PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

AN OVERVIEW
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PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY FRIENDS - ABOUT US

The Parramatta Female Factory Friends has grown out of community action to protect, conserve and bring the Parramatta Female Factory to all Australians. We do this through advocacy, site monitoring, female factory research, tours, talks, education activates and celebrations. We welcome anyone to join us who shares the same aims as in our charter which is to:

1. Protect, preserve and conserve the site and all its provenance according to the Burra Charter.
3. Ensure that the precinct is listed and remains on local state and national heritage registers.
4. To work in conjunction with other organisations for major future planning and strategic opportunities, in particular, those responsible for companion sites such as the Parramatta Gaol, Parramatta Park Old King School and the Roman Catholic Orphanage.
5. Advocate the establishment of a joint state and national statutory authority as custodian and manager who will:
   a) Develop and manage the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct as a cultural, tourism and learning place of international significance.
   b) Manage, conserve, interpret and promote this site for the people of Australia in accordance with the guidelines of the Burra Charter and at the highest possible professional standard.
   c) Raising awareness of the value of and risks to the Female Factory site.
   d) To undertake and promote historical research in order to share the historical value of the two sites and to pass on the heritage of this irreplaceable site to future generations.
   e) To manage and promote the site in spirit of equality as a meeting place where all can access, share and understand our history and our Australian identity, past and present.
   f) To provide staff and budgets to conserve and maintain the site in accordance with 5. a-e
PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY STATUS AT A GLANCE

The Parramatta Female Factory commenced in 1818 is not on the National Heritage List and is worthy of a world heritage site status. This historic Governor Macquarie commissioned and Greenway designed site is the earliest female convict site still in existence and is older than all but three World Heritage Convict Sites in Australia. Over 9,000 female factory women - approximately 1 in 5 Australians related to these women. It is a part of all Australian’s identity, our children’s heritage.

This site holds the stories of the women, men and children -stories of hardship, migration, survival, winning against the odds and going on to become the mothers, teachers, farm workers and businesswomen of the nation. Through their lives they have become the silent revolution as the mothers, sisters, aunts, grandmothers, friends that contributed to the change in colonial thinking to what we know now as Australian values including: fairness, mateship, sense of humour, survival and making the most of life and opportunity. The stories have resonance today and can provide experiences that can spark meaningful connection and change for individuals.

The Parramatta Female Factory Site needs to be protected, preserved, conserved, interpreted historically and make accessible to all Australians present and future through World Heritage Site Status.

The Parramatta Female Factory Site includes the Convict Female Factory site footprint which is the 1818 Governor Macquarie site, the 1820s Governor Brisbane third class additions and the Governor Gipps courtyard and cells additions.

There are less than 15 objects identified nationally directly related to the factory period and only two images of factory women. This means that apart from government records there is very little material culture relating to the half a century of female factory experience of which 44 years were in Parramatta.

This site needs to be preserved intact in its entirety, just as it is with Port Arthur and Hyde Park Barracks. The architecture and architectural elements are of critical historical value.
Future reuse of the Parramatta Female Factory site is of critical importance to all Australians, historically and in relation to our current identity and values.

OUR VISION

The Vision for the Parramatta Female Factory is a World Heritage site which acknowledges its past and evolving history and meaning as the most significant convict female site still in existence. Intrinsic to this is access for all to the identity, history and meaning that makes the Parramatta Female Factory a key aspect of Australian history and identity.

VISION IN ACTION

NARRATIVE

The narrative of this site would respond to the following themes:

- Site of Conscience - Forced Migration, experiences of the women
- Convict Female Factory History – focus on Parramatta with context of 13 Female Factories phenomena
- The Factory Site – Original use - Aboriginal life, an architectural masterpiece of the early Colony – Macquarie commission and evolution through the visions of Government Architects from Greenway to Liberty Vernon
- Factory as site of early Colonial Industry and life of the workers - including Colonial business, production, work methods, technology, work environment, workers actions
- Earliest Female Health Service – hospital for the Colony
- Daily Life
- From Depot to distant places – assignment from the factory to all parts of the Colony
- Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary Circumstances – from thief to luddite to political dissident – exploring the lives of the factory women and staff
- Traces of our history – objects and archaeology of the site
- Australian Identity – female factory contribution to the Australian identity, meaning now
COMMUNITY AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND AMMENITY

The plan for the site would be access for all. This means access for local community, leisure visitors, national and overseas visitors and focus on learning centred visitation – schools, tertiary and lifelong learning.

This would not be a static museum. The focus is on experiential, interactivity, engagement – hands on history – the sheer pleasure of walking in the footsteps of Australia’s ancestors. It would be a national centre for discovery, curiosity, pleasure and learning. The buildings and activities within would enhance the telling of the significant histories. There would be a national resource and information centre responding to: site of conscience (evolution of ethics and values history in Australia to which these women made significant contributions), migration, women’s history, family history, Colonial social, architectural, legal, nursing history and archaeology, workers history.

Also included a place for dialogue – a resource where seminars, workshops, lectures, conferences could be held. A place where tourism and education visitation could be enacted. A place for study at all levels ranging from curiosity or personal interest and creative responses (visual, performance, literary) to academic research and writing.

LOCATION AND RELATED SITE CONNECTIVITY

The Parramatta Female Factory site is in the heart of the North Parramatta Historic Precinct both physically and historically. It came after Government House and before the Parramatta Gaol and the Roman Catholic Orphanage (later Girls Industrial School and Norma Parker Centre). It is ideally placed for access from Parramatta Park, Parramatta River foreshore and Fleet Street and could be inclusive of any pedestrian trails through these areas. The river and road access are significant historic viewing corridors. Historically it has the governance connection with Old Government House, the sister site connection with Parramatta Gaol and the children of the Irish Convict Factory Women were placed in the Orphanage from 1840. As there is open space and car parking areas currently adjacent (north east) of the footprint there is also opportunity for camping and ‘glamping’ for accessible pricing accommodation for education and tourism visitors).
ACTIVITY HUB

The use of the site that is the female factory footprint would provide indoor and outdoor leisure activities. Indoors would include interactive interpretation experiences, visitor amenity (coffee shop and value add historic information and product area), resource centre for discovering the subjects identified above as a national resource and information centre. Indoor creative pursuits, dialogue and workshop opportunities. Outdoors would include spaces for picnics, outdoor school and tour guiding experiences, performances, art workshops (outdoor drawing and painting), commemorations, festivals and fairs as well as a specifically identified location (likely Gipps Yard for reflection as a site of conscience (perhaps reflective garden based around historic plantings).

SITE INVIGORATION

The Parramatta Female Factory Site for many years has been largely unavailable for all Australians. Access has been subject to special permissions. The Parramatta Female Factory Friends vision would open the site up for all Australians to access enjoy and share the story of their identity and the shaping of the country we now know and love as Australia Now. It would provide an opportunity for understanding the past and providing contemporary meaning.
RESPONSES TO PARRAMATTA NORTH URBAN RENEWAL PLAN

The Parramatta Female Factor Friends acknowledge that the North Parramatta Precinct contains sites of great historical significance and contemporary social value. The recognition of this by the NSW State Government is also acknowledged.

Primary concerns relate directly to:

1. The substantial 6000 multi-story urbanization in the direct vicinity of the precinct
2. Nature of the adaptive reuse
3. Future custodianship not identified
4. Why does the Female Factory site need rezoning
5. Proposed multi story buildings on the female factory footprint
6. Future of historic plantings
7. Use or substantial change to open spaces
8. Lack of recognition of the Parramatta Female Factory Site as a site of conscience
9. Lack of recognition as a potential world heritage site
10. Lack of recognition of the second historic site line
11. Historical material not identified or incorrectly identified
12. Incorrect historical information
13. Archeological work not noted or included in interpretation and would be a necessary part of any developments in Parramatta.

1. THE SUBSTANTIAL 6000 MULTI-STORY URBANIZATION IN THE DIRECT VICINITY OF THE PRECINCT

The social value of the site exceeds economic imperatives that can be met elsewhere. The imposition of high-rise exceeding four stories will impact on visual and historical integrity of the site. There is recognition of the need to increase urbanization in Western Sydney but why specifically here is questionable. Is this accommodation unable to be reallocated in what is currently high rise office space that is under-utilised or in another location? Will it be for high end real estate or will there be affordable housing included. Is this a decision prioritizing economic or social/community good.
2. NATURE OF THE ADAPTIVE REUSE

- The exact nature of the adaptive reuse is unclear. It is noted but not detailed.
- Potential cultural facility for 1818/1825 area indicated in the report. Does this recognize the heritage value - is it interpretation or office hub or another gallery space not acknowledging heritage.
- The enhanced pedestrian access is unclear. It is not depicted as it is, unless there are changes to significant wall area in the 1830s wall or adjacent to it.
- Potential water based activities next to footprint not identified
- Strategy for adaptive reuse not identified
- No interpretive themes or values recognizing the high significance of the site indicated.
- ‘A network of restored and reused heritage buildings and landscapes’ is noted but without consideration of the integrity of history significance of the Parramatta Female Factory
- Although increasing pedestrian access is desirable, there is no indication of monitoring this important site which already is subject to theft of original material. How will the two new site access points function
- What does mid-high rise mean at oval, how will this impact the Female Factory Footprint
- What precisely does ‘Nonresidential - commercial, arts, retail 1818/1825 footprint’ mean
- ‘activate heritage buildings through new uses and incorporate them into larger development plots’ is noted in the report. What does this mean?
- ‘Create a zone on the west of the study area that incorporates a majority of the sites heritage buildings and structures’ is noted in the report. What kind of zone? Would expect heritage in response to the Female Factory
- Images and maps indicate high-rise building on site. This is inappropriate to the historical integrity of the site and not supported by the Parramatta Female Factory Friends.
3. FUTURE CUSTODIANSHIP NOT IDENTIFIED

Current ownership and custodianship is Health Administration Corporation. Will this continue or will it be transferred to another state body or will it be sold off to developers or other private organizations. For long term survival and access it is the view of the Parramatta Female Factory Friends that it is state and federal custodianship.

4. WHY DID THE FACTORY NEED REZONING

Any rezoning for private commercial or residential use excludes community and other public access (e.g. apartments, shopping centre or hotel). Why did the Parramatta Female Factory and no other historic aspects need rezoning?

5. PROPOSED MULTI STORY BUILDINGS ON THE FEMALE FACTORY FOOTPRINT

Sensitive infill development at the female factory in the Gipps yard with residential with other supporting uses is unacceptable and does not recognize the historical significance of this location. This would be an ideal location for site of conscience, reflection and garden area.
6. FUTURE OF HISTORIC PLANTINGS

Historic plantings as early as the Governor Brisbane period exist on site. Will the historic trees remain? Removal of trees are not identified.

7. USE OR SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE TO OPEN SPACES

Only open space specifically indicated is outside the footprint of the Parramatta Female Factory. What is going to happen to the current open spaces that were intrinsic to the history of the Parramatta Female Factory?

8. LACK OF RECOGNITION OF THE PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY SITE AS A SITE OF CONSCIENCE

The Parramatta Female Factory is a Site of Conscience and yet this is not identified.

9. LACK OF RECOGNITION AS A POTENTIAL WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Since 2010 the site has been identified by the community as a potential World Heritage Site. Yet this is not indicated, acknowledged or considered.

10. LACK OF RECOGNITION OF THE SECOND HISTORIC SITE LINE

Although the site line to Parramatta Park is acknowledged the one from the gates site to Factory Street is not, even though this is indicted as a second entry point for future plans. High density residential development between fleet and O’Connell are contrary to intention to recognize these site lines. This would impact on building height between Fleet Street and O’Connell Street – not more than 4 stories on Fleet and rising only in relation to historic views.

11. HISTORICAL MATERIAL NOT IDENTIFIED OR INCORRECTLY IDENTIFIED

The following need inclusion as they are either not identified or misrepresented:

- Wall in second class yard erroneously represented on page 16
- Significant building missing page 17 – the dead house
- Unclear if the enhanced pedestrian access in in the 1830s wall or adjacent to it.
- Government Mill Race not identified
- Convict Steps to river access not identified
- Original quarry used for “Factory Stone’ not identified

12. INCORRECT HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Although there is a margin of fallibility in historic dates at times due to lack of evidence. It is certain that the Parramatta Female Factory functioned as a factory well past 1840. The last record of female factory inmates was in 1848 at the closure of the factory. It was in this year it became the Parramatta Lunatic Asylum.

13. ARCHEOLOGICAL WORK NOT NOTED OR INCLUDED IN INTERPRETATION AND WOULD BE A NECESSARY PART OF ANY DEVELOPMENTS IN PARRAMATTA

Any development that invades the surface of significant sites needs archaeological assessment as set out by the State Government of NSW. This is not indicated as a necessary activity. As material has been uncovered at the Parramatta Female Factory through archaeology and other invasive events and a ground penetrating radar has been carried out which showed archaeology existing below the surface it is necessary for this to occur on any part of the Female Factory Site from Fleet Street to the river foreshore inclusive.

SUMMARY VIEW

The Parramatta Female Factory Friends consider the current North Parramatta Urban Renewal Plan needs significant revision and greater community consultation to better reflect the history, identity and will of the local community, the people of NSW and the Nation.

The Parramatta Female Factory Friends are ready and willing to advise and participate and support any aspect affecting the heritage and future of the Parramatta Female Factory and other historical sites within the North Parramatta Precinct.