

PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY FRIENDS INC.
NEWSLETTER – ISSUE NO:14 MARCH - APRIL 2017

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<https://www.facebook.com/parrafactory/>
petition: <https://www.change.org/p/parramatta-female-factory-federal-petition-for-world-heritage>



The Parramatta Female Factory - Augustus Earle 1826 – nla.pic-an2818460 National Library of Australia (NLA)

Patrons: Meg Keneally & Thomas Michael Keneally AO
President: June Bullivant OAM **Vice President:** Judith Dunn OAM
Treasurer/Public Officer: Kerima-Gae Topp
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Committee: History Project Anne Mathews Beth Matthews
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The next General meeting is **FRIDAY 21st April 2017**
Guest speaker at 1:30 pm - General meeting at 2:30 pm at
The Coach House Hambleton Cottage, Hassall Street Parramatta.

Dear Members

Over the last month your committee have been working hard to get an outcome that will save the Female Factory Heritage Core for future generations. We have members who are knowledgeable about the site's history and who have skills in a wide range of topics. This allows people to attend meetings and report back on some of the State Government's future plans at the site.



Urban Growth NSW has been invited as speaker at our April members' meeting to present the proposed plans for the site. We have attached core questions raised at the recent UGNSW meeting with PFFF and NPRAG together with the responses we have received.

Thank you to Committee members Anne, Beth and Ronda, who have been working with Amiel Dizon (our website and logo designer) on visual resources that can be used to assist with informing the community about the factory footprint at this unique site. Thanks to Amiel for his time and support.

Individual members are working hard, writing their concerns and having them published in the local news. Facebook is also a successful forum with a graphic designed by Ronda for Facebook having 1628 views in 24 hours. Instagram, set up by Gay has also gained traction: <https://www.instagram.com/pfffriends> - these are the type of platforms that get the "message" out there and the community involved.

Congratulations to our research officers Anne and Beth who have been working very hard at the State Archives discovering new material which are gems that would never be discovered without their involvement. Thank you to Anne and Beth also for their work in arranging tours and talks. The Gmail account has been working overtime, with PFFF getting many enquiries every week.

The "Herstory" Exhibition at Hambledon has been updated. New women's profiles from Beth and Anne's research and two 'new' models of the original factory buildings organised by Anne, have been added. The Exhibition runs until the end of May 2017 and it would be remiss of me if I failed to thank the Parramatta Historical Society for letting us mount the Exhibition in the "Lucas Gallery" which continues to attract individuals and groups to the cottage.

Thank you to Ronda who has applied to the Parramatta Leagues Club for a Club grant to help fund "Riot Day" this year. The committee has discussed having a display in the lecture theatre instead of a speaker; this would allow us to showcase the research work that PFFF has been doing and make an interesting change. Morning and afternoon tours are planned from the team of guides. The organisation and shared work load are in the process of being organised and a report will be forthcoming.

Alice Kershaw, Beth Matthews and Gay Hendriksen attended the Upper House inquiry into the Museums and Galleries, and a full report will be forthcoming. PFFF is working very closely with the NSW decision makers to voice our concerns and promote our vision.

Gay Hendriksen has set up a new online petition for World Heritage Listing, updating the contacts on the form; please sign and share with your friends and networks.
<https://www.change.org/p/parramatta-femalefactory-federal-petition-for-world-heritage>

Lastly, congratulations to our Patrons Meg and Tom Keneally on their recent publication, *The Unmourned*. The novel, set in Parramatta and at the Female factory, is written in their usual interesting style of storytelling. They are true Australian treasures. PFFF thank them for their ongoing support and advocacy.

June Bullivant OAM
PFFF President
March 2017

HISTORY CORNER

Good Press for the Gipps and the Bells!

Governor Gipps and his wife appear to have been very “hands on” at the female factory, described here as “*that aforesaid sink of infamy*”. Gipps was a frequent visitor checking on the progress of the solitary cells and Lady Gipps is reported as taking “*a warm interest*” in the factory since residing in Parramatta.

Under the tenure of Mrs and Mr Bell, the women’s lives of “*slothful idleness*” had been turned round with less of the “*very feminine breaking of stones for roads*” to “*cheerful industry*” of sewing, spinning and surprisingly, “*making nets for fruit trees*”!

Governor Gipps faced many challenges during his time as Governor (1837 – 1846) with one major challenge being the end of transportation.

Gipps left Sydney in July 1846. He died on 2nd September 1849. There is a memorial to him in Canterbury Cathedral, England. (2)

Sources:

1. The Colonist (Sydney, NSW 1835 – 1840, Wednesday 26 December 1838, page 2
<https://nla.gov.au/nlanews-article31722266>
2. The Australian Biographical Dictionary

THE FEMALE FACTORY.

We are glad to learn that through the exertions of Mr. and Mrs. Bell, ably supported as they have been by Sir George and Lady Gipps, a complete reformation is being effected in that aforesaid sink of infamy, the Female Factory, at Parramatta.

Formerly the females confined in the Factory were allowed to pass their time in comparative idleness, unless when for punishment they were required to pass a few hours of the day in the very feminine operation of breaking stones for the roads; latterly, however, a new and a better system has been introduced, which is apparently likely to work well. Such of the women as can sew are employed in making up shirts, cotton jackets, &c., for sale at prime cost; the others are employed in spinning, making nets for fruit trees, and a variety of other useful occupations. The change from slothful idleness to cheerful industry, has had a very happy effect upon the females themselves, who have sufficient sense to appreciate the improvement. Lady Gipps takes a warm interest in the establishment—indeed her visits, since she went to reside at Parramatta, have been almost daily. His Excellency is also a frequent attendant, and seems much gratified with the manner in which the Factory is now conducted.

The solitary cells for the punishment of refractory females are rapidly progressing towards completion. A third story is about to be added to the building.

NOTICEBOARD

- Next **General Meeting** is Friday 21st April – guest speaker at 1:30pm followed by the General Meeting at 2:30pm.
- **The National Trust Festival, 18th April – 20th May** offers numerous talks and tours – note the Hambledon Cottage events and in particular talks which will be given by PFFF members. Events are accessed online this year at <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/ahf/nsw/>
- **The PFFF exhibition, Herstory – Lives of the Parramatta Female Factory Women** runs until the end of May. Hambledon Cottage is open from Thursday to Sunday - 11am until 3pm (last tour).
- Check out the recent release of **The Unmourned** by **Meg and Tom Keneally**. The novel is the second in their *Monsarrat* series. It is set in Parramatta and tells the story of a factory woman accused of murder! Meg has written a piece on her research for the book on the Penguin website:
<https://penguin.com.au/books/the-unmourned-9780857989390/article/1347-factory-women>
Meg has also sent the link for her Monsarrat Series Facebook on which she has highlighted the heritage issues surrounding the Factory: <https://www.facebook.com/TheMonsarratSeries/>
- For all you history and historical crime fiction readers, the kitchen in which Hugh Monsarrat and Hannah Mulrooney (“*the Unmourned*”) regularly debrief over a cup of Mrs M’s “*excellent*” tea, is based on *which* kitchen, at *which* historic Parramatta house? Clue: 2 words – 5 syllables!
- Thank you to all our contributors and a special thank you to Noela Vranich for her assistance and her ‘eagle eye’ editing.



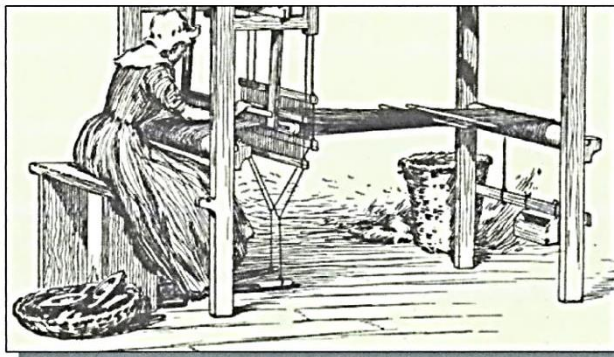
“OUR GIRLS” - WOMENS’ PROFILES BY BETH MATTHEWS & ANNE MATHEWS

MARY HINDLE 1800 – 1841

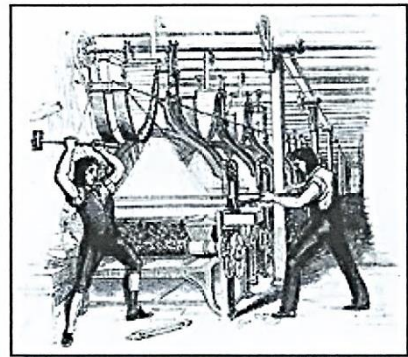
Mary Hindle was transported per *Harmony 1*, 1827 – her sentence was for “rioting”. Her trial at the Lancaster Assizes on the 8th August 1826 resulted in a death sentence which was later commuted to life. Mary had been accused of “*inciting a mob to acts of violence and riotous behaviour*” during the riots and destruction of power looms by the handloom weavers at the local factories. Mary always declared that she was only there to find her young daughter Elizabeth (born in 1819 and then 8 years old) who had run off to watch the riot. Pleas were made on Mary’s behalf by the mill owner and vicar for her release but to no avail, her sentence of transportation was to stand.

At the age of 18 Mary had married George Hindle, a handloom weaver. They were married in St James Parish Church in Haslingden, both signing with an “x”. By the time Mary arrived in Australia, she had lost two children, Abraham in 1822 aged one year and Robert in 1823 aged one year.

On arrival Mary was assigned as a laundress to John Nicholson, master attendant at the Dockyard. Sydney. Mary wrote to the Governor asking for a Free Pardon “*include me in the number...who have received the Blessing of Clemency...do not suffer me to languish the rest of my existence in hopeless slavery....*” She was refused. Most of the male machine breakers had received a pardon so it was a blow to Mary that she had not.



A traditional hand loom – pre industrial revolution c late 1700s



Machine breaking c 1812

In a letter dated November 12th 1827 from Mary to her husband George, she writes of her loss, her hopes and fears:

“I have taken this opportunity of writing these few lines which I hope they will find you in good health, I am tolerably well and healthy at this time. Thank God for that. We arrived in New South Wales about 7th October after a long and tedious voyage of about five months. We had a tolerably good passage.... I was ill and in hospital nineteen days. I was bad with my legs swelling through not having any exercise. I have found a situation in Sidney.....I have a great deal of work....one day appears to be as long as a month...we are not allowed any liberty...if we stay out until 8 or 9 o’clock we get out in the WATCHHOUSE and are very likely to be sent to the factory, a place where they punish women very severely. I hope God Almighty will give me health and strength to get through now that I am in a distant country. I hope my dear little Elizabeth will be taken care of and I hope she is well. I should like very much to see her again, but God knows whether that will be my lot. Please give my love to my mother and likewise to your father and likewise to my brother and sisters. I am waiting anxiously to here from you, and hope you can get my sentence mitigated or I think I shall die of despair.....”

In her letter Mary describes the jobs available in NSW and expresses the hope that her husband could join her one day. This was never to be.

Mary received a ticket of Leave in 1831. She absconded in 1838 and again in June 1840 and was sent to the Factory.

On 21st September 1841 Mary took her own life whilst in the factory and was buried nearby.

Sources:

Our Girls, Unpublished Work by Beth Matthews and Anne Mathews, sourced from original papers SRNSW

<https://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/AUS-PT-JACKSON-CONVICTS/2003>

The Lancashire Riots by Christine Goodier

Women Transported - Life in Australia’s Convict Female Factories by Gay Hendriksen, Carol Liston and Trudy Cowley

SPECIAL FEATURE - SARAH BELL AND THOMAS BELL - BY SUE BELL

Sue Bell is a great - great grand daughter of Sarah and Thomas Bell who were at the Parramatta Female Factory following Matron Ann Gordon's tenure. Sue has a wealth of family research and kindly forwarded the following article for the newsletter.

Sarah and Thomas Bell were the first married couple to be appointed to the Female Factory at Parramatta in 1836 as Matron and Keeper. Elizabeth Fry had been lobbying the British Government on the importance of having a woman as head of every female prison and the Bells were replaced. They were later re-instated in August 1838 when the British Government appointees proved unsatisfactory.

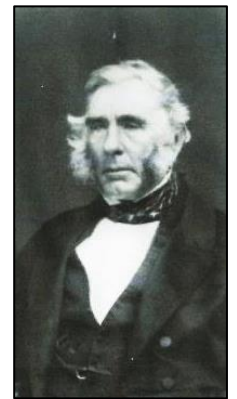
The Bells had left Dublin on the ship *Cleopatra* and arrived in Sydney in May 1832. Both came from Anglo-Irish backgrounds with Thomas born in Kilcullen, County Clare and Sarah (nee Alexander) born in Gort, County Galway. With them were their five children, Mary Isabella almost 6, Joshua 4, Alexander 3, Marmaduke 2 and baby Sarah Elizabeth who was 3 months old. Sarah died on the voyage and *"her remains are laid in the Indian Ocean between the Cape of Good Hope and Van Diemens Land"*. (1)

After their arrival in NSW, Thomas worked as a clerk in the Harbour Master Attendant's Office, administered the accommodation facility for the free female migrants who arrived in the early 1830s and was made superintendent of Carter's Barracks in late 1835.



Sarah Bell

In August 1836, Thomas and Sarah were appointed to the Female Factory by Governor Bourke who had decided to place it on an *"entirely new footing"*. Bourke explained that *"The numbers have rendered the place much more a Gaol than an Asylum...I propose therefore to place a Man and his Wife at the Head of the Establishment, the one as Keeper, the other as matron"*. (2) He wrote to Glenelg saying that he had appointed a couple *"whose behaviour in other situations of trust I have reason to be fully satisfied...."* (3) but it is not clear whether Sarah had worked previously in any such role.



Thomas Bell

Vindex (4) of Parramatta warned in the Sydney Gazette of 30th August 1836:

... the Australian public are promised innumerable advantages in the dismissal of Mrs Gordon from the Female Factory and the appointment of Mr Bell, who is not only to make a radical change of inefficient regulation in that establishment but to supply the future applicants for servants with everything desirable....it is to be feared that the mere change of overseers will only raise the expectations of the public, without any reformation among that unhappy class of our community.

In June 1836, just before the Bells arrived, Charlotte Anley (5) visited the Female Factory and described:

a large and airy building, admirably situated for its purpose but in all other respects ill-adapted, I thought, to be either a refuge for the unassigned convicts, or a prison for the more refractory.....(6)

She felt strongly that more should be done for these women and commented:

let us rather trace the cases of so much crime among the beings of our own sex, and we shall find them to originate, in far the greater proportion of offenders, from the neglect of those who might and should have taught them how to seek a safer and a happier destiny.(7)

1. Bell Family Bible, Anita O'Connor, Sligo, Ireland

2. SRNSW: Colonial Secretary: NRS 905, Main series of letters received, 1826 -1982: 36/6164 [4/2317.2] Minute from Governor Bourke on correspondence of Factory Committee to Colonial Secretary, 4 August 1836.

3. Bourke to Glenelg, 10 September 1836, Historical Records of Australia, Series 1, Vol xviii, p. 533.

4. A champion, protector or liberator

5. *The Prisoners of Australia*, London, Hatchard,1841. Retrieved 11 March 2016. Anley was a 19th century English didactic novelist, social and religious writer, composer and lyricist. She was a Quaker and spent the years 1836 -38 in Australia researching her report for Elizabeth Fry on women's prisons.

6. Ibid., p, 13

7. Ibid., p, 36

A William Palmer visited the Factory six months later when the Bells were in charge, and his description is very different. He describes the accommodation, appearance and employment of the women but says nothing about their well-being. He describes the 1st Class:

A monitress unlocked the door to the left - we entered an oblong room where about 60 women were sewing. All dressed the same as the monitress, many had no shoes, stockings, caps or aprons.... There were mattresses folded with blankets on top, against the wall – very crowded. There was no urinal or convenience apparent. (8)

The Bells were dismissed in February 1838 and were replaced by Mrs Julia Leach and Mr John Clapham who had been appointed by Elizabeth Fry. They had clashed while travelling to Australia and were finally dismissed by Governor Gipps who then reinstated the Bells. Thomas had been the first Superintendent of Emigrants in this intervening period.

The Bells resumed their positions with both on a salary of 150 pounds a year. Previously Thomas had been paid 200 pounds and Sarah 100, so perhaps Gipps in making the salaries the same was taking into account Elizabeth Fry's desire that a woman should run the Factory.

The Irish Sisters of Charity who had arrived in early 1838 were now making daily visits to the Factory providing not only religious instruction but teaching needlecraft, singing and providing educational classes for the women and children.

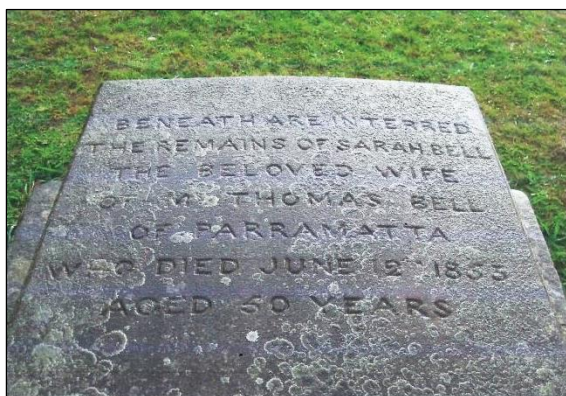


There were now 623 women and 141 children (9) at the Factory and by July 1842, the number peaked to 1,203 women. Of the 623 women, 348 were under Colonial sentence, 12 in solitary confinement, 102 nursing children, 100 assignable, 25 not assignable and 36 in hospital. There had been an expectation that when transportation eased in 1840, the number would diminish but assignment was abolished in the Sydney area in April 1841 and women could no longer be assigned to employers. The overcrowding would not have helped the environment at the Factory and on the evening of 17th February 1843, there was a riot and the police were called to quell it.

Later that year there was further trouble between Sarah Bell and Mrs Corcoran, the Sub - Matron which came to a head on 8th August 1843. Mrs Corcoran made charges against the Bells and after an investigation; the Bells and Mrs Corcoran were dismissed. Thomas Bell and John Hamilton, a contractor, were committed for trial on charges of fraud and embezzlement and after a series of mistrials; the case was eventually dismissed in 1846.

Thomas Bell took out a lease on a large tract of land on the Darling Downs, Queensland called *Jimba* (later named *Jimbour*) in 1843 which he ran with his sons Joshua and John. Sarah died in 1853 at Parramatta and is buried in St John's Cemetery (10). Thomas moved permanently to Queensland and died in Ipswich on 5th September 1872 and is buried in the Ipswich Cemetery.

(10)



8. *Description of the Female Factory* by William Palmer, 30 Dec 1836

9. *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 29 August 1838, p. 684

10. The grave of Sarah Bell at St John's Cemetery, Parramatta NSW.

The image of Sarah Bell (by J. Botterill) was in one of the Bell family collections. It is now in the Fryer Library University of Queensland.

The photo of Thomas Bell is courtesy of Sue Bell.

OUT AND ABOUT – THE PFFF/NPRAG AUSTRALIA DAY STALL IN PARRAMATTA PARK



Ronda, Pauline and Beth – in their bonnets, channelling a forbear or two!



The PFFF team with local Federal Member Julie Owens



Pauline, Kaye and Beth

Australia Day was hot and humid and attracted an extraordinary number of people to Parramatta Park. The joint PFFF/ NPRAG stall was close to Government House and in an excellent location to attract the passing throng. Both groups reported much interest and, there were many conversations and overwhelming support for local heritage.

A special thanks go to PFFF members Pauline Garmonsway and Kaye Weaver who helped out on the day with Kaye supplying the lovely lamingtons! Alice was quite relentless in her pursuit of petition signatures and Beth was kept busy with numerous enquiries from descendants of factory women.



Alice takes a well earned rest!



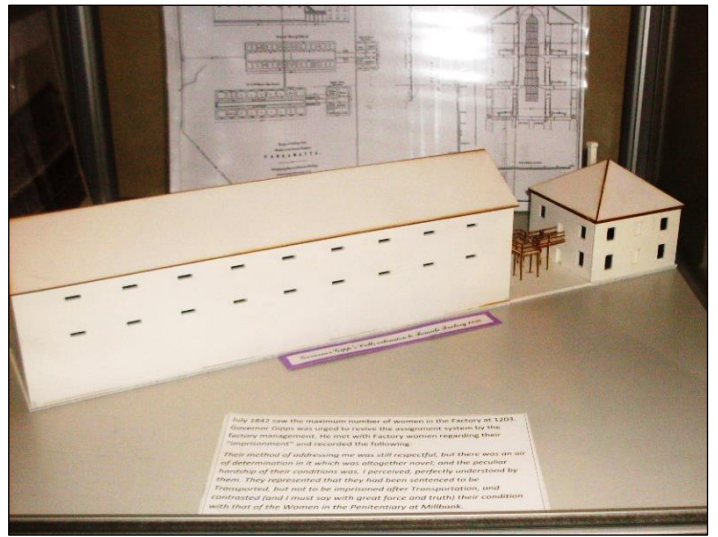
John, Ronda, Anne and Beth

PFFF took advantage of the opportunity to get out and about and work on advocacy and gathering petitions at the recent *Linnwood House* Open Day. There were 4 of us “on deck”, with the sales and information table as well as a display of historic photographs. We introduced a “new” powerpoint which attracted much attention and, a model of the Greenway factory.

Beth, Anne and John worked overtime sharing many of the women’s stories, answering numerous questions about the factory site and gathering more

signatures for the PFFF World Heritage Listing. Many thanks to June for organising the day and sincere thanks to Dorothy Warwick of *Linnwood House Friends* for her support and for including the PFFF in Linnwood’s online publicity.
Ronda Gaffey

Herstory - Lives of the Female Factory Women - New Exhibits at Hambledon Cottage!



Recently Anne Mathews was pinned down and asked about her marvellous Factory models now on exhibition at Hambledon Cottage.

The idea of making models of the factory buildings came from a discussion I had with a friend, Terry Fitzell years ago. "Is there anything I can do to help PFFF?" he asked. I replied, "Yes you can make us a model!" And so the germ of an idea for the project began and was completed recently.

My husband Wayne set about drawing the plans to scale – these were the Gipps Penitentiary Cells, the main 1818 Factory building, the 3rd Class Sleeping Quarters and the Matron's Quarters. Terry then organised the laser cutting of the models, assembled and painted them.

As far as I know there was a model of the cells made some time ago. I remember seeing a photo however I believe the models we have now are perhaps a "first" – it is extremely satisfying for me to see these precious buildings "come to life" and now exhibited at Hambledon Cottage in the *Herstory – Lives of the Parramatta Female Factory Women*.



photo: Trevor Patrick

Anne Mathews



A New Girl at John Macarthur's Hambledon Cottage!

Recently Beth Matthews, Margaret Smith (P&DHS) and I were "tweaking" the *Herstory* exhibits when disaster hit! As we were moving the "mannequin" to make room for a cabinet, her arm fell off!

This 3rd class girl was extremely troublesome – her arm would not return to the socket! And then a solution! Somewhere in Hambledon storage Margaret had seen a dressmaker's dummy. We raced over to a shed and to our delight Ken (Smith) pulled down a rather dusty "lady" and, the exhibit was quickly re-instated.

Ronda Gaffey



Last month Judith Dunn OAM, Anne Mathews and Ronda Gaffey represented PFFF at a Community meeting with UGNSW to raise issues of concern following the UGNSW Sprout Community meeting late last year. These concerns were put to a meeting with UGNSW held at Parramatta RSL on 16th February 2017. Questions raised by PFFF and the UGNSW responses are as follows:

**Parramatta North Urban Transformation Program
Community meeting on the Early works DA – 16 February 2017
Friends of the Parramatta Female Factory – Questions and UGNSW Responses**



1. Which buildings will remain in public ownership?

a) on the North Parramatta site?

b) within UGNSW “heritage core”? ⁽¹⁾

Heritage buildings, other than those within the heritage core or public open space areas, are expected to be transferred to private ownership. Most of the heritage buildings within the heritage core and in public open space areas are expected to remain in public ownership.

2. What is the status of the Vernon building (Admin building) on Greenup Drive?

The Vernon Building on Greenup Drive is currently operating as a Mental Health Counselling Service and will continue to be used for this purpose until alternative facilities are found.

The current development application proposes the area around the Vernon Building to become public open space. UrbanGrowth NSW is liaising with the City of Parramatta Council with a view to possibly transferring the building and public open space to Council.

3. What is status of UGNSW map of “heritage core” which omits the colonial/Greenway buildings from key? Will this be updated? If not, why not?

The map was provided at Sprout to give attendees some guidance on what is included in the heritage core of the site. The heritage core includes high and exceptional significance buildings to be conserved for future generations. The key highlighted some of the better known buildings on the site, including the Female Factory Penitentiary.

We acknowledge that the key does not identify the Female Factory South East Range and North East Range buildings, however this in no way diminishes their status as being of exceptional heritage significance. The map is not due to be updated.

4. Are there any planned NEW buildings on the Female Factory Footprint/within the “heritage core”/within the Fleet Street curtilage?

No residential buildings are proposed within the heritage core.

The site zoning does allow for two support buildings within the heritage core (such as for bathrooms or additional rooms to support future uses). No decisions have yet been made on the future uses of the heritage core.

5. Are UGNSW aware of the disparity between UGNSW identified “heritage” and Australian Heritage Council identified “heritage” at the PFFF site?

UrbanGrowth NSW has been liaising with the Historic Heritage Section of the Federal Department of Environment and Energy in relation to the Parramatta Female Factory heritage, and will continue this liaison. The department manages the process for including a place on the Federal Heritage List.

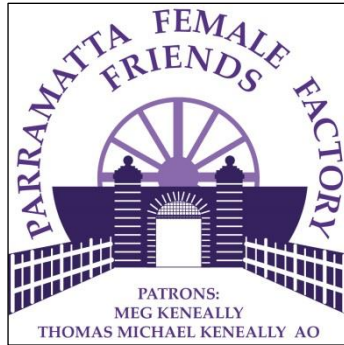
6. Is there a CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN for this entire site? Where is it available?

Is it in the public domain?

7. Yes. A Conservation Management Plan has been developed for the entire site. It has been prepared by heritage experts in consultation with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. The Conservation Management Plan has been in preparation for about 18 months, and is part of the supporting documentation for the early works development application.

The Conservation Management Plan will be made available by Council when the early works development application goes on public exhibition, along with other supporting documents. The Conservation Management Plan guides all conservation and development work proposed on the site.

⁽¹⁾ The UGNSW “heritage core” includes the Female Factory/Asylum buildings at the North Parramatta Cumberland Hospital site



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