buildings on this land. There are no surveys or plans which show in detail these terraces as they were first built but comparison of the 1888 survey with the present structures suggest that, although modified to some degree the buildings have not essentially changed their envelope from the original design. The single storey service wings behind the terraces still survive with minor additions. These have built over most of the small amount of space which originally had been open.

The introduction of new services, changes to finishes and replacement of features such as the shopfronts have left little evidence of the original character and appearance of these buildings.

Within the house, the type of construction typical for the period, particularly tongue and groove floor boards, precludes the accumulation of a sub-floor cultural deposit.

4.3 Geo-Technical Evidence

No tests have been made on this site.

4.4 Conclusions

It may be concluded that;

- there is no evidence to show that the site was developed in any way, other than cleared, until the 1880s;
- prior to development the site, which was on the slope of a ridge, may have been filled and levelled to some degree to accommodate the new development. No physical testing of the site has been made to confirm this;

- the first and only known European occupation of the site was the construction of the two terraces and their out-buildings, all still standing, as part of a larger speculative development in 1881-1882;
- the site is unlikely to contain archaeological evidence of occupation or development except for the above ground structures. Municipal collections had already commenced by this period and it is more than likely that most wastes were removed from the site. The construction techniques employed in the terraces precluded the development of a substantial sub-floor deposit.



The side boundary of 103 Quarry Street

The terraces from Quarry Street, 105 to the left.



The side wall of 105 Quarry Street



Inside 105 Quarry Street, the service wing, looking to the front and to the back.

SECTION 5.0

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 Evaluation Criteria

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

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

An historical analysis provides the context for assessing significance. This analysis is presented in Section 3.0. An assessment of significance is made by applying standard evaluation criteria to the facts of the item's development and associations. These criteria are divided into two categories:

- Nature of Significance
- Comparative Significance

The four basic criteria used in the **nature of significance** category are those of Evolution and Associations (Historic), Creative and Technical Accomplishment (Aesthetic), Community Esteem (Social) and Research Potential (Scientific). **Comparative significance** is assessed according to rarity or representative values.

Items have value if they meet at least one of the nature of significance criteria and are good examples of either or both of the comparative criteria.

5.2 Assessment of Significance

The material contained in this site, most likely to be fill deposited during the last years of the nineteenth century to accommodate a commercial development and use of the site, is assessed to have no cultural significance as a scientific resource. Examination of the material will reveal no more information than is now available from archival sources or other physical evidence. There is unlikely to be any evidence of any buildings within this property which pre-date those still standing.

It is highly unlikely that the under-floor deposits of the house will have any value as an archive of occupation; the construction techniques of the period preclude the accumulation of material of this nature. Municipal collections are likely to have removed the potential for the accumulation of any significant artefact resource in the yard spaces.

The site is assessed to have minimal significance as a cultural resource.

SECTION 6.0

MANAGEMENT

6.1 The Proposal

It is proposed to demolish the buildings on this site, excavate it and build a three storey building in place of the terraces.

6.2 Management of the Archaeological Resource

This analysis has identified that the proposed development is unlikely to disturb relics. It will not be necessary, therefore, for the proponents of the development to make application to the Heritage Council for an Excavation Permit prior to the commencement of the work.

It should be noted, however, that should any deposit, feature or relic of substance and significance be exposed during the course of excavation the owners/managers of the site are required to notify the Heritage Office of NSW. Relics are protected by the Heritage Act of NSW which requires responsible management of them.

It is recommended that:

- **no further archaeological work be undertaken for this site. The proponents of the development will not be required to make application for an Excavation Permit from the Heritage Council of NSW.**

SECTION 7.0

DOCUMENTATION

7.1 Endnotes

Section 3.1

1. Evidence derived from excavation of Paddys Market. Godden Mackay and Wendy Thorp, *Market City Development Paddys Market Archaeological Excavation Volume 2*, 35.
2. Doug Benson and Jocelyn Howell, *Taken for Granted The Bushland of Sydney and Its Suburbs*, 42.

Section 3.2

1. M. Matthews, *Pymont and Ultimo A History*, 11.

Section 3.3

1. NSW Water Sewerage and Drainage Board, *Trigonometrical Survey of Sydney 1865 Sheet*.
2. Quoted in Michael Matthews, *Pymont and Ultimo A History*, 36.
3. Part Block 31 Ultimo Estate, ML Subdivision Plans SP 811.1736/16
4. Sydney City Council Rate Assessment Books, Quarry Street 1882.
5. NSW Department of Lands, *Metropolitan Detail Series Sydney Sheet R3, 1883*.
6. Sands and Kenny City Directory 1882 - 1932.

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7.2.1 Books and Reports

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Rockvale Pty Ltd. 1993.

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Pymont and Ultimo A History
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7.2.2 Guides and Directories

Sands and Kenney
City and Suburban Directory 1858-1932

7.2.3 Land, Property and Council Records

Council of the City of Sydney
Rate Assessment Books 1858 - 1945

Council of the City of Sydney
Records of Building and Development Applications

7.2.4 Maps and Plans

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Trigonometrical Survey of Sydney 1865 Sheet*
Sydney City Council Archives.

Part Block 31 Ultimo Estate (ND)
ML Subdivision Plans SP811.1736/16

NSW Department of Lands
Metropolitan Detail Series Sydney Sheet R3, 1883
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