

THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE
OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE &
DOMAIN AT PARRAMATTA PARK

THE GOVERNMENT DOMAIN, PARRAMATTA 1788-1856

SHAPING THE DOMAIN



THE REDOUBT, c1791, EDWARD DAYES, AFTER JOHN HUNTER
PUBLISHED IN *AN HISTORICAL JOURNAL OF THE TRANSACTIONS
AT PORT JACKSON AND NORFOLK ISLAND*, LONDON, 1793

1 THE REDOUBT

In early November 1788 Governor Phillip, with an initial party of 11 soldiers and 10 convicts, established the settlement of Rose Hill on rising ground next to the Crescent – a billabong on a bend in the Parramatta River, where fresh water replaced the tidal salt water of the harbour. They marked out the ground for a redoubt, a military enclosure to protect the soldiers, convicts and supplies. It contained a provision store and a barracks, and although in February 1789 Judge Advocate David Collins described the Redoubt as being built “only of posts and shingles fastened with pegs on battens”, it supported the establishment of a working convict settlement.

Collins describes the Redoubt as being so small and congested that when two straying emus ran through the camp it was not possible to shoot them, for fear of harming people who were in a state of near panic at the intrusion. Evidence of the Redoubt's location is preserved in the historic record – in April 1790, John Hunter described it as being “on an elevated ground which joins to a very fine Crescent ... On the opposite side of the brook is a farmhouse ... [and] the convicts houses form a line at some distance in front of the barracks”.

These first buildings were not intended to last, and by December 1790 they had already fallen into a state of disrepair. Rose Hill, the defensive landform chosen by Phillip for the site of the Redoubt, is still clearly discernible and retains the spatial relationship with the town and agricultural lands it was designed to defend.

2 AGRICULTURE AT THE CRESCENT & GOVERNMENT FARM

Governor Phillip's instructions were to develop agriculture. Convict labour was crucial in land clearing, crop planting and the initial struggle against the famine that threatened the success of the new colony. Phillip recognised this from the outset and charged Henry Edward Dodd, one of the few experienced farmers in the colony, with establishing the first farm at Farm Cove, Sydney. Crops there failed, however, and a second government farm was established by Dodd on the fertile riverbanks at Rose Hill, now within Parramatta Park.

Over the summer of 1788 seventy acres at Rose Hill were cleared and planted with grain. A barn, a house and a granary were also built. Judge Advocate Collins recorded that “At Rose Hill the people were principally employed in clearing and cultivating land”. He noted that clearing the land was not an easy task and often meant simply sawing off the trees to stumps, as the wood was too hard to clear properly. Collins wrote that it was difficult to get the convicts to work hard at their farming duties, as they were not used to such work. He noted the convicts “were always inventing plausible excuses for absence from labour or for their neglect of it”.

In 1789 the first season produced a plentiful crop, however most of it had to be reserved as seed for future crops, and there was not enough to feed the growing colony as well. They were still dependent on the supply vessels and food was desperately short. Supplies brought from England were dwindling and being affected by vermin. Daily rations were reduced in order to ensure that stores were not exhausted. Food thefts became an increasing problem, as convicts sought to supplement their meagre rations.

By February 1790 things were improving. Governor Phillip records that there were 100 convicts employed in clearing and cultivating at Rose Hill. They were supervised, “for the public benefit”, by Dodd, whom Phillip described as having “much agricultural knowledge [and] a perfect idea of the labour to be required from the convicts”. By mid 1790, Watkin Tench, an Officer in the Marine Corps, records that Dodd was optimistic that the 200 acres of cleared and cultivated land would yield a crop of over 400 bushels of wheat and barley. From 1791 the more regular arrival of ships and the beginnings of trade lessened the feelings of isolation and improved supplies.

The Governor's role was to manage the convict system to achieve the survival of the colony. The work of the convicts at the Government Farm, Rose Hill was critical in ensuring the food supply. The sites of the earliest successful agriculture in New South Wales survive at the Crescent and the Government Farm, and are clearly visible within the Park landscape.



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, PARRAMATTA, c1805 [DETAIL]
GEORGE EVANS
STATE LIBRARY OF NSW

3 GOVERNMENT HOUSE, PARRAMATTA

The first and principal Government House was built on the shore of Sydney Cove in 1788, and a farmhouse was the first home to the Governor in Parramatta. Until Phillip was able to spare the labour and materials to construct a residence for himself, he shared Dodd's house on the Government Farm, where he reports “sleeping on the boards”.

By 1790 a small, single-storey cottage of lath and plaster had been built for the Governor. It was not much bigger than a convict hut, being 44 feet long and 16 feet wide. The archaeological remains of a convict built entrance drive to this earliest Government House have been excavated, revealing the remnants of a simple but robust gravel road surface built by convicts in the early 1790s.

Government House Parramatta (1790–1856) underwent two major rebuilds before it reached its current form in 1817. The first was by Governor Hunter who demolished the Phillip House in 1799. The appearance of the house today owes most to the second rebuild by Governor and Mrs Macquarie, whose 1815–17 extensions, designed by Lieutenant Watts, transformed the building. Together with the Garrison Building (the Officers' Quarters) and the Female Convict Servant's Quarters, located behind the house, it stands in the Park today as an elegant Palladian style residence. A classical timber portico of c1816 is thought to have been designed by convict architect Francis Greenway. The layout of the house reflects patterns of the penal colony's administration under the first 11 governors, as well as the lives of the convicts who worked for them.

The office, drawing room and dining room symbolise the important ‘command centre’ role that Government House Parramatta played during the convict era. The office was where governors made decisions about key aspects of convicts' lives and kept convict records. Governor Macquarie often conducted colonial business in the drawing room, holding meetings and interviews, as well as making decisions about the future of convicts and ex-convicts, the work they did, to which settlers they were assigned, and how their behaviour in the colony affected their sentence. The dining room was where Macquarie entertained ex-convicts, to demonstrate his belief in reformation and his commitment to emancipation policies, and to provide an example to colonists.

The remaining archaeological evidence of the 1790 Phillip house and carriage drive, and the 1799 Hunter house, which forms the core of the existing building, encapsulates the authenticity of this site. Together with the 1815–17 additions made under Governor Macquarie, Government House retains an original early 19th century form and has been restored to represent the Macquarie period.

4 SALTER'S FARM

On the banks of the Parramatta River, emancipist George Salter lived on a small farm that was granted to him by Governor Hunter in 1796. Convicted of smuggling in Devon in 1788, Salter was transported for seven years and arrived in the colony with the Second Fleet. After serving his sentence, which expired in March 1795, Salter was granted 30 acres of land. By 1800 he was living on a flourishing farm, with 10 acres of wheat and 20 of maize, and three convicts assigned to work for him. Salter built the brick cottage which still survives on the site today. As Salter prospered he built up a herd of 11 head of horned cattle. He also became involved in a business transporting grain along the Parramatta River and acquired a second house in Sydney.

In 1813 his farm was purchased by Governor Macquarie, who demonstrated his reforming policy by appointing Salter to the responsible government position of Superintendent of Government Stock in Van Diemen's land. For this Salter was paid a salary of £50, and received a land grant of 260 acres.

Like George Salter, many early convicts, having served their sentence, remained and prospered as a result of the opportunities offered in the new colony. His story is a vindication of the hope that the convict system of transportation, hard labour and discipline could lead to social rehabilitation.



THE GOVERNMENT DAIRY, PARRAMATTA DOMAIN IN *VIEWS OF PARRAMATTA*, 1844
ARTIST UNKNOWN
STATE LIBRARY OF NSW

5 THE GOVERNMENT DAIRY

There are many historical references to Government involvement with dairying in Parramatta, the first being in 1804, when Governor Philip Gidley King established Government dairy farms at both Parramatta and South Creek. It is not known exactly where this first Parramatta dairy was located, however the muster of 1806 records that convict Susannah Warren was assigned to work there.

Early in 1813 Governor Macquarie purchased George Salter's farm, and his farmhouse was converted into a new government dairy by 1817. From 1817 there are many references in the Returns of Government Labour to convicts working in the Parramatta Domain on tasks related to dairying. These include: carpenters from the lumberyard who were employed on constructing a cow house; a convict being sent to carry butter from the Dairy to Government House in Sydney; and a convict who was transferred from working on the Timber Carriage Gang in order to work at the Dairy. In early 1819, the cow house at the Parramatta Domain was altered and a new barn was built, and the cooper was making and repairing buckets, pails and milk vessels, as well as making a churn and yokes for the Dairy.

The records of government orders reveal that in the 1820s the Dairy at Parramatta was supplying large quantities of milk to the government institutions of Parramatta, including the convict Female Factory and the convict Female Orphan School, where the girls were entitled to milk every day.

The Government Dairy appears to have continued functioning until the mid 1850s, as Governor Denison, the last Governor to use Government House Parramatta and the Domain, recorded that "a portion of this park had been brought under cultivation and supplied hay and oats for the stable and milk and butter for the house".

The Dairy Cottage today is a rare and intact example of both an emancipist's cottage and the work place of the convicts assigned to the Dairy. The integrity and authenticity of its 1817 form is unique and it retains direct spatial links to the original 30 acre land grant, to Old Government House and to the Parramatta Female Factory.

6 THE GOVERNMENT WATERMILL

As the amount of land under cultivation increased and harvests improved, the lack of a mill to grind the grain into flour became a pressing problem. Free settler Thomas Allen, an experienced millwright from England, was employed as a master miller and arrived in the Colony in 1793. Despite his expertise and his best efforts, early attempts at mechanised flour milling in Sydney and Parramatta were unsuccessful.

In 1799, the lack of an effective mill was still causing problems for the food supply. Governor Hunter announced his intention to build a Government water mill at Parramatta. The site selected was on the eastern bank of the Parramatta River, where flat river stones formed a natural weir and causeway. Convicts started digging the dam and millrace in 1799, but the mill took years to build. The Rev Samuel Marsden supervised its construction until 1803, when Governor King inherited the project. King brought convict millwright, Nathaniel Lucas, and Alexander Dollis, a master boat builder, from Norfolk Island to complete the project. The mill finally opened in 1804 but it operated with only moderate success.

George Caley, who lived nearby in the Domain, drew a map of this Government watermill site in 1806. He recorded the works, as well as his view that "the whole work may be truly called a folly ... [because] watermills in this part ... are subject to two evils, viz. the want of water in long droughts and by having too much at other times". Caley describes the mill as being a substantial three-storey building made of stone and earth, with a water driven, overshot wheel, 18 feet in diameter.

It is thought that this mill continued to be operated by miller George Howell until c1818 when it was demolished under Governor Macquarie.



VIEW OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE AND SETTLEMENT OF PARRAMATTA, 1793 [DETAIL]
FERNANDO BRAMBILA
MUSEO NAVAL MADRID

7 CONVICT HUTS & GARDENS

Convict living conditions within the Parramatta Domain were crowded, but not harsh. By 1790 Phillip had introduced a formal street plan below Government House Parramatta, with convict huts spaced in an orderly manner on each side at the foot of Rose Hill. They were spaced at a distance of 60 feet from each other, as a "useful precaution against fire", and there was a garden at the back of each allotment. This became the main street of the new town, and is now within Parramatta Park.

Watkin Tench left us a detailed description of these buildings, stating that by November 1790, 32 convict huts had been built, "twenty-four feet by twelve feet each, on a ground floor only, built of wattles plastered with clay, and thatched. Each house is divided into two rooms, in one of which is a fireplace and brick chimney. These houses are designed for men only; and ten is the number of inhabitants allotted to each; but some of them now contain twelve or fourteen, for want of better accommodation. More are building".

With provisions in scarce supply, convicts and free settlers alike were encouraged to make good use of their gardens. Phillip had a kitchen garden planted at the front of Government House and encouraged the convicts to work hard on their own gardens, for the reward of improving their diet. He saw this as an opportunity for convict reformation, but was realistic about achieving substantial results, observing that the convicts were "not used to reap the fruits of their own industry" and that "there are many who have not been brought up to hard work".

8 THE GOVERNMENT LUMBERYARD

The economic development of NSW was an important task for the colonial government and the work of the skilled convicts at the Government Lumberyard, Parramatta, was central to achieving this goal.

Early documentation of workshops for convict craftsmen in Parramatta comes from Watkin Tench who, in November 1790, recorded "a commodious blacksmith's shop", existed at Rose Hill. Tench records that there were 24 carpenters, 15 sawyers and five blacksmiths in Parramatta on 16 November 1790, and by December 1791, an extensive lumberyard was being built. As Tench describes: "This plan is already so far advanced as to contain nine covered sawpits, which change of weather cannot disturb the operation of, an excellent work shed for the carpenters and a large new shop for the blacksmiths. It certainly promises to be of great public benefit".

At the lumberyard convicts were making weatherboards, bearers, joists, lathes, shingles, fencing, nails, door and gate hinges, as well as tools such as pails, hoes and spades. From 1788 to 1811 the number of convicts assigned to the lumberyard increased gradually to 39 convicts with two overseers, reflecting the expansion of public works at the settlement.

As the colony grew and public buildings became larger and more permanent, particularly under Governor Macquarie's term, the construction and maintenance carried out by the convicts of the lumberyard became increasingly sophisticated. Between 1815 and 1821 the number of convicts working at the Parramatta Lumberyard increased from 71 to 344, with 20 overseers and 23 assistant overseers. As convict numbers increased, the lumberyard's range of activities expanded, reflecting the increase in both the range of skilled convicts in the colony and in the demand for skills.

The Government Lumberyard in the Domain was a busy, productive place until c1820 when, under Governor Macquarie's policy of removing public activities from the Domain, a new and larger lumberyard was built on the north side of Macquarie Street close to the Charles Street wharf.

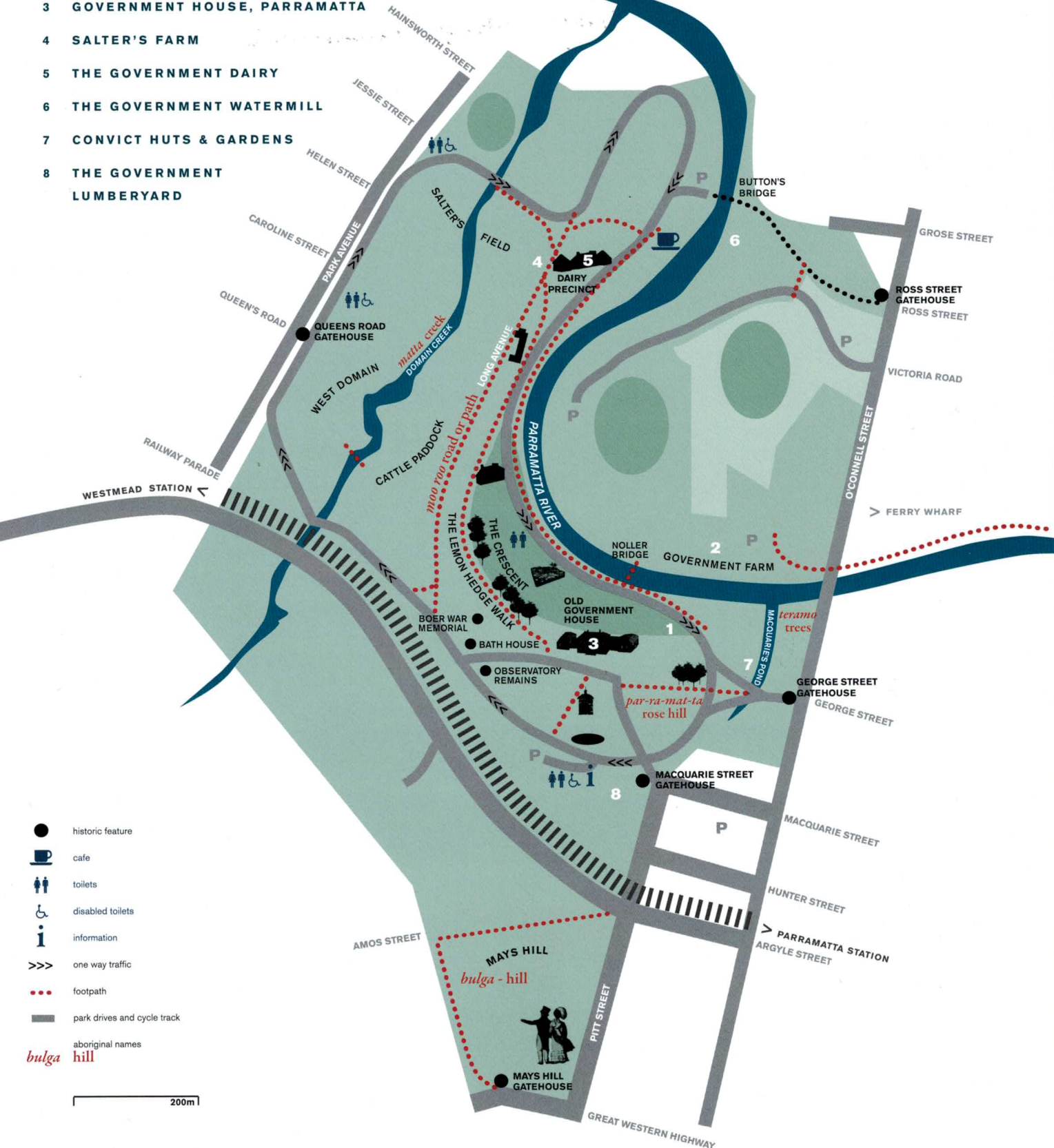


VIEW OF GOVERNMENT FARM AT ROSE HILL NSW, 1791
BY A PORT JACKSON PAINTER
NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, LONDON



VIEW TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE ACROSS THE TOWN OF PARRAMATTA, c1809 [DETAIL]
ARTIST UNKNOWN
STATE LIBRARY OF NSW

- 1 THE REDOUBT
- 2 GOVERNMENT FARM
- 3 GOVERNMENT HOUSE, PARRAMATTA
- 4 SALTER'S FARM
- 5 THE GOVERNMENT DAIRY
- 6 THE GOVERNMENT WATERMILL
- 7 CONVICT HUTS & GARDENS
- 8 THE GOVERNMENT LUMBERYARD



- historic feature
- ☕ cafe
- ♿ toilets
- ♿ disabled toilets
- i information
- >>> one way traffic
- ⋯ footpath
- ▬ park drives and cycle track
- bulga hill aboriginal names

200m



THE COSTUME OF THE AUSTRALIANS, c1817
EDWARD CLOSE
STATE LIBRARY OF NSW

PARRAMATTA DOMAIN: WALK A CONVICT LANDSCAPE

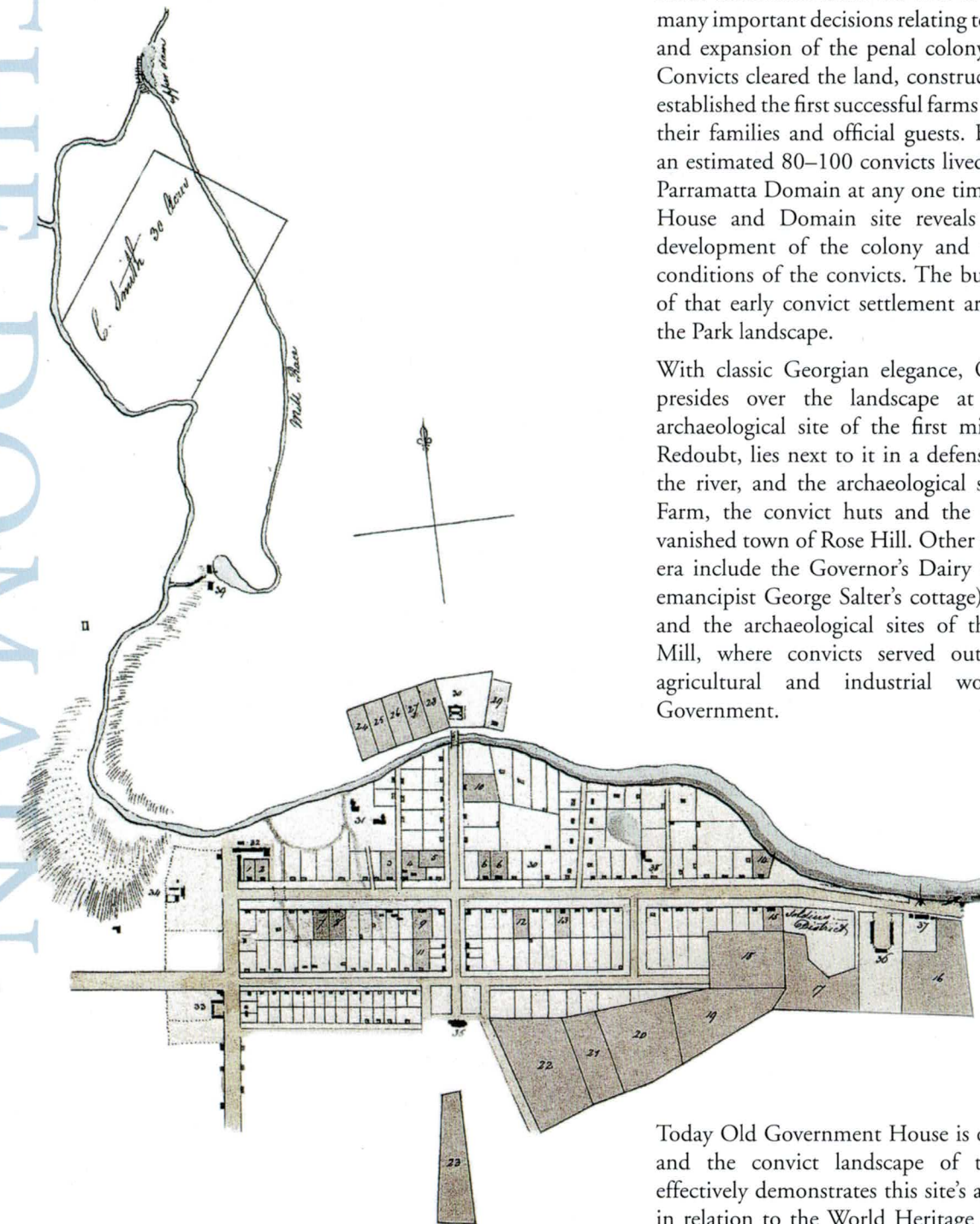
From Governor Phillip's arrival in November 1788 until Governor Denison's decision to relinquish the property in the late 1850s, the Government Domain was both home and office to the colonial governors when at Parramatta. Government House Parramatta operated as an important administrative hub for the colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. The British Government devised the convict transportation system, however it was the colonial governors who implemented the day-to-day administration of that system. Their vice-regal authority gave them unprecedented powers over the administration of the colonies and over the lives of the convicts, including the work they were assigned, the rations they received, the formation of work gangs, and the granting of privileges and pardons.

From settlement until the end of transportation in 1840, many important decisions relating to the governance, survival and expansion of the penal colony were made at this site. Convicts cleared the land, constructed roads and buildings, established the first successful farms and served the governors, their families and official guests. Between 1788 and 1840 an estimated 80–100 convicts lived and worked here in the Parramatta Domain at any one time. The Old Government House and Domain site reveals much about the early development of the colony and the living and working conditions of the convicts. The buildings, marks and signs of that early convict settlement are still discernible within the Park landscape.

With classic Georgian elegance, Old Government House presides over the landscape at Parramatta Park. The archaeological site of the first military encampment, the Redoubt, lies next to it in a defensive position overlooking the river, and the archaeological sites of the Government Farm, the convict huts and the early roads of the now vanished town of Rose Hill. Other features from the convict era include the Governor's Dairy (containing remnants of emancipist George Salter's cottage), as well as the Crescent and the archaeological sites of the Lumberyard and the Mill, where convicts served out their sentences doing agricultural and industrial work for the Colonial Government.

Today Old Government House is open as a house museum and the convict landscape of the Domain, which so effectively demonstrates this site's authenticity and integrity in relation to the World Heritage criteria, can be explored using the map overleaf.

Plan of the Township of Parramatta



PLAN OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PARRAMATTA, 1804
GEORGE EVANS
PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICE, KEW

**THE GOVERNMENT DOMAIN PARRAMATTA,
A WORLD HERITAGE SITE**

In 2010 Old Government House and Domain, Parramatta Park, was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as one of 11 sites across Australia forming the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property.

The World Heritage Listing recognises the importance of Australia as part of a worldwide system that depended on the labour of people who were not free. Convict transportation was a form of punishment that dominated legal thinking in Great Britain and the large European colonial states in the 18th and 19th centuries. This system of punishment also had far reaching economic, political and strategic advantages for the colonial powers.

The inscription reflects the international importance of the Australian story of large-scale forced migration of British subjects who were convicted and transported to the distant colonies of the British Empire. The 11 sites which make up the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property are recognised as having outstanding universal value, as they provide tangible evidence of the 18th and 19th century European belief that transportation and physical punishment would act as a deterrent to crime and the hope that hard labour and discipline could lead to the social rehabilitation of those convicted. The 11 sites each represent an important part of this story. They are:

- ▲ Old Government House & Domain, New South Wales (1788–1856)
- ▲ Hyde Park Barracks, New South Wales (1819–1848)
- ▲ Old Great North Road, New South Wales (1828–1835)
- ▲ Cockatoo Island Convict Site, New South Wales (1839–1869)
- ▲ Kingston & Arthur's Vale Historic Area, Norfolk Island (1788–1814 and 1824–55)
- ▲ Brickendon – Woolmers Estates, Tasmania (1820–1850)
- ▲ Darlington Probation Station, Tasmania (1825–32 and 1842–50)
- ▲ Cascades Female Factory, Tasmania (1828–1856)
- ▲ Port Arthur Historic Site, Tasmania (1830–1877)
- ▲ Coal Mines Historic Site, Tasmania (1833–1848)
- ▲ Fremantle Prison, Western Australia (1852–1886)

The Australian Convict Sites represent the global story of convictism and the evolution of thinking about how best to deal with the punishment of crime – an issue that still challenges us today.

PARRAMATTA PARK
OPEN EVERY DAY
6am–6pm (8pm Daylight Saving)
Phone 02 8833 5000
www.parrapark.com.au



TODAY'S EXPERIENCE:

OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE & DOMAIN, PARRAMATTA PARK

The Parramatta Government Domain was an important centre from which the system of convict transportation was implemented and controlled. The core of that Domain, Old Government House and its landscape setting, is now preserved within the 85 hectares of Parramatta Park. This is a place where the sites and signs of the early years of the colony are still discernible, laid down in the landscape, as well as the archaeological and historical record.

Between 1788 and 1840 nearly 80,000 convicts were sent from Great Britain to the colony of New South Wales, and from the outset the convicts shaped the colony. Initially the convicts worked for the Crown to clear land and produce food, as well as to construct public buildings and roads. From 1793 free settlers started to arrive and convicts were assigned to work for them. The settlers were responsible for feeding and disciplining the convicts, and in return, they were granted land. As the colony expanded, convicts were the labour force that enabled agriculture, trade and commerce to flourish in the colony.

Parramatta Park is a place that provides evidence of a turbulent time of enormous change. It is a landscape largely unchanged from the earliest days of the colony, where the establishment of a British military outpost, the dispossession of the Indigenous inhabitants and the establishment of a population of European origin took place. From the time of the first colonisation of this site, in November 1788, until the British Privy Council issued the Order that ended transportation in 1840, the Parramatta Domain was central to the administration of the convict system.

The World Heritage Listing recognises, at an international level, the authenticity and integrity of the landscape structure of Parramatta Park. It recognises the ability of the Park to illuminate the story of punishment by transportation and to document the management of convicts under the complex system of punishment and incentives implemented by successive early colonial governors.



OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE & DOMAIN, PARRAMATTA PARK
PHOTOGRAPH 2009, SKYSHOTS

Old Government House & Domain [Parramatta Park] is one of 11 historic sites that together form the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property.



Australian Convict Sites
• inscribed on the World
• Heritage List in 2010