



## **Fort Street Public School**

Fort Street Public School – Conservation Management Plan

January 2024

**We acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the Fort Street Public School sits today. We recognise the Gadigal continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.**

# Document Information

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This report has been prepared based on research by Curio Projects specialists. Historical sources and reference material used in the preparation of this report are acknowledged and referenced at the end of each section and in figure captions.

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# Terminology & Abbreviations

The terms below used in this report are defined as per the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter) 2013 Articles 1.1 to 1.17:

- **Place** means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces, and views. Places may have tangible and intangible dimensions.
- **Cultural Significance** means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.
- **Fabric** means all the physical material of the place including elements, fixtures, contents and objects.
- **Conservation** means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.
- **Maintenance** means the continuous protective care of a place, and its setting. Maintenance is to be distinguished from repair, which involves restoration or reconstruction.
- **Preservation** means maintaining a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.
- **Restoration** means returning a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing elements without the introduction of new material.
- **Reconstruction** means returning a place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material.
- **Adaptation** means changing a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.
- **Use** means the functions of a place, including the activities and traditional and customary practices that may occur at the place or are dependent on the place.
- **Compatible use** means a use which respects the cultural significance of a place. Such use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.
- **Setting** means the immediate and extended environment of a place that is part of or contributes to its cultural significance and distinctive character.
- **Related place** means a place that contributes to the cultural significance of another place.
- **Related object** means an object that contributes to the cultural significance of a place but is not at the place.
- **Interpretation** means all the ways of presenting the cultural significance of a place.

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
ARD	Archaeological Research Design
CMP	Conservation Management Plan
DPIE	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
EP&A Act	Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
EPBC Act	Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999
Heritage Act	Heritage Act 1977
HCA	Heritage Conservation Area
HIP	Heritage Interpretation Plan
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Precincts
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
SCA	Sydney City Archives
SHI	State Heritage Inventory
SLNSW	State Library of New South Wales
SHR	State Heritage Register
SSD	State Significant Development
SSP SEPP 2005	State Environmental Planning Policy (State Significant Precincts) 2005
SSP SEPP 2021	State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Eastern Ha) 2005
Sydney LEP 2012	Sydney Local Environment Plan 2012

# 1. Executive Summary

Curio Projects Pty Ltd (Curio Projects) have been commissioned by School Infrastructure NSW (SI) to prepare an updated Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Fort Street Public School (Fort Street Public School) site. The previous draft CMP prepared by Curio Projects (March 2020) formed the basis for the management of the Fort Street Public School site prior to, and during the major redevelopment of the site. This CMP revision and update has been prepared to accurately record the site as it currently exists following its major redevelopment completed in December 2023. Specifically, the 2020 CMP has been updated to comply with SSD010340 condition of consent number D24 which states that:

## ***Conservation Management Plan***

*D24. Prior to the commencement of operation, the Applicant must revise the Conservation Management Plan prepared by Curio Projects Pty Ltd and dated March 2020. The plan must:*

- (a) be finalised by a suitably qualified and experienced heritage consultant in consultation with Heritage NSW;*
- (b) be submitted to the Certifier; and*
- (c) be submitted to the Planning Secretary and Heritage NSW for information.*

The aim of the revised CMP is to provide a clear, updated physical description of the site since its 2023 redevelopment, an updated summary of archaeological investigations undertaken since the last CMP was prepared and update the significance assessment, including gradings of significance for fabric associated with identified heritage assets. This CMP provides a concise set of operational policies to guide and support future decision-making and management of the heritage values of the Fort Street Public School site, within the context of the site's broader cultural heritage significance.

The Fort Street Public School site is located on Observatory Hill, at Upper Fort Street, Millers Point. The curtilage of the school is defined by the circular cut of the Cahill Expressway on ramp. The study area is located to the south of the Sydney Observatory, between the Bradfield Highway in the east, and residential development along Kent Street to the west.

The Fort Street Public School (Fort Street Public School) Site is afforded statutory heritage protection through its listing on the State Heritage Register with the Miller's Point and Dawes Point Village Precinct Conservation Area (SHR. Item. No 01682). In addition, the site is located within the locally listed 'Millers Point and Dawes Point Village Precinct' Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) on the *City of Sydney LEP 2012*. The Fort Street Public School, the Messengers Cottage and the Bureau of Meteorology are heritage listed. The opportunities and constraints arising from the physical analysis and significance of the site, which have informed the conservation policies include:

- Retain the significance of the place within the State significant precinct.
- Retain the continued association of the place with the Observatory site and the former Fort Street school / hospital site.
- Retain the significance of the continued use of the site for public education spanning more than 174 years.
- Retain and protect remaining historic fabric and views on the site.
- Retain and protect any remaining archaeological resource.

The overarching conservation policies developed here for the Fort Street Public School site are intended to guide future ongoing conservation and management of the site.

The CMP will require updating within the next 5 years to incorporate the key objectives of the Heritage Interpretation Strategy, Artefact Management policies and Maintenance Strategies to be developed as part of finalisation of the current project and to respond to the established operational needs of the school once commenced.

## 2. Introduction

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This updated CMP has been formatted, where practical, to address the recently updated Heritage Council of NSW: *Statement of Best Practice Conservation Management Plans*, (Version 1. 2021), the Heritage Council of NSW: *Guidance on developing a conservation management plan* (Version 1. 2021), and *Statement of best practice for conservation management plan* (Version 1. 2021), and the Department of Planning and Environment *Assessing Heritage Significance: Guidelines for assessing places and objects against the Heritage Council of NSW Criteria* (2023)

### 2.1 Background to this CMP Update

The Fort Street Public School upgrade and redevelopment completed in 2023 has required the need to update this document to reflect the changes that have occurred at the site. The site has undergone a series of approved changes in accordance with the statutory approvals as noted in Table 1.1 below

Applications submitted	Number of Application	Date of decision/approval
Fort Street Public School	SSD-10340	16/06/2020
Fort Street Public School Mod 1 - Design and layout changes	SSD-10340-Mod-1	22/12/2021
Fort Street Public School Modification 2 - Design change	SSD-10340-Mod-2	16/06/2023
Partial dismantling, remedial structural reinforcement and reconstruction of the historic boundary wall	HCS/2023/18	24/03/2023

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located within the eastern curtilage of Messenger's Cottage at Fort Street Public School.

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Partial dismantling, remedial structural reinforcement and reconstruction of the historic boundary wall within the eastern curtilage of Messenger's Cottage at Fort Street Public School.	HCS/2023/41	11/09/2023
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Reconstruction of southern kitchen chimney of Messengers	HCS/2023/73	05/12/2023
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Removal and reconstruction of the Parquetry Floor within the Fort Street public school building	S60/2951	13/07/2023
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The previously approved Curio CMP (March 2020) has been used as a baseline document for the preparation of this updated document, with many sections of the document remaining relevant. The inclusion of additional information, such as the inclusion of archaeological results and/or revisions of physical descriptions are based on works undertaken as part of the sites' redevelopment in 2023 and have been updated, only where necessary to ensure consistently with the previously approved CMP (March 2020), and to ensure compliance with the conditions of consent.

## 2.2 Site identification

The Fort Street Public School (Fort Street Public School) site (the study area) is located on Observatory Hill, at Upper Fort Street, Millers Point, with the curtilage of the school generally defined by the circular cut of the Cahill Expressway onramp.

The study area is located to the south of the Sydney Observatory, between the Bradfield Highway in the east, and residential development along Kent Street to the west.

At the time of writing (December 2023- January 2024), the Fort Street Public School site consists of six mains buildings. The Fort Street School building; The Messengers Cottage; The Bureau of Meteorology building (MET Building), Communal Hall/OSHS/Canteen Kitchen, Staff Room, Windmill Wing and Hall.

The locally heritage listed buildings within the site's curtilage include The Fort Street School building, the Messengers Cottage and The Bureau of Meteorology.

In addition to the locally identified Heritage Buildings the site contains State Significant archaeological remains of the former surgeon's cottage, and the remaining boundary wall of the Hospital Complex, as well as a significant Fig tree.

## 2.3 Limitations and Constraints

This CMP has not been informed by CMP-specific Aboriginal community consultation, and therefore the Aboriginal cultural heritage values presented in this report should be considered as preliminary only. The preliminary findings, are however, drawn from the community consultation undertaken as part of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment process completed by Curio for the SSDA in 2019-2020, and as approved by the Registered Aboriginal Parties and DPE at that time.

All physical site descriptions are based on the accessibility to the site at the time of writing, and our understanding of the works undertaken between 2019-2023. The nominated Heritage Architects throughout the major onsite redevelopment building works were Purcell from 2019-2023. Curio Projects

were responsible for the archaeological works, archival recordings and specific close-out heritage site works, including reconstruction of the heritage chimneys, boundary wall and other related elements.

Curio were not commissioned to undertake any investigations of the moveable heritage collection as part of this scope of work and were unable to access the collection. To date, a final location for the storage of the artefact collection has not been determined by Schools Infrastructure.

Curio were not provided access to the (draft) Heritage Interpretation Plan prepared by Extent (December 2023) as part of this scope of work so were not able to include any additional policies or information related to action items that were included in the Heritage Interpretation Plan.

Curio have done our utmost to clearly indicate and acknowledge the previous work of TKD that contributed to the consolidated version of the 2020 CMP, as described in Section 2.4 of this report.

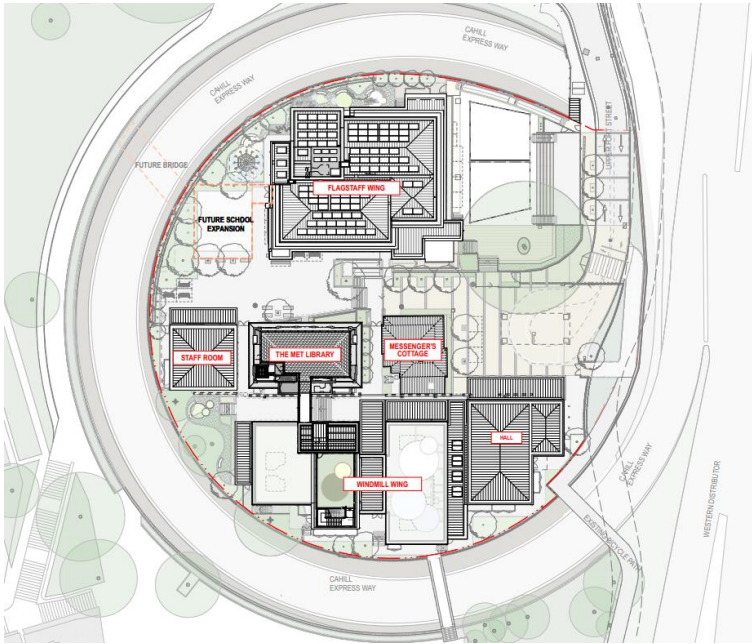


Figure 2-1: Fort Street Public School Site Plan. (FJC Studio).



Figure 2-2: Aerial view over the general Fort Street Public School Study area. Near Maps 2023 with Curio Overlay.



## 2.4 Authorship and Acknowledgements

Curio projects have been engaged to provide an updated CMP the previous CMP completed by Curio projects included sections which had been prepared as part of the draft CMP by TKD.

It is important to note that whilst Curio Projects have been engaged to prepare a revised CMP, it is appropriate to acknowledge authorship of individual sections previously prepared by TDK in 2015. The original draft CMP prepared by TKD in 2015 remained as a draft until it was consolidated with Curio's work in March 2020. Given this current CMP is only a review of the 2020 CMP there are still relevant sections within this revised CMP that have been extracted from the TKD Draft CMP (2015).

Generally, where whole sections have been extracted from the TKD Draft CMP (2015), this has been noted in the introduction to the relevant section, as well as, where appropriate, indicated in *italics* to ensure that the work of TDK is clearly identifiable and attributed.

This CMP approved for use as the CMP to guide the major 2023 redevelopment of the site, as part of the SSDA process. This current revision of the CMP has been prepared by the Curio team of Celine Louizos, Heritage Consultant, Natalie Vinton, CEO, Dr Matthew Kelly, State Excavation Director and Heritage Specialist.

Infographics and gradings of significance diagrams have been prepared by Mathew Nix, Head of Design and Celine Louizos, Heritage Consultant. Specialist heritage input, review for consistency between the previous CMP, the works undertaken on site and the final CMP has been undertaken by Natalie Vinton, CEO, Curio Projects.

## 3. Statutory Context

## 3. Statutory Context

### 3.1 Overview

In NSW heritage and archaeology are governed in NSW by three principal pieces of legislation:

- *NSW Heritage Act 1977* (Heritage Act)—Built Heritage & Historical Archaeology.
- *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act)—Aboriginal Archaeology; and
- *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

The Fort Street Public School (Fort Street Public School) Site is afforded statutory protection due to its listing on the State Heritage Register with the Miller's Point and Dawes Point Village Precinct Conservation Area (SHR. Item. No 01682) and due to its listing in the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (LEP).

There are further planning polices and controls that provide a non-statutory role in the protection of environmental heritage. These include Development Control Plans for each local Council area.

This section of the report discusses the local and State planning context for the site with respect to its built heritage values associated with local heritage items in the vicinity of the subject site.

### 3.2 NSW Heritage Act 1977

In NSW, heritage items are afforded statutory protection under the *NSW Heritage Act 1977* (the *Heritage Act*). Heritage places and items of particular importance to the people of New South Wales are listed on the NSW State Heritage Register. The *Heritage Act* defines a heritage item as a 'place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct'. The *Heritage Act* is responsible for the conservation and regulation of impacts to items of State heritage significance, with 'State Heritage Significance' defined as being of 'significance to the state in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of the item'.

The NSW Heritage Council is the approval authority under the *Heritage Act* for works to an item on the State Heritage Register. Section 57(1) of the *Heritage Act* requires Heritage Council approval if the work involves the following tasks:

- a) *Demolishing the building or work*
- b) *Damaging or despoiling the place, precinct or land, or any part of the place, precinct or land*
- c) *Moving, damaging or destroying the relic or movable object*
- d) *Excavating any land for the purpose of exposing or moving the relic*
- e) *Carrying out any development in relation to the land on which the building, work or relic is situated, the land that comprises the place, or land within the precinct*
- f) *Altering the building, work, relic or movable object*
- g) *Displaying any notice or advertisement on the place, building, work, relic, movable object or land, or in the precinct*
- h) *Damaging or destroying any tree or other vegetation on, or remove any tree or other vegetation from the place, precinct or land.*

A development application to undertake works to a State Listed Heritage Item must be lodged in accordance with Section 57(1) of the Heritage Act via a Section 60 Application to Heritage NSW.

Demolition of an SHR item (in whole) is prohibited under the *Heritage Act*, unless the item constitutes a danger to its occupants or the public. A component of an SHR item may only demolished if it does not contribute to the significance of the item. The requirement for a Section 60 approval also applies to archaeological relics within an SHR site.

### 3.2.1. Exemptions

Certain activities and work are exempt from approval under the Heritage Act 1977 for items listed on the State Heritage Register or subject to an interim heritage order. The purpose of Standard Exemptions is to streamline the approvals process, particularly where works are minor and/or have little impact on significance. The standard exemptions (gazetted on 17 June 2022)<sup>1</sup> can be accessed via the NSW Heritage Division website and allow for certain works to be undertaken without the need to seek Section 60 approval under the NSW Heritage Act, 1977. The self-assessment process is required to be undertaken in order to determine if the proposed works comply with a Standard Exemption.

When a site owner is working under the Standard Exemptions, Heritage NSW do not require notification of the works being undertaken. However, the site owner must keep a record of the decision made when self-assessing if the activities/ works could be done under a Standard Exemption with supporting evidence. This record does not need to be sent to Heritage NSW but must be kept for a reasonable period. The site owner may be asked to provide the record later for audit and compliance purposes.<sup>2</sup>

### 3.2.2. Excavation Permits

Whilst the NSW *Heritage Act 1977* protects heritage, historical archaeological 'relics' are additionally protected from being moved, destroyed or illegally excavated through the operation of the 'relics' provisions. The archaeological provisions of the Heritage Act protect potential archaeological 'relics' of local or State significance from being impacted without an excavation permit.

Division 9 of the *Heritage Act*, titled 'Protection of certain relics', with Section 139 states that,

*"a person must not disturb or excavate any land knowing or having reasonable cause to suspect that the disturbance or excavation will or is likely to result in a relic being discovered, exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed unless the disturbance or excavation is carried out in accordance with an excavation permit"*.

A 'relic' is defined as:

*any deposit, artefact, object or material evidence that:*

- (a) Relates to the settlement of the area that comprises New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement*
- (b) Is of State or local heritage significance.*

In cases where 'relics' are situated within sites or places listed on the SHR, such as the Fort Street Public School Site (an item on the SHR), permits must be issued under Section 60 of the Act.

### 3.2.3. Notification of an Unexpected Discovery

Notification of the unexpected discovery of a relic during ground disturbing works is required under the Section 146 provisions of the Heritage Act. Following the discovery of a suspected relic works in the immediate area must cease in order to allow an appropriately qualified archaeologist to assess and record the relic. Depending on the outcome, NSW Heritage must be notified in accordance with Section 146 of the NSW Heritage Act.

Specifically, Section 146 of the *Heritage Act* states:

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<sup>1</sup> Standard Exemptions NSW Heritage Website Accessed 28.11.2023 <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/heritage/apply-for-heritage-approvals-and-permits/state-heritage-register-items/standard-exemptions>

<sup>2</sup> Standard Exemptions FAQs <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Heritage/Standard-Exemptions-FAQs-update-17-June-2022.pdf>

### 146 Notification of discovery of a relic

A person, who is aware or believes that he or she has discovered or located a relic (in any circumstances, and whether or not the person has been issued with a permit) must:

(a) within a reasonable time after he or she first becomes aware or believes that he or she has discovered or located that relic notify the Heritage Council of the location of the relic, unless he or she believes on reasonable grounds that the Heritage Council is aware of the location of the relic, and

(b) within the period required by the Heritage Council furnish the Heritage Council with such information concerning the relic as the Heritage Council may reasonably require.

No *individual* items within the Fort Street Public School site are listed on the SHR, however the Fort Street Public School site itself is located within the curtilage of the SHR conservation area 'Millers Point and Dawes Point Village Precinct' (SHR #01682).

#### 3.2.4. Section 170 Heritage and Conservation Registers

Under Section (s) 170 of the Heritage Act, government instrumentalities must keep a Section 170 Heritage and Conservation Register which contains items under the control or ownership of the agency and which are or could be listed as heritage items (of State or Local significance).

Fort Street Public School is listed on the NSW Department of Education Section 170 Register (Table 3.1).<sup>3</sup>

Table 3.1: Heritage Listings on Department of Education's Section 170 Register

Heritage Item ID	Item Name	Address
5065782	Fort Street Public School - Building B00A, Grounds and Significant Trees	10 Upper Fort Street Millers Point 2000
5065807	Fort Street Public School	10 Upper Fort Street Millers Point 2000
5065819	Fort Street Public School - Bureau of Meteorology	9 Upper Fort Street Millers Point 2000
5065820	Fort Street Public School - Messengers Cottage	9A Upper Fort Street Millers Point 2000

The management of heritage items on the Section 170 Register require:

(1) A government instrumentality must give the Heritage Council not less than 14 days written notice before the government instrumentality—

- (a) removes any item from its register under section 170, or
- (b) transfers ownership of any item entered in its register, or
- (c) ceases to occupy or demolishes any place, building or work entered in its register.

(2) Each government instrumentality is responsible for ensuring that the items entered on its register under section 170 and items and land to which a listing on the State Heritage Register applies that are under its care, control or management are maintained with due diligence in accordance with State Owned Heritage Management Principles approved by the Minister on the advice of the Heritage Council and notified by the Minister to government instrumentalities from time to time.

<sup>3</sup> NSW Department of Education s170 Register, *Government schools with heritage listed buildings and items (2020)*, accessed December 2023, accessible from < [https://data.cese.nsw.gov.au/data/dataset/00404f27-d3ca-48fd-b74b-151ee8053c8d/resource/85c2226d-c8ef-4a35-b7f9-c2f388edb394/download/heritageitem\\_2020.csv](https://data.cese.nsw.gov.au/data/dataset/00404f27-d3ca-48fd-b74b-151ee8053c8d/resource/85c2226d-c8ef-4a35-b7f9-c2f388edb394/download/heritageitem_2020.csv) >

### 3.3 NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NPW Act), administered by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), is the primary legislation that provides statutory protection for all 'Aboriginal objects' (Part 6, Section 90) and 'Aboriginal places' (Part 6, Section 84) within NSW.

An Aboriginal object is defined through the NPW Act as:

*"any deposit, object or material evidence (not being a handicraft made for sale) relating to the Aboriginal habitation of the area that comprises New South Wales, being habitation before or concurrent with (or both) the occupation of that area by persons of non-Aboriginal extraction, and includes Aboriginal remains."*

The NPW Act provides the definition of 'harm' to Aboriginal objects and places as:

*"...any act or omission that:*  
*(a) destroys, defaces or damages the object or place, or*  
*(b) in relation to an object-moves the object from the land on which it had been situated,*  
*or*  
*(c) is specified by the regulations, or*  
*(d) causes or permits the object or place to be harmed in a manner referred to in paragraph (a), (b) or (c), (NPW Act 1974)*

The NPW Act also establishes penalties for 'harm' to Aboriginal objects and declared Aboriginal places, as well as defences and exemptions for harm. One of the main defences against the harming of Aboriginal objects and cultural material is to seek an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) under Section 90 of the NPW Act, under which disturbance to Aboriginal objects could be undertaken, in accordance with the requirements of an approved AHIP.

NSW OEH maintains a database of Aboriginal objects and places (Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System- AHIMS) which includes *'information about Aboriginal objects that have been reported to the Director General of Department of Premier and Cabinet; information about Aboriginal places which have been declared by the Minister for the Environment to have special significance with respect to Aboriginal culture; and archaeological reports'*. **No Aboriginal sites or places are registered with AHIMS within the Fort Street Public School site.**

### 3.4 Native Title Act 1993

The *Native Title Act 1993* provides the legislative framework to recognise and protect native title, which recognizes the traditional rights and interests to land and waters of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Under the *Native Title Act*, native title claimants can make an application to the Federal Court to have their native title recognised by Australian law. **No native title claimants are registered to include the Fort Street Public School Site.**

### 3.5 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

An Environmental Planning Instrument (EPI) is made under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 (EP&A Act). An EPI can be a Local Environmental Plan (LEP), a Development Control Plan (DCP), a Regional Environmental Plan (REP), or a State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP).

The applicable EPIs in this instance are as follows:

- *City of Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (LEP 2012)*
- *City of Sydney Development Control Plan 2012 (DCP 2012)*

## Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012

The Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (LEP) provides local environmental planning provisions for land within the Sydney LGA. Schedule 5, Part 1 of the Sydney LEP establishes locally listed heritage items. Clause 5.10 of the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (LEP) sets out objectives and planning controls for the conservation of heritage in the City of Sydney.

The LEP states that development consent is required for works that will involve:

*(a) demolishing or moving any of the following or altering the exterior of any of the following (including, in the case of a building, making changes to its detail, fabric, finish or appearance)—*

- (i) a heritage item,*
- (ii) an Aboriginal object,*
- (iii) a building, work, relic or tree within a heritage conservation area,*

*(b) altering a heritage item that is a building by making structural changes to its interior or by making changes to anything inside the item that is specified in Schedule 5 in relation to the item,*

*(c) disturbing or excavating an archaeological site while knowing, or having reasonable cause to suspect, that the disturbance or excavation will or is likely to result in a relic being discovered, exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed,*

*(e) erecting a building on land—*

- (i) on which a heritage item is located or that is within a heritage conservation area, or*
- (ii) on which an Aboriginal object is located or that is within an Aboriginal place of heritage significance,*

Clause 5.10(7) specifically relates to the management of archaeological sites:

*The consent authority must, before granting consent under this clause to the carrying out of development on an archaeological site (other than land listed on the State Heritage Register or to which an interim heritage order under the Heritage Act 1977 applies):*

*(a) notify the Heritage Council of its intention to grant consent, and*

*(b) take into consideration any response received from the Heritage Council within 28 days after the notice is sent.*

### 3.6 Summary of Statutory Heritage Listings

The Fort Street Public School Site is located within the curtilage of the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR) listed 'Millers Point and Dawes Point Village Precinct Conservation Area' (SHR #01682), as shown in Figure 3-1.

The 'Millers Point Heritage Conservation Area' (HCA C35) including the Fort Street Public School is locally heritage listed, as shown in Figure 3-2.

Three locally listed heritage items (LEP) are also located within the Fort Street Public School Site

- The Bureau of Meteorology including interiors - 9 Upper Fort Street (Sydney LEP #1936)
- The Messenger's Cottage for Sydney Observatory including interior - 9A Upper Fort Street (Sydney LEP # 1937)
- Fort Street Primary School Site including buildings and their interiors, fig trees and grounds - 1005 Upper Fort Street (Sydney LEP # 1938)

**Heritage Council of New South Wales**



State Heritage Register - SHR:01682 - Plan:1921  
 Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct  
 Upper Fort Street, Millers Point

Gazettal Date: 21 November 2003

0 50 100 150 200  
 Metres

Scale: 1:5,000 @A4  
 Datum/Projection: GCS GDA 1994



- SHR Curtilage
- Land Parcels
- Railways
- Roads
- LGAs
- Suburbs

Figure 3-1 SHR Millers Point & Dawes Point Village Precinct. Fort Street Public School site indicated in blue. (Source: SHR Listing)





Figure 3-2: The Fort Street Public School site is located within the locally listed 'Millers Point and Dawes Point Village Precinct' Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) on the City of Sydney LEP (2012, Heritage Map - Sheet HER\_014) Fort Street Public School #1938, the Former Messenger's Cottage #1937, the Bureau of Meteorology Buildings #1936, the National Trust Centre #1876. The subject site is indicated by the blue arrow (Curio Addition).

Table 3.2 lists the relevant statutory and non-statutory registers, listings and orders, and identified those in which the Fort Street Public School site (or individual elements of) is sited.

Table 3.2: Summary Table of Heritage Listings and Registers

Register/listing	Details	Statutory implications (y/n)
National Heritage List	Not listed	N/A
Commonwealth Heritage List	Not listed	N/A
State Heritage Register	Included within Millers and Dawes Point HCA	Y
City of Sydney LEP	<i>Bureau of Meteorology including interior (#1936)</i> <i>Messenger's Cottage for Sydney Observatory including interior (#1937)</i> <i>Fort Street Primary School site including buildings and interiors, fig trees and grounds (#1938).</i> Included within Millers Point Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) (C35).	Y
Register of the National Trust (NSW)	Not listed	N/A
NSW National Trust Industrial Archaeology Sites List	Not listed	N/A
Register of National Estate	<i>Fort Street School (former) (western addition)- N.B.</i> Building is no longer extant. <i>Old Training Block, Fort Street School (former) - N.B.</i> Building is no longer extant.	N
NSW Department of Education Section 170 Register	<i>Fort Street Public School - Building B00A, Grounds and significant Trees</i> <i>Fort Street Public School</i> <i>Fort Street Public School - Bureau of Meteorology</i> <i>Fort Street Public School - Messengers Cottage</i>	Y

### **3.7 Heritage Items Nearby**

In addition to the heritage items located within the Fort Street Public School site, several other heritage items are located in close proximity and association to the site (also shown in Figure 3-1), including the:

- National Trust Centre Including Buildings & Their Interiors, Retaining Walls & Ground - 1001 Bradfield Highway (Sydney LEP # 1876).
- Tennis Court and Pavilion - 96-108 Kent Street (Sydney LEP #1920)
- Sydney Observatory (SHR 01449 and Sydney LEP #1934)
- Observatory Park Including Boer War Memorial, Bandstand, Fences and Landscaping – Upper Fort Street (Sydney LEP #1935)
- Agar Steps, Millers Point (Sydney LEP #1868)

### **3.8 Non-Statutory Heritage Registers**

A number of organisations maintain registers of buildings or sites which they have assessed as having cultural heritage significance. These registers have no statutory authority; however the inclusion of a place on a non-statutory register suggests a certain degree of community esteem and appreciation. Non-statutory registers include the National Trust (NSW) Register, the NSW National Trust Industrial Archaeology Sites List, the RAI 20th Century Register of Significant Buildings, and the Art Deco Society of NSW's Art Deco Building Register.

#### **3.8.1. Register of the National Estate**

The Australian Heritage Council is also responsible for keeping the Register of the National Estate (RNE). The RNE can no longer be added to, and for Commonwealth properties, has been superseded by the Commonwealth and National Heritage Lists. The RNE is now an indicative list of significant places with no statutory controls, except for properties owned by the Commonwealth.

No heritage items within the Fort Street Public School site are listed on the RNE.

#### **3.8.2. National Trust of Australia (NSW)**

The National Trust (NSW) Register was established in 1949, and maintains a 'register of landscapes, townscapes, buildings, industrial sites, cemeteries and other items or places which the Trust determines have cultural significance and are worthy of conservation'. While the Register does not have statutory authority, it does fill a role of raising public awareness of heritage issues.

No heritage items within the Fort Street Public School site are listed on National Trust (NSW) Register.

## 4. History

## 4. History

This historical summary has been predominantly extracted from the TKD draft CMP (2015), with additional research and supplementary information prepared by Curio Projects, in both 2020 and 2023, as required. Where text has been directly extracted from the TKD draft CMP, this has been *indicated in italics*. Generally, where standard font is used, this has been written by Curio Projects, unless stated otherwise. The full history of the site is attached as Appendix A.

### 4.1 Historical Timeline

For ease of reference, a brief historical timeline presenting the key developments, alterations and modifications undertaken at Fort Street Public School site has been developed, based on the historical evidence as outlined in Appendix A of this CMP.

Date	Events
Pre-invasion occupation	The traditional owners of the Sydney Cove region are the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. Observatory Hill locality was most likely one of the earliest contact sites between First Nations peoples and early colonists.
1790s	Government windmills built on the high land; construction of Dawes Point fort and Observatory.
1804	Construction of Fort Phillip on the heights of the peninsula ridge.
1806	A third government windmill, a large wooden structure, was built by Nathaniel Lucas near the site where Fort Street Public School now stands
1815-20	Construction of Military Hospital and associated outbuildings (Surgeon Quarters, kitchen, servant's apartments)
1820s-80s	Spread of urban development across whole Millers Point and Dawes Point Precinct, active quarrying along Kent Street
1840	Part of Fort Phillip demolished, new signal station erected in its place, later incorporated into Sydney Observatory
1849	Relocation of Military Hospital to Paddington, Commanding Engineer officially relinquishes possession of hospital site to National School
1849	<b>Fort Street School</b> established, remodelling/adaptation of Military Hospital
1850	Military Hospital building modified for school use to carry the two storey arcade by infilling the encircling verandah altering the building to Victorian Mannerist style.
1850s	Adaptation of Fort Phillip site for Observatory and parklands. (Current Observatory constructed between 1857-1859.)
1862	<b>Messenger's Cottage</b> for Sydney Observatory constructed
1862	Fort Street Infants school erected (west of Surgeons residence, likely associated with original structure of military kitchen outbuildings)
1880	Doves 1880s plan shows that Military Hospital has been extended to join the 1855 school building with an additional out building at the rear on the west boundary, the Infants school is on the northwest boundary and three out buildings (privies) are shown on the southern boundary of the National Trust site
1887-89	Classroom buildings added and repairs made to existing school buildings
1900s	Post plague demolitions and rebuilding throughout the precinct, less so in Dawes Point.
1909	Military Hospital kitchen block and cellar demolished, playground repairs, construction of retaining wall and fence.
1916	Boys relocated to new Fort St High School at Taverners Hill. Fort St School, Millers Point became girls school only
1920-30	Construction of Sydney Harbour Bridge and approaches on the heights of the peninsula ridge.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Events</b>
1922	Construction of purpose-built <b>Bureau of Meteorology Building (MET)</b>
1929	Military Hospital remodelled
1940s	School buildings south of Bureau of Meteorology demolished, including former surgeon's residence and infants school.
1930-50s	New group of school buildings constructed including hall, gymnasium and several classrooms.
1940-50s	Construction of the ring road to the Cahill Expressway for the Sydney Harbour Bridge
1940-41	Construction of modernist <b>Fort Street Primary School Building</b> by Clive Evatt the Minister for Education at the time
1949	<b>Fanny Cohen Gymnasium</b> constructed
1950s	Fort Street School secondary pupils relocated to Taverner's Hill. The primary school pupils vacated the model school to occupy the newer buildings (current Fort Street Public School main building)
1954	Classroom added to 1940 primary school building. Demountable building constructed to west of Bureau of Meteorology
1957	Second bridge over Cahill cutting, linking gymnasium to footway alongside Harbour Bridge approach
1961	Two larger demountable classrooms constructed for Fort Street Girls School to NW of Gymnasium
1963	Bureau of Meteorology vacated the building, with weather forecasting and measuring equipment remaining at the Messenger's Cottage
1975	Military Hospital/former school buildings adapted for National Trust occupation.
1979-2000s	Various uses of Messengers Cottage, including by National Trust 'Young Trust Group', and as Childcare Centre. Some repair, alterations and conservation works undertaken
1991	EEC opens in former Fanny Cohen Gymnasium
1991	Use of Bureau of Meteorology by National Trust for storage
2000	Bureau of Meteorology fell into major disrepair and disuse
2000- Current	Use of Messengers Cottage by Fort Street Public School
2019	Fort Street Public School identified as key public school for expansion in SI (NSW) Strategic Business Case Master Planning for expansion - Concept Design of Master Plan option prepared (FJMT Studio 2019). The redevelopment of the Fort Street Public School Site was completed in order to upgrade school facilities and enable increased capacity of students.
2020-2023	

**The following site works have been completed including:**

- Alterations to drop-off and pick-up locations and associated works, including tree removal and landscaping works.
- Alterations, and additions to the existing buildings at the site including the Fort Street Public School building, The Bureau of Meteorology and the Messenger's Cottage.

**The demolition of selected buildings and structures including:**

- Environmental Education Centre,
- Shade cloth and Play court,
- Part of the existing Fort Street Primary School Building

**The construction of four new buildings including:**

- The Windmill wing (Building J and H)
- The Hall (Building G)
- Staff room (Building F)

## 4.2 Aboriginal Ethnohistory

The traditional owners of the Sydney Cove region are the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. The traditional territory of the Gadigal stretches along the southern side of Sydney Harbour from South Head, west to approximately Darling Harbour, and south towards Botany Bay. The Sydney region has two main language groups: Darug—with two main dialects, one spoken along the coast, and another in the hinterland/Cumberland Plain region of western Sydney; and Tharawal—spoken to the south of Botany Bay. Within the Darug language group, people belonged to smaller family/territorial groups or clans, through which they were connected to, and occupied, different areas of land across Sydney, of which the Gadigal people are one.

While the Observatory Hill locality would most likely have been an original contact site between the new colonists and Sydney's first inhabitants, few accounts or evidence remain to provide further information about contact in this location. The local Aboriginal people living in the area of the Fort Street Public School would have pursued a mixed food economy in the region, utilising and relying on the abundant natural resources of Sydney cove, including marine resources from the harbour and surrounding waters, hunting terrestrial mammals, as well as collecting and processing local plants (see Figure 4.1).

At the time of arrival of the First Fleet and Captain Arthur Phillip in January 1788, it is estimated that at least 1500 Aboriginal people would have lived along the coastal region between Broken Bay and Botany Bay. The arrival of the First Fleet devastated the lives and activities of Aboriginal people of the Sydney Harbour area, restricting access to areas traditionally used for hunting and gathering, shelter and for ceremonial purposes, while introducing devastating diseases such as smallpox. It is estimated that almost half of Sydney's Aboriginal population died in the first smallpox epidemic recorded in the colony in 1789. However, despite the widespread devastation of colonial arrival and establishment to the Aboriginal inhabitants of Sydney, the Gadigal endured and remain a continuing culture in Sydney today.



*By water to Parramatta, with a distant view of the western mountains taken from the Windmill-hill at Sydney.*

Figure 4-1: View of Parramatta River from Observatory Hill, c.1789 (Source: NLA. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135681388>)



Figure 4.2 (left) and Figure -4-3 (right): Sydney Cove, Port Jackson March 1788, William Bradley, Inset of Observatory. Charts from his Journal A Voyage To New South Wales Ca. 1802 (Source: SLNSW Safe 1 14, 7). Figure 4.3 to the right is an extract from Figure 4.2 which shows the site more closely.

### 4.3 Post-Contact Aboriginal History

Discussion of the post-contact evidence for the presence of Aboriginal groups in the vicinity of the study area is problematic. As Paul Irish has pointed out:

*Archaeological research into Sydney's Aboriginal past has overwhelmingly focused on the pre-contact period, while historical archaeology focusing on Aboriginal heritage has mostly been undertaken in regional or remote areas.*<sup>4</sup>

This was the result, as Irish explains, of the existence of an “Aboriginal/historical heritage divide” within the archaeological community due to a number of factors.

Two recent efforts have highlighted the presence of specific sets archaeological remains of Aboriginal presence in the Sydney Basin area in the post contact period.<sup>5</sup> Goward focused on Aboriginal Glass Artefacts (AGA) and identified 58 sites mostly focusing on Botany Bay and Port Jackson.<sup>6</sup> Three AGAs were identified at First Government House site, only 700 m to the southeast of the study area. McDonald recorded 37 examples of art depicting contact motifs in the Sydney Basin, mostly around Broken Bay and

<sup>4</sup> Irish, P. and Goward, T., 2012. Where's the evidence? The archaeology of Sydney's Aboriginal history. *Archaeology in Oceania*, 47(2), pp. 60-68.

<sup>5</sup> Goward, T., 2011. Aboriginal Glass Artefacts of the Sydney Region, A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Archaeology. University of Sydney and McDonald, J. 2008. Rock art and cross cultural interaction in Sydney. Veth, P., P. Sutton and M. Neale (eds.). *Strangers on the Shore: Early Coastal Contacts in Australia*. Canberra. Nation Museum of Australia Press, pp. 94-112.

<sup>6</sup> Though she notes that this is likely a product of where archaeological work is being undertaken not a reflection of Aboriginal cultural behaviour – see Goward, *op cit*, p. 113.

the Hawkesbury River, none are around Botany Bay or Port Jackson and only one is south of Port Jackson near the Georges River.<sup>7</sup>

Irish in his 2014 thesis draws much of the available archaeological and historical information together for the Sydney region and was able to document an ongoing presence of Aboriginal individuals and communities post invasion around Port Jackson for the majority of the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Settlements are known from the Domain (1846) and Woolloomooloo (1844) not far from the study area.

Artistic depictions also suggest a presence and level of interaction in the early period near the site, though these may need to be treated with some caution (Figure 4-2). Major James Taylor's famous panorama shows four groups of Aborigines, the first two on the grounds of the Military Hospital itself, two conversing with a member of the military – all are clothed. The third and fourth present the members of small family(?) groups, north of the study area, naked with weapons living in more demonstrably "primitive" circumstances traditionally anticipated by the European viewers.

From historical sources we also know of the relations recorded between the civil and military authorities and the local Eora in the immediate aftermath of the invasion. For example, Governor Phillips attempts to establish intercourse with the Aboriginal groups through Arabanoo and then Bennelong and Colebee.<sup>9</sup> this relationship was focused on the east side of Sydney Cove at Tubowgulle (now Bennelong Point) and the First Government House and Domain. Nearer the study area was the early observatory established at the north end of the headland Tar-ra (now Dawes Point).<sup>10</sup> William Dawes was a Marine on the First Fleet and was given the task of observing a comet expected in 1788 from the southern hemisphere. He was able to provide engineering and survey expertise to the developing settlement and also developed the first Eora language.<sup>11</sup> His relationship with fifteen-year-old native girl, Patyegarang, was close and she acted as his teacher and servant.<sup>12</sup>

#### **4.4 Early Site History – Windmill Hill/Observatory Hill**

For ease of use of the CMP, in accordance with the new CMP guidelines, the following sub-sections remains brief and notes key points only. For a full post-contact site history please refer to Appendix A: *History* (of this CMP).

**1790s** -area known as Windmill Hill .

*Before it was named Observatory Hill, the high ridge on the western side of Sydney Cove was known in the 1790s as Windmill Hill when it was the site of the colony's first successfully functioning windmill, then Fort Phillip or Citadel Hill from 1804 and Flagstaff Hill from the time of Governor Macquarie. The name Observatory Hill came into currency during the 1860s.*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> McDonald, *op cit*, p. 101.

<sup>8</sup> Irish, P., 2014. Hidden in Plain View: Nineteenth-century Aboriginal people and places in coastal Sydney, Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, UNSW Sydney.

<sup>9</sup> Smith, K, 2009, "Bennelong among his people". *Aboriginal History*. 33, pp. 7–30.

<sup>10</sup> What was to become known as Dawes Point was originally named Maskelyne Point after Dr Neville Maskelyne Dawe's patron and the then British Astronomer Royal.

<sup>11</sup> Phyllis Mander-Jones, 'Dawes, William (1762–1836)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/dawes-william-1968/text2377>, published first in hardcopy 1966, accessed online 17 September 2022

<sup>12</sup> Gibson, R., 2010, "Patyegarang and William Dawes: The space of imagination", *In Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on race, place and identity*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 242-254.

<sup>13</sup> Noni Boyd, "Watts, John", in Philip Goad and Julie Willis, *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, p.755. Other buildings designed by Watts include the Lancer Barracks at Parramatta (circa 18200, additions to Government House at Parramatta



1860s -renamed Observatory Hill



Figure 4-4: The Military Hospital formed a prominent part of Edward Close's depiction of the western side of Sydney Cove, circa 1818. The Government Mill and Fort Phillip can be seen to its right. (West Side Of Farm Cove With Distant View Of The Military Hospital The Smock-Mill And Fort Phillip By Edward Charles Close. Source: NLA.Pic-An4563834-S8).

#### 4.5 Early Site History – Military Hospital

**1814-1844** -The Military Hospital, commissioned by Governor Macquarie occupied the site and was in use for more than 30 years; with the main building designed by Lieutenant John Watts. The building was a rectangular two storey building with a mansard roof, wrap around verandahs. two outbuildings, a boundary wall to the north (stone footings still exist). Historical research suggests that the wall was part of the Military Hospital compound.<sup>14</sup> According to one source the likely period in which the wall was constructed was the 1830s and 1840s, based on an analysis of bricks and mortar composition, although the sandstone footings are part of the northern wall to the Military Hospital.<sup>15</sup>



Figure 4-5 The Military Hospital formed a prominent part of Edward Close's depiction of the western side of Sydney Cove, circa 1818. The Government Mill and Fort Phillip can be seen to its right. (West Side Of Farm Cove With Distant View Of The Military Hospital

<sup>14</sup> State Heritage Inventory database entry for the Bureau of Meteorology.

<sup>15</sup> Edward Higginbotham, *Report on Historical and Archaeological Sites in Observatory Hill Management Plan*, Appendix II, pp.5; Edward Higginbotham, *Inventory for Military Hospital Boundary Wall in Inventory of Historical and Archaeological Sites in Observatory Hill Management Plan*, Appendix 3.

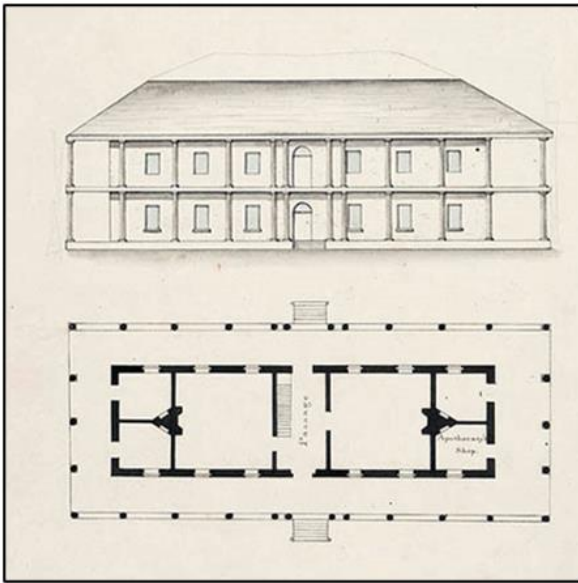


Figure 4-6 1824. Plan of Military Hospital (Left), Plan of 'Doctor's House' (1824) From Standish Lawrence Harris – 'Report & Estimate Of The Value Of The Improvements Which Have Taken Place In The Public Buildings Of Sydney, Etc.' (Source: SLNSW C 225/ F1325534)

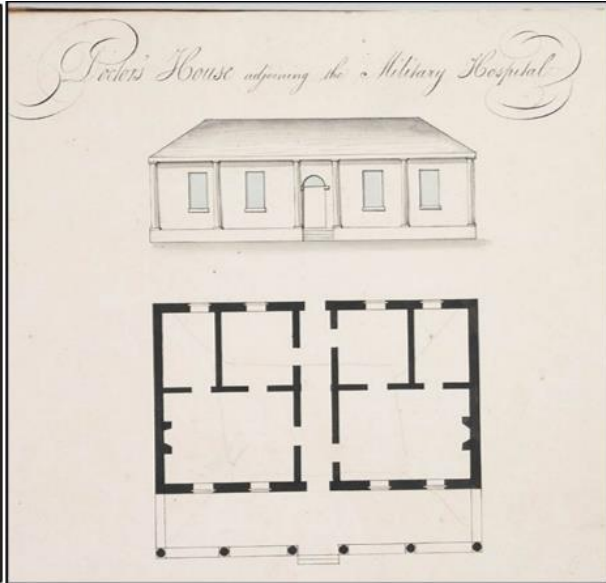


Figure 4-7 1836 Plan of Military Hospital. Main hospital and two outbuildings surrounded by perimeter fence or wall. Detail of perimeter/boundary is not specified and north boundary appears to be slightly splayed (Source: NSW State Archives and Records. Digital ID: NRS13886[X755]\_a110\_000118)

The image in Figure 4.8 is one of the only images of the heritage boundary wall in the early days of the Fort Street Public School.



Figure 4.8: Circa 1910 photograph showing children being taught about gardening in front of the southern side of the wall. (Source: State Records Digital ID 15051\_a047\_005381)

#### 4.6 Military Hospital to first model National School

1831 -National Irish system comes into operation – a state-supported system of primary education where children of all religious denominations to be taught together in the same school.

1848 - Board of National Education request for suitable building to accommodate a model school and a normal school for training future teachers. Military Hospital buildings handed to Board with plans of alterations “necessary to render this building well adapted for two separate schools”, prepared by Colonial Architect Mortimer Lewis.

Changes to Military Hospital building – separation of boys to the ground floor and girls to the first floor; internal stair remove, access to first floor via external staircase; building enlarged by incorporating verandahs into classroom spaces; arcaded loggias constructed around periphery of the building; existing roof retained.

1850 -School opened on 1 April.16,1850. Fort Street was one of four early National Schools established in Inner Sydney. It was the largest and importantly, the first model school intended to demonstrate the construction, organisation and management of a National School

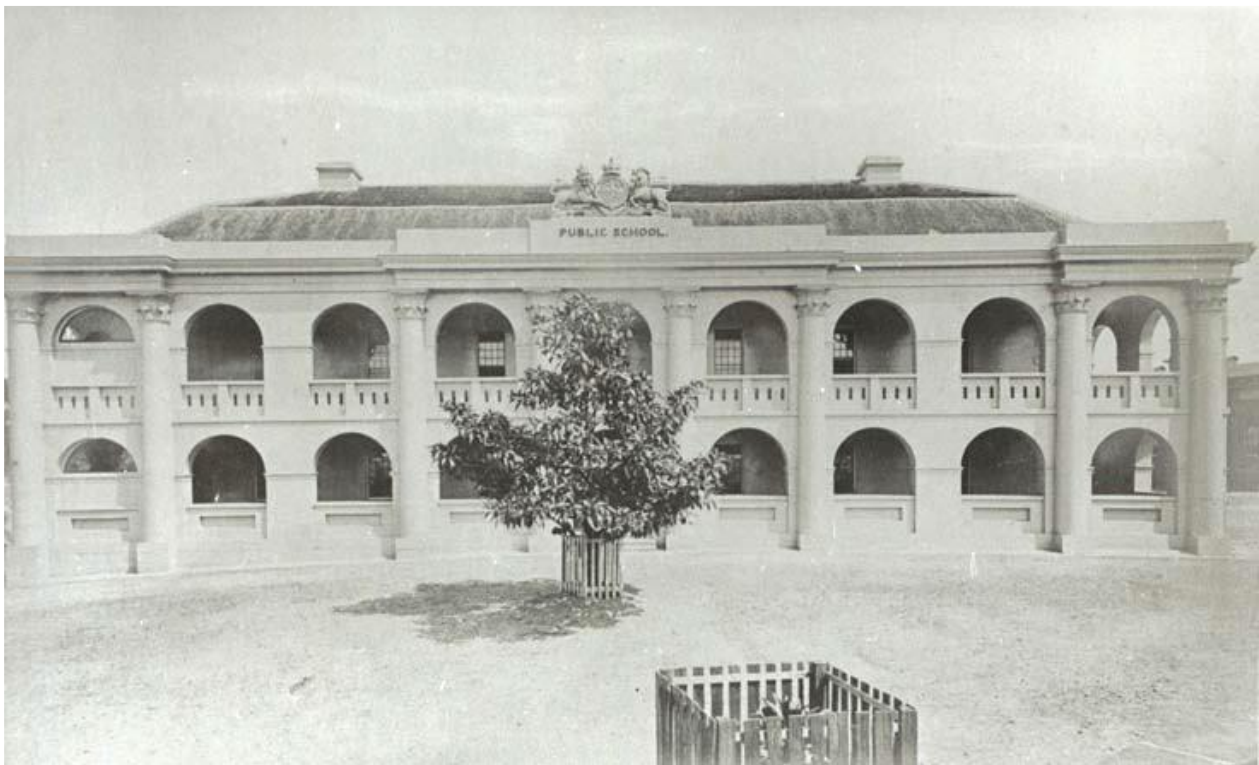


Figure 4-9: Undated photograph of Fort Street School. The roof of the original Military Hospital rises above the parapets of the loggias. (Source: State Records digital ID. 15051\_a047\_005335.jpg)

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<sup>16</sup> Horan, p.11.

#### 4.7 Establishment of Fort Street School

1854 -Secondary school education introduced to Fort Street – construction of new building to the west of the existing school

1862 -Messenger’s Cottage for Sydney Observatory constructed. Infants’ school under construction to the north of the existing buildings

1887- 1889 -Several new classroom buildings were added to the school and repairs were made to the existing buildings

1901 -Site dedicated as a public school

1920-1930 -Construction of Sydney Harbour Bridge and approaches on the heights of the peninsula ridge.

1922-Construction of purpose-built Bureau of Meteorology Building (MET)

1929 -Fort Street Girls High School, Military Hospital buildings remodelled for the high school.



Figure 4-10: Portion of a survey prepared by H Chauncy and dated 7 October 7, 1856, showing development across the National School site which included the modified Military Hospital (A), Henry Robertson’s recently completed classroom block (B), the former doctor’s residence (C) and privies (D). (Source: Historical Atlas of Sydney - City Detail Sheets, 1855 – Sheet\_01.)

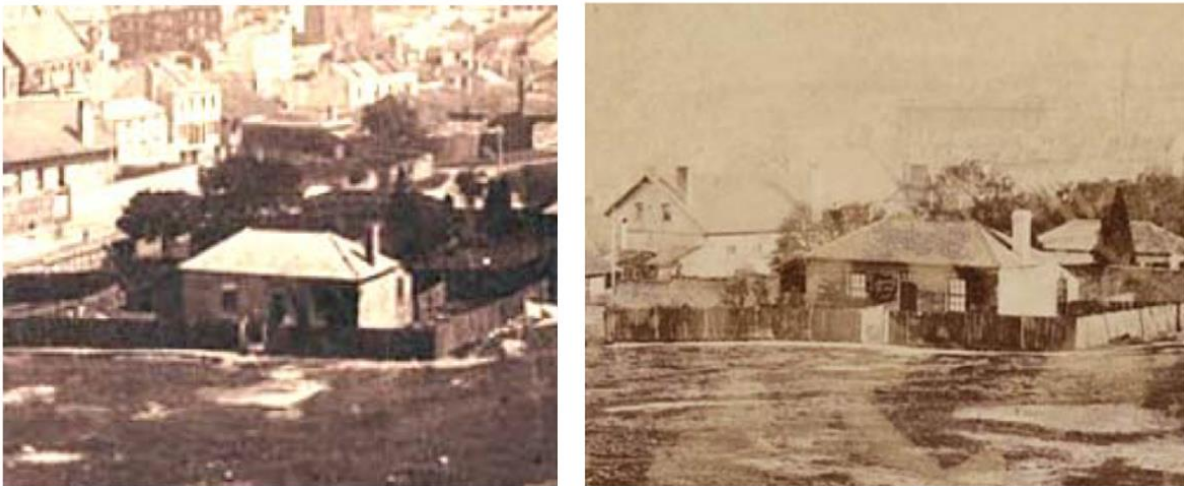


Figure 4-11: The Messenger's Cottage as it appeared in 1864, part of a panoramic series of photographs by Freeman Bros & Prout (left); and in 1871 (right). (Source: SLNSW SV / 16, digital order no. a260004; SPF / 998, digital order no. a089998.)



Figure 4-12: Portion of a survey showing Fort Street School circa 1865. The infants' school is located at A, close to the former surgeon's residence at B. C= Messengers cottage. D= Cottage/outbuilding present on site c.1855-1880 (Source: City of Sydney Archives, Historical Atlas of Sydney – Trigonometrical Survey of Sydney, 1855-1865, Block A1)

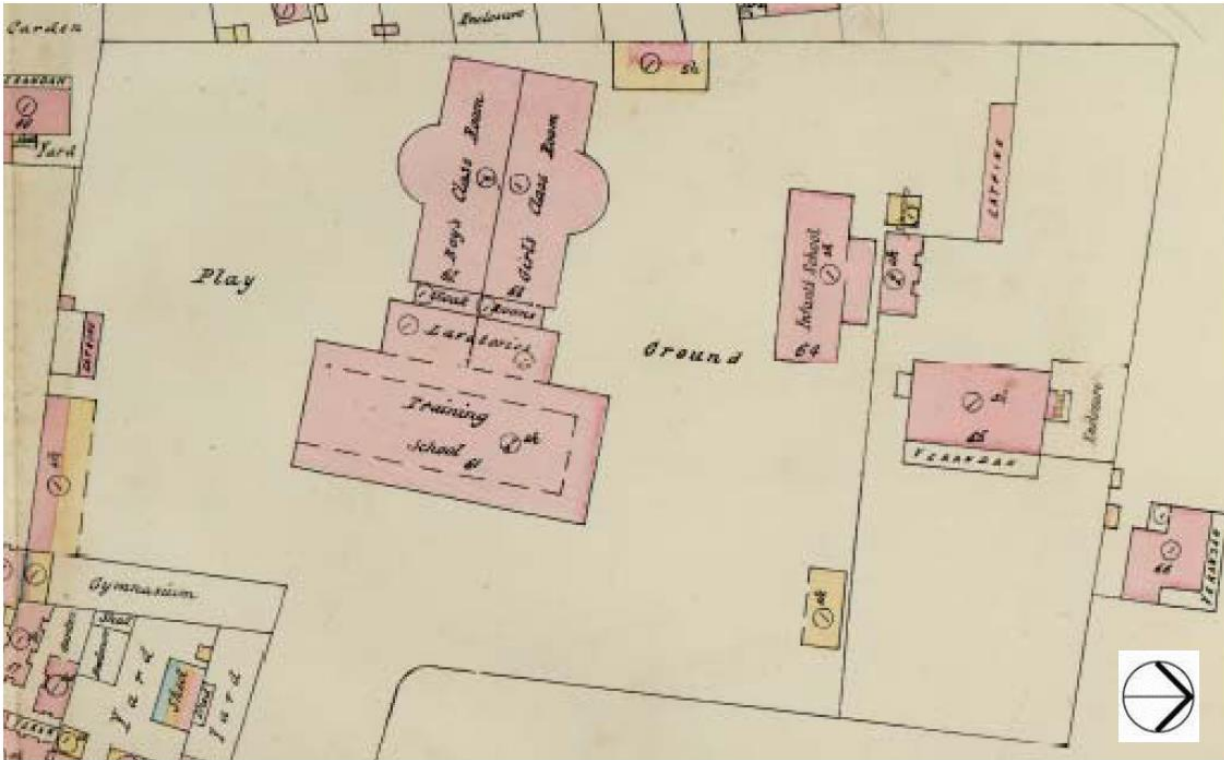


Figure 4-13: Development at Fort Street School, circa 1880. (Source: Historical Atlas of Sydney – Dove’s Plans of Sydney, 1880, Blocks 66 and 67)



Figure 4-14: View of Fort Street School, circa 1900, showing the gates on Princes Street and the wall extending along Essex Street and Upper Fort Street. (Source: State Records digital ID 4481\_a026\_000240.jpg)



Figure 4-15: Fort Street School, circa 1900. (Source: SLNSW PXE 77/365, digital order no. a116365.)



Figure 4-16: The Messenger's Cottage photographed from the Observatory, circa 1900-1910. (Source: SLNSW PXE 711 / 365, digital order no. a116365.)







Figure 4-18: The Messenger's Cottage in 1918, after occupation by the Meteorological Bureau. (Source:observatoryhillec.nsw.edu.au.)



Figure 4-19: View looking west towards Fort Street School in 1932, after completion of the approaches to the Sydney Harbour Bridge. (Source: State Records digital id.12685\_a007\_a00704\_8735000188)



Figure 4-20: Bureau of Meteorology, photographed circa 1932. The recessed balcony of the residential apartment appears to have also served as a drying area. The building directly addressed Observatory Hill Park. (Source: TKD 2016: Fig 36).

### New Primary School Building

**1937-1939** -Circular Quay Co-ordination Committee – proposed road loop cut through part of the Fort Street Public School site – new primary school building “in the northern section of that portion of Observatory Park to be surrounded by the new roadway in open cut.”

**1937 – 1950** -New group of school buildings constructed including hall, gymnasium and several classrooms.

**1940-1950s**-Demolition of existing school building and Construction of the ring road to the Cahill Expressway for the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

**1960s-1970s**-Space needs of school increase – use of demountable classrooms.

**2019-2023**-Redevelopment of Fort Street Primary School buildings.



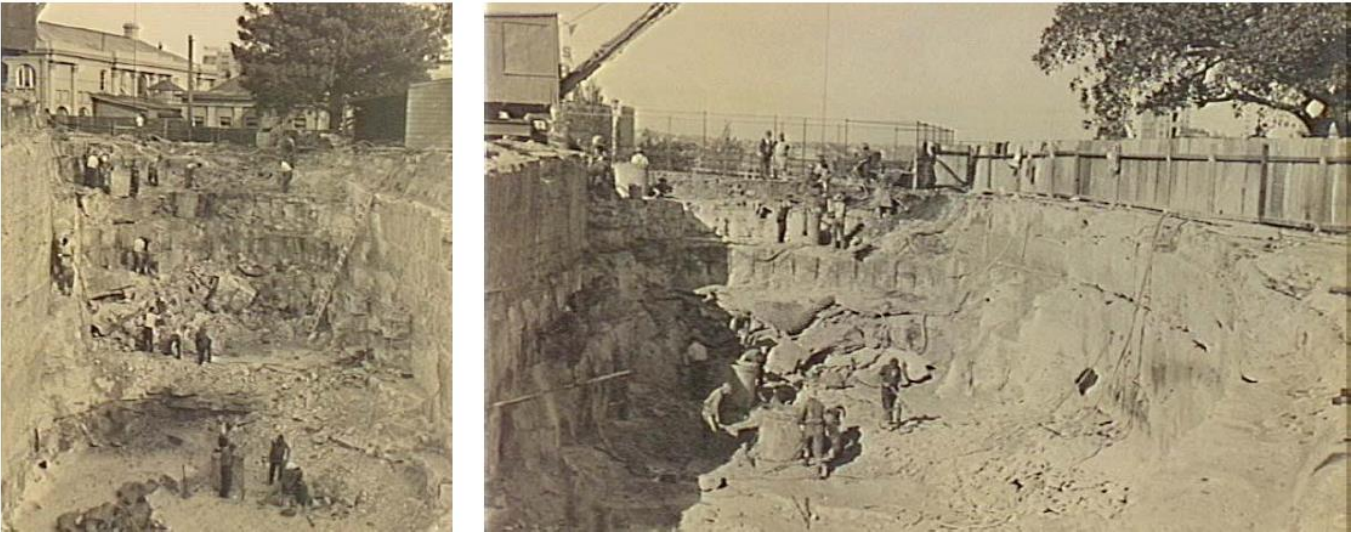


Figure 4-24: Excavating for the road loop looking southeast, 22 May 1940 (left) and looking east, 4 September 1940. (Source: City of Sydney Archives NSCA CRS 66 2 18 and CRS 66 2 23.)

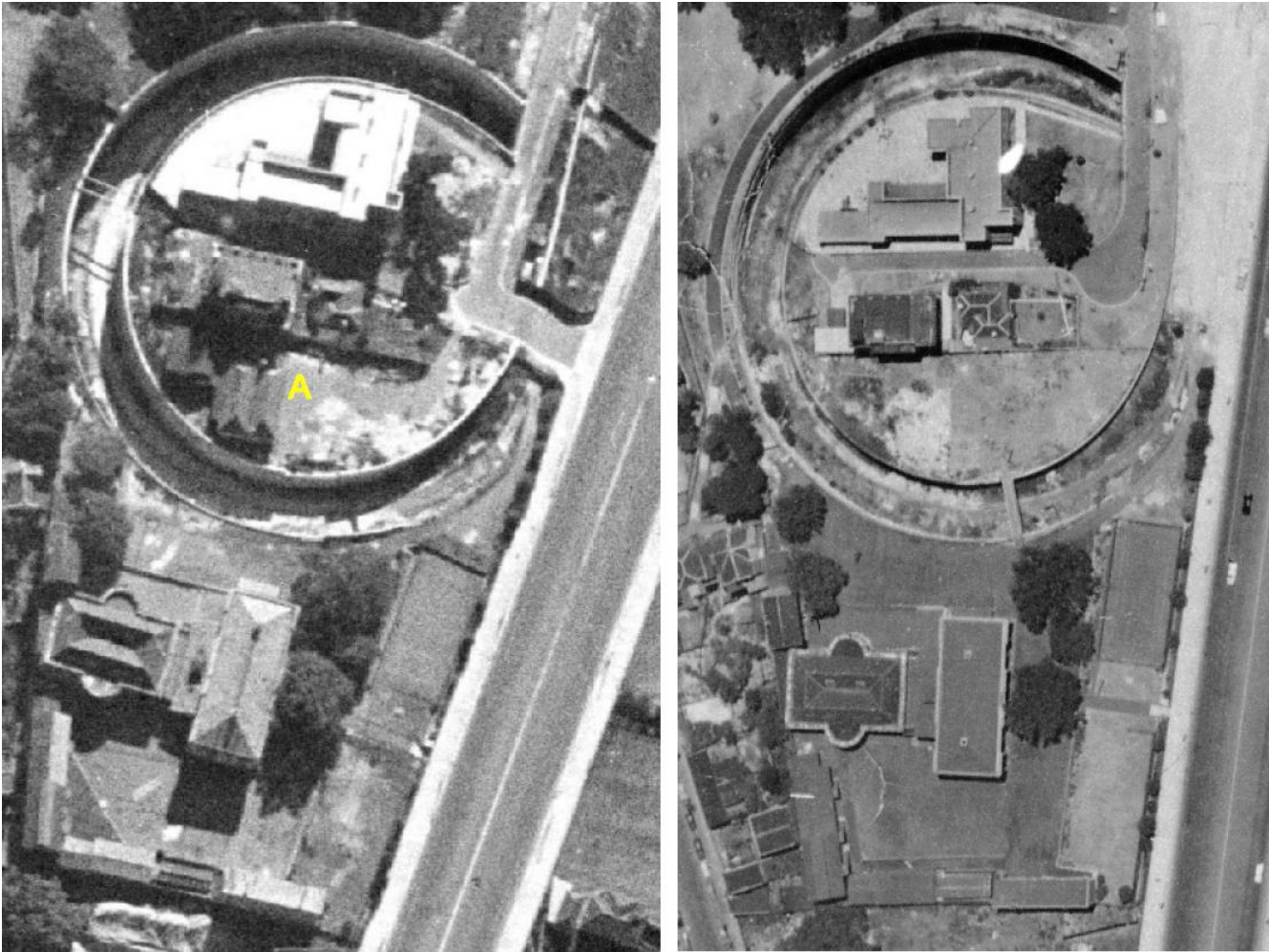


Figure 4-25: Aerial photographs taken in 1943 (left) and 1949 (right). During the intervening period of six years buildings associated with Fort Street School that were situated behind the Bureau of Meteorology, including the former surgeon's cottage associated with the Military Hospital (indicated at A), were demolished. (Sources: City of Sydney Archives Historical Atlas of Sydney; Spatial Information Exchange.)



Figure 4-26: Photographs of Fort Street Public School taken shortly after the building was completed. (Source: Building, August 1942, pp.26-27.)

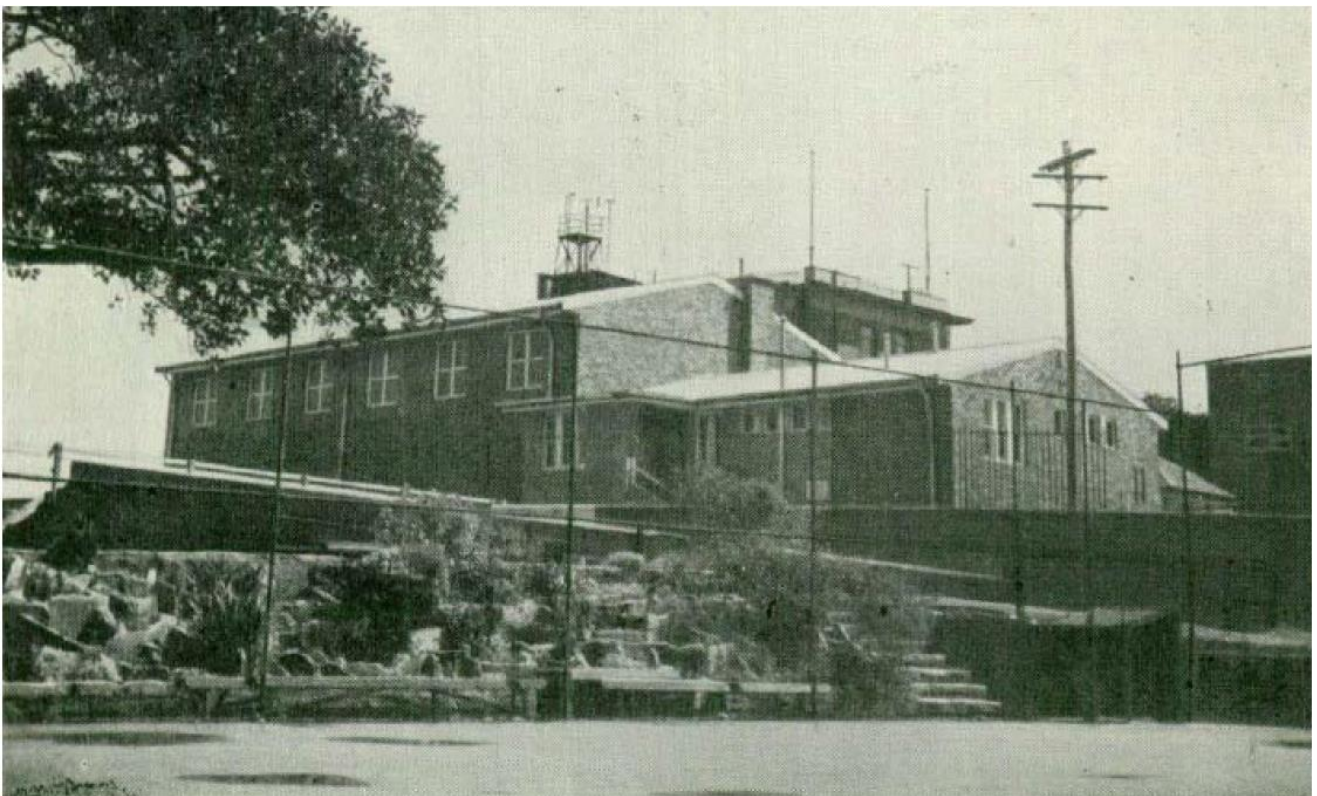


Figure 4-27: The gymnasium built for the Fort Street Girls' High School, 1952. (Source: Report of the Department of Works for the year ended 30th June 1952, p.31.)

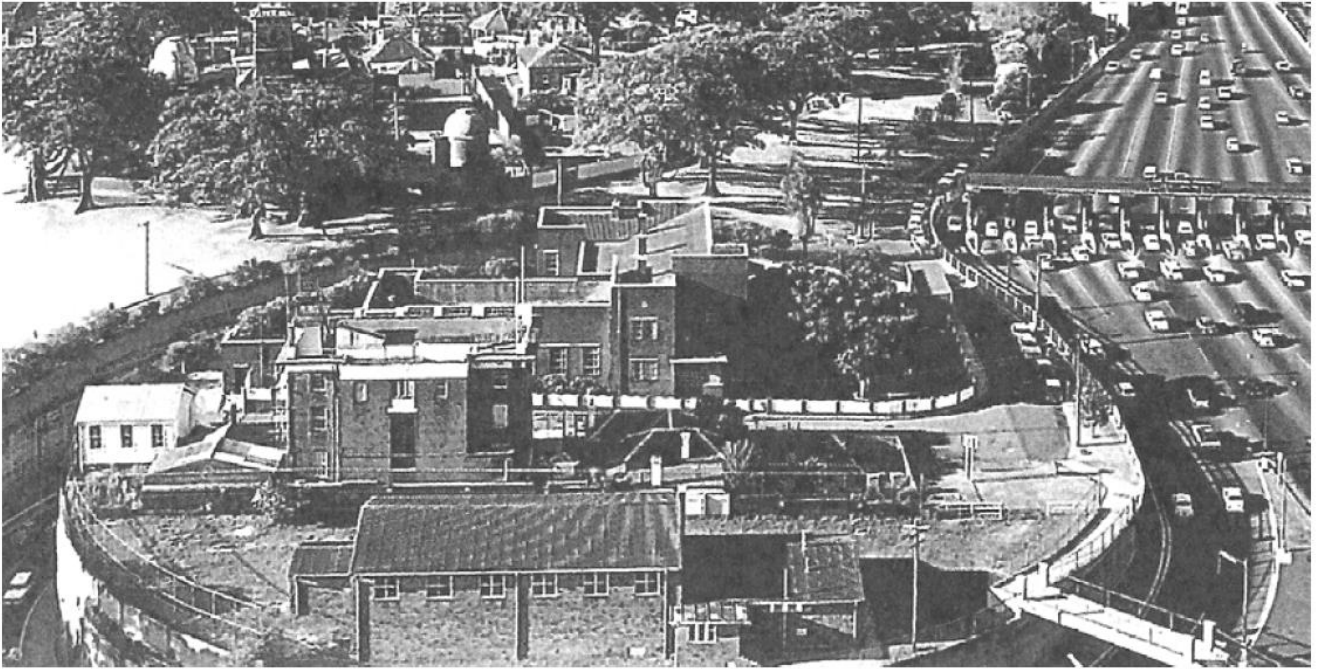


Figure 4-28: Portion of photograph, 1966. Demountable school buildings can be seen in front of the western end of the Bureau of Meteorology on the leased portion of land. Demountable school buildings can be seen in front of the western end of the Bureau of Meteorology on the leased portion of land. (Source: Charles Pickett with Bruce Lamb, *Observer and Observed: a pictorial history of Sydney Observatory and Observatory Hill* – Max Dupain photograph.)



Figure 4-29: The area to the west of the gymnasium was occupied by a demountable school building by the first half of the 1970s, as shown in this circa 1975 photograph. (Source: City of Sydney Archives SRC80.)

## 4.8 Cahill Expressway Cut (1958)

The following history of the Cahill Expressway Cut has been extracted from the Millers Point and Walsh Bay Heritage Review Final Report, prepared for City of Sydney Council by Paul Davies, 2007.

*The expressway was first proposed in 1945 as part of an overall expressway plan for Sydney. Public opposition began when the proposal was first made public in 1948, with the Quay Planning Protest Committee being formed. Despite the opposition, construction on the elevated section of the expressway went ahead in 1955. Funding was provided by the Sydney Council and the NSW Government, and the elevated section was opened on 24 March 1958. Work on the sunken section commenced almost straight away after that, and the additional section was opened on 1 March 1962.<sup>17</sup> The Expressway is named after the then NSW Premier Joseph Cahill, who also approved construction of the Sydney Opera House. While a vital link in the Sydney road system, it is generally not well loved by Sydneysiders, for its ugly appearance and the way it divides the city from its waterfront.*

*The Cahill Expressway was controversial from when it was first proposed. Its elevated nature, proximity to the city and utilitarian appearance meant that when the design of the elevated section was first unveiled to the public, it was described as ridiculous, ugly, unsightly and a monstrosity. An early example of freeway revolt. Sydney Morning Herald writer Elizabeth Farrelly describes the freeway as 'doggedly first proposed. Its elevated nature, proximity to the city and utilitarian appearance meant that when the design of the elevated section was first unveiled to the public, it was described as ridiculous, ugly, unsightly and a monstrosity. An early example of freeway revolt. Sydney Morning Herald writer Elizabeth Farrelly describes the freeway as 'doggedly symmetrical, profoundly deadpan, severing the city from the water on a permanent basis'.<sup>18</sup>*

Davies also notes the Cahill Expressway as:

*An important feature for the [Millers Point] precinct but not a highly visible one is the circular stone excavation for the Cahill Expressway that separated the school grounds from Observatory Hill and from the National Trust Centre (former school building). (Davies 2007: 84)*

While the cutting for the Cahill Expressway is a dominant physical and visual feature in relation to the Fort Street Public School site, its presence is not directly connected to the history of the site as a military hospital and Fort Street Public School. It's relationship is more how it defines and geographically constrains the physical curtilage of the Fort Street Public School Site. Figures 4.28 – 4.29 (on the previous page) shows the complexity of having the school site located within the constraints of the Cahill Expressway Cut.

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/history/sydneystreets/How\\_to\\_Build\\_a\\_Street/Cahill\\_Expressway/default.html](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/history/sydneystreets/How_to_Build_a_Street/Cahill_Expressway/default.html)

<sup>18</sup> SMH, 12/02/02-Opening up the Cahill Expressway won't be a dynamic change

# 5. Physical Description



## 5. Physical Description

### 5.1 Introduction

This section presents a detailed description of the key built and landscape elements present at Fort Street Public School site. This physical analysis describes the existing built environment and landscape of the Fort Street Public School site including the condition of each key site element and built structure, in relation to their wider cultural and physical setting.

This section also provides a description of the known and/or potential Aboriginal and historical archaeology associated with the Fort Street Public School site. TDK provided a detailed review of the broader context, which generally remain relevant to this CMP and has been included. Their work is highlighted in *italics* where relevant. Where Curio additions have been inserted directly within the TDK sections, this has been indicated in **bold**.

### 5.2 Existing Topography and Environment

The site of Fort Street Public School is a circular shaped parcel of land which is elevated and bounded by the circular road, the Cahill cut. The site is also accessible via Upper Fort Street to the north of the site. The site shares the same elevated position as the Sydney Observatory. The built form occupies the majority of the site, with seven buildings of up to three storeys in height.

*“A pair of pedestrian bridges on the southeastern side of the site provides a connection to the National Trust Centre”.*<sup>19</sup>

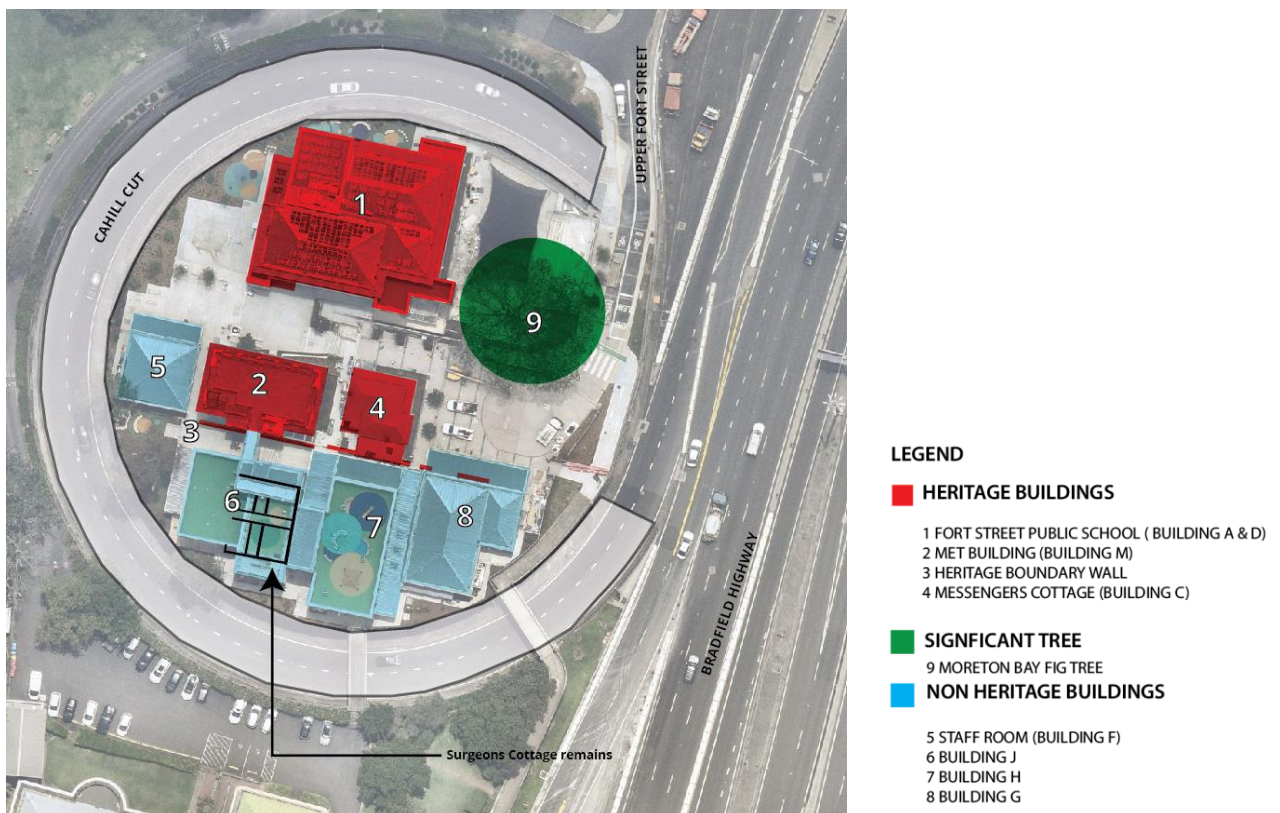


Figure 5-1: Diagram indicating heritage and non-heritage items. Source: Spatial Near Maps with Curio overlay.

<sup>19</sup> Curio Projects, 2020, *Fort Street Public School, Conservation Management Plan (CMP)*, p.58



Figure 5-2: Diagram indicating elements in the vicinity of the subject site, which contribute to its setting. Source: Spatial Near Maps with Curio overlay.

### 5.3 Setting and Visual Character

The Fort Street Public School site is visually prominent, located at the northern road entrance to the Sydney CBD. The wider landscape setting of the Fort Street Public School site on Observatory Hill places it in a complex, layered and varied topographical and built form setting, with a strong presence of landscaping and trees- closely linked with Millers Point and the Rocks. The built form is generally dominated by its heritage buildings, which are much smaller in scale and height that those of the adjoining CBD.

The locality of Fort Street Public School is also significant in its location in connection and/or proximity to several other significant heritage items and places-many of which are readily visible to, and from the site.

These include:

- Sydney Observatory
- National Trust Building (former Fort Street School)
- Sydney Harbour Bridge
- Millers Point
- Sydney Opera House

Visually, however, the connection between the Fort Street Public School site and the above significant heritage items has been impacted and interrupted to varying degrees by landscape features such as the rising topography between the water's edge to Observatory Hill, and built elements such as the cut for the Cahill Expressway, and the alignment of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

For example, there are no clear view lines between the Fort Street Public School site and the Sydney Opera House, despite their relative proximity. The Bradfield and Cahill Expressways present physical and visual boundaries in the locality that serve to create a sense of isolation of Observatory Hill and Fort Street Public School from the Rocks to the east and Millers Point to the north and west.



Figure 5-3: Looking west towards the Fort Street Public School building as viewed from Upper Fort Street. (Source: Curio: 2023)



Figure 5-4: Looking West towards the Messenger's Cottage and Bureau of Meteorology. The Fort Street Public School is visible to the north. (Source: Curio: 2023)



Figure 5.5 Looking South-West towards Barrangaroo, with the constraints of the Cahill Expressway Cut highly evident. The FJMT addition is featured to the right. (Source: Curio 2023).



Figure 5.6 The northern and eastern façades of the Fort Street Public School Building post-alterations and additions, with the mature Morton Bay Fig to the left. The site sits low on the rise of Observatory Hill, whilst surrounded by high rises to the east, south and west. Architects. FJMT (Source: Curio 2023)



Figure 5.7 When viewed from the Observatory Hill, the redevelopment of the site reads seamlessly within the existing landscape, due to its scale, bulk, height and materiality. The Bureau of Meteorology is still visible to the right, with the balustrading barely perceivable. (Source: Curio 2023).



Figure 5-8. Views from Observatory Hill towards Circular Quay (East). The redevelopment of the site retains The Bureau of Meteorology as a key dominant building within the landscape, with the alterations and additions to the Fort Street Public School demonstrating sensitive adaptive reuse. The site itself, both prior to and post-development does not lend itself to cross-harbour and cross-site views at the ground plain (Source: Curio 2023).



Figure 5-9. Views to the East towards Circular Quay of the Bureau of Meteorology, with the Bureau of Meteorology remaining dominant within the landscape. New additions, the Staff Room (to the front) and Windmill Wing (Building J) to the rear do not detract from the siting of the Bureau of Meteorology within the Fort Street Public School landscape when viewed from Observatory Hill. (Source: Curio 2023).



Figure 5-10 The site when viewed from the South (National Trust Carpark) is not dissimilar to the previous site constraints in terms of impacting on views to and from the National Trust to Observatory Hill. See Figure 5.11, on the following page, which shows the former view from the National Trust site for comparison.



Figure 5-11 This photograph taken from the National Trust shows how the views from the south (National Trust Car Park) towards Observatory Hill and the Meteorology Building were obstructed by the former Environmental Education Building (demolished in 2023) prior to the redevelopment of the site (Source: Curio Projects 2021).

#### **5.4 Landscaping Elements within the Fort Street Public School Site**

Other notable elements within the immediate setting and visual character of the Fort Street Public School site include:

##### **5.4.1. Morton Bay Fig Tree**

The mature fig tree at the southeastern corner of the site (Figure 5.12 and 5.13) was identified as having exceptional significance in the 2015 TDK draft CMP and the 2020 Curio CMP. The mature Morton Bay fig forms an integral part of the broader cultural heritage landscape in which the Fort Street Public School site sits and is associated with the significant aesthetics of the mature Morton Bay fig plantings within the Sydney Observatory Group (SHR & LEP). The State Heritage Inventory notes that:

*The siting (of the Observatory Group), with its harbour and city views and vistas framed by mature Moreton Bay fig trees of the surrounding park, make it one of the most pleasant and spectacular locations in Sydney.*<sup>20</sup>

The redevelopment works were specifically designed to retain the Morton Bay Fig so that it was protected insitu as a significant heritage landscape element<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=5051545>

<sup>21</sup> As noted in the Landscape Design Report prepared by FJMT in 2020, dated 21.2.20 and approved as part of the SSD approvals process.



Figure 5-12: Looking West towards the Moreton Bay Fig Tree from Upper Fort Street. (Source: Curio: 2023)

#### 5.4.2. Palisade Fencing

The Palisade Fencing (Figure 5.12 and 5.13) is identified as having moderate significance as it is a replica of the c.1941 palisade fencing and contributes to the ongoing physical and visual curtilage to the site. It retains the consistent character of the historic palisade fencing within The Rocks.



Figure 5-13 Looking West towards the Fort Street Public School building from Upper Fort Street. The palisade fence surrounding the site is highly visible. (Source: Curio: 2023)



### 5.4.3. Stone Pier (Pre-1941)

Prior to the new roadworks requiring the relocation of the Stone Pier to its current location (see Figure 5.14), photographic evidence suggests the pier east of the Messenger's Cottage predates 1941. The historic photograph was taken whilst the southern section of Upper Fort Street was being formed and after the completion of the construction of the 1940s building (see new location in Figure 5.14 below). Additional extensive archival research undertaken by TDK, as part of their work for the draft 2016 CMP, and as part of Curio's subsequent updates, has been unable to resolve the exact construction date of the stone pier, with the photograph from the 1940s providing the only graphic evidence of its existence found to date. Based on its materiality and design, it is most likely to date from c1830s-1860s, however, this can not be confirmed. Given, that it is known to pre-date at least 1940, the stone pier was carefully dismantled and relocated close to the Messengers Cottage and then reconstructed by heritage stone masons. It continues to have high significance as it still has a tangible relationship to its original location, was reconstructed using its' own original materials and is evidenced in the historic archives (See Figure 5-15).



Figure 5-14: Looking South towards the Messengers Cottage and the relocated sandstone pier (Source: Curio, 2023)



Figure 5-15 The Stone Pier prior to the redevelopment of the site in 2023 was located to the east of the Messengers Cottage, as shown in the c.1940 historic photograph (left) ( Source: City of Sydney Archive SRC13421; in TDK 2016: Fig 102)

#### 5.4.4. Cahill Expressway Cut

The Cahill Expressway Cut (see previous Figure 5.2), provides a key physical constraint with respect to the site's curtilage and accessibility and is significant in its own right. This is discussed in further detail in Section 5.5.

### 5.5 Built Elements/Structures

The following section provides a brief description of the built elements and structures on site following the major redevelopment of the site completed in December 2023.

As part of the design process for the redevelopment of the site in 2023, the appointed heritage architects were commissioned by Schools Infrastructure to provide advice relating to built heritage condition and opportunities, as well as to advise on the likely scope of conservation works required.<sup>22</sup>

This advice was incorporated into the design process and summarised in the report titled *Fort Street Public School- Concept Design Scope of Conservation Works (DRAFT)*. Report to SI, dated 13 November 2019 with the recommended works addressed throughout the redevelopment of the site. This report has been provided as Appendix B. In addition, Section 2.1- Background to this CMP Update provides a summary of all statutory approvals granted as part of the site's redevelopment should further information regarding specific works undertaken as part of the 2023 program be required.

#### 5.5.1. The Boundary Wall (c.1830s-1840s)

The Boundary Wall that extends across the boundary between buildings J, H and G and land occupied by the Bureau of Meteorology (MET building) and the Messenger's Cottage is constructed out of sandstock bricks set in a soft mortar over a sandstone foundation.

Whilst the orientation of the boundary wall has remained consistent since the mid-1800s, the physical fabric of the wall has been subject to numerous alterations, additions and renovations over

<sup>22</sup> Purcell 2019, *Fort Street Public School- Concept Design Scope of Conservation Works (DRAFT)*. Report to SI, 13 November 2019.

the years. Previous repairs, repointing and reconstruction of damaged sections have been undertaken using the bricks that were available at the time and were set in a harder mortar.

As part of the major works program in 2023, five sections of the Boundary Wall were approved for demolition to allow for the redevelopment of the school to proceed with the remaining intact sections of extent wall identified in Figure 5.16. During the works program, additional sections of the Boundary Wall destabilised in several locations and were subject to temporary emergency works, followed by permanent reconstruction using skilled heritage stone masons.

The destabilised sections of wall were reconstructed using the existing bricks and involved the reconstruction of a 2.5 metre section of collapsed wall to the west of Messengers Cottage, and the re-stabilisation of approximately 4 metres of the western section of the wall, adjacent to the Bureau of Meteorology.

Figure 5.16, on the following page, details the sections of the Boundary Wall that were required to be reconstructed during the 2023 works program. The works were undertaken in accordance with the stabilisation methodology concept shown and in accordance with statutory approvals.

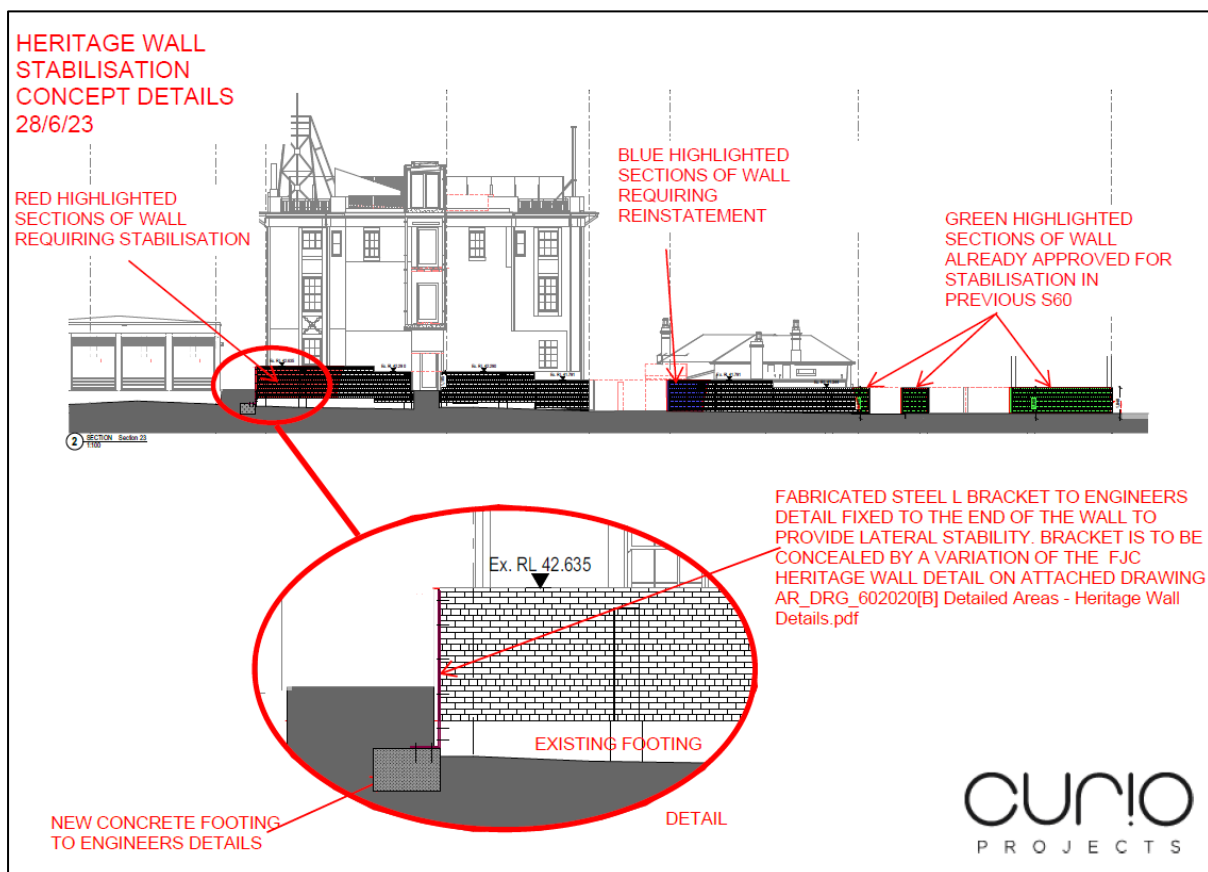


Figure 5-16 Curio Boundary Wall Stabilisation Methodology Concept, showing the sections of wall that were rebuilt in 2023.



Figure 5.17: An example of a compromised section of the Wall -East Elevation pre-reconstruction (Curio Projects 2023)

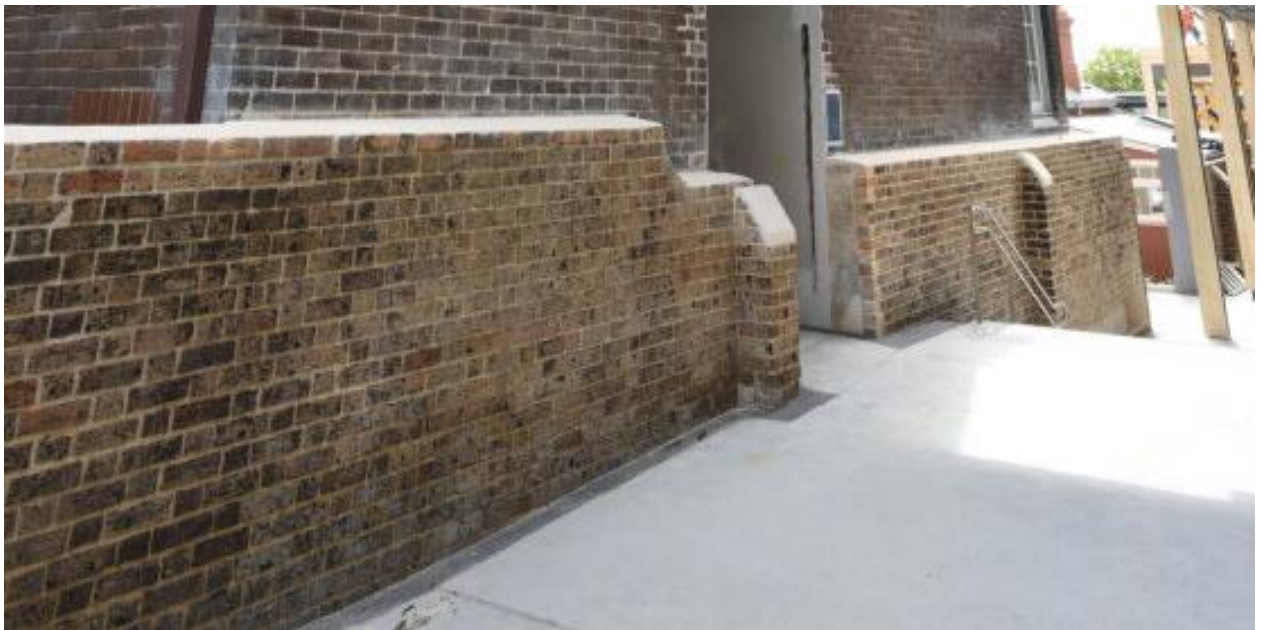


Figure 5-18 An example of the reconstructed Boundary wall using original bricks (Curio: 2023) .

### 5.5.2. Messengers Cottage (1862)

As the centrepiece of the new Central Plaza, the Messenger's Cottage is the 'Front of House Administration' for the Fort Street Public School consistent with its pre-2023 front of house administration use.

The Messenger's Cottage is a single storey brick building with a hipped roof covered by corrugated steel, with two chimneys on the western and southern sides of the roof. The corrugated steel roofing was installed during the first half of 2016 and replaces earlier corrugated steel roofing (which at some stage replaced slate) (See Figures 5-19 to-5-23).

External masonry wall surfaces have been lined with cement render that has been scribed to resemble ashlar coursing. Detailing of timber framed double hung window sashes indicates that original windows have been replaced (pre-2023). A verandah with a concrete floor extends across the northern and part of the eastern side of the building, the roof of which is supported off timber posts with decorative brackets (reconstructions of originals complete pre-2023).

Another skillion-roofed structure extends across the rear of the cottage, that abuts the brick wall. It is understood to have been constructed after 1892 and may have been built during the first decade of the twentieth century. The external wall at the western end is also timber framed and lined with vertical beaded timber weatherboards. The wall at the western end is constructed of brick and is lined externally with cement render.

A small non-significant weatherboard shed that was located to the southwest of the Cottage near the brick wall was demolished as part of the 2023 works. The shed post-dated the initial occupation of the Cottage and was thought to have been constructed by the National Trust (see Figure 5.19).



Figure 5-19: Former late addition non-significant weatherboard shed demolished as part of the 2023 works. (Source: Curio Projects)

## 2023 Redevelopment Works

The Messenger's Cottage was in reasonable condition prior to the 2023 redevelopment of the site.

The 2023 works to the Messenger's Cottage were minor and included little to no changes to the early fabric of the exteriors and interiors. The key works included the reconstruction of a highly unstable chimney, demolition of a non-significant weatherboard shed (see Figure 5.19 above)

repainting of the interiors with a change in the colour scheme to provide a contemporary colour palette, new joinery, and repair and maintenance works undertaken in accordance with the *Fort Street Public School- Concept Design Scope of Conservation Works (DRAFT)*<sup>23</sup>. The works were designed to bring the Messengers' Cottage up to the required Australian standards to allow it to safely operate as a school. Figures 5.30 to 5.32 provide detailed floorplans that are colour-coded to show the various existing categories of fabric from original, through to reconstructed, and contemporary. Following the recent works, the Messenger's Cottage is currently considered to be in excellent condition.

## Exteriors

The existing heritage façade was retained, with all existing brickwork, ashlar treatments and timber elements repaired and made good to existing in accordance with the overseeing Heritage Architect's specifications. The southern-most chimney due to structural instability determined by a structural engineer during the 2023 redevelopment works. The draft scope of conservation works (Purcell 2019) required that the chimney remain unpainted, however, the rest of the building and the other two original chimneys on the building remain painted. Internally, the development retained the existing room configuration of the Cottage, with a future management solution required for the building to address accessibility.<sup>24</sup>



Figure 5-20: The front northern elevation of the Messengers Cottage (Source: Curio 2023)

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<sup>23</sup> Purcell, 2019. *Fort Street Public School- Concept Design Scope of Conservation Works (DRAFT)*, Report to Schools Infrastructure.

<sup>24</sup> FJMT 2020: 36



Figure 5-21: The side eastern elevation of the Messengers Cottage (Source: Curio 2023)



Figure 5-22: The side western elevation of the Messengers Cottage, with the later addition shed demolished (Source: Curio 2023)



Figure 5-23: The rear southern elevation of the Messengers Cottage, showing the reconstructed chimney (unpainted brick chimney) and reconstructed section of boundary wall (to the left). (Source: Curio 2023).

## Interiors

The Messenger's Cottage has undergone a number of modifications since its construction, the most significant of which were undertaken during the period of the National Trust occupancy of the Cottage in the 1980s.<sup>25</sup> Currently, the Messenger's Cottage consists of four main rooms (of which the front three are connected via a small central hallway), a kitchen in the south and a bathroom/WC in the southwest.

The earliest section of the Messenger's Cottage comprises two rooms on its northern side. The main entry to the Cottage is directly from the northern part of the verandah into an entry room which is connected to the adjoining room. Access to the southern and eastern sections of the building is via a door opposite the main entry door, which accesses a short hall terminating at a tea bay to the rear of the Cottage. A small bathroom is located on the western side of the hall and the Principal's Office is on its eastern side. The Principal's Office connects to the eastern side of the verandah via a pair of French doors and to a small Deputy Principal's room at the rear that is connected to the tea bay at the rear of the Cottage. The interior has been refurbished with contemporary finishes and fixtures. The toilets and kitchen have refitted with contemporary finishes and fixtures. The kitchen has retained an early fireplace. It has been noted that:

*A large amount of internal fabric was installed after the National Trust gained control of the building at the end of the 1970s and afterwards. The four principal rooms and hall have simple flush-finished*

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<sup>25</sup> State Heritage Inventory, Fort Street Public School - Messengers Cottage. Heritage Item ID: 5065820, accessed on 30 November 2023, <<https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=5065820>>



plasterboard ceiling linings without cornices in principal rooms. Two have chimneybreasts with simple open fireplaces containing grates and simple mantels above the firebox opening. Floors are constructed out of early polished tongue and groove timber boards, which were refurbished by the National Trust.

There are timber board linings to kitchen and bathroom walls and ceilings, which are understood to have been installed on behalf of the National Trust. Ceilings over these spaces follow the rake of the skillion roofs over them. The bathroom, adjacent W.C. and kitchen have been recently refurbished with new fittings and, in the kitchen, new cupboards. The kitchen has retained an early fireplace.<sup>26</sup>



Figure 5-24: The entry room., with new joinery and a reception desk installed.

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<sup>26</sup> Curio Projects, 2020, *Fort Street Public School, Conservation Management Plan (CMP)*, p.71



Figure 5-25: Deputy Principal's Office, with minor updates, including new joinery, paintwork and blinds.



Figure 5-26: The Principal's Office, with the original timber flooring, new paintwork throughout.



Figure 5-27: Looking towards the veranda from the Principal's Office., with original timber floors exposed.



Figure 5-28: Image of bathroom (WC), with minor updates to paintwork, fixtures and fittings. Retains pre-2023 shower, flooring and sink.



Figure 5-29: The Interview Room has had minor updates only, including new paintwork and lighting fixtures

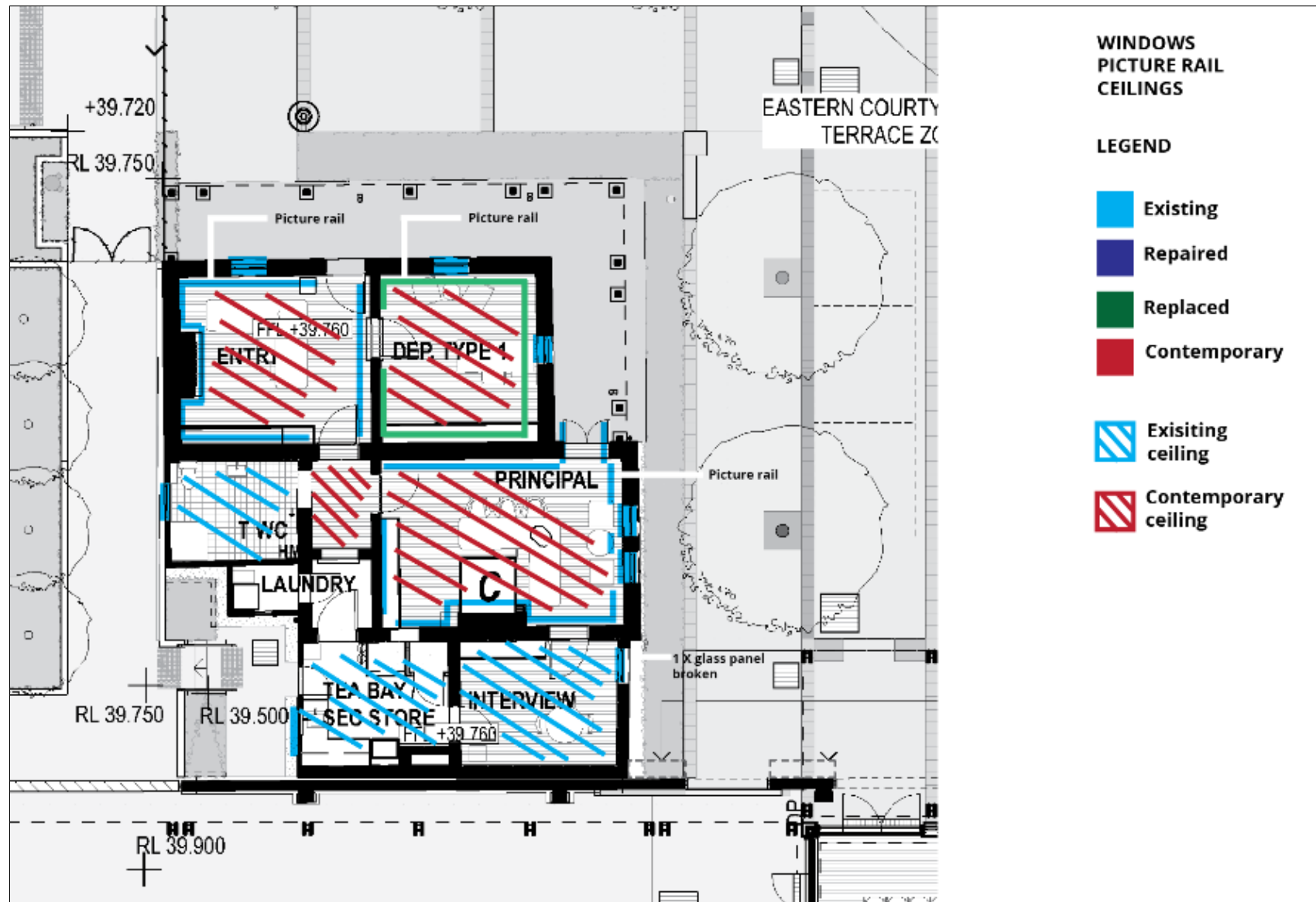


Figure 5-30: Messengers Cottage floor plan with Curio overlay. FJC Studio 2020.

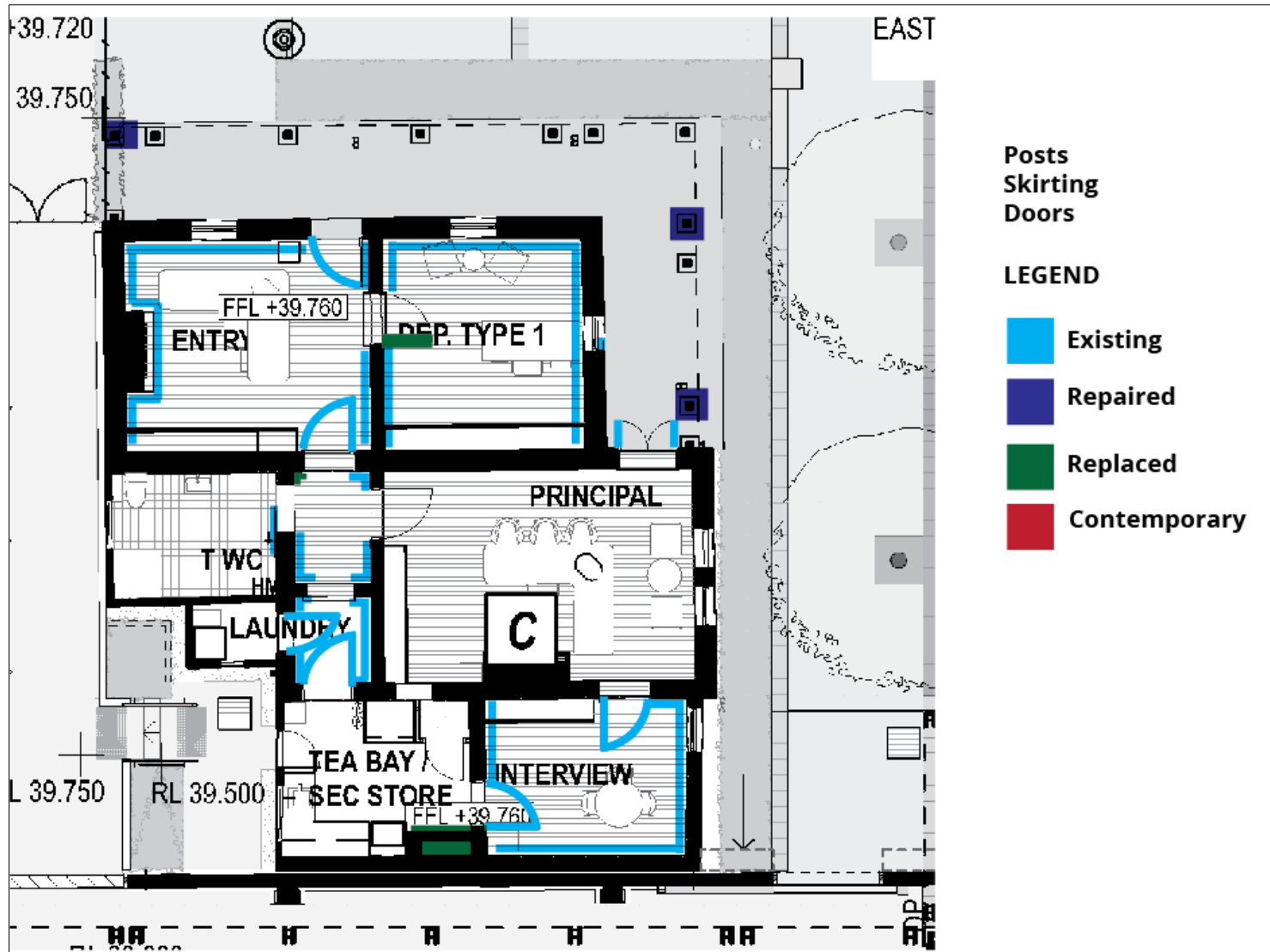


Figure 5-31: Messengers Cottage floor plan with Curio overlay. FJC Studio 2020.

### 5.5.3. Bureau of Meteorology (MET building) (1922)

The redevelopment of Fort Street Public School in 2023, included works to conserve, repair and adaptively reuse the Bureau of Meteorology for the school library and additional recreational space (on the rooftop).

Prior to the completed redevelopment works the basic brick structure of the building was in sound condition, however, the roof had partially collapse, with the first and second floor interiors in very poor condition as result. Several sections of the building's interiors were severely damaged by water ingress and extreme weathering events over the years, as a result of the deteriorated state of the building . In turn, the building was derelict for more than 20 years and was deemed unsafe.

Figures 5.55 to Figures 5.58 provide detailed floor plans that have been colour-coded to show the various existing categories of fabric from original, through to reconstructed, and contemporary.

As a result of the major redevelopment program, the remaining original fabric of the Bureau of Meteorology is now in excellent condition and the adaptive reuse works satisfy the requirements necessary in order to allow the building to operate as a school building.

#### Exterior

The former Bureau of Meteorology is a three-storey brick structure with an outdoor rooftop.

*The exterior of the MET Building demonstrates a number of characteristics of the Inter War Free Classical style. These include the symmetrical composition of elevations, the centrally placed and classically detailed main entry elevations, the cement rendered frieze below the wide eaves overhang, modulation of corners by recessing sections of brickwork and the detailing of piers and brackets associated with the second-floor loggia on the northern side of the building. The exterior of the building is constructed of common bricks relieved by vertical bands of red bricks at the sides of window openings and laid in soldier courses over window heads. There is a diaper-like cross pattern executed in single header course red bricks within first floor window spandrels. Windows consist of timber framed multipaned double hung sashes – those on the second floor are smaller than on lower levels. The corners of the building are subtly modulated by recessed areas of brickwork on each elevation.*

*The principal front northern façade is distinguished by the elegantly detailed main entrance and porch, with glazed doors, sidelights and highlights, and the second-floor loggia, which is partly recessed within the building envelope and partially cantilevers from the façade. A simply detailed wrought metal balustrade encloses the cantilevered section and is repeated at rooftop level, where it extends between low brick piers.<sup>27</sup>*

The weather station is located in the southwestern corner of the rooftop and has been conserved and repainted. An original brick chimney is also located in the southwestern corner of the building at rooftop level. The building has new copper gutters and downpipes throughout.

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<sup>27</sup> State Heritage Inventory, Fort Street Public School - Bureau of Meteorology, Heritage Item ID: 5065819, accessed on 30 November 2023, < <https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=5065819>>

## Interior

Much of the original interior fabric of the Bureau of Meteorology was deteriorated beyond repair after years of exposure to the weather, lack of maintenance, water damage and contamination. The current building, as a result, has generally been refurbished with contemporary materials, finishes and base build elements in order to bring it back into use and in alignment with Australian Standards.

Contemporary floor finishes such as carpet and vinyl cover the floor throughout most of the building. A contemporary staircase has been installed which provides access between ground floor level and level one. There are original fireplaces with timber mantels located throughout the building.

Contemporary suspended ceilings with acoustic panelling partially covers most rooms with a portion of the high-level ceiling and cornice remaining visible.

There is a mixture of contemporary and original profiled skirting boards throughout the Bureau of Meteorology. Where original walls remain intact the original skirting boards are generally also intact. New contemporary partitioning walls have contemporary skirting. This is further identified in the colour-coded floorplans.

The front door opens into a highly intact decorative vestibule. The vestibule consists of a timber panelled door with door lights above and side lights, the door opening aligns with the front door entry. On the eastern side there is a bench which extends the depth of the vestibule. The vestibule has been repaired and French polished to make good.

Timber skirting, timber doors and architraves, cornices and fireplaces remain in rooms where original walls have been retained.

There are original brick walls and an original door opening which remains at second floor level and also at the south-eastern corner of the ground floor. The opening and walls are located along the southern side of the building at second floor level near the bridge connection with the contemporary building J. The original opening consists of a timber panelled door with multipaned glazed side lights to either side of the door and original architrave

## 2023 Redevelopment Works

Prior to its redevelopment in 2023, the Bureau of Meteorology was in an extreme state of disrepair and had not been in use for more than 20 years. The approved design proposed to decontaminate, conserve, repair, reconstruct and undertake contemporary works for the adaptive re-use of the Bureau of Meteorology as the Library for the Fort Street Public School.

The main access to the Bureau of Meteorology was designed to be directly from the Central Courtyard to its northern main entrance, with a secondary new access provided via a new lightweight bridge connecting south to Building J. The majority of the existing heritage façade of the Bureau of Meteorology was retained and conserved.

The main physical interventions to the Bureau of Meteorology included:

- Repair, restoration and make-good of all existing brickwork and intact timber elements (including original windows, doors and fireplaces)
- Demolition of some internal walls and doorways on the ground, first and second floors to allow functional use of the building as the Fort Street Public School library.
- Localised intervention to the southern external façade to facilitate construction of a new transparent light-weight bridge connecting the MET to Building J to the south.



- The addition of a contemporary rooftop addition with a skillion roof contains a stair that allows rooftop access.
- Construction of a new lift within the existing eastern stairwell to provide equitable access to rooftop of the building, including construction of an enclosing structure to the lift overrun on the roof, providing shelter to the lift accessway and Lobby space;
- Creation of a new rooftop open recreation area including a new contemporary glass and metal post safety balustrade set back from the parapet, located behind the wrought metal balustrade on the front façade at second floor level and along rooftop level. The rooftop level consists of contemporary paving tiles and glass balustrades with metal posts. The rooftop connects to building J via a narrow roof level bridge.
- Modification and intervention into the fabric of the rear southern elevation (at the centre of the façade) to allow for the introduction of a narrow contemporary bridge connecting the rear of the MET rooftop, second floor and first floor levels with the new building (Building J) situated to the south of the Bureau of Meteorology. The construction of the glass connection along the southern side of the building between the Bureau of Meteorology and the contemporary building (building J) at first, second, and third floor and rooftop levels forms a covered walkway between the Bureau of Meteorology and building J.

#### Exterior Images – the Bureau of Meteorology



Figure 5-32: The Front Northern elevation of the conserved Bureau of Meteorology (Source: Curio 2023)



Figure 5-33: The side Eastern elevation (Source Curio Projects 2023)



Figure 5-34: The side western elevation (Source: Curio Projects 2023)



Figure 5-35: The Southern Elevation of the Bureau of Meteorology



Figure 5-36: The Eastern Elevation of the Building

Interior Images – the Bureau of Meteorology



Figure 5-37: The Ground Floor Entry Vestibule (Source Curio Projects 2023)



Figure 5-38: The Ground Floor Office/workroom (Source Curio Projects 2023)



Figure 5-39: The Ground Floor Storeroom.

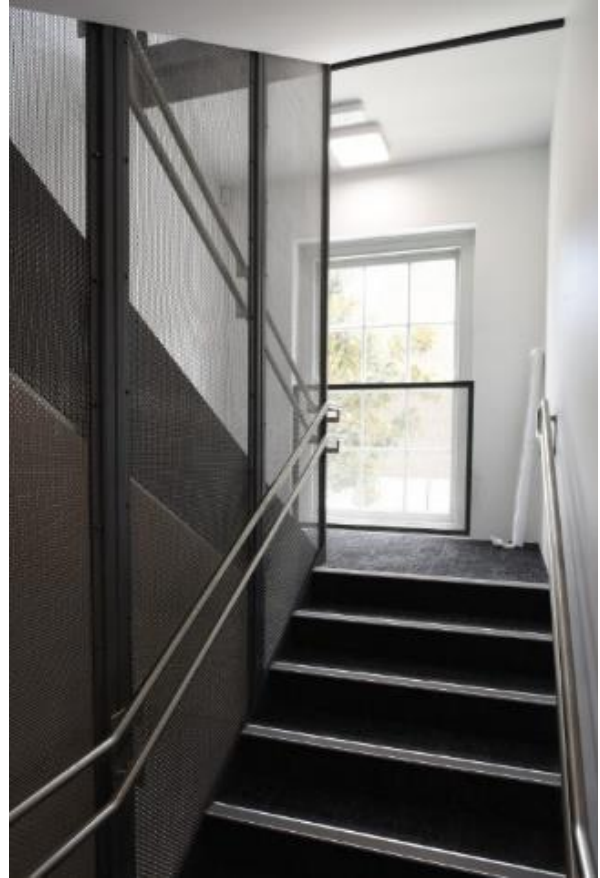


Figure 5-40: The Staircase at Ground Floor.

### Level 1 Images – the Bureau of Meteorology



Figure 5-41: The library. (Source Curio Projects 2023)



Figure 5-42: The seminar room. (Source Curio Projects 2023)



Figure 5-43: The practical activity area. (Source Curio Projects 2023)



Figure 5-44: The stair at first-floor level. (Source Curio Projects 2023)

### Level 2 Images – the Bureau of Meteorology



Figure 5-45: Image of Program Type 1 Room (Source Curio Projects 2023)



Figure 5-46: Image of Program Type 2 Room. (Source Curio Projects 2023)



Figure 5-47: Image of Program Type 3 Room. (Source Curio Projects 2023)



Figure 5-48: Image of outdoor covered space (balcony).  
(Source Curio Projects 2023)



Figure 5-49: Image of original entry door (near Building J).  
(Source Curio Projects 2023)

### Rooftop Images – the Bureau of Meteorology



Figure 5.50 Outdoor rooftop area (Source Curio Projects 2023)





Figure: 5- 51 View of the Rooftop Weather Station, copper downpipes and contemporary bridge connection to Building J (to the right).

Ground Floor

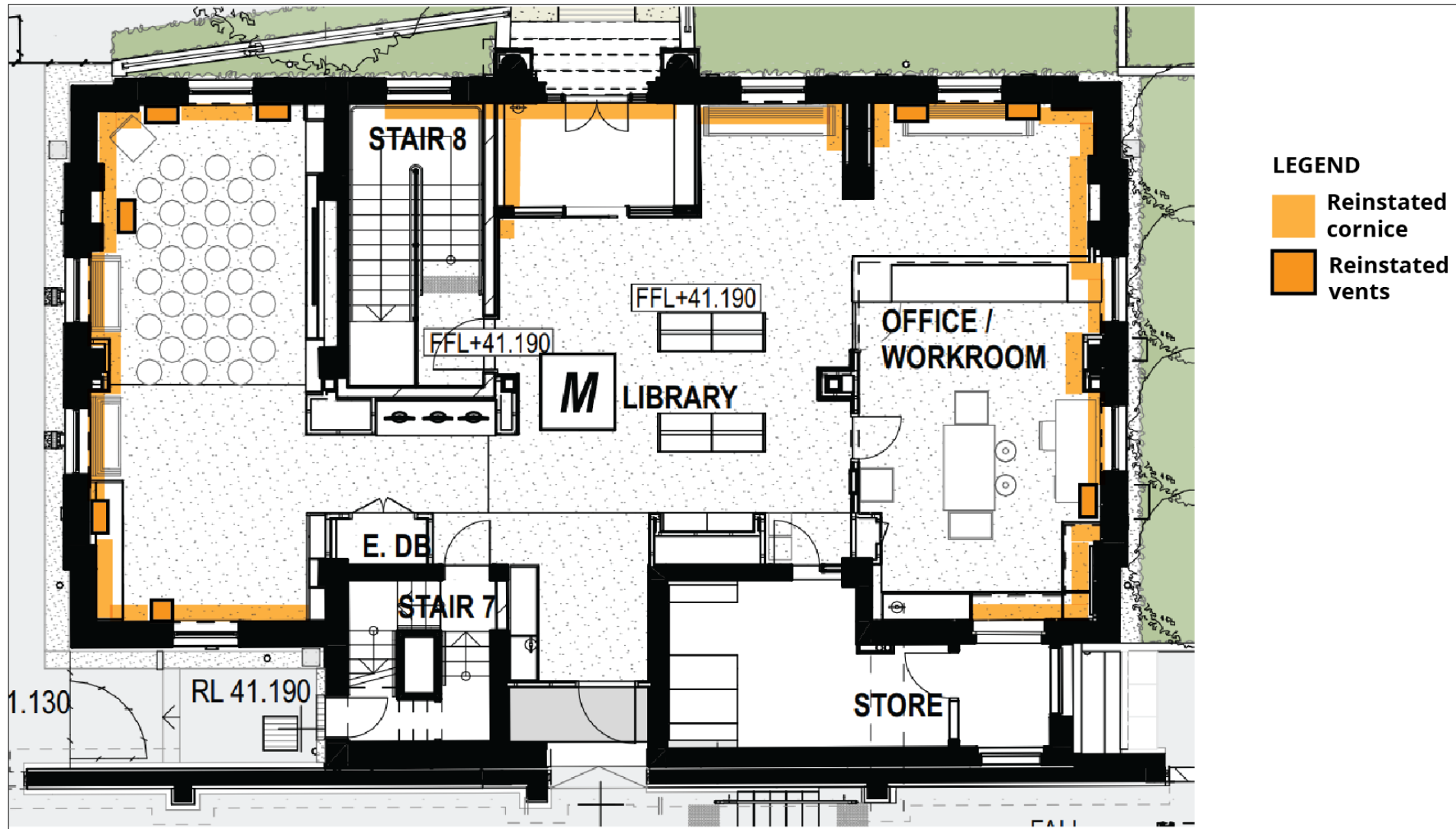


Figure 5-52: Bureau of Meteorology Ground floor plan – Reinstated fabric with Curio Overlay. FJC Studio

Level 1

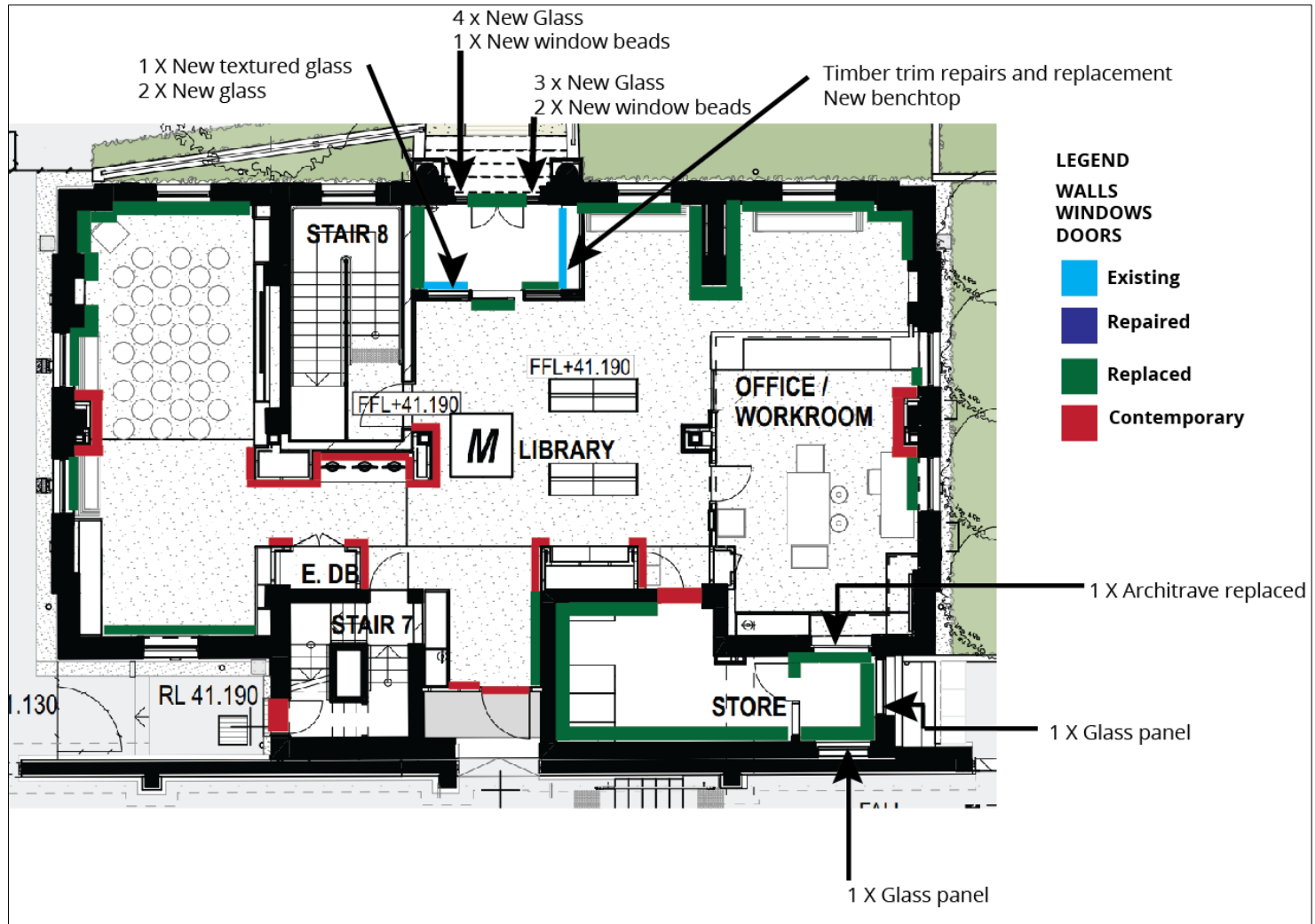


Figure 5-53: Bureau of Meteorology Ground floor plan – existing, repaired, replaced, contemporary fabric with Curio Overlay. FJC Studio

Level 1

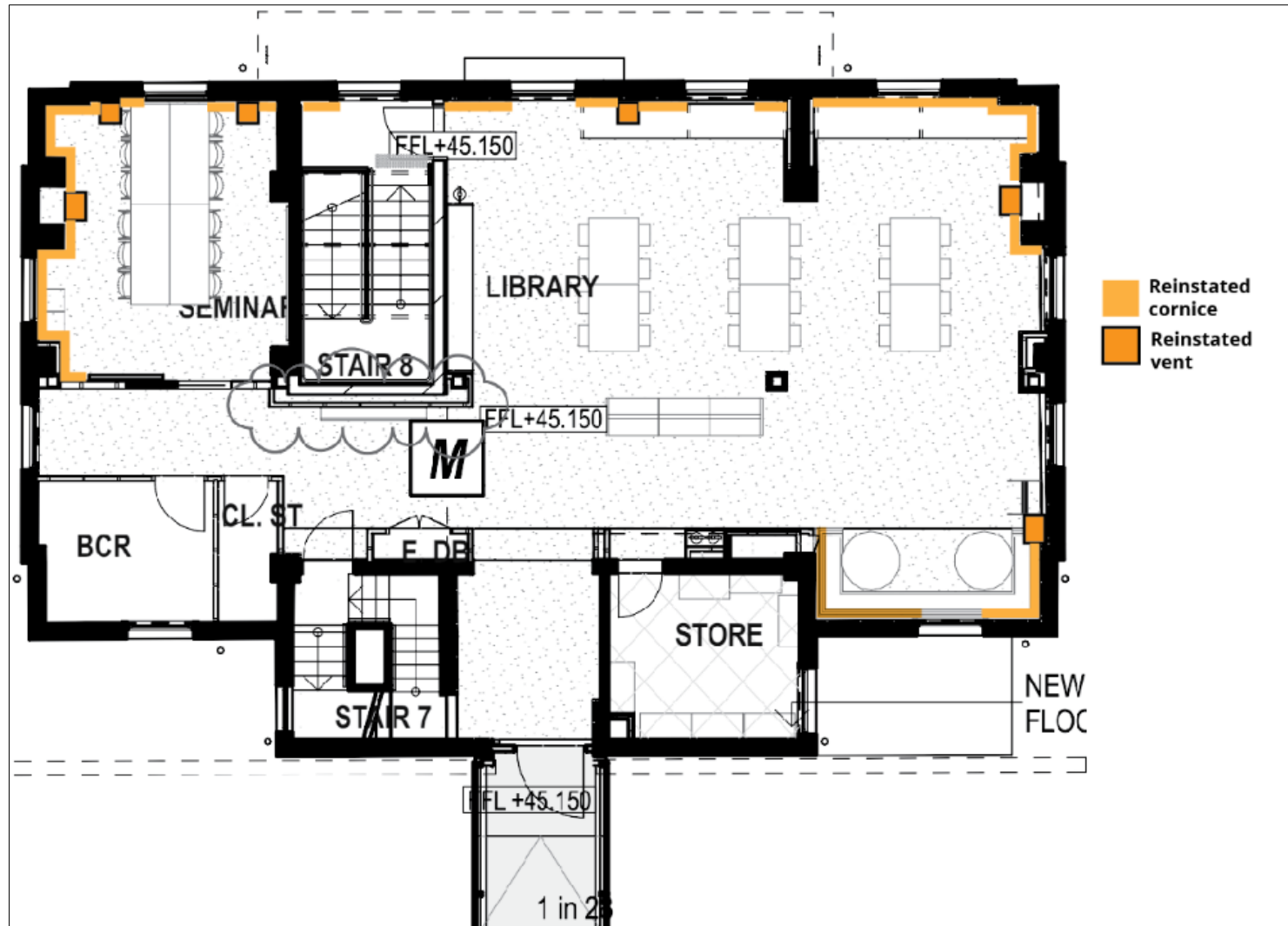


Figure 5-54 Bureau of Meteorology Level 1 floor plan – Reinstated fabric with Curio Overlay. FJC Studio

Level 1

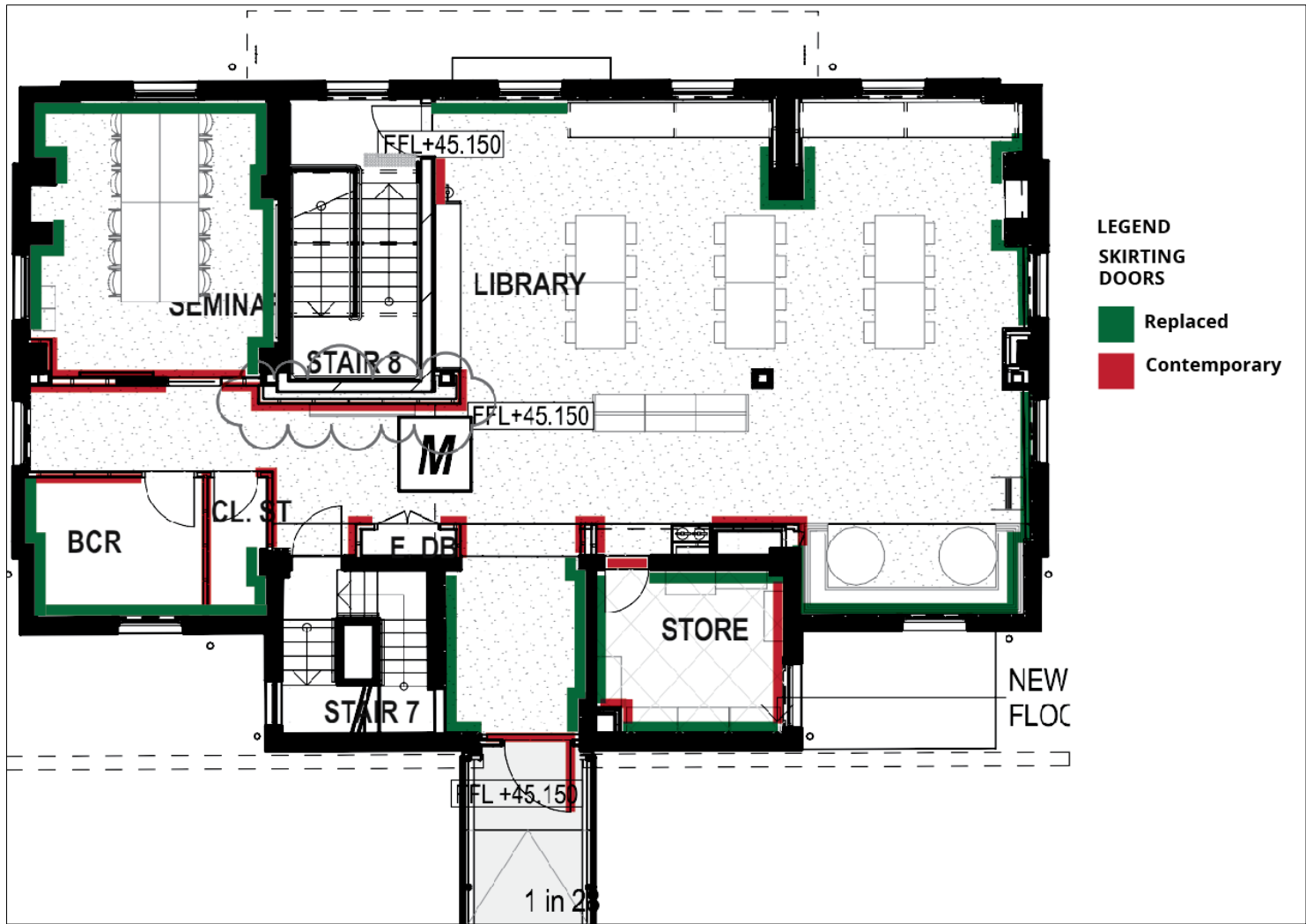


Figure 5-55: Bureau of Meteorology Level 1 floor plan – existing, repaired, replaced, contemporary fabric with Curio Overlay. FJC Studio

Level 2

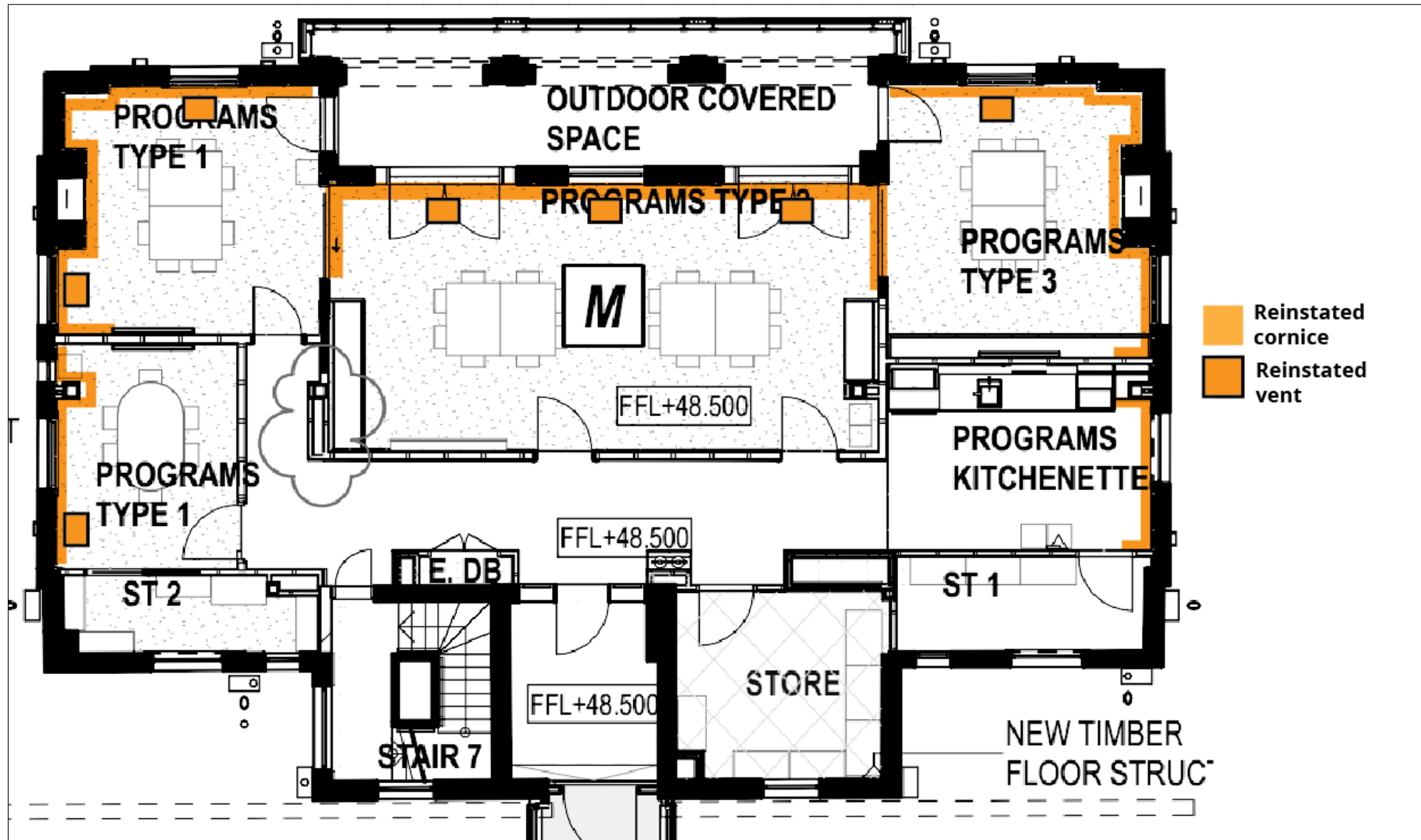


Figure 5-56: Bureau of Meteorology Level 2 floor plan – Reinstated fabric with Curio Overlay. FJC Studio.

Level 2

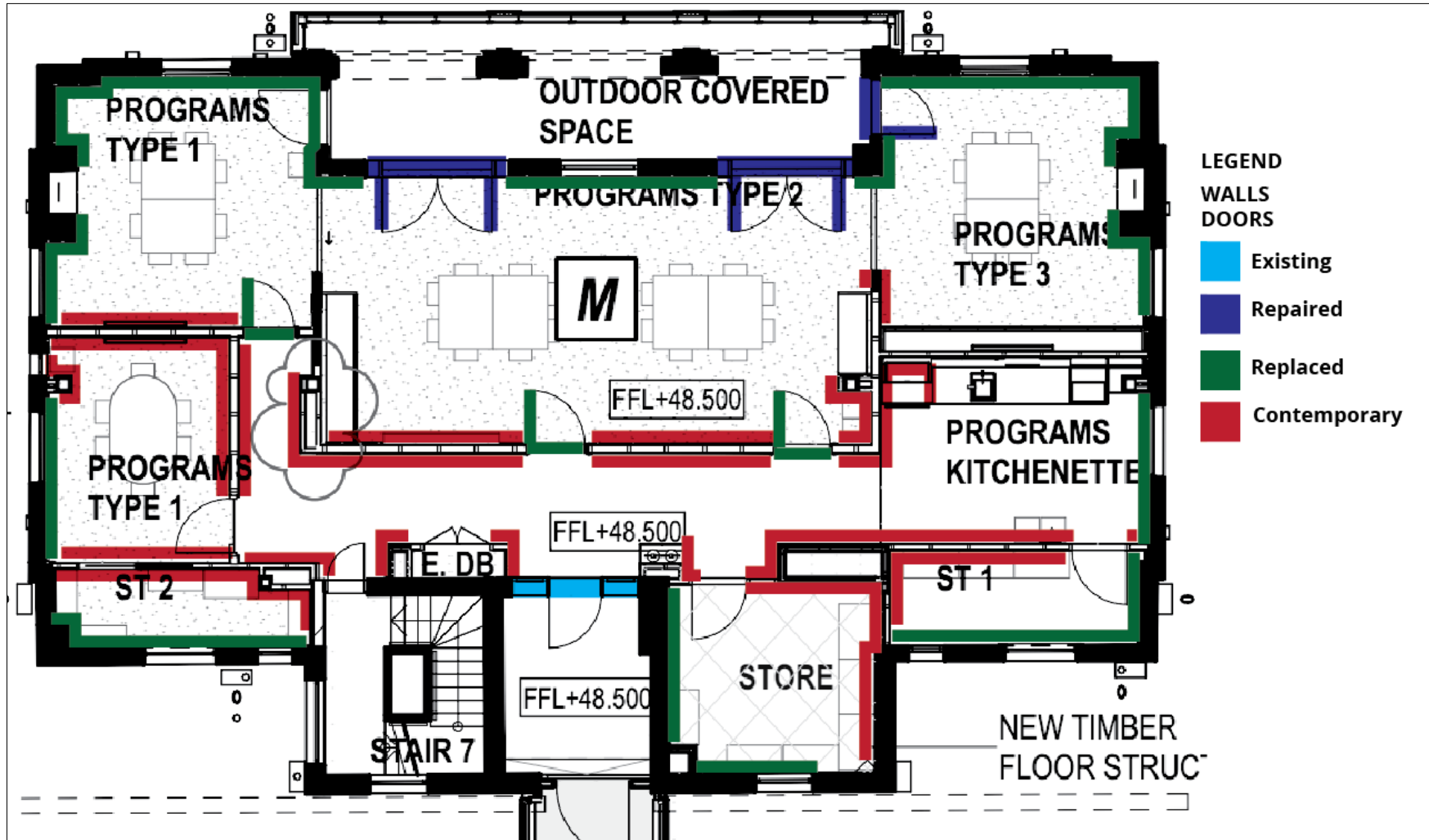


Figure 5-57: Bureau of Meteorology Level 2 floor plan – existing, repaired, replaced, contemporary fabric with Curio Overlay. FJC Studio.

#### 5.5.4 Fort Street Public School (1940)

Fort Street Public School is a red face brick building with reinforced concrete floors. The exterior of the building is a fine example of the Inter War Functionalist style. "Characteristics of the style that are clearly demonstrated by the school building include clear geometric shapes, asymmetrical massing, windows expressed as linear components of the exterior, a balance of horizontal and vertical elements that often resulted in a three-dimensional quality, plain face brick surfaces externally and parapet detailing".<sup>28</sup>

The original L-shaped plan consisting of a two-storey principal school building and rear wing have been retained. A contemporary third storey addition has been added to the rear of the original building and adjoins the principal building form and rear wing.

##### Eastern Front Elevation

The Eastern front elevation of Fort Street Public School consists of a face brick asymmetrical façade with lettering spelling out the name of the school. There are stairs located on the southern end of the building which lead to the front entry.

To the southern side of the façade there is a rectangular tower massing with a vertically proportioned metal framed stained glass window which commemorates *The memory of the men and women from Fort Street Primary School who served and died in two World Wars*. It was erected by B.McKervey, Former Principal in 1958.

There is a series of equally spaced metal framed rectangular ribbon windows arranged vertically with brick banding below at ground floor and first floor level and a contemporary glazed second floor addition which is setback from the original parapet of the building.

##### Western Rear Elevation

The Southern portion of the western elevation forms part of the original face brick rear wing at ground floor and first floor level. There is a contemporary second floor addition with glazing which is setback from the original brick parapet. To the centre of the elevation there is a contemporary three storey addition constructed from face brick work with large, glazed windows with and exterior louvres. To the northern side of the elevation there is a contemporary two storey addition which consists of contemporary laminated glass with copper mesh at first floor and second floor levels.

##### Northern Side Elevation

The eastern face-brick portion of the northern elevation forms part of the original Fort Street Public School building and sits forward of the rest of the elevation. The original part of the northern façade consists of face brickwork, with a series of original horizontally proportioned ribbon windows located at ground floor and first floor levels. An original external set of terrazzo steps lead to the original front door entry at ground floor level. The contemporary addition forms the western section of the northern elevation. This part of the building consists of a vertical narrow glazed window which is covered with external louvres and contemporary laminated glass with copper mesh at first floor and second floor level.

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<sup>28</sup> State Heritage Inventory, Fort Street Public School, Heritage Item ID: 5065820, accessed on 30 November 2023, <<https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemid=5065820>>



## Southern Side Elevation

The southern elevation comprises the principal building form, rear wing, and a second-floor contemporary addition. To the eastern side of the elevation is a single group of metal framed ribbon windows at first floor level and three contemporary metal windows at ground floor level, further along there are two pairs of horizontally proportioned metal ribbon windows at ground floor and first floor level. The western side of the elevation consists of a series of original horizontally proportioned ribbon windows at ground floor level. At first floor level this part of the elevation consists of face brickwork. There is a contemporary glazed addition at second floor level which is set back from the original parapet wall of the principal building form and rear wing.

The two original wings of the school are organised around the stair and hall at the southeastern corner of the building. The tall narrow opening allowing in daylight to the stair contains the war memorial leadlight window. The stair balustrades are simple and fabricated out of steel while the tops of newel posts have a stepped profile.

## Interior

Within the original principal school building wing a corridor extends to the north. On the eastern side of the corridor are three classrooms each on the ground and first floor. On its western side is an additional stair and a classroom on both levels. The southern original rear wing contains learning spaces at ground floor and first floor level.

The Fort Street Public School Building has been refurbished with contemporary finishes and fixtures, including carpeted flooring, contemporary gyprock ceilings, and contemporary gyprock walls.

The ground floor timber flooring has been retained and the parquet flooring on level 1 was reconstructed.

The second floor is a contemporary addition which was recently added to the Fort Street Public School Building. The second-floor level is accessible via the contemporary stair along the western side of the building and contains classrooms and learning spaces. Generally, all windows have been repaired and all have been fixed shut.

## 2023 Redevelopment Works

The main physical impacts as a result of the 2023 redevelopment were to the existing Fort Street School Building and included the following key external changes:

- Construction of a new in-fill addition building to northwest of existing school building; (referred to as 'Building D'), accommodating a new lift and access/egress stair;
- Associated internal demolition and modifications to connect the Fort Street Public School existing building with new;
- Demolition of existing roof, construction of additional storey (across both Building A and D)- inserted behind the parapet of the existing fabric;
- Construction of new roof across Building A & D, including new skylight area above existing assembly hall;
- Replacement of existing non-original windows with new acoustic window sets;

Internal demolition and modification works included:

- New penetrations in internal walls dividing existing eastern classrooms on ground and first floors to open up bounding walls;
- Removal of internal windows to central hallway and demolition of wall beneath to floor level;