


Heritage Inventory Sheet

Recommended Name	Austral Avenue Commission Housing Group		
Site Image			
Address	45-51 Austral Avenue, Westmead 2145 NSW		
Lot/Section/DP	6-9	-	36477
Heritage Study ID	HS91		
LEP ID	Not currently included on the Cumberland LEP		
Heritage Conservation Area	Included in a proposed HCA, Westmead Estate		
Date Updated	February 2021		
Significance Level	LOCAL		
Site Type	Level 1	Built	
	Level 2	Residential Buildings (private)	

Curtilage Map



Statement of Significance

The commission housing at 45-51 Austral Avenue, Westmead is significant at the local level for its historic, aesthetic, social, and representative values. Built in c.1944, the residences form a part of the Westmead Estate designed and planned by architects Messrs Tranter and Kemsley for the Housing Commission. The brick houses within this estate demonstrate the ideals of the Housing Commission which was established to build comfortable and well-appointed dwellings within the resources and capacity of the state during the 1940s. More broadly the dwellings are historically linked to the Post-War development of Westmead that followed the commercial and industrial development of the area. The buildings retain their aesthetic significance as a group of Post-War Austerity style homes, which retain much of their original design and fabric. The item is socially significant for its connection to the Government Housing Commission. This group is a good representative example of early Housing Commission dwellings constructed of brick, c.1944.

Criteria Assessment

a) Historic	Built in c.1944, the residences form a part of the Westmead Estate designed and planned by architects Messrs Tranter and Kemsley for the Housing Commission. The brick houses within this estate demonstrate the ideals of the Housing Commission which was established to build comfortable and well-appointed dwellings within the resources and capacity of the state during the 1940s. More broadly the dwellings are historically linked to the Post-War development of Westmead that followed the commercial and industrial development of the area.
b) Associative	The item does not meet this criterion.

c) Aesthetic/Technical	The group retains their aesthetic significance as a group of Post-War Austerity style homes, with much of their original design and fabric intact.
d) Social	The item is socially significant for its connection to the Government Housing Commission.
e) Scientific	The item does not meet this criterion.
f) Rarity	The item does not meet this criterion.
g) Representativeness	This group is a good representative example of early Housing Commission dwellings constructed of brick, c.1944.

Physical Description

The subject site consists of four (4) Housing Commission dwellings in brick with tiled hipped roofs. The Housing Commission style from the early c.1940s is distinguished by its materiality and form which consists of brick clad single storey dwellings, in either an L shape or a rectangular form. Many of the buildings have small alterations to the exterior, such as having aluminium framed windows with float glass as opposed to timber framed windows with rolled glass. They do, however, retain their scale and form.

45 Austral Avenue

The dwelling at 45 Austral Avenue presents a highly modified rectangular shaped Inter-War dwelling in the Housing Commission style. The dwelling faces Austral Avenue and features a moderate set back, in alignment with other dwellings on the street. The dwelling boundaries are consistent with the 1925 Tooheys Palm Estate subdivision. The street facing boundary has a low brick boundary wall with dental brickwork patterns.

The dwelling has bi-chromatic brick walls and a tiled gable roof, with a hipped roof form. The red brick exterior is broken up into three sections by two horizontal bands of purple brick. A corbelled brick chimney with a modern antenna is positioned toward the front of the dwelling. The chimney does not have cowls. Modern Colorbond guttering has been installed along the edges of the roofline. Windows are horizontally aligned and retain their original timber framing. The entrance has a concrete porch with a low brick wall around the outside. The doorframe has a metal fly screen cover over the exterior.

A concrete footpath leads from the front brick boundary fence to the porch. The front yard is neat, containing only grassed areas and some established formal plantings. The property is bound along the sides by both timber fencing and wire mesh rolled top fencing.

47 Austral Avenue

The dwelling at 47 Austral Avenue presents as a partially modified rectangular shaped Inter-War dwelling in the Housing Commission style. The dwelling faces Austral Avenue and features a moderate set back in alignment with other dwellings on the street. The dwelling boundaries are consistent with the 1925 Tooheys Palm Estate subdivision. The street facing boundary has a low brick boundary wall with dental brickwork patterns.

The dwelling has bi-chromatic brick walls and a tiled gable roof, with a hipped roof form. The top two thirds of the exterior are clad in red brick while the lower third is clad in purple brick. A decorative brick chimney is positioned toward the front of the dwelling. The chimney does not have cowls. Modern Colorbond guttering has been installed along the edges of the roofline. Windows are square shaped, have two panels, and are framed with aluminium. The entrance has a concrete porch with a low brick wall bordering the outside. The doorway alcove is secured with a metal grate and the doorframe has a metal fly screen cover over the exterior. A modern air conditioning unit has been installed to the front of the façade, with cabling connected to the brickwork. A small hose reel has also been installed on the front façade.

A concrete footpath leads from the front brick boundary fence to the porch. The front yard is neat, containing only grassed areas. The property is bound along the sides by both timber fencing and wire mesh rolled top fencing.

49 Austral Avenue

The dwelling at 49 Austral Avenue presents as a partially modified rectangular shaped Inter-War dwelling in the Housing Commission style. The dwelling faces Austral Avenue and features a moderate set back, in alignment with other dwellings on the street. The dwelling boundaries are consistent with the 1925 Tooheys Palm Estate subdivision. The street facing boundary has a low stepped brick boundary wall with a curved brickwork pattern.

The dwelling has bi-chromatic brick walls and a tiled gable roof, with a hipped roof form. The dwelling is primarily clad in red brick while two horizontal courses of purple brick extend around the lower half of the exterior. A decorative brick chimney is positioned toward the front of the dwelling. The chimney does not have cowls. Modern Colorbond guttering has been installed along the edges of the roofline. Windows are square shaped, have two panels, and are framed with aluminium. The entrance has a concrete porch with a white painted metal handrail extending up the steps. The doorway alcove is boarded by a course of bullnose brick while the doorframe has a decorative metal fly screen cover over the exterior. Ceramic wall vents are installed along the façade, with some installed between the horizontal purple bands. The western façade has a small wall-mounted air conditioning unit and modern antenna located beneath the eave.

A concrete footpath leads from the front brick boundary fence to the porch. The front yard is neat, containing a grassed area and minimal established plantings. The property is bound along the sides by timber fencing, wire mesh rolled top fencing, and metal sheet fencing.

51 Austral Avenue

The dwelling at 51 Austral Avenue presents as a partially modified rectangular shaped Inter-War dwelling in the Housing Commission style. The dwelling faces Austral Avenue and features a moderate set back, in alignment with other dwellings on the street. The dwelling boundaries are consistent with the 1925 Tooheys Palm Estate subdivision. The street facing boundary has a low brick boundary wall with stepped brickwork patterns.

The dwelling has bi-chromatic brick walls and a tiled gable roof, with a gabled roof form. The dwelling is primarily clad in purple brick with a wide central band of red brick through the centre of the exterior. A decorative brick chimney is positioned on the western elevation of the dwelling. The chimney does not have cowls and but instead has a modern antenna mounted above it. Modern Colorbond guttering and downpipes have been installed along the edges of the roofline, though these are in a poor condition. Gable ends are clad in timber and have timber panelled vents at the apex of each gable. The front facade also has brick corbeling underneath the eastern and western ends of the front facade. Windows are aligned horizontally and have aluminium frames. The entrance has a brick and concrete porch with steps. The doorway alcove is boarded with course of rounded brick and the doorframe has a decorative metal fly screen cover over the exterior. Ceramic wall vents are installed along the façade. The western elevation also has a wall mounted air conditioning unit

A concrete footpath leads from the front brick boundary fence to the porch. The front yard is neat, containing a grassed area and minimal established plantings. The property is bound along the sides by both aluminium loop fencing and metal sheet fencing.

Condition

The buildings are well maintained and in good condition.

Condition	Good	Fair	Poor
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Alterations and Additions

45 Austral Avenue

- Wire mesh roll top fencing
- Modern antenna
- Modern Colorbond guttering

47 Austral Avenue

- Wire mesh rolled top fencing
- New Colorbond guttering
- Modern air condition unit and cabling
- Aluminium windows
- Hose reel

49 Austral Avenue

- Wire mesh rolled top fencing
- New Colorbond guttering
- Modern antenna
- Aluminium windows
- Wall mounted air conditioning unit.

51 Austral Avenue

- Wire mesh rolled top fencing
- New Colorbond guttering
- Modern antenna
- Aluminium frame windows
- Wall mounted air conditioning unit

The dwellings at 45-51 Austral Avenue have had windows and roofing elements replaced and also have had air conditioning units and antennas added to the exterior facades. Despite these minor additions and alterations, the overall form and material pallet of these dwellings has largely been retained and they have a moderate degree of integrity.

Integrity	High	Moderate	Low
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* *element detracts from the overall cultural significance of the place*

Historical Notes

Construction years	c.1944
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Westmead

The suburb of Westmead is bounded by the suburbs of Wentworthville to the west, Parramatta to the east, Northmead to the north and Mays Hill and Merrylands to the south. The southern half of Westmead, south of Westmead Station lies in the area governed by Cumberland City Council.

Westmead originally formed part of the western portion of the Domain of Government House at Parramatta, which was laid out by Governor Philip in 1790. It originally comprised of over 2000 acres of land established by Governor Macquarie as an administrative area for the penal colony and it became a residential office for ten governors.

By the 1850s the Domain became known as Parramatta Park. In 1859-1861, an extensive portion of the Domain was subdivided, and it was at this time that the suburb became known as Westmead ('West meadow'). The major landholder in the area was William Fullagar, a butcher and publican turned stock agent. Land was also allotted to James Houison, John Savery Rodd and George Oakes. These allotments comprised 50 acres, however, many of these individuals acquired multiple allotments. The land on which the housing commission dwellings would later be located was originally granted to Nathaniel Payten on 4 July 1859. By the time of this subdivision, a number of main roads had been established including Hawkesbury Road, Pye Street, Oakes Street, Bridge Road, Good Street and Houison Street.

Westmead was relatively slow to develop, and it was only after the Westmead Railway Station was opened in 1883 that landowners began to subdivide in the area. By the 1920s, the station's facilities had improved and several estates such as Tooheys Palm Estate and Fullagar's Estate were further subdivided. Land on which the commission houses would later be located was a part of the Toohey Palm Estate and was owned by John Toohey. The estate was subdivided as early as 1914, with land sales progressively sold over the following decades, until 1940s.

Austral Avenue Commission Housing Group

In 1941, the land was purchased by the government at auction prior to the establishment of the NSW Housing Commission in 1941. The planning and design of the Westmead Estate was subject to competition, open to qualified Australian and New Zealand architects. Messrs Tranter and Kemsley, were the winning architects for the area planning of Westmead Estate. This land, which consisted of approximately 53 acres, had been bought with a view to building houses for workers in the nearby factories, and their families. The houses appear to have been built in c.1944.

The Housing Commission oversaw the selection of tenants during this period. Although any person could apply to the Housing Commission for accommodation, every Sydney application was processed through a committee selection panel comprised of a member from each of the following organisations: the Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Arms' Imperial League of Australia (RSL), the National Council of Women, the Trades and Labour Council of New South Wales and the Commission itself. Later, this method would be changed so that tenants were selected by ballot.

By the late 1940s, the wider Westmead Housing Commission Estate was developed which comprised of 300 brick houses as well as a retail strip with 12 shops and a block of flats. Westmead owes much of its present street layout to the developments from this period. In 1970, the Housing Commission of New South Wales became the proprietor of the residences of 45-51 Austral Avenue, with the first house being sold to Henry Brown later that year.

The dwellings remain in use as private residences.

Recommendations					
Heritage Management		Existing Built and Landscape Elements		Future Development and Planning	
1. Include this item as a new heritage listing on the LEP.	X	6. Original fabric is highly significant and should be maintained.	X	12. Alterations and additions should respond to the existing pattern of development, with careful consideration of the setting (form, scale, bulk, setback and height).	X
2. Include this item's listing as part of or as a Heritage Conservation Area.	X	7. Unsympathetic alterations that detract from the cultural significance of the item should be removed.	X	13. New alterations and additions should respect the historic aesthetic/character of the item and area (e.g. paint scheme, materiality, style, landscape elements).	X
3. Consider additional research to nominate this item for the State Heritage Register.		8. Maintain heritage landscape elements and schemes.		14. Future uses for this item should be compatible with its historical functions/associations.	
4. The heritage curtilage for this item should be revised/reduced.		9. Maintain the existing setting of the heritage item, informed by the historic pattern of neighbouring	X		

		development (form, scale, bulk, setback and height).			
5. Not recommended for inclusion on the LEP.		10. Maintain the historic aesthetic/character of the item and area (e.g. paint scheme, materiality, style, landscape elements).	X		
		11. The condition of this item is poor. Condition and maintenance should be monitored.			

Other recommendations and/or comments:

- This site is located within the area of the proposed Westmead Estate Heritage Conservation Area.

Listings

Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number
Heritage Act – State Heritage Register	N/A	-
Local Environmental Plan	N/A	-
Cumberland Heritage Study	Austral Avenue Commission Housing Group	HS91
National Trust Australia Register	N/A	-

Other References

- Broomham, R and T Kass. 1992. *Holroyd Heritage Study Thematic History*. Sydney: Holroyd City Council.
- City Plan Heritage 2017, *Westmead Station (South Precinct) Heritage Study*, City Plan Heritage, Sydney.
- Elias, J and Coppins, S 2013, *Pictorial History Holroyd*, Kingsclear Books, Alexandria.
- M. J. Barry, 1989, *The Role of the New South Wales Housing Commission in Post-War Reconstruction* "Australian Journal of Public Administration", Vol 38, No.3.

Limitations

1. Access to all heritage items was limited to a visual inspection from the public domain. The interiors of buildings and inaccessible areas such as rear gardens were not assessed as part of this heritage study.
2. Condition and site modification assessment was limited to a visual inspection undertaken from the public domain.
3. Unless additional research was required, historical research for all heritage items was based on existing information in the Cumberland Heritage Study Stage 1 2019 prepared by Extent Heritage.

Additional Images



View to 45 Austral Avenue.



View to 47 Austral Avenue.



49 Austral Avenue.



51 Austral Avenue.